



LeadingAge California Launches New On-Demand Course to Help Caregivers

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SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA – Delivering on the promise to advance 21st Century Leadership & Education, LeadingAge California announced today the launch of a new on-demand learning approach to protecting caregivers against burnout, titled *Oxygen for Caregivers*. “It’s inspiring” says Jeannee Parker Martin, LeadingAge California’s Chief Executive Officer, “Instead of the usual off-the-shelf advice, this course is customized to fit each person’s unique life. We’ve made it affordable and convenient for every kind of caregiver so they have access to it anywhere, anytime.”

Caregivers are the backbone of today’s health care system. It’s not sustainable without them. So what happens when they burn out? Two of California’s most innovative nonprofits are not waiting to find out. LeadingAge California and Adventures in Caring Foundation are partnering to start a statewide initiative to improve workforce well-being beginning with LeadingAge California’s nearly 700 members, who are primarily nonprofit providers of senior living and health care throughout the State, and their business partners.

Oxygen for Caregivers, as its title suggests, is designed to be a breath of fresh air for nurses, doctors, and allied health professionals, plus family caregivers and volunteers. Developed by the award-winning Adventures in Caring team in Santa Barbara, it is a breakthrough in online education—it reduces stress as you learn.

The course is the result of ten years of multidisciplinary collaboration among expert caregivers in the Santa Barbara community. They discovered a simple, evidence-based way to build the skills that enable a person to move from suffering to well-being, and applied it to the biggest challenges facing caregivers today: burnout, compassion fatigue, and vicarious trauma. Many studies describe the impact of these problems but, for those on the front lines of health care, there are few viable solutions.

“The biggest challenge we faced in building this course,” said Simon Fox, leader of the Adventures in Caring team, “Is that caregivers are intelligent, dedicated, caring people who already know the self-care they should do, but don’t do it. Giving them one more thing to do won’t help. So we built a program that shows them how to get a whole lot more out of what they are already doing.”

Thanks to the leadership of these two pioneering nonprofits, LeadingAge California and Adventures in Caring Foundation, the communities of California are coming together to produce a key innovation that protects caregivers—the very people everyone depends on most when facing an illness or injury.

For more information, please contact LeadingAge California’s Vice President of Education, Soua Vang at (916) 469-3367 or svang@leadingageca.org.

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About LeadingAge California

LeadingAge California represents nearly 700 members of housing, care and services for older adults – including affordable senior housing, life plan communities, assisted living, skilled nursing, home- and community-based care and business partners and residents. LeadingAge California spans the full continuum of care in its advocacy, educational programs and public relations helping its members serve the needs of hundreds of thousands of the state’s older adults.

About Adventures in Caring Foundation

Adventures in Caring Foundation teaches the art of communicating compassion. Since 1984 hundreds of hospitals, hospices, churches, charities and nursing schools have used their unique programs to inspire professional staffs, volunteer caregivers, students and patients. President George H. W. Bush honored them with his Point of Light Award for outstanding community service, and their video-based training program, *The Medicine of Compassion* won the International Health & Medical Media Award for the best video in patient care.

The Caregiver Crisis:

- Nurses experience on-the-job violence more than *any* other profession. (Ontario Nursing Association)
- Nursing assistants are injured on the job more often than construction workers. (U.S. Dept. of Labor’s Bureau of Labor Statistics.)
- The stress scores of palliative care workers are higher than patients who are newly diagnosed with breast cancer (Vachon, 1987).
- Almost half of doctors are burned out and a third are depressed. (Centor, Morrow, Poses 2012)
- Surgeons commit suicide at 1.5 to 3 times more often than the general population. (Shanafelt, Balch, 2011)
- Medical errors are now the third leading cause of death in the U.S. and burnout is a key factor. (BMJ: British Medical Journal, 2016)