



Ocean County Office of Senior Services

November/December 2017 Newsletter



A Message From
Joseph Vicari:
Freeholder Director
Ocean County
Board of Chosen Freeholders

Freeholder Director
Joseph H. Vicari

As your advocate for Social Security, Medicare and the State Health Insurance Programs (SHIP), I vow to more than 169,000 senior residents that I will remain steadfast in my pledge to make certain **SOCIAL SECURITY, MEDI-CARE and the STATE HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAM (SHIP)** remain viable programs now and into the future for Ocean County's older adults. Again, as your advocate I will continue to urge our Federal representatives to strengthen and protect these important lifelines for our seniors.

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"

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FALL PREVENTION

Recent communication from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) reminds us falls and accidents do not "just happen." Here are a few tips to help you avoid falls and broken bones:

- ✓ **Have your eyes and hearing tested.** Even small changes in sight and hearing may cause you to fall. Always wear your glasses or contacts when you need them. If you have a hearing aid, be sure it fits well and wear it.
- ✓ **Find out about the side effects of any medicine you take.** If a drug makes you sleepy or dizzy, tell your doctor or pharmacist.
- ✓ **Get enough sleep.** If you are sleepy, you are more likely to fall.
- ✓ **Limit the amount of alcohol you drink.** Even a small amount of alcohol can affect your balance and reflexes.
- ✓ **Stand up slowly.** Getting up too quickly can cause your blood pressure to drop and can make you feel wobbly.
- ✓ **Use an assistive device if you need help feeling steady when you walk.** Appropriate use of canes and walkers can prevent falls; make sure it is the right size for you and the wheels roll smoothly.
- ✓ **Be very careful when walking on wet or icy surfaces.** They can be very slippery! Try to have sand or salt spread on icy areas by your front or back door.
- ✓ **Wear non-skid, rubber-soled, low-heeled shoes, or lace-up shoes with non-skid soles that fully support your feet.** It is important that the soles are not too thin or too thick. Do not walk on stairs or floors in socks or in shoes or slippers with smooth soles.
- ✓ **Always tell your doctor if you have fallen since your last checkup, even if you are not hurt when you fall.** A fall can alert your doctor to a new medical problem, or problems with your medications or eyesight.
- ✓ **Stay physically active.** Plan an exercise program that is right for you. Performing balance exercises can help prevent falls and reduce the fear of falling.

A FINAL NOTE: WE ARE SO PROUD!

Each year the state of New Jersey Division of Aging Services does an assessment to compare local area on aging activities to their standards for funding under the Older Americans Act.

We are delighted to share that once again Ocean County has scored high on this important state assessment through the efforts of Senior Services staff and our hardworking community service providers. A quote from the state "Ocean County Office of Senior Services fulfills the mission of a AAA by proactively carrying out a wide range of creative programming and services that assist older persons (and their caregivers) in leading independent, meaningful and dignified lives in their homes and communities for as long as possible."

Would you like a preview of what we are planning for 2018, call our office at **732-929-2091** or **1-800-668-4899** and ask for the 2018 Area Plan Contract Update Summary. You will see the agencies we have funded for next year, and that our goal is to serve over 30,000 clients throughout the county.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED TO ASSIST WITH FILING TAXES FOR THE 2017 TAX SEASON

FREE Income Tax Assistance preparation is available to anyone who needs help filing Federal and New Jersey taxes, with special attention given to seniors. Therefore, each year we need more volunteers to work in the program to help in the preparation of electronically filed tax returns. Volunteers must attend approximately 6 days of training during December and January from 9 am to 2 pm. All classes are held at St. Mary's of the Pines in Manahawkin, NJ. Volunteers are required to be available, at least one half-day weekly from February 1st to April 15th, 2018.

This is an AARP program in cooperation with the IRS and the NJ Division of Taxation. If you are interested in VOLUNTEERING or need more information, please call: Pat **609-294-0730**.



**HOLIDAY SHOPPING – SHOP LOCAL AND VISIT
THE OCEAN COUNTY MALL**

...and while you are there...do you know about the County Connection?

The County Connection is a service provided by The Ocean County Board of Chosen Freeholders, conveniently open during and after business hours from Monday through Saturday 10:00 am-9:30 pm and Sundays 11:00 am-6:00 pm.

The storefront is located at the Ocean County Mall near JC Penney's at 1201 Hooper Avenue in Toms River.

