



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.

If you are a veteran, call us now and we will send you information on the new veteran income tax exemption for tax year 2017. Attach your DD214 to the form we send you, then send it on to the state division of taxation. Simple.

Ocean County Office of Senior Services
The One-Stop Center
P.O. Box 2191
1027 Hooper Ave., Bldg. 2, First Floor
Toms River, New Jersey 08754-2191



Ocean County
Board of Chosen Freeholders

John C. Bartlett, Jr.

Virginia E. Haines

John P. Kelly

Gerry P. Little

Joseph H. Vicari

Carl W. Block, Administrator

Ocean County

Office of Senior Services

Joseph H. Vicari

Freeholder Chairman

Jackie Rohan, Director

www.co.ocean.nj.us

“Making it Easier For Seniors To Choose Services”

Printed by the Ocean County Printing & Graphic Arts Department Freeholder John P. Kelly, Liaison

Ocean County Office of Senior Services

March/April 2018 Newsletter



Freeholder Chairman
Joseph H. Vicari

A Message From Joseph Vicari: Freeholder Chairman

2018 FUNDING APPROVED FOR 43 COMMUNITY CONTRACTS

Whether it is home delivered meals or help with prescription costs, the Ocean County Office of Senior Services can link seniors with a host of programs and services specifically designed to meet their needs.

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.

In January, the Ocean County Board of Chosen Freeholders approved 36 competitive contracts awarded to the senior services network of community service providers; 7 additional contracts were previously awarded to the nutrition provider in December. These meals are often a lifeline for the homebound older adult bringing not only nutritional value but also social contact and sometimes even emergency intervention for the most frail.

In 2018, the Office of Senior Services will oversee a total of 43 Area Plan Contracts with 21 governmental and non-profit agencies totaling more than \$5.8 million. In addition to meals, other funded areas include transportation, caregiver services, benefits and options counseling, legal services and a host of other valuable supports.

For information on what's available, and to request a copy of the 2018 Ocean County Office of Senior Services Area Plan Contract Summary, call **732-929-2091** or **1-800-668-4899**.



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

VISIT THE SENIOR SERVICES WEBSITE

Would you rather use your computer? The Office of Senior Services is featured on the Ocean County Home Page. Please visit our website at www.co.ocean.nj.us, just click on "Office of Senior Services". The Senior Services web site 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.

CLUBS and ORGANIZATIONS – Need a Speaker?

In 2018, staff at the Ocean County Office of Senior Services have once again made a commitment to travel out there into the community, and describe the wide variety of resources available to seniors throughout our county.

Presentation topics can include Medicare in 2018, Caregiver Issues, or an overview of the Ocean County Office of Senior Services – who we are, who we fund...and most importantly, what we are able to do in this community through funding provided by the Older Americans Act, the State of New Jersey Division of Aging Services, and the County of Ocean. Call us at **732-929-2091** or **1-800-668-4899** to schedule a speaker for your group in 2018.

FOOD AND FELLOWSHIP = GOOD BRAIN HEALTH

According to UC Berkeley Health and Wellness Alerts, studies have shown that staying mentally active may help prevent cognitive decline, but does it make a difference if you're a senior? It could, according to a study published in 2017 in JAMA Neurology. Researchers found that playing a game, surfing the web, making crafts, and visiting with friends and relatives might help protect against mild cognitive impairment (MCI). Each of these types of activities was associated with a decreased risk of developing MCI among people in their 70s and beyond.

The researchers followed more than 1,900 adults (average age, 77) with normal cognition for four years. Those who regularly used computers were 30 percent less likely to decline mentally when compared with participants who didn't do so. Those who made crafts, took part in social activity, or played games once or twice a week were also less likely to decline mentally when compared with participants who didn't regularly engage in those activities; 28 percent, 23 percent, and 22 percent, respectively. Paradoxically, reading books did not demonstrate any significant protective effect against new-onset MCI.

Because of the study's observational nature, the researchers could not prove that those activities ward off mental decline, in part because people at increased risk of MCI are less likely to engage in mentally stimulating activities. Still, other studies have reported similar results, which suggests that being mentally engaged might be beneficial. And if you're a senior who enjoys reading, these findings are certainly no reason to curtail that pleasure—especially if you're in a book club.

