

SEASONS IN THE SUN

Area Agency on Aging Summer Newsletter



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WELCOME TO OUR NEWSLETTER

Hello from all us of at Area Agency on Aging. We hope this newsletter finds you in high spirits and enjoying the warm weather. This month we are launching our new quarterly newsletter as another way to keep you up to date and informed about the work of Area Agency on Aging. We hope you enjoy it.



A Note from Lynn

Area Agency on Aging CEO

Welcome to Seasons in the Sun! Area Agency on Aging [AAA] gets many questions about initiatives and opportunities around southwest Michigan. While our core function is planning and development of services, products, and efforts to champion age and independence, we're very multi-faceted.

Always remember the Info-Line for Aging & Disability at 800-654-2810 is available to you as a public service, no strings attached. Wondering if a service is available? Or something happens that causes you to do some research to figure out a path forward? Knowledgeable experts answer questions from simple to complex. People with lots of money, people with no money; call us, maybe we can help. You've got a friend.

There's so much great work going on. We're happy to introduce a much requested quarterly newsletter to share and spotlight information in and around southwest Michigan, and at times even state and national news.

The Campus for Creative Aging lauds age as a time for creativity, purpose, growth and learning. We partner and contract with many organizations to create service options throughout the region. We can help with solutions if and when daily assistance is needed.

All AAA services are designed to promote our mission, Offering Choices for Independent Lives. We want every aging adult to lead a quality life. We look forward to staying connected with you.

Be Well,
Lynn

Older Michiganian's Day 2021. Advocacy in Action

The Area Agencies on Aging Association of Michigan Members and our statewide partners in aging held a week of advocacy May 10-14, 2021. Locally we helmed advocacy efforts giving area seniors a platform to talk about the issues and advocate on their own behalf.

What is Older Michiganian's Day?

Older Michiganian's Day (OMD) is an annual rally that traditionally takes place on the East Lawn of the Capitol Building in Lansing. This event, held virtually this year, brings together hundreds of seniors, aging service providers and senior advocates with their legislators and key state officials. Interested individuals are invited to join this event to show their support for policies that support older adults.

What Issues Are We Addressing?

For 2021 we had five advocacy priorities vital to older adults in Michigan that allow them to age with dignity and independence in their own homes. These issues included rebalancing Long-Term Services & Supports, increasing access to non-medicaid Home & Community Based Services, bridging the digital divide for older adults, supporting and strengthening the Direct Care Workforce and re-establishment of the Kinship Caregiver Program.

Be a Part of our Advocacy Efforts.

Elected officials respond in an immediate and personal way to individual constituents. Your advocacy helps legislators understand how policies affect their constituents. It is this 'voice of the consumer' that can make the issue real for legislators and have a critical impact on how policy is shaped.

Learn More on our Website.

AreaAgencyonAging.org/Advocacy

Take Action! Make Your Voice Heard in Lansing! 2021 Local Legislative Forum

Join us for a conversation with your state legislators to discuss policies and priorities that allow seniors to age with dignity and independence in their own homes.

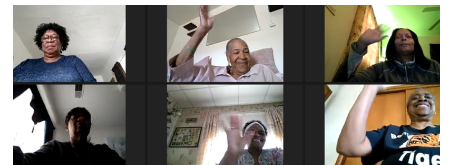
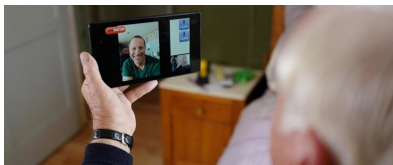


What's Happening at the Campus for Creative Aging?

Since the pandemic closed our doors, we have been busy at the Campus for Creative Aging temporarily pivoting to online education. In this past year we have taught area seniors how to utilize the Internet to stay connected to family, and the activities they enjoy while still being safe. In addition, we have expanded our options and opportunities to engage in lifelong learning.

We recently started to record and post many of our classes on You Tube. There are classes you can watch to learn on how to use Zoom and MyChart. Also, you can learn all about Healthcare Planning, how keep your computer safe and secure, and our New to Medicare classes.

