

Dutchess County Office for the Aging's

## **AGING NEWS**

For the week of March 16

### **Medicare Annual Wellness Visits Mark 15 Years**

Just as we at the Office for the Aging advise older adults to "get to know us before you need us," so should older adults get to know their health situation before serious issues arise, whenever possible.

There can be misunderstandings between a patient and their primary care physician (PCP) as to the difference between a regular checkup (sometimes called a "physical") and an "annual wellness visit" (AWV), which is a specifically defined event approved by Medicare once yearly. Your doctors should make it clear to you what you do and don't get at a wellness visit.

### **What An Annual Wellness Visit Is...**

Introduced by the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services in 2011, annual Medicare wellness visits start at age 66, or the year after you start using Medicare. When you become eligible for Medicare at age 65, you'll have a "Welcome to Medicare" visit which can be performed any time after your 65th birthday but before you turn 66. The next year, you'll have an annual visit. Medicare wellness visits are recommended every year, and focus on prevention, health goals, and advance care planning.

### **And What The Wellness Visit *Isn't***

It's not a full physical exam. It's not intended to manage chronic conditions. Instead, the visit is an opportunity to discuss health concerns, get preventive care recommendations, and develop a plan to improve overall health and well-being.

### **What To Expect At a Wellness Visit**

The visit may include a health risk assessment, advance care planning, a review of family history, an assessment for medical conditions (including falls, alcohol use and cognitive function), and some prevention like counseling, immunizations, and screening for cancer.

### **Why Not Combine Both Types of Visits?**

It's tricky to achieve, but not impossible. The answer comes down to a growing number of older adults, a shortage of physicians to meet that growth, and only so many hours in a day.

A study published last fall in the *Annals of Family Medicine* tested the theory of combining wellness visit and traditional physicals. The typical 20-minute wellness visit was extended to 40 minutes, with the extra time used to cover both wellness-visit issues as well as patients' more immediate complaints.

While the study made no blanket recommendations, the study's lead author noted one unusual finding: that screening rates increased significantly after combined visits.

## **The Cost Factor**

Under Medicare, annual wellness visit costs are covered for:

- One wellness visit each year. This visit can happen once every 366 days.  
On a Medicare Advantage plan, this visit can happen any time each calendar year.
- A discussion with your provider about topics related to preventive care and advance directives.

## **If You Need To Ask About Something Else**

When you make your Annual Wellness Visit appointment, you can ask about the possibility of combining it with a traditional physical, while checking to see what additional copays could be required.

Alternately, you could make a separate appointment to discuss those concerns.

For general Medicare and health insurance counseling questions, call OFA at **845-486-2555** or visit **[dutchessny.gov/hiicap](http://dutchessny.gov/hiicap)**.

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### **Introducing “Silvershield” Scam Prevention (Tue 3/24, Poughkeepsie)**

As scams get ever more sophisticated, it can become more likely that a scammer will successfully trick you into giving up money and/or personal information. We can get scam prevention help from caregivers and loved ones; but they can't always be there in the moment, when the scam attempt is happening.

We need tools that can efficiently detect scams, report them to law enforcement agencies so that investigations can proceed with the speed they require to succeed.

That's where OFA's new partnership with "Silvershield" ([www.silvershield.ai](http://www.silvershield.ai)) comes in. It's a way to check suspicious communications quickly and get clear guidance on what to do next.

OFA is hosting an "Introduction to Silvershield" event for Dutchess County residents over 60, on Tuesday March 24<sup>th</sup> from 2:30 to 4:30pm, at the OFA Poughkeepsie Friendship Center at 114 Delafield St. in Poughkeepsie. Bring your mobile device if you have one.

Seating is limited, so book your spot by calling OFA during business hours at 845-486-2555. We cannot accept reservation requests made by voice mail, email or text message.

### **New Day/Time For "Navigating Medicare" Classes in Rhinebeck**

OFA's monthly "Navigating Medicare" classes at Rhinebeck's Starr Library have been rescheduled to the second Wednesday of every month at 4:00pm.

The monthly “Navigating Medicare” classes held at the Poughkeepsie Galleria community room remain on the third Wednesday of every month at 10:00am, which means the next Rhinebeck class is taking place on Wednesday, April 8<sup>th</sup>.

To sign up for these regular “Navigating Medicare” classes, call OFA during business hours at 845-486-2555.

We also have a “Navigating Medicare” class scheduled for Friday, April 10<sup>th</sup> at 9:30am, at Adriance Memorial Library in Poughkeepsie (93 Market St., parking on Noxon St.). To sign up for this class specifically, call 845-485-3445 extension 3380.

### **“Pancakes in the Park” Returns**

One sure sign of spring is when the sap in Dutchess County's maple trees starts running during the late winter and early spring. OFA and Dutchess County Parks mark the occurrence each year with our free "Pancakes in the Park" event for Dutchess County older adults.

By popular demand there are now two "Pancakes" events, both at 10:30am: one on Thursday, March 26th at the auditorium at Bowdoin Park in

Wappingers Falls; another on Tuesday, April 7th at the Pavilion at Brookmeade in Rhinebeck. Each participant gets a pancake breakfast accompanied by a splash of maple syrup tapped from Bowdoin's own trees. A limited amount of syrup will be available for purchase.

Seating is limited and advance registration with OFA is required.

Registration is now open and seats are going fast! Call us at 845-486-2555 during business hours to register. **Guests may register for only one event.**

We cannot accept reservation requests made by voice mail, email, or text message.

