

THE SERVICE NETWORK

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Talking About the New Medicare Cards

Personal identity theft affects a large and growing number of seniors; people age 65 or older are increasingly the victims of this type of crime. This is why the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) is readying a fraud prevention initiative that removes Social Security Numbers from Medicare cards. The aim is to help combat identity theft and safeguard taxpayer dollars.

Starting in April 2018, CMS will begin mailing new Medicare cards that include a new Medicare Number.

The mailings will be staggered throughout the year and should be completed by April 2019. Medicare will **never** call and ask for personal information before sending new cards so don't share your Medicare Number or other personal information. Medicare will mail more information with the new cards and Medicare recipients can check for the latest updates at www.Medicare.gov. Medicare recipients should make sure their mailing address is up to date. If your address needs to be corrected, contact Social Security at www.ssa.gov/myaccount or 1 800 772 1213. TTY users can call 1 800 325 0778. Recipients should understand that mailing everyone in the country a new card will take time; your card might arrive at a different time than your relatives, friends, or neighbors.

The new Medicare numbers will not change Medicare benefits. People with Medicare may start using their new Medicare cards as soon as they are received.

Medicare Open Enrollment October 15—December 7 Now is the time to review your plan; coverage will begin January 1, 2018

No Waiting List for Statewide Respite & JACC Programs

The **Statewide Respite Care Program** was designed for caregivers who need a break from their caregiving responsibilities. The income guidelines for a single care recipient is \$2,205.00 single/ and \$4,410.00/married. Assets for a single person cannot exceed \$40,000.00/\$60,000.00 for a married couple. Services may include a homemaker/home health aide; social or medical adult day services; and in-patient respite at a facility for up to three weeks. Now is a good time to apply to the program to secure a reservation for the holiday season for in-patient respite.

There may be a co-payment for the Respite Program.

The **Jersey Assistance for Community Caregiving Program (JACC)** provides a broad array of services to individuals at-risk of nursing home placement. The care recipients income, if single, cannot exceed \$3,668.00 monthly/\$4,938.00 if married. Assets for a single person are less than \$40,000.00/\$60,000.00 married. The participant must meet clinical criteria for the program and must be deficient in three areas of daily living that include eating; bathing; toileting; dressing; and mobility.

Call the Division on Aging at 908 527 4870 or toll free at 1 888 280 8226 for more information.

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Aging Services Kiosk October Schedule



Division on Aging staff will be available at **Aging Services Kiosks** on the following dates in November:

Wednesday, November 8

Linden Public Library
31 E. Henry Street
Linden, 07036
10:00—12:00

Monday, November 13

Clark Public Library
303 Westfield Avenue
Clark, 07066
10:00—12:00

Wednesday, November 15

Mountainside Municipal Bldg
1385 Route 22, East
Mountainside, 07092
11:30—1:30

Thursday, November 16

Westfield Community Center
558 W. Broad Street
Westfield, 07090
10:30—12:30

Wednesday, November 22

Fanwood Public Library
5 Forest Road
Fanwood, 07023
10:00—12:00

Tuesday, November 28

Union Public Library
1980 Morris Avenue
Union, 07083
12:00—2:00

Wednesday, November 29

Elizabeth Public Library
11 S. Broad Street
Elizabeth, 07202
10:00—12:00 (bilingual staff)

Division on Aging staff are available on these dates to meet with the public regarding any questions they may have about programs and services for seniors and/or their caregivers in Union County.

The program has been highly successful in reaching County residents who might otherwise not know about help that is available through federal, state, and local programs.

Call the Division on Aging for more information at 908 527 4870 or toll free at 1 888 280 8226

Opioids and the Older Adult Population

(Excerpts: SAMHSA State Technical Assistance Contract and The Recovery Village)

As the baby boomer generation ages and the population of older adults in the United States grows, opioid misuse among older Americans is becoming an increasingly urgent public health concern. The population of older adults who misuse opioids is projected to double and an analysis of Medicare Part D data by the Office of the Inspector General revealed that more than 500,000 Medicare Part D beneficiaries received high amounts of opioids in 2016, with the average dose far exceeding the manufacturer’s recommended amount. Beyond the threat of addiction, opioid use can pose health risks such as breathing complications, confusion, drug interaction problems, and increased risk of falls, which can be more dangerous in the older population.

There is no question that opioids are valuable in pain management; they are prescribed frequently, with approximately 92 million older adults being prescribed an opioid painkiller annually. While many are able to use and stop them as their doctor prescribes, a significant percentage of people end up misusing opioids, not out of weakness or lack of character, but because addiction is an illness and opioids are highly addictive. An estimated 5 to 8 million older adults have a mental health or substance use disorder and self medicate; as the number of people over the age of 65 increases, addiction will have a devastating effect.

Opioids can help older adults maintain their independence and can treat debilitating pain that might otherwise leave them immobilized and homebound. Older people are more likely to be dealing with a number of ailments for which doctors prescribe opioids. Drug tolerance and metabolism change with age, and older adults tend not to be able to consume medication in the same quantities and frequencies as younger adults.

There is no easy answer to addiction treatment in older people, just as there is not for younger people. Addiction is a disease with effects that are often specific to the person with the addiction, and these effects vary with many factors, including age. Awareness of the risk of opioid addiction among older people is the first step toward recognizing it early and encouraging addiction treatment and recovery.

The State of New Jersey’s Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services has an online directory of addiction treatment services available at: <https://njsams.rutgers.edu/dastxdirectory/txdirmain.htm> or call 609 292 5760

Waging a Campaign Against Elder Abuse

Peggy's Law Enacted to Better Protect Elderly Nursing Home Residents (excerpts: NJ Spotlight)

Starting this fall, elderly residents in New Jersey's nursing homes and other long-term facilities will benefit from additional protections designed to ensure law enforcement is looped into possible criminal abuse cases right from the start.

