



Ageing Matters

New Hampshire State Commission on Aging

New Hampshire Commission on Aging

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How Helping Others Might Help You

By **DON AKCHIN**, *The End Game*

Thirty years ago, I got involved in volunteer work to improve the lives and living conditions in an urban neighborhood. Over five years we generated a wide range of projects: Tutoring elementary school students, teaching adults to read, distributing Thanksgiving dinners to food-challenged families, sponsoring classes for women entrepreneurs, clothing drives, book drives, and partnering with existing neighborhood groups. Many of these projects, I'm happy to say, are still ongoing.

An important takeaway from that experience was how hard it was to get volunteers for long-term projects – tutoring, teaching, relationship building – that required the volunteers to make consistent, long-term commitments. There were never problems enlisting volunteers for the book drive, the clothing drive, or annual food distributions. Volunteers eagerly flocked to those one-and-done efforts, which instilled in them good feelings about their contribution, at minimal personal cost.

I was reminded of that lesson while reading a new research study, *The Value of Volunteering*, by **the Mather Institute**. Those of us who have retired, and those of us thinking about retiring, are reminded regularly by spouses and friends that volunteering is a far more useful activity than streaming the 13th episode of *Hollywood Celebrity Breakups*. After all, we have an abundance of free time, and so much work needs to be done in the world: People are hungry, children are lonely, parks are filled with litter, homeless men and women need shelter, shut-ins would love some company...the list of needs is endless.

But volunteering is not as simple as our well-meaning friends seem to believe. The Mather Institute study makes that quite clear. Stay with me as we do a deep dive into the volunteer experience.

Why Volunteer?

Most people say they volunteer because they want to help other people. That's an excellent reason. There's nothing wrong with altruism.

But here's another, more compelling reason: *Volunteering is also good for you!* Numerous studies have shown that older adults who volunteer enjoy better physical, mental, and cognitive health than those who do not. A 2021 study found that older adults who volunteered for more than 100 hours per year reported greater satisfaction with life, more purpose, and lower levels of depression, hopelessness, and loneliness.

That may be, but the truth is that only about 4% of older adults volunteer that much. Nearly one-third report volunteering "once a year or

Helping Others, con't next page

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How to Contact the New Hampshire State Commission on Aging

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Older Adult Volunteer Awards Update

Thank you to everyone who submitted nominations for the 2023 Older Adult Volunteer Awards. We received great submissions from through the state highlighting the work of inspiring and dedicated volunteers.

Nominations will be reviewed in the coming weeks with winners notified in April.

In recognition of May of Older Americans Month, the Commission will host a special event at the state house with Governor Chris Sununu (invited) to celebrate the winners from each county. Stay tuned for further details.

**Check Out Past
Editions of
AgingMatters**

<https://www.nhcoa.nh.gov/newsletters.aspx>

Helping Others, con't

less." Another 20% volunteer "a few days a year." These figures support my past observations about the popularity of one-and-done efforts.

There is another aspect to clarify. Researchers divide volunteer activities into two types. **Formal volunteering** is performing unpaid work for an organization – in other words, the work we typically think of when we hear the word "volunteer." That can encompass a wide range of activities, from tutoring young students to lending your expertise as a nonprofit board member. **Informal volunteering**, on the other hand, is any direct assistance to someone outside of your household. That includes babysitting the grandchildren (yes!), helping a neighbor weed her garden, taking your mother grocery shopping, the neighborhood decorating contest, or driving Aunt Edna to her doctor's appointment.

There are demographic differences in who is most likely to participate in the two types, according to the Mather Institute study. The likelihood of engaging in formal volunteering increases with income. The likelihood of participating in informal volunteering also is greater among adults with more than a bachelor's degree, as well as those who are separated or divorced.

What's In It for You?

The Mather Institute study also looked at how volunteering impacted life satisfaction among older adults. While frequent volunteer activity of either type was associated with greater life satisfaction, formal volunteering had significantly greater impact on the volunteer's satisfaction. However, older adults are more likely to engage in informal volunteering. The roles of volunteers also made a difference. The roles that satisfied older adults the most were collecting, preparing, serving or distributing food; fundraising; general labor such as cleaning up a neighborhood park; tutoring or teaching; or mentoring (or coaching) youth.

