

Western Pennsylvania

# Guide to Good Health

*Your Source for Health Living*  
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## **New Initiative to Support Caregivers Launches in Allegheny County**

The Jewish Healthcare Foundation (JHF) is launching a new initiative, the Caregiver Champions Program. The program is designed to support and empower the many caregivers of frail, older adults in Allegheny County by helping them to better care for themselves, reduce stress and gain access to important caregiving information and resources.

“There has been a dramatic shift in policy, particularly in Pennsylvania, from institutional care for frail elders to new programming that enables adults to remain in their homes as long as possible,” said Karen Wolk Feinstein, Ph.D., president and CEO of JHF. “Yet little attention has been paid to the informal caregivers who now shoulder the physical, mental and financial demands of keeping their loved-ones independent.” Local caregivers can participate in the program two ways.

The first way to get involved is by becoming a Caregiver Champion. The Foundation is currently recruiting experienced family and informal caregivers. Selected candidates will take part in a facilitator training that will empower them to become a resource of information and support within their own communities.

The second way to get involved is by attending Caregiver Salons. Caregiver Salons are free, two-hour sessions that provide informal learning in a casual setting. Attendees will learn about several topics including caregiver burnout, asking for help, accessing local tools and resources and advocating for loved ones. Respite services are available, during the times that Salons are held, at no cost to you while you attend.

“This initiative will create a new generation of caregivers,” said Feinstein. “Right now many caregivers don’t have easy access to the tools, resources and skills needed to care for their older loved ones. We’re going to connect the missing dots so that these people can not only provide better care for their loved ones, they can also improve the quality of their own lives.”

To become a Caregiver Champion, or to learn more about upcoming Caregiver Salons, contact Beth Polonchak at (412) 594-2569 or Pam Vingle at (412) 594-2583.