



For Those About To Turn 100 (And Their Friends)

Who's up for a party?

Every year, we celebrate the centenarians of Dutchess County, as well as couples married 70 years or more, in the Summer issue of this newsletter.

If you are, or know of, a county resident turning 100 or more this year, or a couple celebrating their 70th anniversary this year, be a part of the celebration by contacting OFA at **845-486-2555** or **ofa@dutchessny.gov**. We expect to publish the Summer issue in late May.

One Secret Might Be In Their Gardens

We know some of our centenarians through services facilitated by the Office for the Aging, but many others remain fully independent, and fully active. They don't have any one secret for their extraordinary longevity, but they often mention one factor that many of them have in common: gardening.

Gardening meets many goals associated with successful aging. It facilitates daily exercise, exposes us to the sun's Vitamin D, and provides fresh fruits and vegetables. Gardening is also an excellent social activity; and after this past winter, it will be great to get outside. The last spring frost in the Poughkeepsie area is expected around April 30th, but there's still a 30% chance of the last frost happening well before or well after that date.

If gardening isn't your interest, remember that *any* kind of exercise is better than being sedentary. If you have concerns that exercise and your health conditions won't mix, talk to your health care providers about the kinds of exercise that can work for you. See **dutchessny.gov/seniorexercise** for a list of OFA's available exercise options.

A Message from County Executive Sue Serino



Dear Friend,

It's such an honor to have met and gotten to know so many of you over the years. You have certainly helped make Dutchess County what it is today, and you continue to add so much to our community.

When I delivered my annual State of the County Address in mid-March, I outlined several new initiatives for Dutchess' older adults that I'm thrilled to share with you. A few of them include:

- *An Office for the Aging Ambassador position;*
- *A "Putting Your Skills Back to Work!" Older Adults Skills Fair later this year;*
- *The introduction of a "Senior-to-Senior Pen Pals" intergenerational program;*
- *Trainings for families for those whose loved ones' homes have become dangerous to live in due to hoarding; and*
- *A community-wide survey to better understand how we can continue to improve serving our older adults.*

We will roll out these initiatives in the coming months, and we'll share more information about each so you can take part. Our Office for the Aging does so much for our older adults, and these new programs will complement their efforts to ensure you stay active and connected to your community and each other.

As always, I thank you for all you've contributed to Dutchess County, and I look forward to seeing you soon!

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sue".

“Dutchess Deed Watch” Now Available

Deed fraud is a crime in which thieves record a fraudulent document to try to take ownership of a home that isn't theirs. Deed fraud scams were first announced by the FBI in 2008, and the scams have remained stubbornly persistent since then, especially in areas with limited housing availability, like much of New York State.

You may have seen infomercials and received mailers from companies wanting to sell you protection against deed fraud – but there's no need to buy any of that.

The office of Dutchess County Clerk Brad Kendall has introduced a new Dutchess Deed Watch website that's free to use.

Visit dutchessny.gov/countyclerk and scroll down to the Dutchess Deed Watch section.

A Day For Our Unpaid Caregivers - May 7th

The free annual Conference on Caregiving takes place on Wednesday, May 7th, 8:30 am - 2 pm at the Wallace Center, on the grounds of the FDR Historic Site on Route 9 in Hyde Park. It's a day for older adults' caregivers to get better acquainted with the services available for them and the older adults for whom they care.

Seating is limited; register through the Alzheimer's Association helpline at **800-272-3900**. Registration opens April 7th. 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 and FaLisia Cotten-Swain.



Health Insurance Information, Counseling and Assistance Program

Dutchess County OFA HIICAP Hotline

845-486-2566

Make an appointment to speak with a trained Dutchess County OFA HIICAP volunteer, for unbiased information specific to your needs regarding Medicare, Medicaid, Medicare Savings Program, Extra Help for prescription drugs, EPIC (Elderly Pharmaceutical Insurance Coverage), and much more!

For more information, visit

dutchessny.gov/hiicap

THRIVE60+

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Available for free at libraries, senior centers and municipal buildings throughout Dutchess County.

Five issues published annually, including a Medicare-focused edition in September.

To be added to or removed from our mailing list, call 845-486-2544 or email bjones@dutchessny.gov.

OFA Volunteering Q&A: Ways You Can Help

I'd like to make good use of my free time, but I don't know where to start.

Whatever your volunteering preferences, the Dutchess County Office for the Aging has plenty of options to meet them. We can answer some of your questions here, and you can find out more by visiting dutchessny.gov/ofavolunteer, emailing ofa@dutchessny.gov, or calling **845-486-2555**.