Bottom line, a lot of older adults engage in volunteer activities that aren't likely to increase their life satisfaction. And the types of roles that yield the most satisfaction – such as mentoring, tutoring, or teaching – are the activities fewer adults are likely to take on.

So yes, volunteering of any type is good for society, and anything that gets you away from a video screen is good for you. But the types of volunteering that offer the most positive psychological benefits to the volunteer are the ones that take the most time and the most commitment. They are the activities that require an open mind, an open heart, and a willingness to engage another human being in what philosopher Martin Buber calls an "I - thou" relationship.

Don Akchin produces a weekly newsletter and a biweekly podcast about positive aspects of aging. You can read more (and get a free subscription) at <https://theendgame.substack.com/p/how-helping-others-might-help-you>

Need Help in Finding Your Ideal Volunteer Opportunity?

"5 Ways to Find the Right Volunteer Opportunity" Can Help
Check it out on page 9 of this month's edition of Aging Matters

Help Us Spread the Word!

If you like this newsletter, please share it with your family, neighbors, friends, and colleagues.

March Commission on Aging Meeting Recap

Older adults in the workplace took center stage at the March meeting of the New Hampshire Commission on Aging. The meeting featured an expert panel of thought leaders from across the state providing valuable insights to the issue.

Christina FitzPatrick from AARP-NH shared the many resources that AARP provides to individuals and employers. **Rich Lavers** and **Brian Gottlob** from the NH Department of Employment Security reviewed age-related workforce trends from a statistical perspective. **Ahni Malachi**, the NH Human Rights Commission Executive Director, gave a snapshot of the Commission and reviewed how older adults with workplace, housing, or public accommodation concerns could file complaints. **Ryan King** from Northeast Delta Dental shared the many benefits older adults bring to the workforce as well as how Northeast Delta Dental works to create a successful multi-generational workplace – from intentional recruitment and retention strategies to flexible work arrangements to training workshops on intergenerational working. The presentations led to a robust discussion as well as questions from audience members. Materials shared at the meeting will be posted on the NH State Commission on Aging’s website shortly.

Commission member **Polly Campion** reviewed the progress of bills the Commission is following this legislative session. See the Alliance for Healthy Aging Advocacy Update on page 16 for the latest information on Senate Bill 36, System of Care for Healthy Aging.

The April Meeting of the Commission on Aging, which will focus on an aspect of how our state’s housing challenges effects older adults will take place on Monday, April 17th at 10:00 AM at the NH Hospital Association, 125 Airport Road in Concord. Details and more at: <https://www.nhcoa.nh.gov/>

Complete minutes and the materials that were distributed for the March meeting will be posted on the Commission’s website after the minutes are approved at the April Commission meeting. The NHCOA’s website also includes information about the Commission, its work, past meeting minutes and the Annual Report and its Executive Summary.

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Tech Coaching Available through Dartmouth’s Aging Resource Center

- *Do you have questions about the cell phone you use?*
- *Are you hoping to better use the tablet available to you?*
- *Do you feel overwhelmed by technical terminologies and do not know how to address your computer related problems?*
- *Would you like technology support while you get acquainted with your new computer?*
- *Do you feel embarrassed to ask your friends and family questions about online services and information?*
- *Are you hoping to use technology to better connect with others?*

If you answered yes to any of those questions, Tech Coaching may be the right program for you! Tech Coaching is a free, one-on-one, collaborative service. Assistance is available both in-person at the Aging Resource Center’ Lebanon, NH location or via Zoom.

To make an appointment, please call (603) 653-3460 or email agingcenter@hitchcock.org.

The Dartmouth Aging Resource Center hosts a variety of events for older adults, families, and community members. Classes are held online so anyone across the state can join.

The Center is offering a full schedule of programs in the coming months.

You need to pre-register and obtain the link to attend a class.

Check out the program listing and register for a class at <https://events.dartmouth-hitchcock.org/organizer/aging-resource-center/>

What Does Age-Friendly Mean in NH?

