



LIFE WISE

Jefferson County Office for the Aging

250 Arsenal Street

Watertown, New York 13601

Vol. 23 No. 40

Winter 2009

Happy Holidays from your friends at OFA!

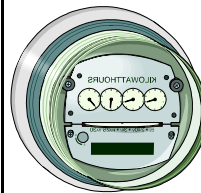
From the Director.... Steven Binion

On behalf of the staff and volunteers at the Office for the Aging, I want to extend to you the best of holiday wishes! This past year has been one filled with many challenges, but our staff has maintained a great outlook and as always, a strong sense of purpose to insure better lives for our older citizens.

The holidays tend to be a busy and hectic time for many but they can also be a wonderful time to reflect and fondly remember holiday seasons gone by. In this day of high technology, instant communication and families that are spread all over the world, it is nice to know that some traditions remain constant. It seems that every family has their own traditions that are observed during the holiday seasons. Some are quite subtle and others are quite elaborate but the important factor is that these traditions have been passed from generation to generation and have withstood the tests of time. As you listen to the music of the holidays and watch the snow fall, I hope you take time to remember and cherish the traditions you have passed on to your families and friends.

With the year 2010 close at hand, the Office for the Aging will be undergoing some major changes as well. Plans are being finalized to move our office to 175 Arsenal Street during the first part of next year. The move will make our office more accessible and provide for some much needed space for our staff.

We hope you enjoy your holidays and look forward to serving you in 2010!



HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (HEAP)

It's HEAP Season again! HEAP started on November 2nd but it is not too late to sign up if you haven't already. HEAP provides the eligible older population with financial help to pay heating bills. An annual, one-time only benefit may be applied for by persons age sixty and over. Those who received HEAP benefits last year were mailed applications directly from New York State and should be completed according to the directions provided. The household income eligibility guidelines for the 2009/2010 HEAP season are as follow:

Household Size	Monthly Income
1	\$2,030
2	2,657
3	3,279

Those who find themselves eligible may then call the Office for the Aging for an application.

Persons who receive food stamps will automatically be processed for HEAP by their food stamp worker and do not need to apply. Please bring in or send in requested information as soon as possible so that benefits may be expedited.

After your HEAP application is processed, you will receive a "HEAP Notice of Eligibility" in the mail. **Please keep this notice.** You will need to produce this document for other agencies and

programs such as the Lifeline Telephone discount program.

Checks will not be mailed to homes, but benefits will be sent to fuel dealers or utility companies.

Additional benefits may be obtained in cases of an emergency through the Department of Social Services. Never wait until the last hours of a 72-hour shut-off notice before applying for an emergency benefit. In order to receive an emergency HEAP benefit, there is no face-to-face interview required but the household must meet the following criteria:

- ★ A shut-off notice, 10 days of fuel or less, or refusal of delivery.
- ★ No resources available that can be used to eliminate the emergency.
- ★ Regular HEAP benefit is not enough to eliminate the emergency.

And finally, check and service your furnace regularly so that dangerous break downs can be avoided in the coldest part of winter! Scheduled maintenance is the key to a furnace longevity and efficiency.

Customers also should check with their utility or energy services company to determine if budget billing is available. A budget-billing option allows customers to equalize monthly payments. For example, a customer's annual bill can be estimated based on past energy use and then divided into equal monthly payments. Typically any differences between the original annual estimate and the actual costs incurred will be reconciled annually.

Anyone eligible for HEAP is also eligible for reduced rate on the basic monthly charge for telephone service. There is no reduction for long distance calls. For further information on Lifeline Telephone service you can call 1-800-342-3377 between 8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

FURNACE SAFETY



If you received HEAP during the past HEAP season and have never had your furnace cleaned through a program offered by the Office for the Aging, now may be the time. Please call our office if you think you are eligible for this program. We would like to insure that you are using a safe furnace. Call for the Furnace Cleaning program at 785-3191. An application will be sent to you. If you are eligible your furnace will be cleaned by our contractor, DP Bartlett.

