

Dutchess County Office for the Aging's

AGING NEWS

For the week of December 21st

Note: the Office for the Aging (OFA) will be closed for the Christmas and New Year's holidays on Friday, December 25th and Friday, January 1st. Clients of our Home Delivered Meals (HDM) program will receive their meals for those days in advance of the holidays.

OFA will be open for regular business all other weekdays – but keep in mind that in-person visitation is limited by pandemic restrictions, and many of your questions can be answered while you remain safe at home, by calling (845-486-2555) and/or emailing (ofa@dutchessny.gov).

Golden Living . . . News for Seniors, Their Families and Caregivers

Todd N. Tancredi, Director

Dutchess County Office for the Aging

IF YOU'VE NEVER HEARD OF OFA...

The primary role of the Office for the Aging is to ensure that Dutchess County seniors can live happily and independently for as long as is safely possible. Independence and autonomy are what a vast majority of seniors want for themselves. Additionally, promoting those goals is the most cost-effective option for taxpayers.

As one means to that end, we try to help younger family members prepare themselves for potential difficulties when caring for senior family members.

Many seniors are familiar with OFA from our annual events like Senior Picnics, but they may be otherwise unaware of everything else the Office for the Aging does.

If you live in Dutchess County but the senior you're concerned about lives elsewhere in New York, remember that every county in the state has an Office for

the Aging or an agency with a similar name and function, while New York City and the City of Yonkers each have a citywide Office for the Aging.

Some of the services we provide to residents of Dutchess County include:

- **Information and referral** about issues of concern to older persons;
- **Advocacy and case assistance** for Medicaid, food stamps, and other entitlement programs;
- **Home delivered meals** for homebound seniors. New York State has temporarily expanded home delivered meal eligibility during the COVID-19 pandemic;
- **Legal services** focusing on shelter and income issues;
- **Long term care services** through our NY Connects unit, providing a single point of entry for a variety of community-based services;
- **Home Energy assistance** for help with fuel bills and utility service terminations;
- **Health Insurance Information Counseling and Assistance Program (HIICAP)** to help seniors navigating the intricacies of senior health insurance;
- **Case management** to provide home care needs assessment;

- **Senior Exercise, Tai Chi and Brain Games classes** to keep the body and the mind active;
- **A Matter of Balance**, a program designed help reduce falls in the elderly.
- **Caregiver services** including workshops, counseling and assistance, case management, and services for grandparents raising grandchildren.

While in-person aspects of some of the above services have been scaled back due to pandemic-related requirements, OFA services remain available remotely, and in 2021 we plan to build on what's available remotely. Those seniors who are homebound, or live in rural areas far from OFA's Poughkeepsie headquarters, may find remote options helpful, both now and after the pandemic.

Nobody knows when the pandemic will wind down and seniors get the all-clear to resume in-person gatherings; but when that time comes, OFA will be ready to reopen our eight Senior Friendship Centers throughout the county where seniors gather for midday meals, companionship and activities. For now, the Friendship Centers are serving as hubs for the expanded Home Delivered Meals program – and if you'd like to volunteer as a meal delivery driver for the program, please get in touch with us.

There's much more information at our website: www.dutchessny.gov/aging, or you can contact us using the information below. Outside the 845 area code, our toll free number is (866) 486-2555.

Golden Living is prepared by the Dutchess County Office for the Aging, 114 Delafield St., Poughkeepsie, New York 12601, telephone (845) 486-2555, email: ofa@dutchessny.gov website: www.dutchessny.gov/aging

COVID SCAMS CONTINUE

Scammers can victimize people anywhere in the world, and one of their key tactics to reach new victims is chasing American headlines. Whatever's in the news, they create a scam to accompany it – and it's happening again with the new COVID-19 vaccine that's been introduced in the U.S. in recent days.

Thus far, the New York State Office for the Aging (NYSOFA) is only aware of one COVID vaccine scam – but there are likely to be more. As a recent statement from NYSOFA put it: “this type of fraud will move very quickly, very soon, and will

take many forms. Scammers rapidly alter their tactics and adapt their schemes to the changing landscape, and we anticipate that they will leverage the pending COVID-19 vaccine to prey on unsuspecting beneficiaries.”

Here are some key points about the vaccine rollout, including signs that a COVID scam is afoot:

- You likely will not need to pay anything out of pocket to get the vaccine during this public health emergency.
- You cannot pay to put your name on a list to get the vaccine.
- You cannot pay to get early access to the vaccine.
- No one from Medicare or any national, state, county or municipal Health Department will contact you.
- No one from a vaccine distribution site or health care payer, like a private insurance company, will call you asking for your Social Security number or your credit card or bank account information to sign you up to get the vaccine.
- Beware of providers offering other products, treatments, or medicines to prevent the virus. Check with your health care provider before paying for or receiving any COVID-19-related treatment.

- If you get a call, text, email — or even someone knocking on your door — claiming they can get you early access to the vaccine, STOP. That’s a scam.

