

Dutchess County Office for the Aging's

## **AGING NEWS**

For the week of December 4

### **OLDER DRIVER SAFETY AWARENESS WEEK IS DECEMBER 4-8**

With winter about to arrive, there's no time like now to go over any concerns you have about driving as you age.

In New York State, there's no hard-and-fast rule on an age when giving up the keys is required. The state Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) has one standard for driving privileges: your driving ability. A physician, police officer, or someone who knows or has observed the driver can contact DMV if they believe a driving re-evaluation is needed. You can also have your driving skills checked by a driving rehab specialist or occupational therapist.

Because driving is all but essential for independence in a suburban/rural county like Dutchess, it's best to be prepared. It's never too late to learn how to become a better driver, and OFA wants to be a "key" resource for older drivers. We hosted a well-received AARP driver safety course earlier this year; if you're

interested in taking such a course in 2024, please contact us during business hours at 845-486-2555 or email [ofa@dutchessny.gov](mailto:ofa@dutchessny.gov). Once we've gauged the interest of older adults throughout Dutchess, we can set up however many classes as we need.

In the meantime, there's more to think about. Next time you visit your regular doctor, talk to them about any concerns you may have about your health as it relates to driving. Mention to the doctor if you're concerned that pain, stiffness, arthritis, or medications might impede your driving ability. At your next eye doctor visit, ask if there are ways to improve your eyesight and be sure your prescription is up to date. Sunglasses are a good investment this time of year, given that sunrises and sunsets happen this time of year when roads are busiest. Wintertime snow glare is yet another concern; after all, there's a reason skiers and snowboarders wear sunglasses and it's not just for looks.

## **WHAT ELSE CAN YOU DO?**

Staying physically active helps improve strength and flexibility, which you'll need to continue driving well. OFA offers both live and remote exercise classes throughout the county; contact us to learn more and get signed up.

## **MORE ADVICE**

*When in doubt, don't go out.* Dutchess County winters can be tough on both drivers and their vehicles. Plan your travel for when conditions are best.

Remember that our geography can affect road conditions. Rain in Poughkeepsie can easily be snow in Millbrook.

*Drive like a townie.* By that, we mean you should have a good working knowledge of less-crowded alternatives to major roads, without resorting to a mobile device's mapping app. Apps can help you find alternate routes, but there are many mobile signal "dead zones" in Dutchess where your map won't update.

*Use assistive devices.* Back-up cameras are standard equipment on new cars, but if you're not looking for a new car there are aftermarket cameras that can be installed on older cars.

For more transportation options for older adults, see [dutchessny.gov/OFAtransportation](https://dutchessny.gov/OFAtransportation) or contact OFA.

***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](mailto:ofa@dutchessny.gov) website: [www.dutchessny.gov/aging](http://www.dutchessny.gov/aging)***

## **MEDICARE OPEN ENROLLMENT SEASON ENDS DECEMBER 7<sup>TH</sup>**

As of this week, appointments for individual counseling with the Office for the Aging's HIICAP counselors for the remaining days of the open enrollment period were completely booked. Fortunately, there are other sources from which you can seek health insurance information and counseling:

- Medicare ([www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov); 1-800-633-4227; TTY: 1-877-486-2048) offers a great deal of useful information, including an online Medicare Plan Finder tool which allows beneficiaries to enter the names of their prescription drugs to generate a comparison of available plans;
- Medicare Interactive ([www.medicareinteractive.org](http://www.medicareinteractive.org); 1-800-333-4114) provides easy-to-understand answers to Medicare beneficiaries, family members, caregivers and professionals alike;
- EPIC (Elderly Pharmaceutical Insurance Coverage) is a New York State program for older adults, administered by the state Department of

Health. EPIC operates a toll-free Helpline which is available from 8:00AM to 5:00PM, Monday through Friday. Call 1-800-332-3742 (TTY 1-800-290-9138) for more information or to request an application, or email [nysdohepic@magellanhealth.com](mailto:nysdohepic@magellanhealth.com).

- The Social Security Administration ([www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov); 1-800-772-1213) can direct you to extra help with Medicare prescription drug costs, The Social Security website includes publications on prescription drug plan cost assistance in 17 languages.

## **THIS WEEK'S "FRIENDLY CALLS" ORIENTATION SESSIONS AT OFA**

You can brighten the day of an older adult right here in Dutchess County, and help keep them socially connected during the holidays, by joining our "Friendly Calls" program as a volunteer.

It's easy to fit Friendly Calls volunteering into your schedule. All it takes is 20 to 30 minutes of your time, once a week. Make an appointment for a Friendly Calls orientation session at OFA, and we can answer your questions and get you connected with an older Dutchess County resident who's interested in hearing

from you. We have Friendly Calls orientations available on the following dates and times. Pick one:

**Monday, December 4<sup>th</sup> – 10:00 am**

**Tuesday, December 5<sup>th</sup> – 2:00 pm**

**Thursday, December 7<sup>th</sup> – 2:00 pm**

Space at orientations is limited. To make an appointment, email

[bjones@dutchessny.gov](mailto:bjones@dutchessny.gov) or call 845-486-2555. If you are unable to come to

Poughkeepsie for an orientation, send an email to the address above and we'll

work with you on setting up an orientation.

OFA also offers onsite orientations for Dutchess County workplaces with group volunteering programs. Contact OFA to find out more!