An article from the NH Commission on Aging – Age-Friendly State Task Force

Editor's Note: This is the 3rd article in a series of articles designed to showcase what NH communities are doing to make where they live more livable for people of all ages. Some towns engage in large planning initiatives while others target small changes. The Commission on Aging – Age-Friendly State Task Force hopes to capture the variety of experiences in the articles solicited for this series. Part Two of our look at Goffstown activities will be published in May.

Making Connections: Opportunities Abound for Goffstown's Older Adults

By **CHRIS DUGAN**

Director of Communications and Engagement, NHSCOA

Now in its 5th year as Age-Friendly Community (as designated by AARP), Goffstown continues to expand opportunities for older adults. From downtown sidewalk updates to improvements to its burdening rail trail system, to community health education programs and offerings-many of them free of charge-the town continues to live up to its age friendly moniker.

"There's a wonderful sense of people coming together to support one another," says **Sunny Mulligan Shea**, former Goffstown resident and member of the NH State Commission on Aging. "The designation from AARP was a great recognition of the many things the town does in support of older adults."

According to the most recent data from town hall, more than one-third of the population of Goffstown is over the age of 60. And with social isolation being a critical risk factor, Mulligan Shea says that the town's offerings to older adults are that much more important. "The town really works to highlight what resources older adults can avail themselves of," she says. "The library, recreation department, and police department-among others are tremendous resources."

Along with of Portsmouth, Goffstown was among the first NH Age-Friendly Community designee.

Commentary:

Make your town your lifetime home

Susan Ruka, chair of the NH State Commission on Aging, says we all have aging in common. "Every day everyone ages, but we all move through the aging process differently. Fortunately, most of us are living longer, healthier lives. This means we can continue contributing to our communities, often in even more meaningful ways as we've accumulated a long lifetime of experience. Supporting the inclusion of older adults in our communities means supporting needs that change as we all age."

Susan's commentary was published in recent edition of the New Hampshire Bulletin; you can read the entire article at <https://newhampshirebulletin.com/2023/03/24/make-your-town-your-home-for-your-lifetime/>

Goffstown is also home to a site for Meals on Wheels of Hillsborough County, which in addition to home delivered meals, also offers congregate meals and activities at the Meeting House. The Goffstown Network runs the town's food pantry in the Parish House of St. Matthew's Episcopal Church (7 N. Mast St.), distributing grocery products and perishable foods to those in need.

"One of the unique and special things about our state is people working together toward a common purpose," said Mulligan-Shea. "Goffstown is a wonderful example of that!"

What changes would you like to see in your community to make it an even better place to live as you age?

Tell us by answering the following questions:

1. If you could spend \$1 Million dollars on something to improve your community, what would it be?
2. If you had limited funds, but could organize people to make a change, what would that change be?
3. Please share what other changes you believe could make your community more livable as you age?

Use this link to share your thoughts with the Commission on Aging:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NHlivability>, or send your answers by April 30, 2023 to Survey, NH Commission on Aging, 117 Pleasant St., Dolloff Building, 4th Floor, Concord, NH 03301

To arrange for a speaker from the Age-Friendly Communities Speakers Bureau for your community event please contact any of the following:

- Ashley Davis, AARP New Hampshire (603) 230-4113 / addavis@aarp.org
- Rebecca Sky, NH State Commission on Aging (603) 848-4024 / Rebecca.I.sky@nhcoa.nh.gov
- Jennifer Rabalais, NH Alliance for Healthy Aging (603) 228-2084 x14 / Jennifer.Rabalais@unh.edu

Care Paradox Advocates for Patients in Need

By **CHRIS DUGAN**

Director of Communications and Engagement, NHSCOA

The Care Paradox, as defined by a collective of in-home care agencies, healthcare providers, nonprofits, and people passionate about helping others get the care that they need refers to the high demand for care that goes unmet because of workforce shortages in caring professions.

“Right now, the gap between demand for services and the number and availability of those who provide them is growing increasingly wider,” said Amy Moore, Director of Ascentria In-Home Care at Ascentria Care Alliance. “And the downstream impact upon patients and their families can be devastating.”