The County Connection has a broad range of services to meet your government needs ranging from the Ocean County Clerk's Department for passport, notary and veteran ID process. Senior Services Representatives are there every day from 10-5 to assist with PAAD, Senior Gold, Meals on Wheels, Heating Assistance, Medicare Enrollment and Property Tax Reimbursement. In addition there is Surrogate information, and even issuance of dog permits for the off leash dog parks within the county.

There are two public access computers, and racks of information about numerous outreach programs and events that the County Connection hosts for its residents of Ocean County. Please call at **732-288-7777** or visit the website at **www.co.ocean.nj.us**.



**SENIORS WARNED TO BE ALERT DURING
MEDICARE PART D
OPEN ENROLLMENT 10/15 to 12/7**

Open enrollment can be a confusing process. If seniors follow some basic, common sense precautions, they can make smart choices and choose the product that is best for them.

Our Senior Services staff reminds you that Part D plans can change every year; watch your mail closely for those notifications. Take the time to review your current medications on the Part D plan finder; be sure those medications will be covered by the plan you choose for 2018.

For more information on Medicare Part D coverage or to get help with any Medicare issue, call the State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) at the Ocean County Office of Senior Services **732-929-2091** or **1-800-668-4899**.

Our counselors would be glad to assist you. Special Part D days and Medicare Part D seminars are scheduled throughout the county, call for details.

HEATING ASSISTANCE?

Applications are currently available for the 2017-2018 Heating season and the deadline for Home Energy Assistance/Universal Service Fund filing the application is April 30, 2018. This is a federally funded program to assist low-income households with their heating bills. Eligibility is based on household size and monthly income. Recertification Applications were sent starting in Mid-August to those who received a heating benefit last year. If you are not a Home Energy Assistance/Universal Service Fund recipient and would like to learn more about this and other types of financial assistance, please call our office at **732-929-2091** or **1-800-668-4899**. If you are already a recipient and have any questions, please contact O.C.E.A.N., Inc. at **732-244-9041** in Toms River, **732-942-3405** in Lakewood and **609-549-5822** in Waretown.



NOVEMBER IS NATIONAL CAREGIVER MONTH: FOCUS ON ALZHEIMER'S

Alzheimer's has been determined to be the most expensive disease in our country with an estimated annual cost of \$259 billion. While the government is working hard to increase research funding, we know family, friends and neighbors are working even harder every day to care for the victims of this disease. We have some thoughts to share from the US Department of Health and Human Services: providing care for an elderly person can be a rewarding experience, but caregivers also are subject to stress and frustration. This is nowhere more evident than in the case of Alzheimer's disease.

A few steps can help prevent fatigue and other problems that make a caregiver's job more difficult:

1. First, remember that you are not alone! The importance of our caregivers cannot be overstated and our need to support them in their care giving is even greater.

2. Know that there are services and supports out there to help you. Learn about available resources by calling the Ocean County Office of Senior Services; we have prepared a Caregiver Resource packet that provides an overview of many services and answers the most frequently asked questions that we hear from caregivers on topics such as home care, adult day care and financial assistance programs.

3. Join a support group; they give you the opportunity to share your experiences, learn from others, find resources and maybe even make new friendships with people that will know and understand what you are going through.

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4. Plan ahead to be sure you have the supplies and resources you need. Whether it is a trip to the doctor, or to the grocery store, take a minute to stop and be sure you have what you need for the journey. Whether it is a list, socks or an extra sweater you will be glad you took the time.

5. Take one day at a time. Some days are just harder than others; lack of sleep and social isolation can add to that type of day.

6. Develop contingency plans for emergencies and obstacles. This is part of planning – keep insurance cards, living wills and an up to date medication list accessible for sudden trips to the hospital – both for you and for your loved one.

7. Accept help – do not take on more than you can handle. This one is hard because sometimes:



- ✓ **Make YOUR health a priority.**
- ✓ **Get enough rest and eat properly.**
- ✓ **Make time for leisure.**
- ✓ **Be good to yourself!**

Share your feelings with others; it is okay to be tired and frustrated. At times though, we know gathering information is just not enough. There are so many options out there; how do you really know what is best for your individual caregiving situation?

From Meals on Wheels to day care/home health aide assistance...even the very difficult choice of a nursing home, our Senior Services staff are available by appointment or by phone to discuss the numerous services within Ocean County. Call **732-929-2091** or **1-800-668-4899**; someone will be glad to assist you.