

Connections • Summer 2026 Newsletter

Extra! Extra!
We Want Your Memories!

IN THIS ISSUE

Articles

<i>Dearest Gentle Reader</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Recall Notice – 32 Degree Heated Socks.....</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Caring for the Caregiver</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Solutions – Time for Change</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Food for Thought – Seniors’ Drug Wars</i>	<i>7</i>

CPPO Things to Know

<i>CPPO Resource Book</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Resources for Caregivers this Way!</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Advisory Council Meetings</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Advisory Council Members</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Donations</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>CPPO Support Groups.....</i>	<i>10</i>

"Dearest Gentle Reader. . ."

- By Margaret Hinman

A nod to the society gossip columnist Lady Whistledown in the Bridgerton TV series.

Colorado Post-Polio Organization is planning to feature a retrospective of our 45 years of service to Colorado and other polio survivors in the fall 2026 issue of the Connections. Many of the archives and much of the information needed to do this justice has been lost or misplaced over the years and none of the current council leaders have been associated with CPPO for all that time.

So, we are asking those of you who have knowledge of its founding and early years (the first twenty to twenty-five+ years at least) to help us by sharing with us your memories of its early workings, and of significant or memorable people and events and even how CPPO has impacted your life for our retrospective.



If you are willing to share what you know, please email your information and memories to Mitzi Tolman at mtolman@eastersealscolorado.org. If you do not use the internet, call Margaret Hinman at 303-763-0013 and leave your name and contact number and she will return your call. She does not answer anonymous calls. Please contact us before September 1, 2026, so we can have your information included in the fall issue of the Connections. Thank you!



Resources for Caregivers This Way

Taking care of a family feels a lot better WITH SUPPORT!

You don't have to go at it alone. Find resources and people who get it at

<https://coloradorespitecoalition.org/resources-this-way/>



CPPO Resource Book

Need more info? Check out CPPO's Resource Book of Articles Related to Polio and Post-Polio Syndrome.

<https://www.easterseals.com/co/shared-components/document-library/post-polio/july-22-resource-book.pdf>

RECALL NOTICE – 32 Degree Heated Socks

Last year CPPO recommended the 32 Degree Heated Socks as a way to keep those cold limbs warm. Please note if you bought the 32 Degree brand from Costco, they have been recalled.

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) says the socks can pose a burn risk when worn during high-intensity activities that combine heat, excessive friction, moisture, and pressure. This combination can cause injury, including burns.

Product details:

- Brand: 32 Degrees Heated Socks
- Sold at: Costco stores and Costco.com
- Timeframe: August 2025 – March 2026
- Price: \$30–\$46 per pair
- Color: All black
- Sizes: Medium, Large, Extra Large
- Brand marking: “32° HEAT” on battery pack casing, packaging, user manual, and retail packaging
- Product codes: 1872150 (in-store), 1913659, 1913660, 191366 (online)

What to do if you have the socks

- Stop using the recalled socks immediately.
- Return them to Costco for a full refund.
- In-store: Return at any Costco warehouse.
- Online: Use the Costco.com online return portal.
- Costco is processing refunds; the manufacturer does not issue refunds directly because the socks were sold exclusively through Costco.



★ 2026 Advisory Council Meetings

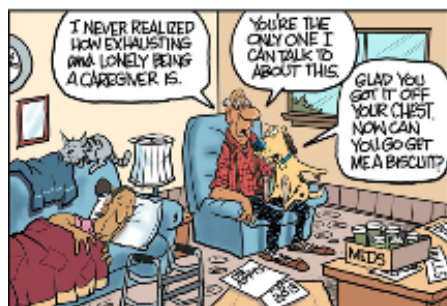
Advisory Council meetings are when planning takes place. You are welcome to attend. Meetings are held quarterly the 4th Wednesday of the month at 4:30 p.m. via Zoom. If you are interested in attending, please let Mitzi know.

2026 dates: July 22, and October 28.

Caring for the Caregiver

- By Megan Bettinger

Family caregivers play an essential yet often unrecognized role in our communities. Many see themselves first as a mother, son, spouse, friend, or neighbor—not as a caregiver. Yet they provide vital support, helping loved ones with daily tasks such as bathing, dressing, meals, errands, finances, and even medical care.



In Colorado, caregiving is widespread. According to the AARP, Caregiving in the U.S. 2025 report, about 22% of adults—over one million people—are family caregivers providing largely unpaid support. Their contributions are invaluable, but they often come at a personal cost.

The demands of caregiving can impact both physical and mental health, leading to stress, compassion fatigue, and burnout. For this reason, caregivers must care for themselves as well as others. Simple stress-management techniques such as deep breathing, meditation, yoga, drawing, and journaling can help promote balance and emotional well-being. Taking breaks, setting boundaries, and asking for help are key steps in preventing burnout.