Ascentria In-Home Care, Way Point, the NH Charitable Foundation, and the NH Alliance for Healthy Aging Advocacy each saw this issue playing out prior to the pandemic only grow increasingly dire in recent years. In response they are collaborating to increase awareness of the issue towards mobilizing action to stabilize the long-term services and supports system of care and ensure that caregivers are paid a living wage, receiving the training and support they need and deserve. This has culminated in the Care Paradox Campaign featuring a website that outlines the challenge and collects peoples’ stories – both of caregivers and those that need or receive care. By sharing stories, the various impacts of the paradox can come to light and the will to create change can grow.

According to Moore, the conundrum goes beyond patients and their families, it affects all of us. She

said, “Home and community-based care is a large component of the overall system of care in New Hampshire. When hospitals and rehabilitation centers can’t discharge patients back home because there is no care available, it creates a domino effect.” Hospitals have become strained to provide care to those that while able to leave, cannot and to those that need hospital level care.

“This really is relevant to everyone.” said Moore, who uses her own lived experience with a head injury when discussing the acute need for services. “Your life can change in an instant. Many people are just one incident away from needing help and we need to ensure those supports are there.”

Medicaid is the largest payer for home and community-based services for older adults and adults with physical disabilities. According to **a report by the NH Fiscal Policy Institute**, the rates Medicaid pays for these services has not kept up with the cost of inflation to the tune of \$153 Million since 2011. Organizations providing these services have done fundraising to stay afloat. These organizations say this is not sustainable. “Lack of necessary funding is putting the continued offering of home and community-based services at risk. We need to shore up our system of care through investment. By developing a collective will to do better by those in need, we can create a more vibrant community for all us,” Moore concluded.

To learn more about the work of the Care Paradox, or share your own story, please visit: <https://careparadox.org/>

Editor’s Note: This article by AnnMarie Timmons, published in the New Hampshire Bulletin on March 22, 2023 provides additional information on the issues faced by care agencies in providing home care services. The beginning of the story is included here; for the complete story, please go to <https://newhampshirebulletin.com/2023/03/22/were-teetering-on-the-edge-are-medicaid-rates-making-it-harder-to-age-at-home/>

‘We’re teetering on the edge.’

Are Medicaid rates making it harder to age at home?

Instead of living in nursing facilities, nearly 3,800 Granite Staters are in their own homes and communities thanks to the help they receive with basic needs like bathing, transferring from a wheelchair to bed, managing medications, making meals, and getting to medical appointments.

Approximately 600 of them risk losing that care in July if the state doesn’t increase what it’s paying providers through the Medicaid-funded Choices for Independence (CFI) program, which covers the

cost of housekeeping and personal care services for people who want to age at home and qualify for Medicaid.

The heads of Ascentria Care Alliance and Waypoint of New Hampshire, who have 600 CFI clients between them, said they will leave the program in July if lawmakers do not increase their Medicaid payments. They said they’ve stayed in the program this long only by fundraising to cover their losses.

The Challenges to Community Transportation in New Hampshire

In our car-dependent culture, many of us don't often think about what happens if we lose our ability to drive, even if it's just temporary. Still, if you needed to get to the doctor, grocery store, pharmacy, or anywhere else, how would you, if you couldn't drive? New Hampshire's most vulnerable populations face this dilemma every day. Older adults, individuals with disabilities, veterans, immigrants, refugees, and others who can't afford to drive or are physically or mentally unable to drive often become isolated if they have no means to get where they need to go.



At some point in our lives, many of us will have to face the difficult moment when we realize we should no longer drive. Often this moment is when we are 80 or older. By 2040, the number of 80+ year-old individuals are projected to more than triple in the state. Local, regional, and state agencies

And the Survey Said...

Many thanks to the Aging Matters readers who took the time to complete the survey that was included in the newsletter earlier this year. The responses were just what we were looking for to help guide the format and content of future editions of Aging Matters.

Overall, comments about the newsletter were positive, with responses including “keeps me updated on the issues related to aging, “factual and easy to read” and “it keeps me updated with services I was not aware existed.” One person wrote “I like the timely topics covered. I feel better reading the upbeat things concerning aging.”

In terms of where a better job could be done, one respondent said they would “like to have an ‘executive summary’ of all the articles at the beginning rather than having to scroll and scroll to find out everything in the issue.”

