

PARKER JEWISH INSTITUTE HOSTS SNAP CAREGIVER CONFERENCE

Parker Jewish Institute hosted the first Services Now for Adult Persons (SNAP) Caregiver Conference on November 15, 2018. Over 80 health care professionals attended the conference. The conference brought together a panel of experts who addressed the complex issues of caregiving. Paola Miceli, SNAP's president and CEO, said her goal was to provide valuable information to caregivers and the professionals who assist them. Michael N. Rosenblut, Parker President and CEO, welcomed the group of professionals. "Parker is here for everyone, between our skilled nursing facility, all our community programs, insurance with Age Well New York and transportation, we're here for you," he said.

Bernadette Josephs, LMSW, Director of SNAP's Caregiver Support Program, for an overview. "The main purpose of SNAP's program is the well-being of caregivers. Many people are not prepared for their new role as caregivers. There's a lack of support from family and friends. So, our goal is to provide support for caregivers, including counseling, support groups and respite," Josephs said.

Caolina Hoyos, LMSW, Director, Caregiver Resource Center, NYC Department for the Aging, discussed two types of caregivers, the informal family caregiver and the formal, paid caregiver. Looking at statistics for all 50 states, there were on average 34.5 million informal caregivers caring for people 50 years and older, she noted. Nationally, 60 percent of informal caregivers are female and 40 percent are male. "85 percent are caring for a relative," Hoyos added.

Robert Sabella, Parker's Marketing Outreach Associate, said Parker established the Alzheimer's Caregiver's Support Initiative through a New York State Department of Health grant. Parker's Respite Program gives relief to caregivers of those with Alzheimer's and other dementias, while getting their loved ones involved in meaningful activities to enhance quality of life, increase socialization and stay active. To apply for the program, please call (516) 586-1567.

Aside from respite and financial assistance, Galasso said caregivers need emotional support. To address that issue, she called on Michael Upston, LCSW, who directs the Community Advisory Program for the Elderly (CAPE), based at Samuel Field YM & YWHA. CAPE is a community mental health clinic in Queens serving older adults and their families. His program also gives clinical training to SNAP Social Work staff. Upston talked about caregiving through the lens of mental health. "I was working with a colleague with a homebound client who scored high in significant depression. My colleague connected his client to the Virtual Senior Center, and with this one intervention, his depression level was lowered from 20 percent to 3 or 4 percent," Upston said.