Respite care is an especially important resource. It offers temporary relief, allowing caregivers time to rest and recharge. Even short breaks can reduce stress, improve mental health, and help caregivers sustain their role over time. Maintaining a positive outlook also plays an important part in caregiver well-being. Many stressors come from how we perceive our circumstances. It takes courage to stay positive, especially during difficult times. Each day brings choices—sometimes small ones—and by shifting perspective, caregivers can begin to notice everyday blessings and moments of hope.

Additional support and strategies can be found through the Stress-Busting Program for Family Caregivers™ (© 2008 Sharon Lewis and the WellMed Charitable Foundation; revised February 2020), which offers practical tools to manage stress and build resilience.

Caring for the caregiver is essential. By supporting their health, encouraging self-care, and connecting them to resources, we strengthen not only caregivers, but the families and communities who depend on them.

For more information and caregiver resources, visit:
<https://coloradospitecoalition.org/resources-this-way/>



Solutions—Time for Change

- By Margaret Hinman

"The old gray mare she ain't what she used to be . . . many long year ago!" and the same goes for the old gray horse. When muscle strength decreases and balance issues arise, all part of the normal aging process, it is time to make changes in order to live safely and to maintain as much independence as possible. This natural aging phenomenon is complicated by the years of having to adapt to the physical consequences of having had polio.



Successfully navigating this time in life includes an attitude adjustment for some and, for all of us, requires behavior changes, changes in the environment and creative solutions to adapt to our new reality. And it also means grieving the loss of the old normal and addressing the fears of what might come in the future.

Being no longer able to walk without fear of falling, having difficulty standing without holding onto something, having difficulties reaching up, bending over, lifting and carrying, struggling with changing between standing and sitting,

and getting fatigued when doing these activities means it is time to make a thorough assessment of one's abilities and environment. Based on that assessment, it is time to make and act on decisions about how to continue living safely and maintain daily independence. These changes need to occur regardless of where you live, either in an assisted living community, or in your own home.

Essential to being successful is a potential change of attitude, of perspective. By looking at your environment differently, personalizing your home and your behavior and not following your standardized conventions frees up options and helps make your environment truly adaptable. This means making changes in how you do things:

Instead of standing to do your activities, come up with ways to **do them while sitting**. For example, do food prep seated at the kitchen table rather than at the higher kitchen counter or use a bar stool* at the kitchen counter. The most versatile stools have a wide floor base to prevent tipping, are height adjustable, and have a swivel seat with arms and a back. Or sit in an electric scooter* that has an adjustable height seat.

Solutions—Time for Change Continued



Improve standing balance by wearing substantial well-fitting shoes that have soles that are flat to the floor from heel to toe and from side to side.

Manage your time and your energy.

Fatigue, a common result of aging with polio, is your enemy as overusing your already compromised muscles and nerves can increase the rate of decline. Cut back on the number of daily physical activities each day, perhaps spreading housekeeping chores over several days or planning only one outside-the-home activity each day.

Use canes* and crutches,* including forearm crutches* (Canadian walkers) in the house and when out and about.

Walkers,* especially rollator walkers* can provide greater stability. Those with wider seats, are height adjustable and have hand brakes are a versatile option as they allow the user to walk safely, hold on to while standing with the brakes on, sit in and move around while seated and provide a platform for carrying objects. They are an especially safe way to get up from bed and “walk” while seated into the bathroom at night.

Use orthopedic bracing,* maybe for the first time or get a replacement if an evaluation shows that the current one(s) cannot be modified to meet your current new needs.

A wide variety of scooters* and wheelchairs,* from those that are lightweight and foldable to those that have all kinds of options, are on the market. And there are ramps* and hoists* for loading them into a vehicle or gaining access to your home.

Get people to help you. Keep a list of what you need help with, for example, changing furnace filters or storing holiday decorations, then inform your family, friends and neighbors that when they come to your home you may ask them to help you. Ask the neighbor kids to take out your trash regularly.

When out and about, use store electric carts. Catch an employee in the parking lot to bring a cart to your car (grocery stores and Costco are especially helpful in doing this). And ask either store personnel or other shoppers to reach things you cannot get.

Or order groceries online and have them delivered and/or shop online for almost everything you want or need and get delivery to the home or inside the garage. At medical facilities and doctors’ offices, ask if they can bring a wheelchair to your car. And use valet parking whenever it is available.

Solutions - Time for Change Continued

Have the housekeeper include washing the sheets and changing your bed on their to-do list. Have a handyman (step stools and/or ladders are not safe assistive devices!), contract for annual evaluations of your HVAC system, contract for an in-home housekeeping aide, hire a lawn care service or the kid next door.

