

## **Backpacks provide support for family caregivers**

For many, caring for a loved one who is elderly or dependent on assistance can often feel overwhelming. To support nonprofessional, family caregivers, the Department of Human Services (DHS) Area Agency on Aging (AAA) Caregiver Resource Committee, in partnership with other local agencies, developed a caregiver backpack filled with brochures, books, DVDs, and other educational materials designed to inform on caregiver issues, provide easy-to-use tips, and connect caregivers to community resources.

“Family caregivers are busy people who are constantly seeking a balance between their lives and the needs of an ill or aging loved one. Finding time to learn more about caregiving topics or seek local supports can sometimes prove difficult,” said Brenda Slagle, caregiver support program coordinator at the AAA. “These backpacks allow family caregivers to learn about topics relevant to their situation at a self-guided pace.”

The backpacks are available for check-out at five local libraries: Cooper-Siegel, Crafton, Western Allegheny Community, Avalon Public, and Northland Public. Caregivers may borrow the bag for three weeks – and renew, if desired – as they would any other library material. While the backpacks are currently stored at these five locations, they may be requested by and shipped to any member library of the Allegheny County Library Association. In the near future, there will be caregiver backpacks in circulation at each of Allegheny County’s libraries and bookmobiles.

To learn more about the caregiver backpacks, and other family caregiver services at AAA, please visit <http://alleghenycounty.us/Human-Services/News-Events/Engagement/Caregiver-Support-Programs.aspx> or contact Brenda Slagle: Brenda.Slagle@alleghenycounty.us, 412-350-4996.