

Close to 1,100 meals are currently prepared daily and distributed to homebound seniors as well as the seven congregate meal sites located throughout our County, there is no wait list in Ocean County for this program.

Other support areas to be funded include transportation, legal services, caregiver services, social and recreational activities, benefits options counseling, mental health support and other community based initiatives, we expect to serve close to 33,000 older residents and their families. We will oversee 43 Area Plan contracts totaling a little under 5.8 million.

The Office of Senior Services is a key part to a large network of agencies and organizations that assist seniors living in Ocean County. Access to all of this information and assistance through direct client contact and outreach events continue as the major focus for our office 2019.

Our programs improve the quality of life for older adults: whether someone is a newly arrived resident who can benefit from Medicare counseling, educational and health screening programs, or is an older frailer individual who receives a home delivered meal or home health aide visit, we provide funding for services that can help.

Senior services staff responded to 6,500 callers and walk-ins while more than 47,000 visits were made to the office's website found at www.co.ocean.nj.us. This website contains a variety of important resource documents as well as links to important community services.

Call us at **732-929-2091** or **1-800-668-4899** so we can explain the site in more detail as well as send you a copy of our Ocean County Office of Senior Services Resource Directory.



Ocean County Office of Senior Services

March/April 2019 Newsletter



**Freeholder
Joseph H. Vicari**

A Message From Freeholder Joseph H. Vicari:

As the Freeholder Chairman for the Ocean County Office of Senior Services, I remain steadfast in my commitment to make certain that Social Security, Medicare and the State Health Insurance Program (SHIP) remain viable now and into the future for Ocean County's older adults. I am also committed to protecting our seniors from scams intended to defraud them of their hard-earned income, assets and/or their identity.

Each year, more and more older adults fall prey to financial scams resulting in the loss of billions of dollars. Telephone scams are the most common method used to target frail, vulnerable and isolated older adults in our community. Whether it is a threatening call from the IRS, a sympathetic plea from a loved one or a sweepstakes notifying you of winnings, they are all designed to scam the recipient into sending money or turning over confidential information used for identity theft.

One of the newest scams is con artists impersonating representatives from the Social Security Administration (SSA). According to a recent **Scam Alert** issued by the SSA, they have received reports of fraudulent telephone calls from individuals claiming to represent the SSA. The alert states that unknown callers are using threatening language to warn unknowing victims that they will be arrested or face other legal action if they fail to call a specific phone number. If you, or someone you know, receive a call like this, the SSA advises that it is best not to engage with the caller or share any information. If you receive a fraudulent call from someone claiming to be from the SSA, please report them to Social Security's Office of the Inspector General at **1-800-269-0271**.

You can also call the Ocean County Department of Consumer Affairs at **732-929-2105** or our office at **732-929-2019** or **1-800-668-4899** if you have any questions about whether or not something might be a scam or if you believe, you have fallen victim of a scam.

The One-Stop Center
1027 Hooper Ave., Bldg. 2, First Floor
(732) 929-2091 • 1-877-222-3737 • 1-800-668-4899

"Making it Easier For Seniors To Choose Services"
Printed by the Ocean County Printing & Graphic Arts Department Freeholder John P. Kelly, Liaison

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TAX HELP IS AVAILABLE

The Ocean County Office of Senior Services provides a list of volunteer income tax counseling sites. Ocean County is fortunate to offer free income tax assistance to people unable to afford this service. The AARP Tax-Aide volunteers are specially trained in cooperation with the Internal Revenue Service and the NJ Division of Taxation to understand the many provisions of the tax code, particularly those that affect older people. Personal one-on-one assistance is provided to help the taxpayer complete Federal and State tax returns. Please call the Office of Senior Services at **732-929-2091** or **1-800-668-4899** for the site nearest to you.

IMPORTANT UPDATE NEW MEDICARE CARD MAILING COMPLETED

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has now finished mailing new Medicare cards to people with Medicare across all mailing waves, including Wave 7 states and territories and to people with Medicare, Parts A&B who live in Canada and Mexico.

To ensure that people have access to their new number before the transition period ends, providers can now individually look up all Medicare Beneficiary Identifiers (MBIs), if they have access to their Medicare Administrative Contractor's (MAC) secure provider portal. Likewise, people with Medicare can access their new Medicare number or print an official card within their secure MyMedicare.gov account.

If someone with Medicare says they did not get a card, you should instruct them to:

-  Look around their house for old or unopened mail. They mailed new Medicare cards in a plain white envelope from the Department of Health and Human Services.
-  Sign into MyMedicare.gov to get a new number or print an official card. They will need to create an account, if they do not already have one.
-  Call **1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227)** so they can verify their identity, check their address and help them get their new card.
-  Ask their health care provider, who may be able to securely look up their new number at the point-of-service.
-  Continue to use their current card to get health care services until they get their new card. They can use their old card until January 1, 2020.

Continued on next page



Medicare patients are using their new cards in doctors' offices and other health care facilities. For the week ending January 11, 2019, more than half (58%) of total claims health care providers submitted to CMS used the new MBI, showing that many providers are already successfully submitting claims with the MBI. While providers and suppliers can continue using the former Social Security

number-based Health Insurance Claim Number (HICN) during the transition period, they encourage you to use the new MBI for all Medicare transactions.

They posted some new resources for beneficiaries and partners on their websites:

Medicare.gov updates:

- Wave 7 states/territories flipped to “finished mailing” on [medicare.gov/newcard](https://www.medicare.gov/newcard) campaign page. Also, note new content
- Beneficiary blog accessible from the Medicare.gov homepage
- “Mail you get about Medicare” page includes information about the foreign mailing letter (with link to sample letter we sent to beneficiaries living overseas)

MyMedicare.gov updates:

- MBI unmasked. New number/print card option is available, even if they did not mail the new card during the wave
- No longer includes “expected mail date”; this feature was tied to the mailing waves

CMS.gov updates:

- Updated mailing wave chart
- Social media toolkit (partners can use these graphics/language to amplify our outreach on Facebook and Twitter)
- Content updates throughout

They will continue to share updates throughout the transition period. Please send feedback and questions on the New Medicare Card Project to: NewMedicareCardSSNRemoval@cms.hhs.gov

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES APPROVED FOR OCEAN COUNTY SENIORS

In January, the Ocean County Board of Chosen Freeholders approved 37 competitive contracts to a host of local aging network service providers. Ocean County Office of Senior Services works with 22 governmental and non-profit agencies to provide services to seniors. One of the largest support programs is the county's senior nutrition program, which this year is expected to provide about 300,000 meals to seniors; these contracts were approved in December.