



*Sedgwick County...
working for you*

SEDGWICK COUNTY, KANSAS
COMMUNICATIONS

NEWS

CONTACT: SEDGWICK COUNTY COMMUNICATIONS 316-660-9370 FAX: 316-383-7509

December 15, 2004

Contact: Kristi Zukovich
316-660-9370

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

HOLIDAY SEASON A PERFECT TIME TO PREPARE A PLAN TO STAY "IN TOUCH" WITH OLDER RELATIVES DURING A CRISIS

(Sedgwick County, Kansas) – Sedgwick County Department on Aging and Central Plains Area Agency on Aging in cooperation with the Administration on Aging encourage families to spend some holiday time mapping out a plan that will keep their older relatives safe when disaster and personal crisis strikes.

Administration on Aging's Eldercare Locator Program has recently released an action plan "IN TOUCH, " to help families establish a strategy to assist older relatives in emergency situations. "IN TOUCH" was developed to assist families to initiate a discussion about ways to help older relatives should an emergency occur. Disasters and emergency situations such as falls or sudden change in health condition can strike quickly and without warning, requiring immediate attention to the situation or evacuation prior to a crisis situation, including age-related characteristics, such as delayed response time or reduced ability to see or hear. Physical or mental impairments also can be barriers to quick response, as can chronic health problems, limited finances, and language and cultural differences. Families can cope with emergencies by preparing in advance for the worst-case scenarios.

-more-

The Sedgwick County Department on Aging and the Central Plains Area Agency on Aging encourage families to follow these suggestions:

- Identify potential emergency situations and disasters that could occur in your older family member's home and community.
- Note what community resources are available that might assist your efforts in establishing your "IN TOUCH" plan.
- Talk about individual circumstances that are concerns that are concerns for you and your older loved ones.
- Outline your "IN TOUCH" plan in writing and share it with everyone involved.

"It is always important to make sure you are prepared for a crisis situation whether it is a disaster related or an unexpected event," said Sedgwick County Commission Chairman Tom Winters. "Being prepared includes keeping the lines of communication between family members open."

For a copy of the "IN TOUCH" plan or for information on services available to older adults and caregivers call the Sedgwick County Department on Aging/Central Plains Area Agency on Aging at 660-5120.

-end-