I don't want to overcommit

How does 20-30 minutes, once a week for eight weeks sound? Along with a brief orientation, that's the full time commitment for OFA's "Friendly Calls" program. You reach out with a weekly phone call to an older adult in Dutchess County at risk of social isolation and loneliness, and help them re-connect with the wider world. You can even make a "Friendly Call" when you're on vacation.

I really need to get out of the house

OFA has plenty of options available.

There's an ongoing need for volunteer drivers throughout the county in the OFA Home Delivered Meals program, which brings nutritious weekday meals to hundreds of homebound older adults throughout the county. Deliveries originate at OFA Friendship Centers in Beacon, East Fishkill, Millerton, Pawling, Pleasant Valley (Tri-Town), Red Hook, and Wassaic (South Amenia), as well as from OFA's central kitchen at our headquarters in Poughkeepsie. Typical delivery hours take place during middays, and mileage reimbursement is available for drivers who use their own vehicles. Many Friendship Centers would be happy to have additional pairs of hands as well.

OFA Summer Picnic season also begins soon, with 12 picnics between Memorial Day and Labor Day. In addition to helping thousands of your older friends and neighbors, volunteering at an OFA Summer Picnic is a great way to stay physically active. Your

daily 10,000 steps are all but guaranteed when you help out at a Summer Picnic.

You can also become an OFA clerical volunteer at our Poughkeepsie headquarters, and help us assemble picnic season goodie bags and prepare OFA newsletters for mailing.

Will my unique skills come in handy?

Absolutely. If you have musical, storytelling, or performing arts talent, our Friendship Centers have receptive audiences.

On the other hand, if you're able to simplify health insurance paperwork, the skills you have are very much in demand. Our Health Insurance Information, Counseling and Assistance Program (HIICAP) is a non-sales-oriented program that answers older adults' questions about Medicare, Medicare Advantage programs (managed care), Medicare prescription drug coverage, Medigap, and other health and long term care insurance. HIICAP counselors help older adults sort out the sales pitches from the truly useful assistance.

You can also learn a new skill by volunteering to lead an OFA Exercise and/or "A Matter of Balance" class. We'll provide the free training.

I know a teenager who needs to do some community service work for school, and--

Say no more. We'll gladly have them, especially during Summer Picnic season. If they're under 18, they'll need a parent or guardian to sign a waiver in addition to the regular OFA volunteer form. All OFA volunteer applications are subject to background checks. OFA volunteering options are typically best suited to high-schoolers.

May I help in more than one way?

We thought you'd never ask. Of course!

Will I have a real impact?

In more ways than you can imagine.

Enjoying the Day at an OFA Friendship Center



A spirited game of cards at the Poughkeepsie OFA Friendship Center, with a local Cub Scout pack. The kids and older adults shared their skills in chess, dominoes, Uno and more.



Hula hoop time at the Beacon OFA Friendship Center!



Attendees at our East Fishkill OFA Friendship Center celebrated the spirit of Valentine's Day in February.



Dutchess County Parks joined the Red Hook OFA Friendship Center for a recent "Senior Park Prints" beginners' art class.

There's an OFA Friendship Center near you!

Beacon • East Fishkill • Millerton • Pawling • Pleasant Valley (Tri-Town) • Poughkeepsie • Red Hook • Wassaic (South Amenia)

Contact OFA to learn more
845-486-2555 / ofa@dutchessny.gov

“Brace Yourself” for Medical Equipment Scams

Before we get into the meat of this article, promise us that you'll share this information with friends and family who don't receive this newsletter, and who may not be active online. We do our best to reach all 80,000 older adults in Dutchess County; but reliable word-of-mouth from friends, family and neighbors is the best way to ensure OFA's messages reach the people who need it most.

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At a OFA scam prevention event this year in Pawling, a local resident came to us with an unusual story: that Medicare had paid claims in his name for \$15,000 worth of catheters. His health care providers had never prescribed him catheters, let alone \$15,000 worth. He suspected a scam, and reported it to Medicare as such.

This scam is just one of many reported between 2022 and 2025, just for suspicious catheter claims. The National Association of Accountable Care Organizations spotted the suspicious claims pattern: jumping from 50,000 Medicare beneficiaries in prior years, to over 450,000 in 2024.

Medicare didn't spot much of anything, having paid likely bogus claims that passed the \$3 billion mark last year.

The scam covers the gamut of medical equipment commonly used by older adults and disabled individuals: spinal and knee braces, oxygen, artificial limbs, wheelchairs, orthotics, and more.

