



**NEWS COLUMN – Area Agency on Aging District 7, Inc.**

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**Caregiver Month Observed in November**

**Nina R. Keller, Executive Director, Area Agency on Aging District 7  
November 2020 Monthly Column**

National Family Caregiver Month is celebrated each year in November and is a time to recognize and honor family caregivers across the country. It offers an opportunity to raise awareness of caregiving issues, educate communities, and increase support for caregivers.

Along with the Administration for Community Living and the Caregiver Action Network, we address the new realities family caregivers face with their loved ones during these uncertain times as we navigate through the current pandemic.

Family caregivers manage health emergencies, juggle priorities, and suffer isolation - and all of that was before COVID-19. The pandemic brings even more challenges as family caregivers handle “Caregiving in Crisis”. With the stress and anxiety around COVID-19, it is important that caregivers are taking care of themselves. Read over these “10 Tips for Family Caregivers” from the Caregiver Action Network:



1. Seek support from other caregivers. You are not alone!
2. Take care of your own health so that you can be strong enough to take care of your loved one.
3. Accept offers of help and suggest specific things people can do to help you.
4. Learn how to communicate effectively with doctors.
5. Caregiving is hard work, so take respite breaks often.
6. Watch out for signs of depression and don't delay getting professional help when you need it.
7. Be open to new technologies that can help you care for your loved one.
8. Organize medical information so it's up to date and easy to find.
9. Make sure legal documents are in order.
10. Give yourself credit for doing the best you can in one of the toughest jobs there is.

The Area Agency on Aging District 7 (AAA7) would like to thank all family caregivers for the selfless acts you do each day. We encourage you to make caregiving for yourself a priority as a caregiver. Join us for one of our monthly Telephone Caregiver Support Groups for further help and assistance and a time to share and gain support from other caregivers. Calls take place the third Thursday of every month from 1:30 pm until 2:30 pm. In addition, the AAA7 is also looking to offer its “Powerful Tools for Caregivers” class online. The class provides support for caregivers, information about community resources, ideas to relieve stress, and ways to improve communication with healthcare providers. To register or learn more about either opportunity, please call 1-800-582-7277 or e-mail [info@aaa7.org](mailto:info@aaa7.org).

The AAA7 provides help to caregivers through the Caregiver Support Program, which is designed to assist caregivers with finding answers about how their caregiving role impacts their life and where to find resources and services to decrease caregiver stress. Caregivers may be caring for an older adult, their adult child with a disability, or the caregiver may be a grandparent caring for their grandchildren or non-relative child. Services include assessments, training, information and assistance, supplemental services, respite, as well as counseling. Currently, the AAA7 has some extra assistance available to assist caregivers with essential needs and some financial assistance during the current time. For more information about the Caregiver Support Program through the Area Agency on Aging District 7 or to find out if you are eligible for extra assistance, please call 1-800-582-7277.