

BAI BEACON

*The Newsletter from Family and Community Services
Made possible by generous donations to Banner Alzheimer's Foundation*

www.banneralz.org • 602.839.6900 • October 2015 • Volume 8, Number 10

The Role of First Responders and Dementia

Nearly every time you engage a first responder it is because something unexpected has happened. Whether calling police, fire, or EMTs, something out of our control has occurred and we need help beyond what we are capable of giving. With this attitude, we try to avoid contact with first responders unless absolutely necessary. First responders are public servants, but are often an under recognized and underutilized resource in the care team. They encounter people with dementia in a variety of ways through the initiation of friends and family, or by happenstance. Regardless of the how, the *why* is important to consider because, as with most things with dementia, forethought can prevent an escalation or out of control situation. Below are some of the most common scenarios in which first responders can be helpful.

Driving

Even in the early stages of dementia, driving can become dangerous. Beyond memory changes, dementia will affect the person's depth perception, reaction time, the ability to interpret information, and increase the likelihood of getting lost - in even familiar surroundings. This is why driving should be cautiously and conservatively evaluated. While we are always concerned about the safety of our person, driving brings in the added concern of the potential dangers to others on the road.

Families and other concerned friends need to start the conversation about driving early in the illness as the person may be able to be an active participant in the conversation. Ideally, he/she will decide to discontinue driving. However, the ideal is not necessarily the norm

and taking the keys and vehicle away or making it inoperable becomes the only option for some families.

First responders can help in the risky driving arena in a few ways. One option to consider, if you have direct knowledge of a person's medical status that would affect his or her ability to operate a motor vehicle safely, you should complete a Driver Condition / Behavior Report with the Arizona Department of Motor Vehicles Medical Review Program. Please note that once they receive the form, their only contact will be with the driver and you will not be notified of any outcome.

Information on the Medical Review program:
<http://www.azdot.gov/mvd/driver-services/MedicalReview>

Driver Condition/Behavior Report form to fill out:
<http://www.azdot.gov/docs/default-source/mvd-forms-pubs/96-0469.pdf?sfvrsn=0>

A law enforcement Officer can also send a Re-Examination Request to Motor Vehicle Division (MVD) asking that the person be brought in and complete a driving test. Law enforcement typically has to view the person driving and witness their poor driving habits prior to submitting the form.

A physician, registered nurse practitioner or psychologist may also report a patient to MVD who "has a medical or psychological condition that, in his or her opinion, could significantly impair the person's ability to safely operate a motor vehicle". The Physician Examination Report form must include the name, address and date of birth of the patient. The medical professional submitting the report in good faith is immune from civil or criminal liability for making the report. As a family member, you can ask your medical provider to assist you with this process if they are unfamiliar.

Our Mission

To end Alzheimer's disease without losing a generation, to set a new standard of care for patients and their families, and to forge a model of collaboration in biomedical research.

Firearms

Memory, thinking, and judgment as well as physical and behavioral competence issues related to a person's safe operation of a motor vehicle apply to firearms as well. The symptoms of persons with dementia such as memory loss, confusion, personality changes and anxiety affect their ability to safely own and operate a firearm. Gun availability can pose a particular risk to care partners as families typically have limited legal means to remove firearms from their family members. If there is a firearm in your home it is best to:

- Keep it in a locked cabinet (one that does not have glass)
- Store it unloaded
- Install trigger guards on all firearms to prevent them from being used
- Keep all ammunition in a locked fireproof safe separate from the firearm or better yet, rid of all ammunition
- Keep keys for the trigger guards, gun cabinet and ammunition hidden from the person with dementia
- Get rid of the firearms; store them at a neighbor's house, sell them, or take them to the police to be destroyed. Many local law enforcement agencies will accept firearms for disposal. Call the agency and an Officer will respond to take possession of the firearm. You can also bring them to your closest police station BUT leave the firearm in your vehicle and have an Officer meet you at your vehicle to take possession of the firearm.

Wandering

A person with dementia can have disorientation to not only time, but place. They can also become fixated on getting to a certain location, or become lost in familiar settings which can lead to a very dangerous consequence of dementia- wandering. The best safeguards are, once again, prevention. However, even with every safety measure in place, a person with dementia can still become lost. People with dementia can wander on foot, by driving, or using public transportation. With that in mind, every second counts. First responders recommend contacting them as soon as you notice your person is missing. With missing person calls, typically, responders want to wait 24 hours before a search begins. However, someone with dementia has specific safety concerns. Be sure to state this diagnosis when calling 9-1-1. In addition, Arizona has passed the Silver Alert system which, when certain criteria are met, enables responders to use a broader alert system to try to locate this person as soon as possible.