The first line of defense against these scams isn't Medicare or other insurers. It's not our health care providers, and not law enforcement. *It's us.*

How This Scam Operates

The scammers reach out to their potential victims - people like you - often pretending to be from Medicare or a medical equipment manufacturer. What to do? Hang up. Better yet, don't pick up in the first place.

The scammers will give anybody who picks up the phone a too-good-to-be-true pitch: that you're eligible for free or heavily discounted medical equipment. All you need is to provide them your Medicare ID or Social Security Number - and that's the reddest of red flags. Remember:

Never hand over your Medicare or Social Security number to unsolicited callers. Never.

Even if you've done the right things to protect yourself, you're still not entirely safe. The scammers might already have gotten your credentials through other illegal means.

Watch For Unwanted Shipments

Without proper verification or your consent, the scammers may deliver medical equipment that you didn't ask for and don't need. They then bill Medicare for this equipment, pocketing taxpayer money and potentially leaving you in a financial mess.

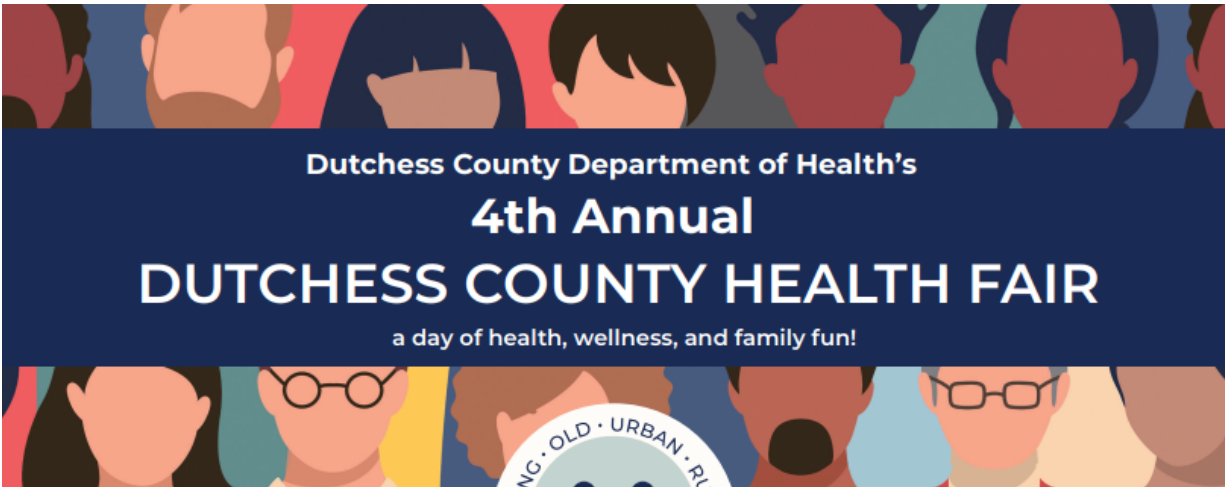
Or the scammers simply file a fake Medicare claim, using your credentials. As long as the crooks bill their fake claims to look like legitimate claims, and don't do anything to draw attention to themselves, their scams can go on for years. It's small comfort that many Medicare scammers incriminate themselves by using their stolen money to buy fancy cars.

Cover Yourself: Report The Scam

If you think you've been targeted, report it ASAP to Medicare (**800-633-4227**) and local law enforcement. This creates a paper trail in case you are billed later.

For Future Reference

Visit dutchessny.gov/scamprevention for a printable list of scam prevention resources that you can share with offline friends and family.



Dutchess County Department of Health's
4th Annual
DUTCHESS COUNTY HEALTH FAIR

a day of health, wellness, and family fun!



YOURhealth

Saturday, April 12th 11am-2pm
 Dutchess Community College's Falcon Hall
 50 Mascot Drive, Poughkeepsie



SCAN HERE
 to learn more
 about the
 day's indoor
 and outdoor
 exhibitors,
 raffles,
 giveaways,
 and more!

