



A Message from County Executive Marc Molinaro

Friends,

The COVID-19 pandemic has reduced worldwide human life expectancy by just under two years. Now imagine there was a different disease that reduced life expectancy by *seven* years, that it was also a lot more common than COVID - but also that a cure was both free and simple.

This particular “disease” is our negative beliefs regarding aging, both in individuals and in society at large. The consequences of negative beliefs show up as everything from high blood pressure, to greater inflammation, to an acceleration of the aging process. Take away those negative beliefs, replace them with positive attitudes toward aging, and people live longer. What’s more, the extra years tend to be happier and more active.

Strange as it might sound, there’s five decades of peer-reviewed studies that back up the key role of positive beliefs in successful aging. This is critical not only for seniors, but for people of all ages.

Try this thought experiment: What would you do if you knew you had seven extra years to use as you saw fit?

One key is to continue challenging yourself. The point is not that you’ll succeed at everything you try, but to keep looking for things you’re able to achieve. Which means this week’s signoff to my message has changed a bit.

Stay happy and safe, be kind...*and be positive!*

Avoiding Post-Holiday Depression

It may not have been a jolly holiday season for seniors who live alone. Two out of every seven American seniors live alone, according to a recent estimate from the National Council on Aging (NCOA) – and with over 60,000 seniors living in Dutchess County, that would be over 17,000 of our senior friends and neighbors living alone.

While some people may be solitary by nature and enjoy it that way, being alone for the holidays, and through the winter, can bring an even heavier burden of loneliness – equivalent to a 15-cigarette-a-day smoking habit, according to NCOA. As a risk factor, loneliness has more impact on seniors’ mortality than even obesity or a sedentary lifestyle. It doesn’t have to be that way.

The Office for the Aging plays a key role in helping seniors maintain social connections and keep loneliness at bay, most notably with our eight Senior Friendship Centers, in Beacon, East Fishkill, Millerton, Pawling, Red Hook, South Amenia (Wassaic), the City of Poughkeepsie, and Pleasant Valley, where our Tri-Town Senior Friendship Center reopened last fall.

Visit a Friendship Center and the first thing you may hear are seniors laughing. There could be a furious game of mah-jongg happening at one table. At the next table over, seniors are debating how the Knicks look this season. At another table, it’s an exchange of advice on which stores have been able to keep cans of cat food stocked.

There’s also a nutritious midday meal and a regular variety of informative and entertaining presentations.

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Avoiding Post-Holiday Depression (continued)

If a senior you know is interested in finding out more about Senior Friendship Centers, contact information is available at dutchessny.gov/OFANutrition, or by calling **845-486-2555**.

Good Nutrition Beats Winter Blues

As the glow of the holidays fades, feeling a bit blue may seem normal enough – but there's reason to be concerned if the feeling continues for more than a couple of weeks. It may be Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD). Even pets can suffer from SAD, according to researchers from the University of British Columbia.

While a call to a healthcare provider may be in order, there's a good chance a senior could be prescribed good nutrition rather than an antidepressant, especially if the senior is already taking several other prescribed medications.

This month's issue of the *OFA Nutrition News* contains a trove of useful information on nutrition's role in preventing depression, including the foods that can help and those that can't. There's also an easy recipe for Portuguese *caldo verde*, a hearty green soup containing potatoes, collards or kale, and chicken or beans.

You can find each *Nutrition News* - and many recipes, too - at dutchessny.gov/OFANutrition.



Save the Date!

2nd Annual
PANCAKES IN THE PARK

Bowdoin Park
Sheafe Rd., Wappingers

Thursday, March 24th, 2022

(CLIP AND SAVE)

Home Delivered Meals and Winter Weather

In the event of inclement weather, any postponement or cancellation of Home Delivered Meals services will be announced and/or posted on area radio stations and their websites, and on Dutchess County Government social media:

facebook.com/DutchessCoGov

and

twitter.com/DutchessCoGov

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Aging News Online

Looking for more ways to age gracefully? The New York Times has tips ([click here](#)).

Things to know about the new “No Surprises Act” national medical billing law ([click here](#)).

Former MLB pitcher Jim Corsi died this past week at age 60 of complications from colon cancer, which he said might have been prevented had he gotten a colonoscopy when he was younger ([click here](#)).

Can you “think yourself young?” There’s five decades of research that says yes ([click here](#)).

Some useful tips for senior job-seekers ([click here](#))

More US seniors, especially women, are retaining healthy brains as they age ([click here](#)).

This Week in Senior Birthdays

1/10: Singer/songwriter [Rod Stewart](#) (77)

1/11: Singer/songwriter/actress [Naomi Judd](#) (76)

1/12: Mentalist “[the Amazing](#)” [Kreskin](#) (87)

1/13: Actor [Richard Moll](#) (79)

1/14: Drag racing legend [Don Garlits](#) (90)

1/15: Guitarist/actress [Charo](#) (71 or 76 or... nobody’s quite sure. Es un misterio!)

1/16: Journalist/author [William Kennedy](#) (92)

Know any Dutchess County seniors turning 100 this year? Any Dutchess County couples married 70 years or more? If they’d like, they can be honored in OFA’s upcoming *Spotlight on Seniors* newsletter. Email bjones@dutchessny.gov for details.

Starting Friday, January 7 at 11:00 a.m.

Free Online Series on Veterans Benefits

The New York State Office for the Aging (NYSOFA), the Association on Aging in New York, and New York State Division of Veterans’ Services have partnered with GetSetUp — a peer-to-peer online learning community — to offer this online series that runs weekly throughout January and early February.

Veterans can access any of the sessions in the series by [clicking here](#) and using the partner coupon code NYSTATE at login.

The first class is called “MythBusters! Getting rid of the mythology that has prevented you from getting the Veterans’ benefits that you rightfully earned.” Is combat service required to get any Veterans’ benefits? If a Veteran passes away before the VA decides their claim, does the surviving spouse get any benefits? These are just a few of the questions that the New York State Division of Veterans’ Services will answer.

For more information, contact
[Dutchess County Division of Veterans Services](#)
veterans@dutchessny.gov

A Really Bad Joke

Q: When do you know you’re old enough to retire?

A: When you stop lying about your age and start bragging about it!