You can find all of our classes, including evidence based classes such as Developing Dementia Dexterity and P.A.T.H (Personal Action Towards Health) on our website at campusforcreativeaging.org/classes. Register online or call Amy Nichols at (269) 982-7748 or email amynichols@areaagencyonaging.org.



THE ROAD-MMAP TO YOUR BENEFITS

What does it mean to have full coverage with Medicare?

Full coverage would include Medicare A for 80% hospitalization, Medicare B for 80% of out patient services including doctor visits, Secondary that addresses the 20% A & B do not cover and Drug coverage. Your secondary and your drug coverage are the areas you have the most choices on how you want to be covered. Would You Like Help Understanding Your Benefits? Contact Mistelle Sleigh at (269) 408-4354 mistellesleigh@areaagencyonaging.org

MMAP (Michigan Medicare/Medicaid Assistance Program) is a free service provided by AAA and the Michigan State Health Insurance Assistance Program for anyone who needs help understanding their Medicare/Medicaid benefits.



Info-Line for Aging & Disability

(800) 654-2810

HELLO. HOW CAN WE HELP YOU?

Call the Info-Line to access resources, services, and programs available to older adults and adults with disabilities in southwest Michigan.

What is an Ombudsman?

What is a Long Term Care Ombudsman and what do they do?

A Long Term Care Ombudsman is a certified advocate who works to resolve any problems that impact the quality of life and quality of care of residents living in licensed long-term care settings such as nursing homes, skilled rehabilitation facilities, adult foster care homes, and homes for the aging which are commonly referred to as assisted living communities. Ombudsmen work one-on-one with residents and/or their representatives who have complaints by helping them address their concerns, understand and exercise their rights, ensure they are receiving the care they deserve and desire and protect them from abuse and neglect. Services are provided at no cost.

What matters and issues do Ombudsman address and advocate for?

A complaint can be about any aspect of a resident's life in a nursing home or assisted living community that effects their health, safety and well-being. These can range from the quality and service of meals, addressing if call lights are answered for residents in a timely manner or advocate for residents who are facing involuntary discharge.

Residents' rights are guaranteed by the Federal 1987 Nursing Home Reform Law. Ombudsmen can utilize the Federal and State laws to protect residents and provide mediation and assistance.

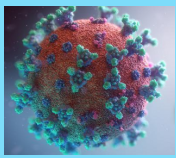


**Laura Foerster AAA's
Long-Term Care Ombudsman
(800) 442-2803**

What are the steps when someone calls, and how is it kept confidential?

When someone reaches out with a complaint, the ombudsman must first establish exactly what their concerns are and what the resident or their representative ultimately wants. Their wishes will guide all investigative actions and communication regarding the complaint. Ombudsmen cannot disclose any personal information about a resident without their consent and only advocate with their permission and direction. There are laws that protect a residents' right to privacy and ensure they always have confidential access to the services of the ombudsman program.

AreaAgencyOnAging.org/Elder-Rights



Corona Virus Vaccines. Myth vs. Fact

It's been almost a year and a half since the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a pandemic and now the United States leads the world in protecting its citizens from the virus. We currently have three COVID-19 vaccines available in the United States, and as of May 13, 2021, more than 70 percent of older adults have been fully vaccinated, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Because this virus greatly effected adults 65 and up, vaccination is vital for older adults.

While a few people have said they are skeptical of getting vaccinated due to some circulating conspiracy theories. The vaccines have proven to be safe.

Myth #1: The Vaccines Were Created Too Quickly to Be Safe.

Though the COVID-19 vaccines have only recently been authorized, the scientific work that made them possible has been going on for years. Scientist already had a start from the research they've done on other coronaviruses, like SARS and MERS. When it became clear that COVID-19 was a major threat to lives around the world, vaccine development kicked into high gear. Even though the need for COVID-19 vaccines was urgent, no shortcuts were taken. More than 100,000 volunteers participated in clinical trials for the three vaccines that are currently available. Hundreds of millions of people around the world have received at least one dose and data is continuing to accrue suggesting these vaccines are very safe.

Myth #2: The Vaccines Can Change Your DNA.

The vaccines don't interact with your DNA at all. The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines are made of RNA, which can't change DNA, and they never enter the nucleus, which is where your cell's DNA is stored.

Myth #3: If You've Already Had COVID-19, You Don't Need a Vaccine.

