

Dutchess County Office for the Aging's

AGING NEWS

For the week of January 6

MAKING YOUR WISHES KNOWN

When it comes to your health care and end-of-life decisions, do your loved ones know what you would want, or would they be left guessing and arguing among themselves if you became unable to decide for yourself?

These don't have to be awkward conversations. It may come as a pleasant surprise to those closest to you that you've been giving end-of-life and aging issues some thought, to spare them future confusion in an already stressful situation.

Making your wishes clearly known, in writing, is the basis of what's called "advance care planning." The goal is to create plans known as "advance directives" covering the decisions that are best made ahead of time, while you're able to do so. The directive can describe what you want, as well as what you don't.

NOTHING'S CARVED IN STONE

Your wishes may change between now and this time next year, or ten years from now, or even next week. An advance directive only takes effect if you cannot communicate your own wishes. That's how the directive is designed: to let you make changes as your needs evolve.

The American Bar Association defines advance care planning as “A process for setting goals and plans with respect to medical care and treatments. It requires conversations between the individual and his or her family, key health care providers, and anyone else who may be involved in decision-making. It can begin at any point in a person's life, regardless of his or her current health state and, ideally, is documented in an advance directive or recorded in your medical record, revisited periodically, and becomes more specific as your health status changes.”

If you are looking for a simple way to make your wishes known, a living will or a durable power of attorney are great directives to start with. There may be other directives needed to cover your finances and estate, depending on your

needs.

WHAT HAPPENS WITHOUT DIRECTIVES?

Planning can only improve your chances of receiving the care you prefer, while avoiding treatments you may wish to avoid. The lack of an advance care directive, on the other hand, can complicate what could otherwise be straightforward decisions about your health care. Without a directive, doctors may try to look to family, friends or clergy for guidance, or to a court-appointed guardian if no one can be found to make decisions on your behalf.

IT COSTS LESS THAN DOING NOTHING

While OFA legal services do not have a financial eligibility requirement, the services are intended for those who would be otherwise unable to afford them. We operate our legal services division on a suggested-donation basis.

Reach out to OFA at 845-486-2555 or ofa@dutchessny.gov, and we can help you get started with the advance directive process. Visit

dutchessny.gov/ofalegal to find out more about our full range of legal

services, as well as additional legal services located nearby.

Golden Living is prepared by the Dutchess County Office for the Aging,

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SOMETHING DIFFERENT TO START 2025 – CHICKEN SOUP

Try as we may to avoid them, we all catch colds. To battle this inevitability to a draw, humanity has come up with folk remedies; some of which do work, at least to some extent.

You might recognize the following remedy, taken from Pliny the Elder's *Natural History*, written 77-79 A.D.: "The skin of the crop of poultry, sprinkled into the drink when dried, or roasted if fresh, relieves chest catarrhs and moist coughs."

It's translated from the Latin of Imperial Rome, but we know chicken soup when we see it.

The medical journal *Chest*, from the American College of Chest Physicians, reports that chicken soup is indeed a useful temporary cold remedy. The soup's heat clears the airways. Its water keeps you hydrated and replaces fluids. The combination of fats, garlic and spices work together to break up mucus and calm the throat.

And it can't be a can of Campbell's that'll cure what ails you. Too processed, and too much sodium. What's needed is the soup our grandparents would make when we were home sick. Look at any culture on earth. If they raised poultry, they used the whole bird – and made some kind of soup from it.

None as good as yours or your grandma's, of course. But if you don't have the classic family recipe handy, here are just a few from around the world.

From the southern US: [chicken and rice soup](#)

From Finland: [you might need to know Finnish \(or Google Translate\) for this one.](#)

From Africa: [chicken pepper soup.](#)

From Mexico (and the Caribbean): [caldo de pollo.](#)

From Poland: it's called [rosół](#) there.

From India: [chicken rasam](#) and more.

Of course there's [Jewish chicken soup](#), and many other culinary mashups like chicken matzo ball ramen.

[Japanese style chicken and dumplings](#)

And we're not forgetting [the vegan spin on "chicken" soup](#), which includes the important tip for all noodle soups - to cook your noodles separately from your soup, lest the noodles go mushy from absorbing too much broth.

“FRIENDLY CALLS” JANUARY VOLUNTEER ORIENTATIONS

With OFA's "Friendly Calls" program, you can choose to make phone calls to older adults at risk of social isolation, or you can choose to receive calls - or you can do both. For those of you who haven't volunteered before and are exploring your possibilities, "Friendly Calls" can be ideal. A typical "Friendly Calls" series takes place once a week, for 20-30 minutes a call, for eight weeks. "Friendly Calls" volunteers must be at least 18 years of age. Those

who wish to receive calls must be Dutchess County residents at least 60 years of age.

Upcoming “Friendly Calls” orientations at OFA headquarters at 114 Delafield St. in Poughkeepsie are scheduled as follows:

Tuesday 1/7/25, 10:00am

Monday 1/13/25, 1:30pm

Tuesday 1/21/25, 10:00am

Monday 1/27/25, 1:30pm

To schedule your orientation – they last about an hour – here at our Poughkeepsie office, call 845-486-2555 during business hours, or email ledgar@dutchessny.gov.

EBT CARD NEWS FOR 2025

After a rash of “skimming” scams targeting EBT (formerly known as food stamps) benefit cards, New York State is ([slowly](#)) moving its EBT system to more secure cards, the kind with “smart card” chips that we’ve seen on debit and credit cards for years. [Here’s the latest from the U.S. Department of](#)

[Agriculture.](#)

We'll let you know ASAP when New York announces a timetable on the rollout of new cards.

In the meantime, if you've had benefits stolen recently, [the window to have a scammed card replenished is a lot tighter](#) than it was just a few months ago.

Worried about scams in general? Visit dutchessny.gov/scampreventionresources for useful contact information.

Other news:

[Three big Medicare prescription changes](#) are now in effect.

[Federal offices will be closed Thursday, January 9th in honor of President Jimmy Carter](#), whose state funeral will take place that day. Also cancelled on January 9th are that day's postal deliveries; and post offices will likewise be closed, along with local [Social Security](#) offices.

Got a natural Christmas tree? [Time to haul it out of the house.](#) Check with

your town/village/city government on the tree-disposal procedures for your community.

What's a safe amount of alcohol to consume – [none? Some?](#) Researchers remain divided. Check with your doctor, seeing as alcohol and medications can interact badly.

Hungarian-born Agnes Keleti had been the world's oldest Olympic medalist, [but passed away](#) just shy of her 104th birthday, which would've been January 9th. She medaled at both the 1952 and 1956 Summer Games. [100-year-old French cyclist Charles Coste](#) is now the oldest living medalist, having won gold at the 1948 Summer Games. [97-year-old Peter Kennedy](#) is the oldest living American medalist.

When does [the 2025 cost of living adjustment for Social Security](#) kick in?

Reminder: [it's illegal to feed wild deer](#) (and moose) in New York State.

This week's birthdays:

1/3: Singer-songwriter-guitarist [Stephen Stills](#) (80)

1/4: Author/historian [Doris Kearns Goodwin](#) (82)

1/5: Actor/director [Robert Duvall](#) (94)

1/6: Chef/author [Nigella Lawson](#) (65)

1/7: Singer/songwriter [Kenny Loggins](#) (77)

1/8: Singer [Shirley Bassey](#) (88)

1/9: Singer/songwriter [Crystal Gayle](#) (74)

And here's the latest Bad Joke:

Eggs benedict should be served on a hubcap, because there's no place like chrome for the hollandaise.