MEDICARE BENEFICIARIES

Matthew Wiley - HIICAP Coordinator

November 15th to December 31st is open enrollment for Medicare Part D beneficiaries. It is the one time during the year in which Medicare beneficiaries can enroll, disenroll, or switch their Medicare Part D prescription drug plan. Now is the time to review your coverage. If you are having trouble getting any of your prescriptions, or have recently been prescribed new medications, you may want to see if there is a better Part D plan available to you to meet your present needs.

There is a website and a 1-800 number that can help you decide. If you don't have access to a computer, a family member may be able to help you. The website is www.medicare.gov and the phone number is 1-800-633-4227. These two sources are where you can find out which Part D Plan will work best for you.

EPIC is also available to anyone over the age of 65. If you are income eligible, EPIC may lower some of the co-pays you have to pay for your prescriptions at the pharmacy. EPIC's telephone number is 1-800-332-3742. The Office for the Aging can also assist you with this complicated matter by calling (315)785-3191.

MEDICARE ADVANTAGE PLANS NOT RENEWING FOR 2010

Source - Mature Living (St. Lawrence County Office for the Aging)

If you are a Medicare recipient enrolled in the following Medicare Advantage PFFS (Private Fee for Service) plans, you will not have this coverage in 2010. The plans that are not renewing for 2010 are:

- Coventry (Advantra)
- Health Net (Pearl)
- Wellcare
- Secure Horizons (United Health Care) (PFFS plans only).

What do you do?

You may elect to enroll in another Advantage Plan or return to original Medicare. If you do nothing, you will be returned to Original Medicare. If you don't have a stand-alone drug plan you must select a drug plan by December 31, 2009 for drug coverage effective January 1, 2010. You may also need to purchase a Medicare supplemental plan to have similar coverage as your Advantage Plan.

Do you have an Advantage Plan that includes drug coverage?

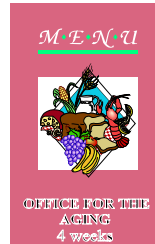
You can do several things:

- Enroll in a new Advantage Plan with drug coverage by December 31, 2009.
- Enroll in an Advantage Plan without drug coverage included. However, if you don't already have a drug plan, you will need to enroll in a stand-alone drug plan by December 31, 2009 or you will have no drug coverage in January 2010.
- Go back to original Medicare with a stand-alone drug plan. You may need to purchase a Medicare Supplemental (Medigap) insurance policy to receive coverage similar to what your 2009 Advantage Plan provides.
- You should have received notification from your plan about the non-renewal during early November. (Stand-alone)

If you have questions, call the Medicare

Rights Center at 1-800-333-4114 or call Medicare 1-800-633-4227.

The Office for the Aging may be able to assist with this transition by calling (315)785-3191 for an appointment.



OFFICE FOR THE AGING MENU

The following is the menu for meals to be served in all county meal sites for the next 4 weeks.

DECEMBER

- Mon. 7 - Sloppy Joe on a Bun
- Tues. 8 - Sliced Ham w/Scalloped Potato
- Wed. 9 - Chili
- Thur. 10 - Hawaiian Pineapple Pork
- Fri. 11 - Vegetable Lasagna
- Mon. 14 - Oven Browned Fish w/Tartar Sauce
- Tues. 15 - Shepherd's Pie
- Wed. 16 - Roast Pork w/Gravy
- Thur. 17 - Turkey Burger w/Peppers & Onions
- Fri. 18 - BBQ Chicken Leg
- Mon. 21 - Italian Sausage w/Peppers & Onions
- Tues. 22 - Beef Stroganoff
- Wed. 23 - Baked Chicken Breast w/Gravy
- Thur. 24 - Breaded Fish w/Tartar Sauce
- Fri. 25 - **Christmas Day - No meals today**
- Mon. 28 - Hamburg Patty w/Gravy
- Tues. 29 - Chicken w/Supreme Sauce
- Wed. 30 - Prima Vera Casserole
- Thur. 31 - Roasted Turkey w/Gravy

JANUARY - 2010

- Fri. 1 - Happy New Year's - No Meals today

Occasionally, the Senior Nutrition lunch program is unable to provide meals due to inclement weather. When this happens, there will be announcements made on the following Radio and Television Stations:

- | | |
|---------------|-------------------|
| WATN-AM 1240 | WCIZ-FM 93.5 |
| WOTT-FM 100.7 | WFRY-FM 97.5 |
| WTOJ-FM 103 | WWTI-NEWSWATCH 50 |
| WWNY-TV 7 | NEWZJUNKY.COM |



Reminder: Please be sure to keep your sidewalk and driveway clear of snow and ice. This will enable the driver to safely deliver your meal.

