

WINDSOR COA NEWS
February/March 2021

Our mission is to serve older Windsor adults by providing opportunities and resources that advance the quality of life in a rural community.

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In these challenging times, it sometimes seems that we can't see the light at the end of the tunnel, but we've finally heard that folks over the age of 75 will be eligible to receive their COVID vaccine on February 1st! We're hoping that this may be the first glimmer of that light we've been seeking for almost a year. We hope that you have been able to stay well and are getting everything you need to live comfortably. Please remember that your COA is here to help, and that Jessica Buoymaster, our Outreach Worker is available with information and assistance. You can reach out to her at 329-4364 or to Sue Jacobs at 684-3191.

When to Enroll into Medicare *from Cathy Hall, SHINE Counselor in Windsor*

If you are not age 65 and receiving Social Security benefits, you will be contacted by Medicare prior to your 65th birthday. If you are turning 65 and not receiving Social Security benefits, you must contact Social Security to enroll. You will NOT be automatically notified by Medicare that you should enroll.

If you are still working at age 65, you should consult with your human resources department to see if you should enroll in Medicare Part A and Part B while still working, or if you are covered under a spouse's plan, check to see what they recommend. Depending on your situation, you may be able to defer signing up for Medicare Part A, Part B and Part D, but you need to know if you have credible coverage to avoid penalties being added to your premiums when you do enroll.

If you are currently covered by Medicare Parts A, B & D or will be enrolling in them and need help paying for premiums, there are some Public Benefits Programs available to help cover some of the premiums or reduce prescription costs.

You can call me at 413-212-9991 if you have any questions or need help finding a Supplemental Insurance Plan or Part D prescription plan. While I am still quite new to the SHINE program, I will do my best to get you the information you need.

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Building on the excellent article, "Boosting Your Natural Immune System" submitted by Diane Pennetti in our previous insert, here is some information Sue gleaned in a workshop at the same conference.

**FIVE PILLARS OF BRAIN HEALTH**

This was one of the workshops I attended at the fall state-wide conference that members of the COA attended. I hope you find one or more tips you can work into your daily schedule.

1. Discover: Learn something new to challenge your brain, such as:
  - Take or teach a class
  - Learn a new language, dance or musical instrument (the workshop leader learned how to play a ukulele online)
  - Play a challenging card or board game
2. Connecting: Stay socially engaged ...
  - With family, friends, your community (by phone and online until we can gather in person)
  - Avoid isolation
  - Enjoy the companionship of a pet (maybe foster one through a shelter)
  - Volunteer: Get involved! Join a club; serve in your community on a board or committee (Windsor's 250<sup>th</sup> committee needs people!)
3. Exercise: Get moving! Examples are walking (wear grippers on the ice!), dancing (even around the house), strength training, Tai Chi, Yoga. Aim for at least 30 minutes, three times/week.

Physical activities help to:

- Repair and protect brain chemicals
  - Increase circulation
  - Reduce anxiety and improve sleep
  - Reduce the risk of diabetes
4. Eat a Brain-Healthy Diet: The speaker recommended three books: "Power Foods for the Brain" by Neil Bernard, MD; "Rebuild" by Dr. Robert Zembroski
    - Eat less meat and sweets
    - Eat more fish and seafood, nuts such as walnuts and almonds, beans, grains, dark greens (check with your doctor first) such as kale, spinach, broccoli, whole berries
    - Eliminate processed foods containing chemicals, preservatives and dyes
    - Make one small change at a time
  5. Sleep and Reducing Stress
    - Get enough sleep
    - Take time to exercise, meditate, practice tai chi or yoga to reduce stress
    - Laugh and smile

Tips for increasing memory

- Pay attention and take notes
- Avoid multitasking
- Establish a routine
- Take breaks
- Use calendars, reminders, alarms.

We join all of you in looking forward to spring and to happy and healthier days. Remember to reach out to Jessica or myself, Sue Jacobs with questions or concerns.