



Sun 18 Mar 2012

Another great YASS meeting. Nice to see all who turned out!

NEW FACES

- Elizabeth Sodbinow
- Viviane Lopuch

Good to see you, folks, and we hope you can come again. Thank you for sharing your story with us, Elizabeth, and congratulations on your long and difficult recovery!

LIZ MERCER, WA STATE INSURANCE COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

Liz Mercer gave us a good overview of the kind of help her office can provide, and she passed out a folder "Health Insurance Options for People With Disabilities". This is an excellent guide which you can obtain through the contact information below.

- ◆ The insurance commissioner's office can help guide you through the Medicare and state insurance maze. Liz and a mostly volunteer group of staffers can provide you with one-on-one guidance.
- ◆ Right now not everyone can get health care insurance, depending on pre-existing conditions and other circumstances. This will be fixed by the federal Affordable Health Care Act ("Obamacare"), but not until 2014. Meanwhile, the commissioner's office can help you find affordable alternatives if they exist.
- ◆ The commissioner's office can also help you contest a wrong or questionable hospital or doctor bill.
- ◆ AARP is one option for dental coverage, as is the UW School of Dentistry which provides a sliding fee scale.

Liz and her staff are energetic and knowledgeable, and happy to answer your questions and help. Contact Liz directly at 206-515-9929 or LizM@oic.wa.gov. Thank you, Liz!

APHASIA REGISTRY AND REPOSITORY

Rebecca Hunting-Pompon from the UW Speech and Hearing Clinic told us about a new registry and database for aphasics. It will contain contact information so the UW can inform you about research study opportunities, and also data from test sessions for future aphasia research. Contact the aphasia lab at 206-685-2140 or rhpompon@u.washington.edu.

DRAMATIC REHAB IMPROVEMENT

Mike Gordon reports dramatic improvement from a new rehab research study now underway at Harborview hospital. After *one week* of this new rehab method, two hours a day, he is now able to put on and take off his jacket using both arms and bring a cup to his mouth and drink with his affected arm. He gave us an amazing demonstration. Mike's stroke was many years ago, and this ability is brand new. Remarkable and exciting! The study is being coordinated by Cecille Corsilles-Sy at the UW. She may be contacted at cecesy@u.washington.edu or 206-744-8320.

3rd ANNUAL APHASIA DAY

Saturday June 30, from 9:00 to 3:00 at the Lake City Community Center, the UW Dept. of Speech and Hearing Sciences will present their 3rd annual Aphasia Retreat for aphasics, caregivers, and families. Highlights include research updates, improving quality of life after stroke, vendors and exhibits, testimonials, sessions for survivors and caregivers, refreshments and lunch. Don't miss it! Contact shclinic@uw.edu or 206-543-5440 for more information or to register.

PARKINSON'S DRUG MAY HELP HEAL BRAIN INJURY

Research has shown modest improvements in brain function after traumatic brain injury with a common drug used for Parkinson's patients: amantadine hydrochloride. Check with your doctor to find out more.

HIGH TECH HELP

Mike Purdy and Don McDaniel showed us their Kindle Fire and Apple iPads, respectively, and some of the benefits they have for the disabled. Don has an app for his iPad called Proloquo2go which allows him to communicate and converse using a synthesized voice which speaks what he has written about himself. Amazing and very cool! Mike's Kindle is a reading device which also has speech synthesis and Web access too. The iPad and aphasia app run about \$800, not for the faint of heart, and the Kindle is about \$200.

VOLUNTEERS AVAILABLE

Gary Ruen was a plumber, and has offered his services free to anyone in the group who needs plumbing help. Likewise, Mike d'Ambra has offered his services as "ErrandMan" (his term) to do errands for stroke survivors such as shopping, pick ups, drop offs, even light cooking (he was a personal chef). Anyone that needs "stuff" done and just can't do it, Mike can, and all he asks is gas money. Gary and Mike show the kind of heart and character that make me proud to be a member of this group!

HOW ABOUT IT?

So how about setting up a "volunteer bank" in our group, to follow Gary and Mike's example and connect people who need help with those who can give it? Think about this for next meeting and let's talk about how to make this happen.

AUGUST PICNIC HOSTS?

If you can host the YASS August picnic, let me know. Sharon Leitheiser volunteered for this but it may not work out.

SAVE A STAMP, SAVE A TREE

Please let me know if you want to go email only and opt out of receiving group mailings by postal mail. Help reduce the burden on the American Heart Association, which does our mailings for us. Let me know (contact info below).

Thanks to everyone for a great meeting. See you next time!

Gerrit SeattleYASS@gmail.com 206-241-7693 (see our website at www.SeattleYASS.weebly.com)