Banner Alzheimer's Institute offers an Information Card that can be filled out in advance which contains detailed pertinent information about the person. By presenting

this card to first responders when your person has wandered, it can save precious moments and ensure this information is transmitted to the appropriate parties. To obtain your copy of the BAI Information Card, contact: baiinfo@bannerhealth.com

The Mesa Police Department also offers the Adult ID Kit that records identifying and pertinent information about a person who may wander. Having this Kit completed in advance makes the information readily available to law enforcement to expedite their search and rescue efforts. The Adult ID Kit can be obtained at any one of the four Mesa Police Stations or online at: www.mesaaz.gov/police.

In addition the Mesa Police Department has partnered with the Arizona Crime Prevention Association and designed a "Silver Directory" section in the "Be on the Lookout" website. This confidential directory can be viewed only by the registrant and law enforcement. It contains information on persons with impairments who are known to, or are at risk to wander. This information is available to all Arizona law enforcement agencies. Visit www.bolocop.org for information and to register your loved one.

Finally, the Alzheimer's Association offers a Medic Alert-Safe Return (MA-SR) bracelet. This bracelet or pendent is worn by the person with dementia in case they wander, and there are multiple facets to this program. First, if the individual is found, first responders know this is a person with dementia and can reunite them with their caregiver. Second, a caregiver can alert MA-SR if their person wanders, which activates a nationwide community support network to assist in finding your person. Many times scholarships are available to help with the cost of the bracelet. For more information, visit www.alz.org or call the Alzheimer's Association 24/7 Helpline at 800.272.3900.

Shoplifting

Here is a common scenario: Mary and John were shopping at a local store one afternoon when, unbeknownst to Mary, John took a candy bar from a shelf. As they exited the store, they were stopped by a loss prevention officer who had observed John taking the candy bar.

Law enforcement may receive a call of a shoplifting by a person with dementia such as in this story. The person with Alzheimer's may not understand or remember that merchandise must be paid for. He or she may casually walk out of the store without paying — unaware of any wrongdoing. Caregivers can work with the store managers. We suggest explaining the situation to management so they can respond in an accommodating manner. Perhaps they can snap a photo and keep it on file in case it happens again or you can work something out with management whereby you pay for the item

discretely. Not all store staff will be knowledgeable about dementia and the shoplifting connection. Thus, they may handle the situation as they would any other shoplifting incident. If this happens to you don't hesitate to contact the store management, or enlist the assistance of the local Alzheimer's Association to address the situation in order to train the store staff. It would also be helpful for you to carry courtesy cards provided by Banner Alzheimer's Institute that reads "My companion has a medical condition that affects memory and thinking. Your patience is appreciated." Or have your loved one carry a wallet-size card that states that he or she is memory-impaired. This may prevent the person with Alzheimer's disease from feeling embarrassed.

Preparedness is so important for caregivers because in the midst of a traumatic event it is difficult to gather the information necessary to address the issue. It is better to have a plan in place that can assist the caregiver and first responders. Remember, first responders are here to help you and the person with dementia.

To learn more about this topic, be sure to join our Dementia Dialogue on Wednesday, October 21 from 12N to 1PM MST when Karen Stegenga, Crime Prevention Officer with the Mesa Police Department joins the discussion. To register, call 623-832-3248 or visit www.banneralz.org/dementialogues.

Ask The Expert

Family and Community Services Team

Dear Family and Community Services Team,

Last month's Beacon was so enlightening, and helped me understand that even though I feel like I am in a constant learning curve, I have actually learned a lot caring for my wife for the past five years. If you'll allow me, I would like to share some of my "caregiver wisdom" with your readers in hopes that someone else can be spared the challenge of figuring this out the hard way.

I am the primary caregiver for my wife and have assumed all of the household duties, including grocery shopping. A couple years ago, my wife developed "sticky fingers." We were walking through the grocery store one day when she began to "help herself" to goodies from the bakery. Then she would grab a candy bar at the checkout and stick it in her purse. Needless to say, I was shocked and so embarrassed.

My first reaction was to scold her, and try to reason with her. You don't have to be a caregiver of someone with dementia for long to know that strategy will never work. I knew I had to adapt how I responded and began thinking creatively to go to where she is. Now we always begin shopping by the bakery and I allow her to pick out a couple of cookies or a donut to eat while we shop. As we enter the checkout line, I ask her what candy she would like to take home with her today. This way I keep the situation under control while also keeping my wife contented. I have also talked with the grocery store manager about my wife so that he knows that I will settle the bill should we get out of the store with something that has not been paid for.

I hope that by sharing this story, other families caring for someone like my wife, won't create unneeded embarrassment for the person...