Another noted the newsletter “seems to lack info for active seniors. We are secure financially, interested in the future – conservation of land, preservation of NH culture, openness to accept all.” “Too many articles about agency meetings and development of ‘plans’” was an observation by another survey respondent.

Others asked for an increased in stories on money issues, family caregivers, enrichment programs and

and stakeholders, transportation service providers, regional mobility managers, and Regional Planning Commissions across the state have come together to collaborate on improving education, outreach, and the coordination of transportation services.

An article published in the March/April Edition of New Hampshire Town & City published by the New Hampshire Association of Regional Planners, is one effort to help improve understanding of community transportation services in New Hampshire. It was written by Scott Bogle, Rockingham Planning Commission; Ben Herbert, Southern NH Planning Commission; Terry Johnson, Southwest Regional Planning Commission; Donna Marceau, Nashua Regional Planning Commission and Sylvia von Aulock, Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission.

The full article can be found at https://www.nhmunicipal.org/sites/default/files/uploads/documents/Publications/nharpc_article_nhma_tc_marapr_final.pdf

information on community events, and strategies to combat agism. A focus on mental health and articles specific to those older adults over the age of 80.

Many who responded to the survey were readers who followed the EngAgingNH newsletter in the past. Most read the Constant Contact version of the newsletter rather than download the full print version. Many respondents share the newsletter with others. Responses to where they get aging-related information was varied. The internet received the highest response, followed by family and/or friends and magazines. Readers who responded to the survey were all above the age of 60 with those in the 75-84 age range having the most responses.

Aging Matters will always be a work-in-process. Over the coming months, readers will see the suggestions offered in the survey incorporated into future editions.

Reader feedback is always welcome. With the vast number of topics available in the world of aging, we invite your ideas and thoughts on how we can better educate and engage older adults in New Hampshire. Feel free to contact nhcoanews@gmail.com whenever you have something you would like to share with us...and other Aging Matters readers.

2022/2023 Fuel Assistance Program Ends April 30

If you are having trouble paying for your heat this winter season, the New Hampshire Fuel Assistance Program (FAP) may be able to provide you with some relief.

The NH Department of Energy distributes federal Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) funds to New Hampshire's five Community Action Agencies (CAAs), which in turn take applications, determine benefits, and distribute FAP payments to vendors on behalf of eligible New Hampshire households throughout the state.

The Fuel Assistance Program provides benefits to qualified New Hampshire households to assist with heating costs from December 1st through April 30th. Applications can be submitted through April 30th. Both renters and homeowners may qualify for the Fuel Assistance Program.

FAP benefits may also be used to help households in a heating emergency by securing an emergency delivery of fuel or by delaying a utility disconnection or eviction notice if heat is included in the rent and the rent is not subsidized.

FAP benefits are a grant; they do not have to be paid back and they are not counted as income when applying for other assistance programs. Fuel bills that have already been paid by the applicant can be submitted and repaid through the awarded benefit, creating a credit on the applicant's account.

Am I Eligible?

Eligibility for the Fuel Assistance Program is determined by gross household income (i.e. total before taxes), the number of people in the household, the type of fuel used, and the energy burden to the household. Income limits are surprisingly high (i.e.: \$50,959 annually for a 2-person household).

How Do I Apply?

- Contact your local CAA office to learn how to apply for FAP. (See the list of CAA office phone numbers in your county on the side panel.)
- The CAA staff will tell you what information you will need to supply to process your application. To prevent delays in processing, be sure to provide all requested documents.
- If you are homebound or unable to visit a Community Action Agency office, it may be possible to arrange a home or telephone interview.

Find more information at <https://www.energy.nh.gov/consumers/help-energy-and-utility-bills/fuel-assistance-program>

NH Community Action Agencies

BELKNAP COUNTY (CAPBM)
Laconia (603) 524-5512
Meredith: (603) 279-4096

CARROLL COUNTY (TCCAP)
Tamworth: (603) 323-7400

CHESHIRE COUNTY (SCS)
Keene: (603) 352-7512
or (800) 529-0005

COOS COUNTY (TCCAP)
Berlin: (603) 752-3248

GRAFTON COUNTY (TCCAP)
Ashland: (603) 968-3560

HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY (SNHS)
Milford, Peterborough & Hillsborough
(603) 924-2243 or (877) 757-7048
Manchester: (603) 647-4470
or (800) 322-1073
Nashua: (603) 889-3440
or (877) 211-0723

