

## The Importance of Affordability and Flexibility

With the economy being on the mind of most every American, our feature story for this newsletter is about the importance of affordability and flexibility. As Americans have quickly come to realize, gas not only fuels our cars, it also fuels the American economy. On August 17, former Vice President Al Gore said, “I don’t remember a time in our country when so many things seemed to be going wrong simultaneously.” Due to the uncertainty in our economy, most people are forced to reconsider many of their leisure activities, lifestyle choices and long-term plans.

“Regardless of the economic climate, people continue to face health-related challenges, experience functional limitations, and need assistance with daily living activities,” said Mary Doepke, RN, co-owner of Home Helpers. According to *A Profile of Older Americans: 2007* published by the Administration on Aging, “Most older persons have at least one chronic condition and many have multiple conditions.” Whether a person is younger or older, one thing is for certain, chronic conditions often lead to functional limitations – physical and/or cognitive.

As people are becoming increasingly aware of the cost of products and services, it seems that people want to get the maximum value for each dollar they spend. That same level of scrutiny also applies to finding affordable and flexible options for loved ones who need assistance with daily living activities and desire companionship.

“Frankly, assisted living and nursing care facilities are not feasible for many people who need assistance. Also, few people want to commit to making such a drastic and often irreversible change,” said Doepke. Earlier this year, the results released from an AARP survey indicated 90% of people ages 64 to 74 want to live out their lives in their current homes. “That’s no surprise to us as there’s no place like home. Our clients tell us that their homes provide comfort, enhance quality of life, and signify independence,” Doepke added.

Homecare provides tremendous flexibility and tends to be affordable as clients pay an hourly rate for care services. According to a report released by the Federal Interagency Forum on Aging Related Statistics and the Family Caregiver Alliance, “Limited (not 24/7) but regular care at home costs less than 50% of care provided in a ‘facility.’”

Home Helpers provides the care and support people *need* and deserve, regardless of their age. It’s all about Making Life Easier<sup>SM</sup>. “An advantage of home health care that many people are finding to be increasingly important is our affordability and flexibility,” added Doepke. Offering services on an hourly basis, Home Helpers tailors its homecare services around an individual’s needs and budget. If you or someone you know may be interested in learning more about home health care, we offer a no obligation, free in home consultation. We also offer a helpful educational series covering a variety of topics and can direct you to other resources within our community that might be appropriate.

## SOCIAL WELLNESS

### – The importance of social interaction and connectedness.

There are two fundamental aspects of health. Medicine focuses on cure and treatment whereas wellness focuses on prevention. When people think of wellness, many think of diet, exercise and other lifestyle choices that may lead to better health. It is estimated that more than 75% of wellness activities focus on physical aspects; however, there are six dimensions of wellness, all of which merit attention.

The six dimensions of wellness are – emotional, intellectual, occupational, physical, social and spiritual. Graphical depictions of the wellness model often show each factor as a piece of a pie.

According to Mary Doepke, RN, co-owner of Home Helpers, “I personally view the wellness model as a teeter totter that we try to keep in balance. If one aspect of wellness is reduced, the other dimensions often become more important to maintain or to achieve balance. In other words, there is shifting that occurs to find balance and a desired quality of life.”



One wellness factor that is often overlooked or viewed as being less important than other factors is social wellness. Social wellness refers to having companionship. People need family and friends to turn to, to share life experiences, and to receive support and validation. Being able to engage with others is important as it helps foster a positive self-image.

There are many factors that affect social wellness including marital status, work status and living arrangements. Findings from research indicate that a lack of social wellness affects people many different ways including:

- Isolation – People often feel separated from others. Many factors can exacerbate isolation such as physical and/or cognitive impairment, the death of family and friends, and loved ones moving away.
- Poor health – Health complications often result from an inability to adequately care for one’s self without assistance. (e.g. get to medical appointments, manage/refill medications)
- Loneliness – People want to feel they matter and be noticed. As Andy Rooney is quoted as saying, “Under everyone’s hard shell is someone who wants to be appreciated and loved.”

As people age or face limitations, the focus often shifts from the person to his or her limitation. For example, if you refer to someone as a disabled person, you are focusing on the disability. “At Home Helpers, we believe in the person first – a person with a disability, and not a disabled person. While the difference may seem minor to some people, we believe it is significant as every person matters, wants to be noticed, feel important to others, and have a sense of purpose in life,” Doepke added.

“Companionship is one aspect of the homecare services we provide that many of our clients indicate is vitally important to them,” said Doepke. “Whether having a hand to hold or a heart to understand, many people simply do not like being alone. Some of the ways our caregivers engage our clients include reading or discussing the daily news, playing cards, enjoying friendly conversation, sharing a favorite hobby, driving a client to doctor appointments and accompanying his/her during the visit, shopping or going out for lunch.”

## Laughter is Good for the Soul

- An elderly gentleman was invited to his long-time friend's house for dinner one evening. He was impressed by the way his buddy was preceding every request to his wife with endearing terms such as Honey, My Love, Darling, Sweetheart and Pumpkin. The couple had been married for almost 50 years, and clearly, they were still very much in love. While the wife was in the kitchen, the man leaned over and said to his friend, "I think it's wonderful that, after all these years, you still call your wife those loving pet names." The friend hung his head. "I have to tell you the truth," he said, "I forgot her name about 10 years ago."
  - One weekend a man decided to call his elderly mother in Florida as it had been some time since they last chatted. The man asked "How are you doing?" She replied, "Not too good. I feel very weak." The son then asked, "Any idea why you feel so weak?" She said, "Because I haven't eaten in 38 days." The son then asked, "How come you haven't eaten in 38 days mom?" His mother replied, "Because I didn't want to have my mouth filled with food when you called."
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We share these stories not only for a laugh but also to make a point. People often do crazy things that don't make sense to others. Whether struggling with memory and forgetting people's names or exhibiting an unusual and unexpected behavior change such as not eating, many people will simply not ask for help or pick up the phone themselves. Whether someone is facing complications from diabetes, is fatigued as a result of cancer treatments, is facing physical challenges as a result of arthritis, or is experiencing more frequent senior moments, help is available for both the individual and his or her family members.

While many families want to provide care for their loved ones that is both needed and deserved, many families are simply not able to meet the day-to-day needs of an aging parent or ill spouse or family member. Due to increased pressures at work, household and family obligations and other commitments, many families find Home Helpers to be a wonderful solution. To learn more about our services and how we may be of service, call us at (630) 323-7231.



## HOME HELPERS – *Making Life Easier*<sup>SM</sup>

Home Helpers offers personalized care services similar to the care and support that is often provided by family members. We tailor our services and schedules to address our clients' needs.

Home Helpers begins with a free in-home consultation, preferably at the care recipient's residence. This gives us the opportunity ...

- To meet the client and assess the situation.
- To make sure the requested services can be properly and safely performed.
- To ensure the Caregiver assigned possesses the personality, skill set and passion that best meet your loved one's needs.

Home Helpers' experienced and compassionate Caregivers are bonded, insured and carefully screened. Our Caregivers are employees, not subcontractors, thereby minimizing client liability.

To learn more about Home Helpers, call (630) 323-7231 or visit us on the web at [www.MaryAndMikeCare.com](http://www.MaryAndMikeCare.com)

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Compassionate Care is a bi-monthly newsletter produced by Home Helpers. We hope you found this edition to be informative and helpful.

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