Modify or rearrange the furnishings in your home. Move seldom used furniture and other items out of the main living spaces to allow more space to move about easier. Repurpose rooms to allow living on one floor of the house. Adjust the bed height to make it easier to get in and out of and to transfer to a wheelchair or rollator walker when getting up at night.

Have at least one chair/seat* in each space that has a higher seat with a back and arms to reduce having to struggle with sitting and standing. Love that electric recliner.* Lift low furniture onto platforms or bricks or commercial furniture leg lifts. Store kitchen utensils and often-used items on the countertop rather than in the upper cupboards. Use smaller sized disposable pans in the oven as this makes it easier to move food in and out of the oven while sitting.

Remodel your home. A complete remodel is a major investment, but there are many lower-cost changes that can be made. Install grab bars,* not only in the bathroom in the tub/shower and by the toilet, but also on the walls beside the garage door



and other places in the home where you frequently need extra stability. Put handrails* on both sides of steps/stairs or invest in stair chairs* for stairways or even in the garage. Install comfort height or handicapped toilets.* Install a front loading washer* and dryer* and sit to do laundry—locate them so the doors open toward each other.

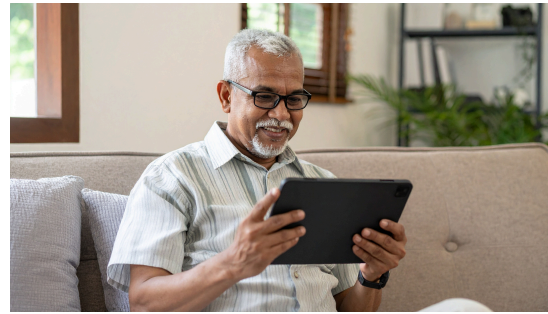
Evaluate flooring—carpet* is softer, but can make navigating wheeled assistive devices* more difficult and hard surface flooring* can be slick and can be injurious in a fall. Remove* inside doors or rebuild the openings* to accommodate walkers and wheelchairs. Install ramps.*

Use electronic devices.* The variety of remote controlled, voice controlled and app-controlled devices is growing exponentially. They can be connected to Alexa or Siri or managed in the Apple Home or Google Home sites on your phone, your electronic tablet or other devices. They include everything from light bulbs to wall sockets to robotic vacuum cleaners to drapes and window blinds, to dead-bolt locks* to garage door openers (My-Q garage door openers

Solutions - Time for Change Continued

operate from phone and with an Amazon Prime subscription securely allows Amazon deliveries into your garage), to mention a few.

The suggestions listed are just the beginning of creative ways that polio survivors have addressed their safety and independence issues. Hopefully, it will help get you thinking and exploring solutions that meet YOUR needs. . .



Food for Thought - Seniors' Drug War

- By Margaret Hinman

You know you have been impacted by the senior drug wars when you need a larger 7-day or a 3-times-a-day, 7-day pill box for your daily medications! The combatants in this war are you, all of your health issues, your treatments and medications, and your medical professionals whose goals should be to help you live a long, healthy, pain-free, comfortable life.

However, this combination of factors is riddled with complications. All medical interventions, surgeries, assistive devices, lifestyle changes and medications, including prescriptions, over-the-counter meds and supplements, have side effects, sometimes negative ones, and can interact with the body and with other medications differently than anticipated. And additional meds can crowd that pill box!

The complications come from how your body is functioning, and what needs "fixing" and from having a cadre of general practitioners and specialists, each with his/her own area of expertise and his/her own protocol for treatment, and who are often not integrating with each other regarding your care. This is the essence of our drug war!

One way to take control of your war is to ask questions and get data before starting any treatment, whenever circumstances allow. Accidents, medical emergencies like heart attacks, strokes, respiratory failures, etc. may not give you time to do the research up front.

Food for Thought Continued



A friend, knowing that when she sees her medical professionals, she may forget important questions, always takes to every medical appointment a written list of her medical conditions, her current medications, her allergies and the questions she wants to ask. By having thoroughly thought-out information at her fingertips to inform the medical professionals as to what is happening helps her decide her next steps.

In any visit, when discussing the treatment options for any condition a written list is a reference that ensures that your total health and your current medications are addressed in addition to the new needs. As you factor in the potential cures or management options, their lifetime impact and the potential side effects of each treatment option, both positive and negative, you also factor in the implications related to your whole body. For example, polio survivors need to know how the treatment is going to impact an already compromised neuro-muscular system and their bone health.

Hopefully, your prescribing physician will communicate all of the side effects in a thorough, understandable manner. And hopefully, you know how the side effects will be addressed up front, for example, by changing the medication, by adding another medication, by stopping the medication or other options.