## **TELECONFERENCE WITH DEMENTIA CARE EXPERT TEEPA SNOW**

**(Friday 12/8, RSVP by Tuesday 12/5)**

You're invited to a live teleconference next week in Rhinebeck featuring Teepa Snow, a renowned expert and advocate in the realms of caregiving and interaction with individuals affected by dementia and Alzheimer's disease.

*Event Details:*

- Title: A Person-Centered Approach to Transitions in Caregiving
- Date & Time: December 8th, 10 am - 3 pm
- Venue: The Pavilion at Brookmeade, 34 Brookmeade Dr., Rhinebeck

Teepa Snow's sessions are consistently enlightening, offering valuable insights that resonate with our mission. This is an exceptional opportunity for families, friends, and caregivers to deepen their understanding and refine their approach in these critical areas.

RSVP by December 5th, 2023 to [info@brookmeadecommunity.org](mailto:info@brookmeadecommunity.org)

For additional information regarding the agenda and content, [click here](#).

**FOR DUTCHESS SENIORS, SOME GET-UP-AND-GOGO**

Imagine that your 88-year-old mom in Beacon has been glad to adapt to the world of mobile technology, but she finds ride-sharing apps to be less than user-friendly. Or your 77-year-old dad in Red Hook has heard of Uber and Lyft and is interested but prefers his old reliable landline to a smartphone. They've got appointments to get to but can't always do it on their own.

The scenarios described above might also be your own situation.

The Office for the Aging is connecting Dutchess County's older adults with the non-emergency medical transportation they need, with help from "GoGoGrandparent" (GoGo for short), an on-demand ride-sharing service that's been expanding nationwide, including in Dutchess County.

GoGo is aimed at Dutchess County older adults (age 60+) who are *not* eligible for transportation via Medicaid and have no other means of transportation to non-emergency appointments.

During the pilot phase of this program, OFA and GoGo are providing a limited number of free non-emergency medical trips for Dutchess County older adults, within Dutchess County, wherever local Uber and Lyft drivers are available.

To register for your first GoGo ride, call OFA during business hours at 845-486-2555. Once registered, you'll receive further instructions on how to sign up for rides.

*Note: To apply for access to free GoGo rides, a client must first register for the program by contacting OFA during business hours at 845-486-2555. Contacting GoGo without first contacting OFA to register for the program can result in being charged for rides.*



## **OTHER TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS**

As required by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Dutchess County Public Transit operates an ADA Complementary Paratransit Service for qualified individuals within Dutchess County and the City of Poughkeepsie. The service is available to eligible individuals who live within three-quarters of a mile of a regularly scheduled bus route and who cannot use the regular fixed route service. The service is available on the days and during the hours that the fixed route operates. Complementary paratransit service is defined as next day service. Reservations can be scheduled up to seven days in advance. Callers on Saturday, Sunday, and holidays will be connected to a voicemail box. Please leave your name and phone number, and you will be contacted within 24 hours to arrange your transportation. When scheduling a reservation, please provide the dispatcher with complete addresses for all pick-up and drop-off locations, and any special needs. Dutchess County Public Transit may provide the service with any appropriate vehicle. For more information, call 845-473-8424 or visit [www.dutchessny.gov/publictransit](http://www.dutchessny.gov/publictransit), which includes maps of all Dutchess County Public Transit bus routes.

**VA Castle Point** (845-831-2000 extension 5145) transports veterans to appointments at Veterans Hospitals.

**Pawling Resource Center** (845-855-3459, [www.pawlingresourcecenter.org](http://www.pawlingresourcecenter.org)) serves Town and Village of Pawling older adults.

**North East Community Center** (518-592-1399 extension 101 or [nedt@neccmillerton.org](mailto:nedt@neccmillerton.org)) provides transportation services for residents of Amenia, Dover, North East/Millerton, Stanford and Washington/Millbrook, via the Care Car; and also coordinates the Northeast Dutchess Transit Program serving Pine Plains, Stanford and Washington/Millbrook.

**Friends of Seniors** (845-485-1277, [friendsofseniors.org](http://friendsofseniors.org)) provides non-emergency medical transportation (and other services) for the frail elderly (60+). As of August 2023, Friends of Seniors services have been taken over by Catholic Charities Community Services of Dutchess County.

#### **Other news:**

A new Harvard report indicates that [affordable housing for older adults is expected to be a growing issue](#) as baby boomers start turning 80.

A diet rich in whole grains has been linked to [reduced cognitive decline in elderly Black individuals](#).

[Your calorie needs change](#) as you age.

As the December 7<sup>th</sup> deadline for Medicare open enrollment for 2024 gets closer, watch out for [marketers who break Medicare and Medicare Advantage advertising rules](#).

The ticket presale for the Rolling Stones' 2024 tour [crashed the AARP website this week](#). AARP really is sponsoring their tour.

**This week's birthdays:**

12/2: Novelist [T.C. Boyle](#) (75)

12/3: Actress/author [Julianne Moore](#) (63)

12/4: Former Knicks star [Bernard King](#) (67)

12/5: Author/playwright [Hanif Kureishi](#) (69)

12/6: Actor/comedian [Steven Wright](#) (68)

12/7: Baseball Hall-of-Famer [Johnny Bench](#) (76)

12/8: Irish flute player [James Galway](#) (84)

**And this week's Bad Joke:**

I just wrote a book on reverse psychology. Do not read it.