

### A Walk in the Park



Bright yellow t-shirts, baseball caps, and walking canes speckled the slope leading to the Massachusetts State House on September 26, attracting a crowd of curious onlookers. It's not every day that a large group of seniors are seen walking through the Boston Common.

Late last month, Commonwealth Care Alliance hosted its first "Walking Club" event for members. The event was an off-shoot of various Health Education and Caregiver Training programs that engage seniors living with chronic diseases, and reinforces the organization's commitment to member-centered care and community involvement.

Around 30 Commonwealth Care Alliance members and caregivers, primarily from the Metro Boston

area, came not only to exercise but to socialize with other members and Commonwealth Care Alliance staff.

One member looked at his pedometer after the walk and noted he had walked well over 3,500 steps. He proudly joked, "I bet this is the most I have walked in 10 years!"

Program members weren't the only ones who benefited from the walk around Boston Common. Twenty-one of Commonwealth Care Alliance's employees gained just as much from the meet-and-greet with the friendly seniors.

"I left with two new grandmothers!" mused Commonwealth Care Alliance intern Abby Animashaun. "It was incredible to meet the people who are the reason why Commonwealth

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Watch out for mail from Commonwealth Care Alliance. These important member materials were sent to you by the start of October:

- Summary of Benefits 2013
- Annual Notice of Change (ANOC) 2013
- Formulary (List of Drugs) 2013
- Low Income Subsidy Rider 2013
- Multi language insert

## Urinary Incontinence

Sarah loves to spend time with her friends talking about grandchildren and visiting with neighbors. But lately she's been having a big problem that keeps her from enjoying life. Because she can't get to the bathroom in time, she's starting to wet her pants. Sarah doesn't know what's happening, but the problem keeps her at home.

Sarah may have a problem with bladder control called urinary incontinence. While it may happen to anyone, urinary incontinence is more common in older people. Women are more likely than men to have incontinence. If this problem is happening to you, there is help. Incontinence can often be cured or controlled. Talk to your doctor about what you can do.

### Types of Incontinence

- **Stress incontinence** happens when urine leaks as pressure is put on the bladder, for example, during exercise, coughing, sneezing, or laughing.
- **Urge incontinence** happens when people have a sudden need to urinate and aren't able to hold their urine long enough to get to the toilet in time. It is often, but not only, a problem for people who have diabetes, Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, multiple sclerosis, or stroke.
- **Overflow incontinence** happens when small amounts of urine leak from a bladder that is always full. A man can have trouble emptying his bladder if an enlarged prostate is blocking the urethra. Diabetes and spinal cord injury can also cause this type of incontinence.
- **Functional incontinence** happens in many older people who have normal bladder control. They just have a problem getting to the toilet because of arthritis or other disorders that make it hard to move quickly.

### Treatment

- **Pelvic muscle exercises** (also known as Kegel exercises) work the muscles that you use to stop urinating. Making these muscles stronger helps you hold urine in your bladder longer.
- **Biofeedback** uses sensors to make you aware of signals from your body. This may help you regain control over the muscles in your bladder and urethra. Biofeedback can be helpful when learning pelvic muscle exercises.
- **Timed voiding** may help you control your bladder. In timed voiding, you urinate on a set schedule, for example, every hour. You can slowly extend the time between bathroom trips. When timed voiding is combined with biofeedback and pelvic muscle exercises, you may find it easier to control urge and overflow incontinence.
- **Lifestyle changes** that may help with incontinence include losing weight, quitting smoking, avoiding alcohol, drinking less caffeine, preventing constipation, and not lifting heavy objects.

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### Pumpkin-Apple Quick Oatmeal

- 1 1/3 cups water
- 2/3 cup apple juice or apple cider
- 1/2 cup canned pumpkin
- 1/3 cup chopped dried apples
- 1 1/4 cups quick-cooking rolled oats
- 1 tablespoon packed brown sugar or brown sugar substitute
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1/2 cup vanilla fat-free yogurt
- Ground cinnamon (optional)

1. In a medium saucepan, combine water, apple juice, pumpkin, and dried apples. Bring to boil. In a small bowl, combine oats, brown sugar, cinnamon, and nutmeg; stir into boiling water mixture. Cook for 1 minute, stirring occasionally.
2. Divide hot oatmeal among four serving bowls. Top each serving with a spoonful of yogurt and, if desired, garnish with additional cinnamon. Makes 4 servings (3/4 cup oatmeal and 2 tablespoons yogurt each)

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## Urinary Incontinence *Continued from previous page.*

### Management

- Some drugs can help the bladder empty more fully during urination. Other drugs tighten muscles and can lessen leakage. Talk with your doctor about the benefits and side effects of using these medicines.
- Special devices for both men and women could help control incontinence.
- Surgery can sometimes improve or cure incontinence if it's caused by a change in the position of the bladder or blockage due to an enlarged prostate.
- You can buy special absorbent underclothing that can be worn under everyday clothing.

**Questions?** Talk to your doctor, your nurse, or another member of your primary care team. ♦

*Source: National Institute on Aging, National Institutes of Health*

## A Walk in the Park *Continued from first page.*

Care Alliance does what it does. I would not have had the opportunity to interact with them in any other setting.”

Based on the success of the first “Walking Club” event, Commonwealth Care Alliance’s Health Education and Caregiver Training team plans to host more walking events and other activities that encourage physical and social activity in the future.

**Questions?** Call Courtney Mulroy, Department of Health Education and Caregiver Training, 1-866-610-2273 ext. 1386 ♦

**Please Note:**  
Our TTY number has  
changed to 711



## Local Member Meetings are held in your communities.

Look for your invitation in the near future. Families and caregivers are welcome!

Questions? Call Diana Zegarra at 1-866-610-2273 ext. 1247



# Are You Protected From the Flu?

Source: [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

It's flu season once again — have you protected yourself with a flu shot yet?

Feel like you've heard this information before? Why don't you test your flu season knowledge to see how much you really know!

**True or False?** Each year, flu causes illness, hospital stays, and even deaths.

True. In a typical year, the number of flu-related deaths range from 3,300 to 48,600 (average 23,600).

**True or False?** People aged 65 and older have developed immunity to the flu.

False. People aged 65 and older are at greater risk of serious complications from the flu than younger adults. This is because human immune defenses become weaker with age.

**True or False?** I could get the flu from the vaccination itself.

False. The seasonal flu shot is made from a killed or inactivated virus so it is not possible to get the flu from the shot itself.

**Questions?** Talk to your doctor, your nurse, or another member of your primary care team, or call our Member Services Team at 1-866-610-2273 ♦

Visit the Commonwealth Care Alliance web site for the latest in member information

[www.commonwealthcare.org](http://www.commonwealthcare.org)



Call our Member Services team, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

**1-866-610-2273**

To share your own recipes or stories, or if you have an idea for the newsletter, contact Nerissa J. Fry at 1-866-610-2273 ext. 1244 or e-mail [nfry@commonwealthcare.org](mailto:nfry@commonwealthcare.org)



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**Health or Wellness or  
Prevention Information**