County Executive Sue Serino and the Office for the Aging
 present

FREE Summer Picnics for Older Adults
Live Music • Great Food • Rain or Shine

Space Is Limited • Carpooling Suggested
Reservations Required - Opening May 1st

**Save
 the dates!**

Date	For Older Residents Of	Date	For Older Residents Of
Wednesday May 28th	Amenia, Dover, Pawling, Union Vale	Wednesday July 16th	North East, Pine Plains, Stanford, Washington
Wednesday June 4th	Fishkill	Wednesday July 23rd	Wappinger
Wednesday June 11th	Milan, Red Hook, Rhinebeck	Wednesday July 30th	Pleasant Valley
Wednesday June 18th	Clinton, Hyde Park	Wednesday August 13th	City of Poughkeepsie
Wednesday June 25th	Town of Poughkeepsie	Wednesday August 20th	Beekman, LaGrange
Wednesday July 9th	Beacon	Wednesday August 27th	East Fishkill

Presented with support from The Pines at Poughkeepsie, Central Hudson, and Hudson Valley Medicare Group

It's Not Memory Loss, But Might Be Dementia

Driving difficulties, a change in sleep patterns, financial issues, and even disruptions in sense of smell, are not usually the first things that comes to mind when we're concerned about signs of dementia. We're more likely to think of common indicators like memory loss that disrupts daily life, difficulty completing familiar tasks, trouble recognizing the time or one's location, and losing the ability to retrace one's steps.

Below are a few lesser known symptoms that may or may not be signs of dementia. Talk to your health care providers if any of these raise concerns:

Shuffling, slipping, tripping or falling - Dementia can cause movement problems. You might start to notice that a person is shuffling, opposed to lifting their legs when they are walking.

OFA's "A Matter of Balance" classes can help participants learn how to avoid falls, reduce the likelihood of injury, and view the prospect for falling as something we can control. Contact OFA for more information.

No filter - Blurting out something rude or belligerent, as opposed to merely speaking directly, can be a sign of inhibition loss caused by dementia; however, normal brain aging processes without dementia can also allow rash words to slip out. Caregiving for a person in a situation like this can be extremely challenging.

Seeing things - One rare form of dementia affects the way we process the things we see. For example, when we see a white plate on a white tablecloth, our brain helps us work out that the plate and tablecloth are two different things. In a person with a form of dementia called posterior cortical atrophy, the brain loses the ability to process what the eyes are seeing.

Depression - Depression doubles the risk of cognitive impairment in women and quadruples it in men. The risk is particularly concerning

when depression occurs in older individuals who have no prior history of depression. What's encouraging here is that when depression is successfully treated, the signs of what appeared to be dementia can dissipate.

Eating strange foods - While OFA's Nutrition division encourages a balanced diet that may include foods people haven't tried before, that's not what's happening when parts of the brain that control taste and appetite are affected by dementia. This can manifest as food cravings, along with attempts to ingest inedible things.

Dental problems - There's a close connection between oral health and cognitive health. Studies have shown that individuals with poor oral health, such as gum disease and tooth decay, have an increased risk of developing dementia; so stick to your schedule of brushing, flossing, and regular dental visits.

Lawbreaking - Dementia-related damage to the parts of the brain that regulate judgment and impulse control may show up as anything from shoplifting to running red lights, especially if a person had ordinarily been a straight arrow.

Not Getting The Joke - Enjoying playful banter, jokes and sarcasm are signs that the brain's frontal lobe is working as it should. People with dementia can sometimes struggle to detect humor. That's one reason why OFA's weekly emailed "Aging News" includes a family-friendly Bad Joke. Email ofa@dutchessny.gov to subscribe, and before long you'll be a regular Seinfeld.



Dutchess County Office for the Aging
114 Delafield Street, Poughkeepsie, NY 12601

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TO:

OFA Friendship Centers and Hours

Contact a Friendship Center near you to find out about meals, activities, volunteering opportunities and more!

dutchessny.gov/OFAnutrition

Beacon (Mon-Fri, 10a-2p) 1 Forrestal Heights, Beacon 845-838-4871	Poughkeepsie (Mon-Fri, 9a-2p) 114 Delafield St., Poughkeepsie 845-486-2564
East Fishkill (Mon-Fri, 10a-2p) 890 NY 82, Hopewell Junction 845-226-3605	Red Hook (Mon-Fri, 10a-2p) 59 Fisk St., Red Hook 845-475-1129
Millerton (Mon-Thu, 9a-2p) 28 Century Blvd., Millerton 518-789-3081	South Amenia (Mon-Thu, 10a-2p) 229 S. Amenia Rd., Wassaic 845-373-4305
Pawling (Tue-Thu, 10a-2p) 154 Charles Colman Blvd., Pawling 845-855-9308	Tri-Town (Mon-Thu, 10a-2p) 1576 US 44, Pleasant Valley 845-275-8565

For more information about
the Dutchess County
Office for the Aging,
visit

dutchessny.gov/aging

email

ofa@dutchessny.gov

call

845-486-2555
or **866-486-2555**

or mail

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We're open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
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