Even if you recovered from COVID-19 and built up some natural immunity, you might not be protected from the variants that are starting to spread. This may help explain why a small number of people who had COVID-19 can get infected a second time. There's also evidence that if you had a very mild infection or had an infection but no symptoms, you may not have as many antibodies to fight the virus. If you received treatment for COVID-19 previously, ask your doctor when you should schedule your vaccination.

Myth #4: Side Effects from These Shots Are Worse Than Other Vaccines

There's nothing unique about the side effects of these vaccines. It's the same pattern of fever, aches, and pain at the injection site that is seen with other vaccines, like the flu shot or the shingles vaccine.

For the latest on COVID-19 vaccines and info visit [CDC.GOV](https://www.cdc.gov). If you're having trouble booking a vaccine appointment call your local county health department for help.

Understanding Dementia

The word dementia is sometimes seen as a diagnosis on its own but is an overall term for diseases and conditions characterized by a decline in memory, communication, learning, remembering, and problem solving. These changes may occur quickly or very slowly over time. The progression and outcome vary, but are largely determined by the type of dementia and which area of the brain is affected.

Experiencing symptoms doesn't have to mean the end of daily life. Certain types of dementia can be slowed and some causes even reversed if caught in time. The first step is to understand what distinguishes normal memory loss from dementia symptoms, and how to identify the different types of dementia. Whatever your diagnosis, though, there can be plenty of things you can do to help manage symptoms and continue to enjoy a full and rewarding life for as long as possible.



Developing Dementia Dexterity Classes help give Caregivers resources and help they need.



Certain types of dementia can be slowed if caught in time

*"I learned to communicate better and create a positive family environment,"
class attendee Ann James.*

If you or someone you know are caring for someone with Alzheimer's, Dementia, Lewy Bodies, or memory loss, call us for information, resources, and for information on how to attend our Developing Dementia Dexterity class.

This class is a three-session online class, via Zoom, for family members who are caring for a person with a dementia-related illnesses, such as Alzheimer's or Lewy Body Disease. The program has been proven to reduce caregiver stress by providing caregivers with useful tools. This is not a support group, but an opportunity to learn new information and strategies that will make the job of caregiving easier and more rewarding. There is no cost to attend this training. For more information about this class call Faith Dowd at (269) 982-7746 faithdowd@areaagencyonaging.org.

For more resources call our Information and Access line at (800) 654-2810.

From Short Term Nursing Home to a Place of His Own

Last year Steve found himself in danger of being homeless and in need of major medical attention. His home had been condemned, and he needed three toes amputated due to developing gangrene from frostbite.

He checked into a facility and after surgery and extensive physical therapy, he learned how to walk again. **As he became healthier, he wanted to have his own place again; to be independent.**



Steve's Happy in his New Home

The Area Agency on Aging Nursing Facility Transition program coordinated everything Steve needed for a successful transition to living an independent life.

"They helped me find my apartment, helped me fill out the application and submit it, and helped me get my full Social Security Disability Insurance. They helped me figure out my first month rent and the deposit and helped get me furniture, and everything I needed in the apartment," says Steve.

Do you, your parent, family member or loved one need support returning home from a nursing facility or short term rehab after a hospital stay?

Contact us to understand your options and how to have your needs met, as you return home or want to live independently. Call (800) 654-2810 for more Information.



Whether leaving after a short-term hospital or rehab stay, moving in with family, or wanting a place to call home, we can help achieve the best transition possible.

Nursing Facility Transition Program

(800) 654-2810

AreaAgencyonAging.org/nursing-facility-transition

Connecting You to Services You Need, to Live the Life You Want.



Call us to learn more about:

- MI Choice Waiver Program
- Nursing Home Transition Program
- In-Home and Community Based Services and Support
- Short-Term Hospital Discharge Options
- Medicare Medicaid Information
- Computer Learning

(800) 654-2810

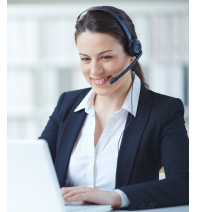
AreaAgencyonAging.org

Serving Berrien, Cass & Van Buren Counties



REGION IV
Area Agency
On Aging

Offering Choices for Independent Lives



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