MERRIMACK COUNTY (CAPBM)
Concord: (603) 225-6880
Suncook: (603) 485-7824
Warner: (603) 456-2207

ROCKINGHAM COUNTY (SNHS)
Derry: (603) 965-3029 or
(855) 295-4105
Portsmouth: (603) 436-3896 or
(800) 639-3896

Raymond: (603) 895-2303 or
(800) 974-2303
Salem: (603) 893-9172
or (800) 939-9172
Seabrook: (603) 474-3507
or (800) 979-3507

STRAFFORD COUNTY (CAPSC)
Dover, Farmington & Rochester:
(603) 435-2500

SULLIVAN COUNTY (SCS)
Claremont: (603) 542-9528

A new **Water/Sewer Arrearage Program (LIHWAP)** is available for current/past FAP recipients only. Any household who received a benefit from the NH Fuel Assistance Program from December 2021-April 2023 is now eligible to receive a one-time water and/or sewer arrearage paid off in full, whatever the amount owed is. Payments can be made until September 30, 2023. Applications can be requested from your Community Action Agency.

Drug Take Back Day is April 22

Too often, unused and expired medications find their way into the wrong hands. That's dangerous and often tragic. Bringing unused and expired medications to a Drug Take Back Day collection site protects you, your family, and your community.

National Prescription Take Back Day is a bi-annual event that occurs in the United States to encourage people to safely dispose of their unused or expired prescription drugs. The event is typically held on a Saturday in April and October and is organized by the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) in collaboration with local law enforcement agencies, community organizations, and pharmacies. DEA sponsors collection sites throughout the country where medications can be dropped off for proper disposal.

During National Prescription Drug Take Back Day, people can bring their unused or expired prescription drugs to designated collection sites in their communities. These collection sites are staffed by law enforcement officials and volunteers who ensure that the collected drugs are disposed of safely and in an environmentally friendly way. The collected drugs are typically incinerated to prevent any potential harm to the environment or wildlife.

Preparing for Take Back Day on April 22

If you are planning to participate in the next National Prescription Drug Take Back Day on Saturday, April 22, 2023, there are a few things you can do to prepare:

Identify the collection site: You can find the collection site nearest to you by [visiting the DEA's website](#), which provides a collection site locator tool. Make sure to check the opening and closing times of the collection site before you go.

Gather your unused or expired prescription drugs: Look for any unused or expired prescription drugs in your medicine cabinet or other storage areas in your home. Make sure to collect all of the prescription drugs that you no longer need, including over-the-counter medications.

Liquids must be in their original container. Pet medications are accepted. Vape pens are accepted with the batteries removed. Other e-cigarette devices are accepted with the batteries removed. These batteries are highly flammable. That's why it is important that the batteries are removed before the pen or device is placed in a collection bin.

Remove personal information: Before you take your prescription drugs to the collection site, remove any personal information from the medication labels or packaging to protect your privacy.

Transport the drugs safely: Make sure to transport your prescription drugs safely to the collection site. You can do this by placing them in a sealed plastic bag and putting the bag in your car's trunk.

Follow the instructions at the collection site: When you arrive at the collection site, follow the instructions of the staff and volunteers. They will guide you on how to safely deposit your prescription drugs in the designated containers.

Remember that National Prescription Drug Take Back Day is an important event that helps keep our communities safe and healthy. By participating, you are helping to prevent drug abuse and ensuring the safe disposal of prescription drug.

Source: WasteMedic <https://wastemedic.com/2023/02/national-prescription-drug-take-back-day-is-april-22-2023/>



AGE OF CHAMPIONS
SAVE THE DATE
Saturday, April 22,
2023
10 AM -1 PM
Lundholm Gymnasium,
UNH, Durham



University of New Hampshire
Center on Aging and Community Living
Age of Champions Health and Wellness

Bring your parents, grandparents, children, and friends. This is a multi-generational event with fun for everyone involved! Learn about community resources, try your hand at pickleball, and interact with students from several UNH departments as we celebrate healthy aging across the lifespan. Remember, it's never too soon to age well! Details at <https://chhs.unh.edu/center-aging-community-living/university-engagement/age-champions>

5 Ways to Find the Right Volunteer Opportunity

Volunteering is a great way to give back to your community and make a difference in the lives of others. It can also be a very rewarding experience for the volunteer, providing opportunities for new friendships, experiences, and skills. There are many different types of volunteer opportunities available, so it is important to find one that is a good fit for the individual volunteer. Here are five tips for finding the right volunteer opportunity for you.

