

## **WINDSOR COA NEWS**

**July/August 2023**

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

The Executive Office of Elder Affairs provides financial support for this COA publication

### **Coping with Stress & Anxiety**

On Wednesday, July 26<sup>th</sup>, Diane Pennetti will be presenting a workshop focusing on how we can develop skills to deal with the stress and anxiety we encounter in our everyday lives. With the participants, she'll explore the effects of these issues on our physical and emotional health, and explore healthy coping skills to deal with same.

Lunch will be served, so please register by calling Jessica at 413-329-4364 no later than Friday, July 21<sup>st</sup>.

[Diane is a retired nurse with several years experience in the mental health field.]

### **The VA's Aid and Attendance Benefits and Housebound Allowance.**

This benefit is a monthly payment added to the amount of a monthly VA pension for qualified Veterans and survivors. If you need help with daily activities, or you are housebound, find out if you qualify.

#### **VA's Aid and Attendance Benefits**

To qualify for this benefit, you need to answer these questions and at least one of these must be true:

- 1). You need another person to help you perform daily activities, like bathing, feeding and dressing, or,
- 2). You have to stay in bed - or spend a large portion of the day in bed - because of illness, or,

- 3). You are a patient in a nursing home due to a loss of mental or physical abilities related to a disability, or,
- 4). Your eyesight is limited (even with glasses or contact lenses you have only 5/20 or less in both eyes, or concentric contraction of the visual field is reduced to 5 degrees).

#### **Housebound benefits eligibility**

You may be eligible for this benefit if you get a VA pension and you spend most of your time in your home because of a permanent disability (a disability that does not go away).

NOTE: You cannot get Aid and Attendance benefits and Housebound benefits at the same time.

You can apply for VA Aid and Attendance or Housebound benefits in one of these ways:

Send a completed VA form to your Pension Management Center (PMC). This VA Form has a downloaded capability. The VA Form is 21-2680. You also can use doctor reports, details to show what illness, injury, or mental or physical disabilities affect your life or daily things you do.

If you're in a nursing home, you need to use VA Form 21-0779. It too is downloadable (in PDF form).

[Our heartfelt thanks to COA Board member and Veteran, Alan Zawistowski for these helpful articles.]

## Stay Safe in the Summer

Important information from the National Institute on Aging ([www.nih.gov](http://www.nih.gov) for more details).

Watch for signs of heat illness like any one or combination of: dizziness, cramping, swelling, rash, exhaustion, nausea, confusion or a slow or rapid pulse. Call your doctor, urgent care center or other medical provider. **DO NOT WAIT!** Ask your doctor if any of your medications make you more likely to become overheated or sunburned.

Drink plenty of liquids, such as water, fruit or vegetable juices, or drinks that contain electrolytes. Avoid alcohol and caffeinated beverages.

If your living space is hot, try to spend time during midday in a place that has air conditioning. Windsor's Town Hall is an emergency shelter. Contact Jessica Buoymaster if it's locked and/or you need a ride. Keep your home as cool as possible with air conditioning or fans. Try to limit use of the oven; keep shades, blinds, or curtains closed during the hottest part of the day, and open windows at night.

Dress for the weather. Wear lightweight, light-colored, loose-fitting clothing made with natural fabrics such as cotton. Check weather forecasts on local radio/tv stations or at [www.weather.gov](http://www.weather.gov) and pay special attention to the "heat index" (a combination of temperature and humidity).

Use a broad spectrum sunscreen, SPF 15 or higher, and reapply it throughout the day, especially if your skin will have continuous exposure to the sun. Wear a brimmed hat and other protective clothing, and sunglasses. If you do get sunburned, stay out of the sun until your skin is healed and use cool cloths and moisturizers to treat the affected area.

Prevent tick bites. Apply repellent (applied after your sunscreen) and do a tick check once you are indoors by removing your clothing and checking your entire body for insects or bites. [Note: We've been noticing that the deer ticks are especially numerous this year. Please be careful.]

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## Community Coffees

After a brief respite in July and August to focus on home and family, the COA will resume the Community Coffees in September (date to be announced). Come for coffee, tea, bagels, fresh fruit, baked goodies, great conversation (and maybe a Bingo game or two). Look for the COA insert in the September issue of WN&T for more information.



## IT'S TIME FOR THE FARMER'S MARKET COUPONS!

Farmer's Market Nutrition Program offers income eligible seniors coupons that can be used to buy fresh vegetables and fruits at approved farmers' markets and farm stands in MA. In 2023 and 2024, eligible seniors will be able to apply for a \$50 booklet.

Jessica Buoymaster will distribute the coupon booklets she receives from Elder Services over the coming weeks. Eligible seniors must be over age 60, be on fuel assistance and/or food stamps (SNAP), or meet the following income guidelines:

Household	Annual income	Monthly
1	\$26,973	\$2,248
2	\$36,482	\$3,041
3	\$45,991	\$3833

For more information, contact Jessica at 413-329-4364, or Elder Services of Berkshire County at 413-499-0524.