

Free program is meant to help safeguard those with memory impairments and cognitive brain disorders

Mayor Scott Avedisian and representatives from MissingPatient.com announced today the city's participation in the free program and encouraged qualified residents to enroll. They were joined this morning by members of the city's Human Services, Police and Fire departments.

Founded by Rhode Islander Timothy Holmgren, MissingPatient.com helps caregivers, medical professionals, public safety personnel and others to find missing loved one(s), such as those suffering from Autism, Alzheimer's disease or any other cognitive brain disorder. Some have likened the system to the "Amber Alert," a nationwide system for missing children. MissingPatient.com is now available through statewide agencies in several places, including Florida, Ohio, North Carolina and Texas, though Warwick is the first municipality to offer the program directly through its police department and senior center.

"This gives public safety personnel and caregivers another resource to assure the safety of some of our most vulnerable citizens," Avedisian said. "The city is pleased to help promote this program and to help residents who wish to enroll in the program to do so."

MissingPatient.com offers online enrollment, the support of law enforcement officials, confidentiality, secure encryption and an online profile manager. Caregivers are asked to provide a photo and such information as name, hair and eye color, height, weight, race, medical conditions and any distinguishing characteristics, such as tattoos, or habits like visiting the beach.

When a loved one goes missing, or is found without identification, police and emergency hospital staff can access pertinent patient information. Information and a missing person alert is also transmitted digitally and immediately – by cell phone text message, emails and/or fax – to patients' contact lists of family, friends and caregivers, other police departments, hospitals and the media.

It's estimated that 35 million people worldwide are living with dementia. According to the 2009 World Alzheimer Report issued by the Alzheimer's Disease International (available online at www.alz.org), the number of people living with the disease is expected to nearly double every 20 years – to 65.7 million in 2030 – making services like MissingPatient.com even more relevant. It only takes a second for a loved one to wander away. Sixty percent of those with dementia will wander away at some point. Fifty percent of those not located within 24 hours died (nasar.org).

"It is the goal of Warwick Senior Services to do whatever possible to improve the lives and safety of our growing elderly population. This program provides vital information that is disseminated rapidly and reliably to help locate missing patients as soon as possible," said Meg Underwood Brugeman, director of Senior Services for Warwick. "The state-of-the-art system, which works similarly to the Amber Alert system, could be an incredible resource in helping to

bring loved ones home quickly and safely.”

“Caregivers need to act now, not after,” Holmgren said. “It only takes a couple of minutes to register, and the more quickly the police, hospitals, family, friends, and neighbors are alerted to the situation, the better. We are very pleased to be working with the City of Warwick to provide this service.”

Holmgren won the 2008 Rhode Island Business Plan competition and the 2009 Web Marketing Association’s WebAward for “Outstanding Achievement in Web Development.”

For more information about the program, log onto MissingPatient.com. Those who wish to meet with a Senior Center staff member for help with enrolling should call Linda Knutton at 401-468-4079.