Gov. Chris Christie has signed a bipartisan bill that requires workers at the more than 900 state-regulated facilities that house senior citizens to promptly contact police if they suspect abuse, exploitation, or other criminal harm involving any of the elderly residents. It also holds both the worker and the facility responsible if the police are not notified within 24 hours of a suspected crime, or within two (2) hours if an injury is involved.

Under the current law, employees must report suspected abuse, neglect, and other harm to the state's Office of the Ombudsman for the Institutionally Elderly, which advocates for senior citizens in all long-term residential sites and is empowered to investigate these complaints. But, workers were not required to call the police.

The Ombudsman's Office is not a first-responder agency but it does promptly refer calls it gets involving emergencies to police and encourages caregivers to call 911 directly if their concern is urgent.

According to the Ombudsman's annual report for 2016, New Jersey has 380 nursing homes, with some 51,000 beds, licensed through the Department of Health. Another 500+ long term care facilities, boarding homes and group residential facilities primarily overseen by the Department of Community Affairs, provide approximately 26,000 additional beds.

The Ombudsman's office, formed in 1977, has the power and trained staff to investigate a wide range of complaints related to seniors living in these facilities; they can probe cases involving residents over age 60 in state-run developmental centers and psychiatric hospitals. Each site is required to prominently hang a poster that displays information about the Ombudsman's office complaint line at 1 877 582 6995, and the posters now urge people to call 911 if it is an emergency.

Investigators at the Ombudsman's office opened more than 2,700 cases in 2016, investigating reports of alleged improper care, unexplained injuries, physical and sexual abuse by staff and other residents, and financial exploitation, among other complaints. The office also referred 17 cases to the state attorney general last year, most involving financial fraud in which the elderly resident was a victim.

To file a complaint:
Call 24-Hour Toll Free Hotline: 1-877-582-6995
Email: ombudsman@advocate.state.nj.us
Write: The Office of the Ombudsman
P.O. Box 852
Trenton, NJ 08625-0852
Fax: 609-943-3479

Ryde4Life Program

EZ Ride is a non-profit public-private partnership that offers transportation for adults 50 years or older in partnership with Transportation Network Companies like Lyft and Uber. Rides are provided on all working days from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm.

To participate in the Ryde4Life program, participants should have a credit or debit card, a cell phone, and complete and sign a Registration and Agreement Form.

There is a non-refundable membership fee of \$15.00 per year. The administrative fee is \$1.00 per ride which may be waived for eligible riders (PAAD eligible). Ride charges will be per Lyft/Uber rates applicable at the time any ride is provided. All fees and charges are collected in advance from the credit/debit card by charging \$50.00 to start the account, much like EZ Pass; fees will be deducted from the available balance and additional money will be debited from your card when account balance drops to \$25.00. Rides are provided in real time with no advance reservations.

For more information go to Ryde4Life@ezride.org or call 1 866 208 1307 Option 4

Sorry, Nobody Wants Your Parents' Stuff

(excerpts: nextavenue)

I've cleaned out more houses than I care to count after a death in the family; my parents' home (yes, where I grew up), grandparents, my grandmother's husband's house, my mother-in-law's home (all those family memories sitting around the table), my kids father's home. The thing I learned from all these clean outs is that no one wants the stuff, not even you or your kids. All those prized possessions: china, crystal, expensive figurine collections, antique corner shelves, plates with pretty rose patterns, soup tureens, silver service, jewelry, crocheted blankets, a myriad of tchotchkes, and so many photographs of people no one in this century can identify.

So, forgive the morbidity, but if you are lucky enough to still have the aforementioned family members, it would be wise to start figuring out what you'll do with their belongings after they exit. Many boomers and Gen X'ers charged with disposing of the family heirlooms are unprepared for the reality and unwilling to face it. And if you're thinking that your grown children will gladly accept your parents' items, even for sentimental reasons, you are in for a big surprise.

We live in a Target and Ikea age where people live minimally; they don't have emotional attachments to things that earlier generations did. They are more mobile so they don't want a lot of heavy stuff dragging them down. Most antique dealers and auction houses have little appetite for your parents' stuff either. Even charities like the Salvation Army and Goodwill frequently reject donations of home furnishings.

So, what can you do to avoid finding yourself forlorn in your late parents' home? Here are some suggestions:

- Start mobilizing while your parents are still around; ask them the story behind the collection of their stuff. That can help with selling it, or deciding to keep it due to a fantastic story.
- Give yourself plenty of time to find takers if you can. The longer you have to sell something, the more money you will make.
- Do an online search to see whether there is a market for your parents' art, furniture, china, or crystal
- Get jewelry appraised
- Look for a nearby consignment shop or liquidation firm that might take some items
- See if someone locally could use what you inherited, i.e. tools, kitchen gadgets
- Download the free **Rightsizing and Relocation Guide** from the National Association of Senior Move Managers at https://www.nasmm.org/education/guide_to_relocating.cfm
- But the best advice is....Prepare for Disappointment. For the first time in history, two generations are downsizing simultaneously. This, it seems, is 21st century life....and death. Sad but true, there is little future for the possessions of our parents.

Alzheimer's Caregiver Conference

Saturday, November 4, 2017

8:30 am—12:00 pm

Union County College
1033 Springfield Avenue
Cranford, 07016

Call **973 586 4300** to RSVP and secure adult day services
Adult Day Services provided Gateway Family YMCA

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