*Signed,
Paul*

Dear Paul,

Thanks for sharing your wisdom with us and our readers. We invite others to share their stories with us so that we can all continue to learn. Please submit your stories by writing baiinfo@bannerhealth.com. We look forward to hearing from you!

Have a Question?

To submit your question for future consideration email us at: baiinfo@bannerhealth.com

Clinical Trials Announcement

Having memory problems? Trouble thinking clearly?

If this sounds like you, or someone you know, please consider the EMERGE Study. The EMERGE Study is a global study assessing the efficacy and safety of an investigational medication, to determine whether it can slow the progression of symptoms in early Alzheimer's disease. There is an important medical and scientific need to research therapies that could delay memory loss and the progression of disability in Alzheimer's disease because there are currently no approved treatments that slow the course of the condition.

You may be able to take part in the EMERGE Study if you:

- are 50–85 years of age
- are experiencing symptoms that might be related to early Alzheimer's disease, such as problems with memory or thinking clearly.

You will need a study partner – someone who is close to you, such as a family member or close friend – to attend certain study visits with you and provide information on your health and well-being.

If eligible, all study medication, examinations, and medical care related to the study will be provided at no cost to you. Reasonable compensation for time and travel may be provided.

If you, or someone you know, would like more information about taking part in the EMERGE Study, and to help us to further research and advance a potential treatment option for early Alzheimer's disease, please call 602-839-6500 and talk with a BAI/BSHRI Clinical Trials Representative.



Did you know a charitable gift through Banner Alzheimer's Foundation will serve as an investment in the health and wellness of our community and others around the world? To make a gift and join our community of friends, call 602-747-GIVE (4483) or visit www.banneralz.org/waystogive.

October 2015 Program Schedule CAREGIVER EDUCATION PROGRAMS

PHOENIX

Planning Ahead Class for Caregivers

Learn how to plan for legal, financial and medical decisions for someone with Alzheimer's disease/related dementia.

Tuesday, October 13; 10:00 a.m. - noon
Banner Alzheimer's Institute
901 E. Willetta Street, Phoenix
Free but registration is required.
To register, call (602) 839-6850

COMPASS: Directions for Caregivers after the Dementia Diagnosis

Learn the basics of Alzheimer's disease/related dementia and how to implement 8 practical strategies to avoid many of the common problems that arise.

Tuesday, October 27; 10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.
Banner Alzheimer's Institute
901 E. Willetta Street, Phoenix
Free but registration is required.
To register, call (602) 839-6850

MESA

GPS Lecture for Caregiving - Problem Behaviors: Solutions that Work

Learn about the most common types of behavior problems in dementia and a variety of solutions to minimize them.

Friday, October 9; 10:30 a.m. - noon
Arizona Museum of Natural History
53 N. MacDonald, Mesa
Free but registration is required.
To register, call (602) 230-CARE (2273)

Keeping the Person with Dementia Occupied

Learn how to adapt activities as the disease progresses and how to find a variety of stimulating and engaging activities that work in order for the person to have fun and feel success.

Tuesday October 20; 10:00 a.m. - noon
Mesa Library Red Mountain Branch
635 N. Power Road, Mesa
Free but registration is required.
To register, call (602) 839-6850

Please turn over for more classes →



These programs are made possible by the generous support of the Banner Alzheimer's Foundation.

October 2015 Program Schedule CAREGIVER EDUCATION PROGRAMS

SUN CITY

Transition of Care

Transitioning from home to a residential care setting can be challenging for caregivers and the person with Alzheimer's or Parkinson's disease. This 2 hour class will discuss the importance of planning and considerations to make in a transitioning into long term-care.

*Friday, October 2; 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Banner Sun Health Research Institute
10515 W. Santa Fe Drive, Sun City
Free but registration is required.
To register, call (623) 832-3248*

BSHRI Community Lecture Series

Topic: The Benefits of Life Enrichment Programs.

*Friday, October 30; 2:00 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.
Banner Sun Health Research Institute
10515 W. Santa Fe Drive, Sun City
Free but registration is required.
To register, call (623) 832-3248*

To learn about upcoming education and support programs dates at:

- Banner Alzheimer's Institute, visit www.banneralz.org and click on "Events Calendar" icon or call Deidra Colvin, Events Coordinator at 602-839-6850
- Banner Sun Health Research Institute, visit www.bannershri.org and click on "Events and Education" or call Veronica Flores, Events Coordinator at 623-832-3248

WEBINAR/TELECONFERENCE

Dementia Dialogue Webinars

Topic: First Responders and Persons with Dementia.
*Wednesday, October 21; 12:00pm-1:00pm AZ Time
Please register for this webinar at www.banneralz.org/dementiadialogues or call 623.832.3248.*

