

Dutchess County Office for the Aging's

AGING NEWS

For the week of April 20

"How do you even spot a scam any more?"

That's a great question we received from an Office for the Aging client. The obvious "tells" of a scam, like poor spelling, implausible stories, and sketchy graphics, don't pop up in scam attempts as much as they used to.

Modern scams look like messages from friends and family, from your bank, from places you shop...and that makes them more likely to work against you, because they look more real.

"Don't Get Cocky, Kid"

If you've seen the first *Star Wars* movie, you recognize the line: a warning about overconfidence from Han Solo to young Luke Skywalker, who was boasting about his shooting skills against Imperial fighters. It works as a warning for us as well, to stay humble about our ability to spot and avoid scams. What makes us scam-savvy today can easily be outdated information tomorrow.

Scammers are like mosquitos. You can spray yourself head-to-toe with repellent, you can wear protective gear and stay away from areas that mosquitos frequent; and at the end of the day, while you're getting ready for bed, there's that telltale itchy bump on your skin. You did everything right, and it got you anyway. *How?*

It's A Numbers Game

Like mosquitos, the sheer number of scammers probing our weaknesses from around the world means that eventually they can find a target.

Scammers adapt to change as just as any successful business does -

because that's what they are: businesses. Their business happens to be theft, and they are consummate professionals. Their scams can be crafted with artificial intelligence. What that means for us is that the artificially synthesized voice trying to trick us on the other end of the phone can speak standard American English, right down to regional accents.

Or, more unsettlingly, the fake voice can sound exactly like one of our loved ones.

But Remember Your Training

Scammers still rely on urgency and panic to lower your guard. The single most effective scam prevention habit remains the same: **Stop. Think. Verify.**

The urgency the scammer is trying to create is fake. It's not a reason to act. They're hoping you fall back on your instincts. But no matter how slick the message is, if *any* message makes you feel rushed or stressed...STOP.

Don't engage. Don't click any links in emails or text messages. Don't scan any unexpected QR codes or answer surprise phone calls. It's like our moms said all those years ago, and maybe you said it to your own kids: *Don't touch that, you don't know where it's been!*

Report the Scam, Even If You Spotted It

Reporting scams even when you weren't victimized helps authorities track fraud patterns, identify criminal networks, and take down fraudulent websites faster. In the US, you can report to the Federal Trade Commission at **reportfraud.ftc.gov**, and to the FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center at **ic3.gov**. Each report directly contributes to protecting your friends and neighbors - and once in a while, it really helps catch criminals.

NY HEAP Cooling Application Assistance Now Open

It did feel a little like summer for a few days this past week...no better time to ask about New York State's Cooling Assistance Benefit. The benefit helps income-eligible households buy and install an air conditioner or fan to cool their home.

How does it work?

If you are eligible, you may receive one cooling benefit per applicant household for the purchase and installation of an air conditioner or fan. In circumstances where an air conditioner cannot be safely installed, a fan will be provided.

How much can I receive in cooling benefits?

The price cannot be more than \$800 with installation for a portable air conditioner, or fan, and not to exceed \$1,000 for an existing wall sleeve unit.

Like heating assistance funding, cooling assistance funds are limited and are distributed on a first-come-first-served basis.

For details on applications and eligibility, call 845-486-2555 or email

ofa@dutchessny.gov.

OFA SilverShield Scam Prevention Event (Monday 4/27)

We know many of the basic tools to avoid scams, like not engaging with communication attempts from those we do not know and have not verified. But how do we get past avoiding scammers, and move forward to reporting them?

That's where "SilverShield" (www.silvershield.ai) comes in. SilverShield and the New York State Office for the Aging have made 300 free SilverShield subscriptions available to Dutchess County older adults. You can register for our next SilverShield sign-up event, coming up Monday, April 27th at 2:30pm at the Office for the Aging Poughkeepsie Friendship Center at 114 Delafield St.

Register by calling OFA during business hours at 845-486-2555. We cannot accept registration requests made by email or voice mail.

OFA Wappinger Mobile Office Hours

OFA Ambassador Mary Reedy is hosting by-appointment OFA Mobile Office Hours around Dutchess County. It's a chance to get your age-related questions answered in person, with considerably less travel on your part.

Here's the schedule:

Tuesday, April 21st, 1p-4p – Town of Wappinger Senior Center

Town Hall Senior Center, 20 Middlebush Rd.

Appointments are 30 minutes long at each Mobile Office Hours event. Appointments can be made for either session by calling 845-486-2555 during business hours. We cannot accept reservation requests made by voice mail, email or text.

We will be adding many more Mobile Office Hours events throughout the county.

If your Dutchess County civic organization wants to host a Mobile Office Hours event, email ofa@dutchessny.gov or call 845-486-2555 during business hours.

At OFA, we're also available for presentations to groups on OFA Services, successful aging, scam prevention, home safety, caregiving, and much more. Contact us to find out more.

2026 Dutchess Honor-a-Veteran Gets Underway

The 2026 Dutchess County Honor-A-Veteran series kicked off on Thursday, April 16 with honors for the late Stephen Shumway (1947-2024), a Vietnam Veteran and Fishkill resident. If you know a deceased veteran who should be honored for their service to our country, and to learn more about past honorees, visit dutchessny.gov/honoraveteran.