### **Tech Support Day at OFA (Tuesday 3/31)**

Keeping up with technology can be hard for all of us, but a chance to get some help with the tricky parts is on the way. We at Office for the Aging are excited to work with New York State Senator Rob Rolison's office to host a Tech Support Day for Older Adults at OFA's Poughkeepsie Friendship Center at 114 Delafield St., 2:30-4:30pm on Tuesday, March 31<sup>st</sup>.

Sign up by calling OFA during business hours at 845-486-2555.

## **“CarFit” for Mature Drivers, at Marist (Saturday 4/11)**

The Marist University Doctor of Physical Therapy program and Helen Hayes Rehabilitation Hospital present the CarFit Program. It’s a free, interactive educational program designed to improve older driver safety. Trained volunteers provide information ensuring the safest “fit” for older drivers and their vehicles.

The event takes place on Saturday, April 11<sup>th</sup>, from 9am to 2:30pm, at the Marist University Allied Health Building, Parking Lot 18, Beck Place, Poughkeepsie.

Appointments are required. To make an appointment, contact Lynn Matthes at 845-786-4155 or [lynn.matthes@helenhayeshosp.org](mailto:lynn.matthes@helenhayeshosp.org).

## **OFA Nutrition Volunteers Wanted (Poughkeepsie, East Fishkill)**

OFA’s Nutrition Services division is looking for dedicated volunteers who can assist our Home Delivered Meals program:

- At our central kitchen at OFA headquarters in Poughkeepsie; and

- As drivers for our Home Delivered Meals program's East Fishkill hub, which operates out of the East Fishkill Community Center in Hopewell Junction.

See [www.dutchessny.gov/ofavolunteer](http://www.dutchessny.gov/ofavolunteer) for more information including a printable volunteering form. Mileage reimbursement is available for Home Delivered Meals volunteers who make deliveries using their own vehicle.

### **OFA March Mobile Office Hours**

If you have questions about aging services that would be best served by an in-person meeting, but travel to and from Poughkeepsie is a challenge, OFA Ambassador Mary Reedy is hosting by-appointment OFA Mobile Office Hours around Dutchess County.

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

Here's the schedule:

Monday, March 23<sup>rd</sup> – Town of Poughkeepsie Senior Center

14 Abe's Way, Poughkeepsie

Tuesday, March 31<sup>st</sup>, 10a-1p (new time) – Beekman Town Hall

4 Main St., Poughquag

April dates are coming soon.

If your Dutchess County civic organization wants to host a Mobile Office Hours event, email [ofa@dutchessny.gov](mailto: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.

### **Scam Prevention for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (Tue 3/17)**

OFA Outreach Coordinator Brian Jones will give a presentation on scam and fraud protection for members of the hearing loss community and their caregivers on Tuesday, March 17th at 5:15 pm, at the Pleasant Valley Library at 1584 Main St (US 44) in Pleasant Valley, for the Hearing Loss Association of America's Mid-Hudson chapter.

The presentation is open to the public and recommended for people with hearing loss and/or family members with hearing loss. To register, visit

**hearingloss-midhudson.org**, email

**hearingloss.midhudson@gmail.com**, or call

**845-489-7008**. Can't make it to the presentation, but want some close-at-hand scam prevention resources? Visit **dutchessny.gov/ofaprintable** for important strategies and contact information.

### **Volunteer OFA Exercise Instructors Wanted**

We've been getting a lot of inquiries lately about exercise classes for older adults in Dutchess County, but have you ever thought about teaching an exercise class?

No experience is necessary. We provide all training. To learn more about the classes, visit [www.dutchessny.gov/seniorexercise](http://www.dutchessny.gov/seniorexercise).

### **OFA at Alzheimer's Mini Conference in Millerton (Wed 3/18)**

Join the Alzheimer's Association, the Office for the Aging, Sun River Health

and community partners for a mini-conference and listening session on Alzheimer's disease, dementia and memory loss:

**Wednesday, March 18<sup>th</sup>, 9:30-11:30am**

**Millerton-NorthEast Library Annex (OFA Friendship Center)**

**28 Century Blvd., Millerton**

It's essential learning for older adults and caregivers of all ages. Sign up by calling OFA at 845-486-2555 or emailing [ofa@dutchessny.gov](mailto:ofa@dutchessny.gov).

Light refreshments will be provided. The event is supported in part by grants from the New York State Department of Health.

**Other news:**

Following up on last week's newsletter that detailed concerns about dementia versus normal forgetfulness, this helpful list of [10 early signs of Alzheimer's disease and dementia](#).

As the April tax deadline gets closer, [here come the tax scams](#). Watch out for them.

[Indiana has become the first state to ban “crypto kiosks,”](#) which are commonly used in scams targeting older adults. Many other states have restrictions in place, but no other states have passed outright bans. We’re keeping an eye out for developments specific to New York State but haven’t seen anything yet.

### **This week’s birthdays:**

3/13: Actor/director/screenwriter [William H. Macy](#) (76)

3/14: Actor/comedian/director/screenwriter [Billy Crystal](#) (78)

3/15: Actor [Judd Hirsch](#) (91)

3/16: Singer-songwriter/guitarist [Nancy Wilson](#) (Heart) (72)

3/17: Singer/songwriter/Hudson Valley resident [John Sebastian](#) (82)

3/18: Pianist/composer [John Kander](#) (99)

3/19: Football coach [Andy Reid](#) (68)

**You're one of the lucky ones who get to read our weekly Bad Joke:**

What's blue and not very heavy? Light blue.