To report a COVID-related scam, go to reportfraud.ftc.gov, operated by the Federal Trade Commission.

NEW YORK DMV IMPERSONATION SCAMS, TOO

The New York State Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) is also battling a rash of phishing schemes. According to a DMV statement:

“These fraudulent text messages are made to look like they are from the DMV and they include a link to a fake DMV website. The messages ask the recipient to update their contact information – which is how scammers get at your personal information.

If you receive such a text message, you should NOT provide any personal data and should delete the text right away.

DO inspect all electronic communications you receive to confirm the message was generated from a legitimate source.

DO look for telltale signs of phishing - poor spelling or grammar, the use of threats, the URL does not match that of the legitimate website. If the message does not feel right, chances are it is not.

DON'T click on links embedded in an unsolicited message from an unverified source.

DON'T send your personal information via text. Legitimate businesses will not ask users to send sensitive personal information through text message.

DON'T post sensitive information online.

For more information on phishing scams, as well as steps to mitigate a phishing attempt, visit the New York State Office of Information Technology Services Phishing Awareness resources page at <https://its.ny.gov/resources>.

THANKS FOR BEING THERE

OFA's final outdoor event of 2020 was the "Car-aoke" that took place December 15th at Bowdoin Park in the Town of Poughkeepsie. A bit of cold weather did not deter dozens of seniors from coming out to enjoy an afternoon of festive holiday songs, refreshments and safe social connections. If you missed it,

here's a link to the video from Dutchess County Government's Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=3478433358859834>

Many thanks to the day's musicians: Brenda (Bryn) Moore – vocals; Harold Kimble – saxophone; Randall Martin - electric drums; Ray Watkins – keys; Diana Ferrara – vocals. Thanks also to the New Hamburg Engine Company 1 for driving Santa Claus to the event!

As winter continues, we'll be working on new ways of staying connected and adapting to the COVID-19 pandemic's safety necessities.

Our thanks to everybody who participated in OFA's adapted events schedule for 2020, starting with our Platinum sponsors EverCare at Home and Home Energy Solutions.

We're also grateful to Sheriff Butch Anderson and the Dutchess County Sheriff's Office; the Dutchess County Medical Reserve Corps and Traffic Safety Board; and Dutchess County Parks.

Thanks also to the following organizations, municipalities and school districts for hosting OFA drive-thru events over the summer and fall:

Dutchess County Fair

Cities of Beacon and Poughkeepsie

Towns of Beekman, Dover, East Fishkill, Fishkill, LaGrange and Stanford

Arlington, Pine Plains, and Wappingers School Districts

Church of Regina Coeli, Hyde Park

Thanks also to “Bee Bee the Clown” for dropping in at some of our Drive-In Senior Picnics to bring smiles to lots of faces!

And many thanks to the dozens of volunteers who helped all our events run smoothly. Volunteering not only helps Dutchess County’s seniors; it’s a source of meaningful social and physical activity – and there’s a bottom-line benefit as well. According to the New York State Office for the Aging’s most recent estimates, the value of senior volunteers’ time and effort statewide comes to well over \$13.8 billion annually.

If you’re interested in volunteering for OFA in 2021, in any of our many programs, please contact OFA Outreach Coordinator Brian Jones at bjones@dutchessny.gov or (845) 486-2544.

Other aging news online:

The federal government is proposing changes to health care privacy (HIPAA) regulations to make them less cumbersome:

https://www.medpagetoday.com/publichealthpolicy/washington-watch/90184?xid=nl_covidupdate_2020-12-14&eun=g1261622d0r&utm_source=Sailthru&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=DailyUpdate_121420&utm_term=NL_Gen_Int_Daily_News_Update

In Wales, a group of seniors age 72 to 93 are using theatre to share their experiences of the COVID-19 pandemic. Many are new to performing:

https://www.theguardian.com/society/2020/dec/15/we-dont-want-to-be-seen-as-victims-theatre-group-older-people-covid?utm_term=aed3401f3f3b595d6846dd270e02dcdd&utm_campaign=SocietyWeekly&utm_source=esp&utm_medium=Email&CMP=societyweekly_email

This week in senior birthdays:

12/19: Actress Cicely Tyson (96)

12/20: Motown singer Kim Weston (81)

12/21: Talk show host Phil Donahue (86)

12/22: Mets pitcher Jerry Koosman (78)

12/23: Actor/voice artist Harry Shearer (77)

12/24: French artist Pierre Soulages (101)

12/25: Singer/songwriter Jimmy Buffett (74)

And plenty of Bad Jokes, regardless of whether you've been naughty or nice:

Q. Where does Santa go when Christmas is over?

A. To a ho-ho-ho-tel.

Q. What should you sing at a snowman's birthday party?

A. Freeze a jolly good fellow.

Q. What do reindeer hang on their Christmas trees?

A. Horn-aments.

Q: What's the most popular Christmas wine?

A: 'But I don't like Brussels sprouts!'