



**motion picture  
pioneers  
assistance  
fund**

# SOCIAL SERVICES CORNER

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## SAFETY FOR SENIORS WHO WANDER

**Question: I read about a new California law that can issue an alert for missing seniors. Why not just file a missing persons report?**

**Answer:** Good question. An adult is presumed to be competent, and a senior is still an adult. However, people over age 65 are considered a vulnerable population, meaning they may have special needs and are eligible for special protections under the law. That is the philosophy behind California's SB1047, a new law that went into effect January 1, 2013.

SB1047 allows the California Highway Patrol to issue a Silver Alert when a person over age 65 is reported missing, so that law enforcement agencies can work together to locate seniors who may be lost or disoriented. Why the Highway Patrol? These seniors may be driving, may be passengers, or may be walking on roads or highways trying to find their way to safety.

When older adults have dementia (a long-term condition) or are disoriented (a short-term condition), they may be prone to wander. In senior care, professionals define wandering as "the need to walk about

or leave the home." Wandering takes many forms, such as pacing, looking for something, claiming the need to go somewhere or just meandering off. It takes only a minute for a confused senior to wander away from safety and into danger.

The Alzheimer's Association and MedicAlert Foundation have created a very successful program called Safe Return. People who wander wear a bracelet or necklace and can carry a wallet card that alerts emergency responders to their situation. It is very discreet, but it carries a wealth of information, such as address, next of kin and medical conditions. Emergency responders have been trained on how to safely return these people home.

The Alzheimer's Association has information on how to create a home safety plan for someone who wanders and information on how to enroll in Safe Return at [www.alz.org](http://www.alz.org) or you may call (800) 272-3900.

Source: "Wandering & Dementia," <http://alzonline.php.ufl.edu/en/reading/wandering.php>; University of Florida College of Public Health & Health Professions.

## JOKE OF THE MONTH

**"God grant me the senility to forget the people I never liked, the good fortune to run into the ones I do, and the eyesight to tell the difference."**

**— A *Prairie Home Companion* Pretty Good Joke Book**

Laughter is known to boost the immune system, lower blood pressure, burn calories and release pleasure-inducing chemicals in the brain.

Go Green!

Receive Social Services Corner by email.

Call (888) 994-3863, ext. 2370, or email [info@wrmail.org](mailto:info@wrmail.org).

**Do you or does someone you know need our assistance? Call toll-free (888) 994-3863 or visit [www.wrpioneers.org](http://www.wrpioneers.org) to find out more about our assistance programs.**



The Motion Picture Pioneers Assistance Fund is a program of the Will Rogers Motion Picture Pioneers Foundation.



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## FEBRUARY IS NATIONAL WISE HEALTH CARE CONSUMER MONTH



We have written here often about how important it is for you to take an active role in your health at any age. This includes knowing your rights as a patient, how

to get what you need from a doctor's appointment, how to save money on prescriptions and even how to appeal a declined Medicare service. We are taking this opportunity during Wise Health Care Consumer Month to review a few basics.

America's health care system is the only one among developed nations that has strong commercial elements. Notice how many ads there are for medications, insurance plans and medical supplies! Providers are fighting for your business because they know you have options. To be a wise health care consumer, you need to make informed choices.

Choose wellness. Wellness is your overall plan to stay healthy and to manage chronic conditions. The American Institute for Preventive Medicine publishes

Sources: The American Institute for Preventive Medicine has many articles and brochures at [www.healthylife.com](http://www.healthylife.com). Read more at [www.aipm.net/wise/](http://www.aipm.net/wise/).

educational products aimed at helping people make informed choices about diet, smoking, exercise and stress, all of which help keep health problems at bay. The main argument behind wellness is that much of our health maintenance is within our control.

For problems we cannot prevent or treat on our own, a consumer needs to know where to get information. Many insurance companies want you to work through their websites, which may be impersonal and limited. Insist on a phone number from insurance providers, medical services, pharmacies, etc. Always speak to a live person. Record the date and time of your calls and with whom you spoke. Health information belongs to the patient, not just the provider. This is one of your rights!

Bills may be negotiable. Don't be afraid to ask about discounts or deals. The commercial side of health care works in your favor. Competition should yield pricing options. Be persistent! Remember, Medicare covers the cost of a second opinion. Trust your instincts, and be your own personal shopper for health!

## NEW ADDITIONS TO THE MPPAF'S NATIONAL RESOURCE DIRECTORY

### [www.chooseworkttw.net](http://www.chooseworkttw.net)

Sponsored by the Social Security Administration, this website provides information about its Ticket to Work program. Every disabled person ages 18 through 64 who receives Social Security Disability Insurance or Supplemental Security Income is eligible to receive free employment services, vocational rehabilitation services or other support services through the Ticket to Work program.

### [www.disability.gov](http://www.disability.gov)

This is the federal government's website for disability programs and services nationwide. It provides links to other federal, state or local government agencies, academic institutions and nonprofit organizations.



### QUOTE OF THE MONTH

“You would be surprised what there is to see in this great country within 200 miles of where any of us live. I don't care what state or what town.”

—Will Rogers

To view our entire National Resource Directory, please visit [www.wrpioneers.org](http://www.wrpioneers.org).