

# 'Dementia-friendly' community steps to get outlined in Holyoke



((FILE PHOTO))



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**HOLYOKE** -- Steps to make the city safe and respectful for people with dementia will be announced today at 12:30 p.m. at a press conference at City Hall.

"Nearly 60 percent of people with dementia live in their own communities, and one in seven live alone, creating an urgent need for communities to support people with dementia and their caregivers," a press release said.

Tips to help first responders, families, businesses and the public deal with those who have dementia will be discussed at the press conference with Mayor Alex B. Morse, the city Council on Aging and Senior Center, O'Connell Care at Home and The Loomis Communities.

A list of organizations that provide help regarding dementia and support groups also will be provided at the event, along with a list of upcoming related events, the press release said.

## HOLYOKE HEADLINES

"A dementia-friendly community is defined as one that is informed, safe and respectful of individuals with dementia and their families and provides supportive options for improved quality of life," the press release said.

Tips to help in dealing with people who have dementia include, according to Carol Constant of The Loomis Communities:

- Take it slow.
- Ask simple questions.
- Limit reality checks.
- Keep eye contact.
- Keep in mind that a person with dementia may be easily agitated or afraid, so tell him or her that you are there to help.
- Ask caregivers if the home of a person with dementia contains firearms. If so, advise that the caregiver remove the firearms.
- If removing firearms from such a home isn't possible, store the weapon in a gun-safe or locked container; store the key in a safe place; and store the gun unloaded and with a safety lock.
- If a person with dementia unknowingly walks out of a store without paying, try to resolve the issue with the store manager instead of having the person arrested and inform the caregiver so the person can be accompanied on future shopping trips.

Upcoming events include:

- Guide to Dementia-Friendly Communication, Dec. 6, 6:30 p.m., St. Peter's Lutheran Church, 34 Jarvis Ave. The presentation by registered nurse Rachel Tierney is free.
- Caregiver's Guide to Dementia, Dec. 8, 4 to 5:30 p.m., Holyoke Medical Center, auxiliary auditorium, 575 Beech St. The presentation about communication and strategies for understanding emotions by registered nurse Christine Waldie, a certified dementia practitioner, is free. But those who plan to attend were asked to call in advance at 413-534-2533.
- Managing the Holidays When Life Changes Occur, Dec. 13, 12:30 to 1:30 p.m., Holyoke Senior Center, 291 Pine St. The presentation by Tierney is free.

**Tips to help in dealing with people who have dementia:** by [Mike Plaisance](#) on Scribd

**Resources to help in dealing with people who have dementia:** by [Mike Plaisance](#) on Scribd

**Upcoming events related to dementia:** by [Mike Plaisance](#) on Scribd

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