

Good Morning, my name is Yvonne Eisner. I would like to thank you and the Care More Medical Group for the opportunity to speak today. I am speaking of my experience as a caregiver for my mother Amelia Simpson who suffered from Dementia.

I cannot remember when I first heard my mother was diagnosed with dementia or when I first saw it written. It just seemed to appear without any official acknowledgement of its existence. In some ways dementia affected me the same way it affected her. Little by little your life changes and you become involved in the problem or issue of the moment and you don't see that you are deeply involved in a very daunting and emotionally draining journey. Vascular dementia slowly shut her physical and mental function.

We were referred to Care More's Mental Health Clinic where Monica Cheng the psychiatric nurse practitioner prescribed medication and referred us to the Brain Health Clinic. The clinic not only treated my mother but in a sense treated me, ensuring I would be able to cope and provide her the care she needed. Unfortunately, mom's condition worsened rapidly and she was not able to fully benefit from the program.

As her caregiver I was at a loss, tending to the day to day issues of caring for my mother that I was not able to understand and or deal with her decline. I could have read all the information available on the internet regarding dementia but I could have not been able to process the information until Dr. Debra Hadden and Amy Pound, MSW of the Care More Brain Health Clinic explained it. It was then that I understood the reasons for her behavior. They also taught me how to understand the disease and take better care of her.

Dr. Hadden and Amy, educate patients, family and caregivers on what the disease is, how to cope with it and most importantly provide support. The three Brain Health Classes provided are Disease Management for basic understanding of her individual case; how the dementia affected her ability to

swallow and walk and the nuance of dementia such as personality traits can be exaggerated which was making her difficult to deal with and care for. Safety issues of dementia, which had we attended sooner could have avoided urgent care visits and Legal Issues of Dementia, the importance of an advanced directive and power of attorney for health care

This leads me to an example I would like to provide of why educating the patient, family and caregivers early is extremely crucial. My mom was experiencing shortness of breath. She was tested for blockages. The test was inconclusive, the shortness of breath continued. I thought the shortness of breath was minimal and might actually be anxiety. What she was experiencing did not interfere with her quality of life but stents were placed in her arteries. The procedure itself went well, but she lost a lot of blood and needed a transfusion, upon being discharged she had a seizure and was then admitted for observation. If there had been a protocol in place where the Brain Health Clinic had been in the loop, the procedure may have not taken place and she would not have had to experience that ordeal, which was very traumatic for her and me.

Early detection and education is so crucial not only the reasons I mention but mostly to provide the patient with the best quality of life during their last years by educating the family and caregivers to develop the coping skills necessary to care for the patient. Before being a part of the Brain Health Clinic I wasted so much time and energy attempting to reason with her, only to increase her anxiety and paranoia. I worried, cried and became so stressed that I was considering the possibility of admitting her into a nursing home. Something I never wanted for my mother.

Please understand this is very personal to me because if it were not for the support of the Brain Health Clinic I would have not been able to keep my mom at home. So if you can please put yourself in my place and see that without this program my mother would have spent her last year or years living with and being cared for by strangers.

I would like to close this by expressing my most sincere wish. I hope that the words I and speak will lead to a protocol that would include early detection of dementia and Alzheimer's to be placed on the annual physical exam, where a patient can be referred to the Brain Clinic for further evaluation. In the event that dementia or Alzheimer's wasn't detected at least it will bring awareness to the patient and family. In the event that it is, it will provide education of the disease, knowledge of how to handle it and the support to do it successfully.