1. **Define your goals.** What do you hope to accomplish by volunteering? Are you looking to make a difference in your community, learn new skills, or meet new people? Once you have a clear idea of your goals, you can begin to narrow down the type of volunteer opportunity that will be the best fit for you.
2. **Do your research.** Not all volunteer opportunities are created equal. Some may require more time or effort than others. Once you have defined your goals, take the time to research different opportunities to find one that is a good match for your interests and availability.
3. **Get involved with an organization you care about.** One of the best ways to find a rewarding volunteer opportunity is to get involved with an organization you are passionate about. Not only will you be more likely to stick with it, but you will also be more invested in the work that you are doing.
4. **Talk to people who have done it before.** Ask family and friends if they know of any good volunteer opportunities. They may have insider knowledge of great opportunities that you would not otherwise know about.
5. **Be patient. It may take some time to find the perfect volunteer opportunity.** Don't get discouraged if your first few attempts don't work out. Keep looking and you will eventually find an opportunity that is a good fit for you.

Source: Yavapai United Way. <https://www.yavapaiuw.org/5-ways-to-find-the-right-volunteer-opportunity-for-you/>

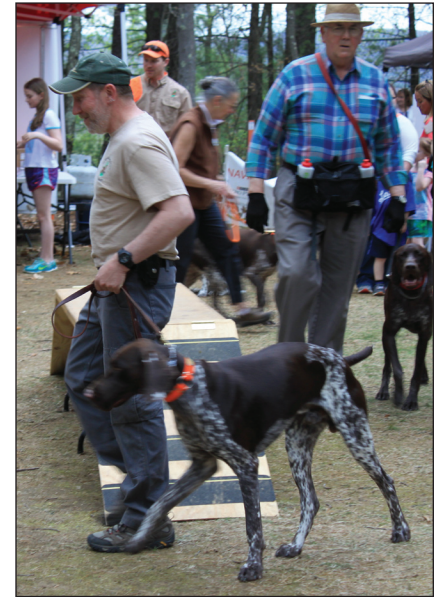


Click on the graphic above or go to <https://agefriendly.community/anti-ageism-pledge/> to add your name.

"I stand for a world without ageism, where all people of all ages are valued and respected. I acknowledge that ageism is harmful to me and others around me, and to our workforce, communities, and economy. I know that the struggle to eliminate ageism will not end with a pledge, and that I must act to transform my own bias, and the bias in our institutions and systems. I will speak out against the age injustices I see, call attention to ageist language and stereotypes, and educate myself, my family, friends, co-workers and peers about the importance of being actively anti-ageist and promoting age equity in all aspects of life."

Discover WILD New Hampshire Day

Saturday, April 15, 2023
10:00 AM until 3:00 PM
11 Hazen Drive, Concord NH



Bring the family to New Hampshire Fish and Game Department's biggest community event of the year!

Discover WILD New Hampshire Day is a fun way for the whole family to explore New Hampshire's wildlife resources and legacy of outdoor traditions. Browse educational exhibits presented by environmental and conservation organizations from throughout the state. See live animals, big fish and trained falcons. Try your hand at archery, casting, fly-tying and B-B gun shooting. Watch retriever dogs in action. Get creative with hands-on craft activities for the kids. Plus, check out the latest hunting and fishing gear and gadgets.

Discover WILD New Hampshire Day is hosted by Fish and Game and sponsored in part by the [Wildlife Heritage Foundation of New Hampshire](#).

Updated information is available at <https://wildlife.state.nh.us/events/dwnh.html>

Photo courtesy NHF&G

SCAM of the Month Alert

How to Recover Your Hacked Email or Social Media Account

There are lots of ways to protect your personal information and data from scammers. But what happens if your email or social media account gets hacked? Here are some quick steps to help you recover your email or social media account.