KEEP THE "H" FOR HEALTHY IN HOLIDAY EATING

By Nancy O'Connor R.D.

This holiday season, try thinking healthy. That doesn't mean it can't be delicious! We all know low fat, low fat, low fat. But most of us still lack fruits and vegetables or adequate dairy in our daily diets. Because of this we lack potassium, magnesium, calcium, all of which can help control your blood pressure and lessen your risk of osteoporosis. A shortage of these minerals has also been linked to increased incidence and exacerbation of arthritis. Remember, eating foods high in sodium and enjoying drinks loaded with caffeine can make it harder for your body to absorb calcium

In the new year start reading food labels especially for Dietary Fiber. Your goal is between 25-30 gms per day. Believe me once you start reading labels you will see how difficult this can be. Yet it's worth the effort to gradually change your eating habits to lessen the incidence of many types of cancer, control your diabetes and quite possibly help you lose weight!

While your friends are exchanging high fat, sickeningly sweet cookie recipes you can score a 10 in "2010" and try these recipes to start on a healthier path. Remember we all hope for a long life, but it takes more than hope to have a healthy one.

Fruit Smoothie

8 oz. Plain yogurt (415 mg Calcium vs. 250-300 mg in fruited)
1/3 cup Orange Juice Calcium enriched

1 cup Strawberries, raspberries or mixed berries (frozen)
1 tsp. Flaxseed (optional)

Peaches with Ricotta Cheese

1 cup Ricotta Cheese, part skim
2 cup Peaches, frozen, canned or fresh
4 Tbs. Almonds (optional)
1 Tbs. Maple Syrup
1/4 tsp. Almond extract

Mix ricotta with maple syrup and almond extract. Equally divide peaches among 4 bowls. Top with flavored ricotta and sprinkle with almonds if desired.

May your journey be a long one, but with each cross in the road may you choose the healthiest way. Happy Holidays 2009.

CAREGIVER FAMILY CHECKLIST

Source: Caregiver.com

The most loving gift a person can give to ones family is to put your affairs in order before a disaster or medical emergency. To assist in providing that gift the following is a list of information and documents you should have prepared:

1. All bank accounts, account numbers and types of accounts and the location of banks.
2. Insurance company, policy number, beneficiary as stated on the policies and type of insurance (health, life, long term care, automobile, etc).
3. Deed and titles to ALL property.
4. Loan/lien information, who holds them and if there are any death provisions
5. Social Security and Medicare numbers.
6. Military history, affiliations and papers (including discharge papers).
7. Up-to-date Will in a safe place (inform family where the Will is located).
8. Living Will or other Advanced Directive appropriate to your state of residence.
9. Durable Power of Attorney.

10. Instructions for funeral services and burial (if arrangements have been secured, name and location of funeral home).

CAREGIVER BURNOUT

By Dr. M. Ross Seligson

Being able to cope with the strains and stresses of being a Caregiver is part of the art of Caregiving. We need to remain healthy so that we can continue to be Caregivers. We must be able to see our own limitations and learn to care for ourselves as well as others.

It is important for all of us to make the effort to recognize the signs of burnout. In order to do this we must be honest and willing to hear feedback from those around us. This is especially important for those caring for family or friends. Too often Caregivers who are not closely associated with the healthcare profession get overlooked and lost in the commotion of medical emergencies and procedures. Otherwise close friends begin to grow distant, and eventually the Caregiver is alone without a support structure. We must allow those who do care for us, who are interested enough to say something, to tell us about our behavior, a noticed decrease in energy, or mood changes.

Burnout isn't like a cold. You don't always notice it when you are in its clutches. Very much like Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome, the symptoms of burnout can begin surfacing months after a traumatic episode. The following are symptoms we might notice in ourselves, or others might say they see in us. Think about what is being said, and consider the possibility of burnout.

