



VOLUME 2, ISSUE 5

## SOCIAL SERVICES CORNER MAY 2007

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### ISSUE 5 ARTICLES:

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### COPING WITH ALLERGIES

Spring is upon us, and with that comes a whole host of seasonal allergies. According to the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology, more than 20% of the U.S. population suffers from seasonal allergies, rhinitis or hay fever. Pollen season generally extends from February or March through October.

Doctors say that individuals who suffer from allergies are better off avoiding triggers and using medications to manage their symptoms. In other words, the earlier allergy sufferers begin tackling their problem, the better. Also, people who don't treat their allergies can end up with infections in their sinuses, throat or ears.

The two most common types of allergy medications are antihistamines and decongestants. If you can't take decongestants due to heart or thyroid problems, ask your physician about trying anti-leukotriene, a medication that helps fight allergic inflammation. For severe allergy sufferers who don't find much relief from medications, allergy vaccination is recommended.

Finally, if you happen to be outside during high pollen counts, it is suggested that once indoors you take off your shoes, change your clothing, and consider washing your hair. Hair is considered a magnet for airborne pollen spores.

### STOPPING TELEMARKETERS

You can now reclaim quieter dinner hours and greatly reduce telemarketing calls to your home and cell phone. The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) established the National Do Not Call Registry. By registering for the FTC's list, the bulk of telemarketers are barred from calling you. Once registered, calls will stop within 31 days. **Sign up free of charge by calling the National Do Not Call Registry at (888) 383-1222.**

Questions or  
comments call  
Megan Olman, MA,  
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(888) 994-3863,  
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## HELP WITH YOUR UTILITY BILLS

As summer approaches, it is very important to stay cool. However, operating an air conditioner all season can be expensive. That's why it is important to know that several programs exist that can assist you with your energy bill. You may be able to find help from the organizations and programs below.

- ***The Low-Income Energy Assistance Program*** is a federally funded program to help eligible low-income homeowners and renters meet their heating and cooling needs. **For state-specific information, call (866) 674-6327 or visit [www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/liheap](http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/liheap).**
- ***The National Council on the Aging*** identifies assistance programs for older Americans through their online Benefits Checkup site. **For more information, call (202) 479-1200 or visit [www.benefitscheckup.org](http://www.benefitscheckup.org).**
- ***National Energy Assistance Referral*** provides information on where to apply for low-income energy assistance in your area. **For more information, call toll-free at (866) 674-6327.**

## WARNINGS OF RARE REACTIONS TO SLEEPING MEDICINE

The FDA warns that sleeping pills prescribed to millions of people may sometimes cause sleep driving and other rare behaviors. Sleep driving is a complex version of sleepwalking – getting up in the middle of the night and going for a drive, with no memory of it.

Physicians in the U.S. wrote more than 57 million prescriptions for insomnia in 2006. Americans spent three billion dollars last year just on Ambien and Lunesta, the two most advertised drugs in the nation. To lower your risk of side effects, the FDA advises patients to NEVER take a prescription insomnia drug with alcohol or another sedative, or take higher than recommended doses. Remember to speak with your physician or pharmacist about any possible prescription side effects.

## QUOTE OF THE MONTH

***“The most wasted of all days is one without laughter.”***

— e.e. Cummings (1874 – 1962)

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