For more information contact the Dutchess County Office of Veterans Affairs at 845-486-2060. The office is located at 1335 US 44, Suite 2 in Pleasant Valley, open 9a-5p weekdays.

Hearing Loss / Cochlear Implant Event (Thursday 4/21)

The April meeting of the Mid-Hudson chapter of the Hearing Loss Association of America features "The Bionic Ear: Understanding the Magic of

Cochlear Implants” with Allison Leasure, Engagement Manager for Cochlear Americas, and Brian Nicholas, MD, FACS, ENT/Otolaryngology at White Plains Hospital Physician Associates. It takes place on Thursday, April 21st, 5:15-6:30pm, at Elting Memorial Library in New Paltz (93 Main St.), [also available via Zoom](#).

Visit hearingloss-midhudson.org for more information.

Medication Drop-Off Day (Saturday 4/25)

What are we supposed to do with medications that are expired or otherwise no longer needed?

Flushing them risks endangering the water supply. Disposing of medications in regular trash, especially if they’re controlled substances, runs the risk of people with addiction looking through your garbage for a fix. And doing nothing with them isn’t a feasible solution either, seeing as a pet could get into them or somebody could take them by mistake.

All those reasons are why a National Medication Take Back Day happens twice a year, in April and October. The next take back day is

Saturday, April 25th; and there are four take-back events that day in Dutchess County, all taking place from 10am to 2 pm.

- Amenia Town Hall – 4988 US 44, Amenia
- Town of East Fishkill Police – 2468 NY 52, Hopewell Junction
- Vassar Brothers Medical Center – 9 Livingston St., Poughkeepsie
(Building A, Main Lobby Entrance)
- Wappinger Town Hall – 20 Middlebush Rd., Wappinger

Near northern Dutchess County, there is also a takeback event taking place at the Kingston Police Department (1 Garraghan Dr.).

Can't make it on the 25th? [Dutchess County also has 12 medication drop boxes at law enforcement agencies across the county](#), providing a safe way to anonymously dispose of your medications. Safe disposal helps prevent drug misuse, accidental ingestion, and protects our environment.

Prescription and over-the-counter medications, as well as ointments, are accepted and should be placed in sealed containers or plastic bags. Needles and other hazardous materials are not accepted.

OFA At Annual Conference on Caregiving in Hyde Park (Thursday, 5/7)

The annual Conference on Caregiving takes place on Thursday, May 7th from 8:30 am – 2 pm at the Wallace Center on the grounds of the FDR Historic Site on Route 9 in Hyde Park.

This year's theme is "20/20 Vision – Planning for a Bright Future." Topics in support of caregivers will include estate and financial planning; caregiving and grief support; end-of-life doula services; and Tai Chi/wellness. OFA staff will be at the conference to answer guests' questions about aging services in Dutchess County.

Registration takes place through the Alzheimer's Association. Call their helpline to save yourself a seat: **800-272-3900**. [You can also use this link.](#)

Breakfast and lunch are provided.

The Caregiver Conference is organized by the Dutchess County Office for the Aging with the Alzheimer's Association Hudson Valley Chapter, Parkinson's Disease Support Group of the Mid-Hudson Valley, Hudson Valley Hospice, and community members Cathy Regan, RN; Falisia Cotten-Swain, LCSW-R; and Eileen Hendriksen, LMSW.

AARP Shredder Events in April

One of the tricks used by identity thieves involves rummaging through our recycling for personally identifiable information. Protect yourself at an AARP Fraud Watch document-shredding event; there are two coming up in Dutchess County. Click the relevant links for registration info, including details on what sort of materials are and aren't accepted for shredding.

[Friday, April 24th, 10a-12:30p – St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church, 55](#)

Wilbur Blvd., Poughkeepsie

[Thursday, April 30th, 10a-12:30p – Hopewell Recreation Park, 392 NY 376,](#)

Hopewell Junction

Other news:

It's tax season, and that means it's also tax scam season. [Here's the ink to federal tax scam issues](#), and [here's the New York State version](#).

Where to start with older adults' legal needs? [Here's a good roundup in the Times](#).

If you enjoy wine in moderation [there's some promising news](#). Keep in mind that next week there may be a study that says just the opposite.

A deep dive on [one way bad actors study Medicare for fraud vulnerabilities](#).

This week's birthdays:

4/25: Actor/director [Al Pacino](#) (86)

4/26: Actor/comedian [Kevin James](#) (61)

4/27: Singer/songwriter/actress [Sheena Easton](#) (67)

4/28: Actress/dancer/singer [Ann-Margret](#) (85)

4/29: Singer/songwriter/guitarist/actor [Willie Nelson](#) (93)

4/30: Science-fiction author [Larry Niven](#) (88)

5/1: Singer/songwriter [Judy Collins](#) (87)

A Bad Joke for fishing season:

Give a man a fish and he'll eat for a day. Teach a man to fish and he'll
disappear all day.