- Feeling of depression.
- A sense of ongoing and constant fatigue.
- Decreasing interest in work.
- Decrease in work production.
- Withdrawal from social contacts.
- Increase in use of stimulants and alcohol.
- Increasing fear of death.
- Change in eating patterns.
- Feelings of helplessness.

Strategies to ward off or cope with burnout are important. To counteract burnout, the following specific strategies are recommended

- Participate in a support network.
- Consult with professionals to explore burnout issues.
- Attend a support group to receive feed back and coping strategies.
- Vary the focus of caregiving responsibilities if possible (rotate responsibilities with family members).
- Exercise daily and maintain a healthy diet.
- Establish "quiet time" for meditation.
- Get a weekly massage.
- Stay involved in hobbies.

By acknowledging the reality that being a Caregiver is filled with stress and anxiety, and understanding the potential for burnout, Caregivers can be forewarned and guard against this debilitating condition. As much as it is said, it can still not be said too often, the best way to be an effective Caregiver is to take care of yourself.

For information on Caregiver services at Office for the Aging, Please call 785-3191.

OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM

By Elnora M. Durgin, Coordinator

As 2009 comes to an end I am pleased to report Jefferson County's Ombudsmen remain normally active. In addition to regular visitation to their assigned facilities they have faithfully attended monthly meetings to take advantage of the in-service training provided.

At our April meeting Matt Wiley, HIICAP Counselor, presented the Senior Medicare Patrol Program to the group. All Ombudsmen present benefitted from the opportunity to receive this important information.

Another highlight experienced by the Ombudsmen was when Assistant State Ombudsman, Caroline Curley, was present at a special meeting. She was given the opportunity to meet our Volunteer Ombudsmen and witnessed our efforts to become more familiar with Jefferson County's Assisted Living Plans. The presentation was provided by Dave Stone and made her aware of our interest in preparing for this future residential scenario.

For the very first time in the history of the Ombudsman Program New York State created a special day of training designed for the volunteers at the annual Ombudsman Conference. This was held in Syracuse. Five of our dedicated volunteers took advantage of the opportunity and accompanied the coordinator to the day-long event for a very enjoyable and educational day.

As stated previously, even though we have dedicated Volunteer Ombudsmen here in Jefferson County, we are understaffed. According to the standard ration we should have at least 18, (preferably 20) to guarantee all long term care residents are visited regularly and receive proper representation. Currently we have only 12 which places us at a disadvantage under normal conditions without even considering the winter months ahead of us when visitation is limited.

For this reason we are recruiting volunteers for a spring training class to certify additional Ombudsmen. If you or anyone you know might be interested in attending please call 785-3191. At that time you will be provided information as to the roles, responsibilities and the true meaning of word "Ombudsman".

As advocates we strive to improve the quality of life for all residents whose home has become a "Long Term Care Facility".

Long Term Care Residents need you! Call Office for the Aging today at 785-3191.



By Sheila Kehoe, Long Term Care Coordinator

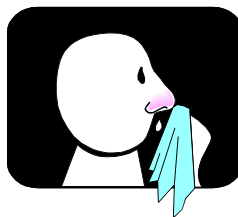
The NY Connects Jefferson County has just entered its fourth year of program operations. The program continues to support personal independence by encouraging consumer choice by

providing information and assistance on available long term care services. Through collaboration at the local level, NY Connects has become a catalyst for long term care systems reform.

Information and assistance is provided on a wide variety of subjects including transportation, homecare services, home-delivered meals and congregate nutrition sites, personal emergency systems, housing and long term care services.

For more information, please go to www.nyconnects.org or call Sheila Kehoe at 315-785-5081.

STEPS TO PROTECT YOURSELF FROM THE FLU



The first and most important step in protecting against the seasonal flu is to get the flu shot. Vaccination is especially important for people at high risk of serious flu complications, including young children, pregnant women, people with chronic health conditions like asthma, diabetes or heart and lung disease and people 65 years of age and older.