So let's take it a step further – how about adding a meal at one of our eight nutrition sites located throughout the county? Each site offers a variety of social and educational opportunities that can help your brain stay healthy plus a meal designed to meet the nutritional needs of seniors. Our nutritionist will add to the benefit with periodic nutrition education – so call for information and join these healthy meeting sites for a meal and brain healthy activities.

We look forward to seeing you for lunch!

WATCH YOUR MAIL NEW MEDICARE CARDS HEADED YOUR WAY

According to the US Department of Health and Human Services, if you have Medicare, you can protect your identity and help prevent health care fraud by guarding your Medicare card like you would a credit card.

Identity theft from stolen Medicare Numbers is becoming more common. Medicare's here to help by removing Social Security Numbers from Medicare cards and replacing them with a new, unique number for each person with Medicare. Medicare will mail new Medicare cards with the new numbers between April 2018 and April 2019.

Here are some important steps you can take to protect yourself from the identity theft that can lead to health care fraud:

- **DON'T** share your Medicare Number with anyone who contacts you by telephone, email or in person, unless you've given them permission in advance. Medicare will NEVER contact you (unless you ask us to) for your Medicare Number or other personal information.
- **DON'T** ever let anyone borrow or pay to use your Medicare Number.
- **REVIEW** your Medicare Summary Notice to be sure you and Medicare are only being charged for actual items and services received.

If you're looking to enroll in a Medicare plan:

- **REMEMBER** there are no "early bird discounts" or "limited time offers."
- **DON'T** let anyone rush you to enroll by claiming you need to "act now for the best deal."
- **BE SKEPTICAL** of free gifts, free medical services, discount packages or any offer that sounds "too good to be true."

If someone calls you and asks for your Medicare Number or other personal information, hang up and call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227). To learn more about protecting yourself from identity theft and health care fraud, visit www.Medicare.gov/fraud or contact your local Senior Medicare Patrol (www.smpresource.org).

Any questions related to Medicare, don't hesitate to call our office at **732-929-2091** or **1-800-668-4899** and ask to speak to one of our SHIP (State Health Insurance Program) staff and they will be glad to assist you.



10 things to know about your new Medicare card

Medicare is mailing new Medicare cards starting in April 2018. Here are 10 things to know about your new Medicare card:

1. **Mailing takes time:** Your card may arrive at a different time than your friend's or neighbor's.
2. **Destroy your old Medicare card:** Once you get your new Medicare card, destroy your old Medicare card and start using your new card right away.
3. **Guard your card:** Only give your new Medicare Number to doctors, pharmacists, other health care providers, your insurers, or people you trust to work with Medicare on your behalf.
4. **Your Medicare Number is unique:** Your card has a new number instead of your Social Security Number. This new number is unique to you.
5. **Your new card is paper:** Paper cards are easier for many providers to use and copy, and they save taxpayers a lot of money. Plus, you can print your own replacement card if you need one!
6. **Keep your new card with you:** Carry your new card and show it to your health care providers when you need care.
7. **Your doctor knows it's coming:** Doctors, other health care facilities and providers will ask for your new Medicare card when you need care.
8. **You can find your number:** If you forget your new card, you, your doctor or other health care provider may be able to look up your Medicare Number online.
9. **Keep your Medicare Advantage Card:** If you're in a Medicare Advantage Plan (like an HMO or PPO), your Medicare Advantage Plan ID card is your main card for Medicare – you should still keep and use it whenever you need care. However, you also may be asked to show your new Medicare card, so you should carry this card too.
10. **Help is available:** If you don't get your new Medicare card by **April 2019**, call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227). TTY users can call 1-877-486-2048.

You have the right to get Medicare information in an accessible format, like large print, Braille, or audio. You also have the right to file a complaint if you feel you've been discriminated against. Visit CMS.gov/about-cms/agency-information/aboutwebsite/cmsnondiscriminationnotice.html, or call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227) for more information. TTY users can call 1-877-486-2048.