If these issues are not addressed satisfactorily by your physician, your local pharmacist or a specialist ambulatory pharmacist are expert additional resources. Pharmacists are trained to evaluate medication effects and interactions and all of the treatments for the disease based on YOUR total unique circumstances. This Medication Therapy Management Program is covered by Medicare Part D. Dr. Internet (!) may also be useful if you are cautious about the reliability of the resource.

The answers to your written list of questions from your doctor give you the power to make your decisions about how you want to proceed, including delaying a decision and getting more information, starting only one medication at a time so as to identify any side effects, or choosing to let life take its course by no treatment. By using this strategy, you can more easily manage your personal drug wars and keep tight control of that weekly medication box!

Just some food for thought!

★ 2026 Advisory Council Members

Sue Brandon, Chairperson

763.377.2287

suebrandon1950@gmail.com

Marny Eulberg, MD, Medical Advisor

303.829.1538

marnyeul@me.com

Mitzi Tolman, Colorado Post-Polio

Program Coordinator

720.940.9291

mtolman@eastersealscolorado.org

Jim Carr

720.220.8413

jimlcarr@msn.com

Margaret Hinman

303.763.0013

mhinman12@icloud.com

Robert Burnett (Habla Español)

720.394.5500

robert.v.burnett@gmail.com

Lois Tilley

303.638.4192

loistilley@live.com

★ Donations

If you would like to donate to support Colorado Post-Polio efforts, please complete this form, detach and mail it to Mitzi Tolman at Easterseals Colorado. To ensure that CPPO receives 100% of your donation, contributions should be payable to Easterseals Colorado with "POST-POLIO" written in the memo line. Your contribution will be gratefully acknowledged. Thank you!

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY, STATE, ZIP: _____

PHONE: _____

E-MAIL: _____

MAIL TO: Easterseals Colorado

Attn: Mitzi Tolman

940 Wadsworth Blvd. STE 120

Lakewood, CO 80214

Memo line: POST-POLIO



Colorado Post-Polio Support Group Schedules

CPPPO encourages you to stay in touch with your facilitator so you are aware of any meeting changes.

AURORA (NEW LOCATION)

Meets the 4th Thursday of every month from 11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Meeting in-person at Christ the Savior Lutheran Church 1902 S Nome, Aurora

Facilitator: Myrna Schmidt, 608.790.5755 or myrnaschmidt1@yahoo.com

COLORADO SPRINGS (NEW LOCATION)

Meets the 1st Wednesday of every month from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Meeting in-person at Gold Hill Police Station 955 W. Moreno Ave., Colorado Springs

Contact the facilitator for additional information.

Facilitator: Fran Weitzel-Callan 719.460.4764 franweitzel@comcast.net

DENVER NORTH (Zoom Meeting, All Welcome)

Meets the 3rd Saturday of every month from 10:00 a.m. to Noon.

Meeting via Zoom.

Facilitator: Jill Eelkema, LCSW, 720.675.9902 or jille@westerncarepartners.com

DENVER SOUTH

Meets the 1st Tuesday of every month from 11:00 a.m. to 12:45 p.m.

Meeting via Zoom. Contact erubin85248@gmail.com for the link or contact mtolman@eastersealsocolorado.org

GRAND JUNCTION

Meetings are held quarterly.

Contact Ron Carlson, 970.640.8052 or rpcarlson2@gmail.com for support and information.

NORTHERN COLORADO (Fort Collins)

Meets the 4th Saturday of every month from 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Trinity Lutheran Church of Fort Collins 301 E. Stuart St., Fort Collins

Facilitator: Peter Way, 970.460.6164 or NOCOPolio@gmail.com

**FREE MATTER FOR
BLIND OR DISABLED**



easterseals Colorado
Colorado Post-Polio
940 Wadsworth Blvd Ste 120
Lakewood, CO 80214

This Is YOUR Newsletter – *Connections* is the official news publication of the Colorado Post-Polio Program. The opinions are those of the individual contributors, and do not necessarily constitute an endorsement or approval by either the Colorado Post-Polio Council or Easterseals Colorado. **(Always check with your personal physician for all medical questions and concerns.)**

We invite not only your comments about this newsletter; tell us what topics you want to read about in future issues. If you have article ideas or suggestions, are willing to write a short article, tell your personal story or you'd like to review a book, please call **Mitzi Tolman** at **720.940.9291** or email her at mtolman@eastersealscolorado.org, or write to: Easterseals Colorado, Attn: Mitzi Tolman - Colorado Post-Polio *Connections*, 940 Wadsworth Blvd Ste 120, Lakewood, CO 80214.

If you prefer to receive this newsletter online or need to change your mailing information, please contact Mitzi Tolman at Easterseals Colorado at 720.940.9291 or mtolman@eastersealscolorado.org.