Please do your part to protect yourself, your family and your neighbors from the flu! Take everyday precautions by covering your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Properly dispose of the tissue.

Perform hand hygiene (hand washing with soap and water, alcohol-based hand rub, or antiseptic hand wash) after sneezing, blowing your nose, or coughing, or after touching used tissues or handkerchiefs.

Try to avoid close contact with people who are coughing or sneezing and if you are sick with flu-like illness, stay at home and avoid contact with others to keep from infecting them. Remember to eat a healthy diet, exercise and get plenty of sleep. Avoid using alcohol or tobacco products.

If you have a cough and fever see your doctor and follow his or her direction.

SANTA FOR SENIORS PROGRAM



As the 2009 holidays are fast approaching, we will note our 9th annual Santa for Seniors Program, which the Office for the Aging sponsors in conjunction with radio station Z93FM.

We are particularly proud of this endeavor as we provide gifts to more than 500 nursing and adult home residents in the Jefferson and Lewis County area. The facilities provide OFA with first names of residents and gift suggestions, which are then announced over the air. For example, Mary, from a local nursing home, is in need of a sweater. Listeners then call the radio station and sponsor Mary. Gifts are dropped off at the radio station, sorted and picked up by the nursing home staff for distribution at their facilities.

Almost all the nursing and adult homes in Jefferson County participate, along with Lewis County Nursing Home in Lowville.

GIFTS FOR SENIORS

The Holidays are rapidly approaching. It's a wonderful time of the year to enjoy the company of friends and loved ones. With the Holiday Season also comes the Holiday Shopping and trying to select the proper gift for each loved one.

Below are a few suggestions that might give you some ideas when you are looking for that perfect gift for that special senior.

- Prepaid long distance phone cards
- Subscription to their favorite magazine or newspaper or books
- Assorted greeting cards, writing paper and postage stamps
- Lap robes, afghans or fleece blanket

- A basket with a variety of canned goods, cookies, crackers and especially their favorites
- Gift certificate for their beautician or barber
- Gift Card to a grocery or department store
- Bedroom slippers
- Sweaters
- Socks
- Neck Pillows
- CD's or tapes of their favorite songs or movies
- Silk flower arrangements - no watering
- Toiletries

**Jefferson County Public Health Service
Home Health Care
531 Meade St.
Watertown, NY 13601
(315) 786-3770**

Jefferson County Public Health Service provides home health visits in the patient's home. Services provided include nursing, physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, medical social services and home health aide services. Patients can be referred to the agency by hospitals, physicians, community agencies, family and friends. The patient must have a physician that is willing to sign orders for the care in the home.

Nursing care may include but is not restricted to:

- Wound care
- IV therapy
- Drawing blood
- Teaching regarding a new diagnosis, new medication and/or treatment
- Insertion and maintenance of a foley catheter
- Assisting with medication management
- Teaching regarding community resources

The first evaluation visit completed by the clinician to determine patient's health care needs is free. If you have questions regarding home health care for yourself, family member or a friend, please feel free to call (315) 786-3770.

Jefferson County Office for the Aging
250 Arsenal Street
Watertown, New York 13601
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Lou Gehrig's Disease

By Peter Fazio Director of
Jefferson County Veterans
Office

Studies have shown that Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS), also known as Lou Gehrig's Disease, occurs at a higher rate in veterans than in the general public.

Based on a review of those studies, the VA has established that a "presumptive" link exists between ALS and military service.

Harvard researchers found that individuals with a history of military service are at a nearly 60% greater risk of being diagnosed with the condition.



That means that if a veteran has 90 days or more of continuous active service has been diagnosed with ALS, they should file a claim. If a veteran has died from ALS, the surviving spouse can file a VA claim for survivor benefits.

For more information or to file a claim, contact the Jefferson County Veterans Service Agency at (315)785-3086.



Workshops at the WorkPlace 2010

The WorkPlace will be sponsoring workshops on "Job Search Techniques for the Older Workers" on January 11, February 8 and March 8 . The time will be from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

The workshop is intended to discuss some of the barriers older workers experience in their job search and methods to overcome some of these barriers.

For further information call the WorkPlace at 782-9252.

