

# SENIOR SERVICES

The Berks Elder Network, BEN, meets once a month to network and share information about issues affecting seniors.

**BY MONICA VON DOBENECK**  
READING EAGLE CORRESPONDENT

The Berks Elder Network, or BEN, isn't an official organization.

It has no website, no Facebook page and no bylaws.

But it improves the lives of senior citizens in Berks County and immeasurably helps the businesses that join it, according to several members.

Dave Kendall, CEO of Comfort Keepers, Spring Township, is the moderator of the group, which meets once a month at a member's facility to network and share information about issues affecting seniors. Its 300 members include hospitals, physical therapists, real estate agents, nutritionists, nursing homes, hospice programs, assisted living facilities, lawyers and anybody else whose careers lead them to work with senior citizens.

"It operates silently in the community," Kendall said. "Its simplicity is why it works so well. Other counties are flummoxed by the way we have become so significant."

## 'Enrich the lives'

The group's mission is "to enrich the lives of older residents in Berks County," he said.

The ability to connect with others in related professions helps everybody.

Kendall's business, Comfort Keepers, provides private in-home care to seniors, everything from a few times a week to around the clock. Adult children of the seniors usually have lots of questions about their parents' needs.

### Comfort Keepers

**CEO:** Dave Kendall,  
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### Transition Connections

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### Senior LIFE Reading

**Owner:** Kate Ketter  
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"(Often) they get thrust into this because of a health care crisis or decline," Kendall said.

Knowing all the other senior-oriented businesses and organizations out there helps him answer their questions and make appropriate referrals.

"It lets me produce what I call my 'golden Rolodex' of providers," he said.

More people are staying in their homes as they age, and they have more complex needs. That means "it is essential that providers are communicating with each other," Kendall said.



READING EAGLE: TIM LEEDY

Dave Kendall, CEO of Comfort Keepers and moderator of Berks Elder Network, says the organization's "simplicity is why it works so well."



The Berks Elder Network has about 300 members. Many were at the monthly meeting May 11.