Signs That Your Email or Social Media Account Has Been Hacked

You might have been hacked if

- your social media account has posts you didn't make
- you can't log into your email or social media account
- your Sent folder has messages you didn't send, or has been emptied
- friends and family are getting emails or messages you didn't send, sometimes with random links or [fake pleas for help or money](#).

Steps To Get Back into Your Account

1. Update your security software, run a scan, and delete any malware. Start with this important step — especially if you're not sure how someone hacked into your account. Use either the security software that comes with your computer, phone, or tablet or download software from a reputable, well-known security company. Then, run it to scan your device for malware. If the scan identifies suspicious software, delete it, and restart your device.

2. Change your passwords. If you're able to log into your email or social media account, change the password right away. If you use similar passwords for other accounts, change them, too. Make sure you create strong passwords that will be hard to guess. If you can't log in to change your password, check the advice your email provider or social network has available. Several popular email service providers (like Gmail and Yahoo) and social media websites (like Facebook and Twitter) [give advice on how to restore and protect your account](#). If someone took over your account, you might need to fill out forms to prove it's really you who's trying to get back into your account.

3. Set up multi-factor authentication. While you're updating your password, check if your email or social media account lets you turn on [multi-factor authentication](#). Multi-factor authentication requires a password plus something else — say, a code from an authenticator app — to prove it's really you.

What To Do Once You're Back in Your Account

1. Check your account settings. After you log back in to your email account, check on a few things:

Look at your signature block and make sure it doesn't have any unfamiliar links.

Check your settings to see if there are "rules" set up to forward emails automatically. Delete any rules you didn't set up, so your messages aren't forwarded to someone else's address.

On your social media account, look for changes since you last logged in — like any new "friends."

2. Take stock of what's in your inbox. Consider what kind of information the hacker might have seen. Hackers look for information that can help them find usernames and passwords to important sites, like online banking or retirement accounts. Consider changing the usernames and passwords for accounts that may be at risk.

3. Look for tracks. In your email account, review the Sent, Trash, or Deleted folders. You might be able to uncover clues about what the hacker did. Search for emails that the hacker sent from your account, or that the hacker may have viewed and then deleted. In your social media account, check for messages that the hacker might have sent from your account. This information will help you figure out what information was exposed. If it was, visit [IdentityTheft.gov](#) to find out what you should do next.

4. Report misused information at [IdentityTheft.gov](#). If you the hacker misused your sensitive information, like your Social Security number, to access or open new accounts, to apply for government benefits, to file federal taxes, or any other misuse, report it. At [IdentityTheft.gov](#), you can create an individualized recovery plan to help you recover from identity theft.

5. Tell your friends. Send your friends a quick email or text, or post something to let them know that you were hacked. Tell them not to click on links in emails from you or respond to a hacker's fake pleas for help or money. If you're emailing a bunch of people, put their email addresses in the Bcc line to keep them confidential. You could send them this article, too.

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Hacked, con't

How To Protect Your Accounts from Getting Hacked

Use strong passwords. That means at least 12 characters. Making a password longer is generally the easiest way to make it stronger. Consider using a passphrase of random words so that your password is more memorable but avoid using common words or phrases. If the service you're using doesn't allow long passwords, you can make your password stronger by mixing uppercase and lowercase letters, numbers, and symbols. And don't reuse existing passwords from other accounts. If one of those accounts gets hacked, a hacker can try that same password to get into your email or social media account. For more tips, check out this [Password Checklist](#).

Turn on multi-factor authentication. Multi-factor authentication requires a password plus something else — say, a code from an authenticator app — to prove it's really you. This protects your account even if your password is stolen.

Protect your information. Think twice when someone asks you to put in your username and password. Never give them out in response to an email. If the email or text seems to be from your

bank, for example, visit the bank website directly. Don't click on any links or call any numbers in the message. Scammers impersonate well-known businesses to **trick people into giving out personal information**.

Install and update security software and use a firewall. Set your security software, internet browser, and operating system (like Windows or Mac OS X) to update automatically.

Get well-known software directly from the source. Sites that offer lots of different browsers, PDF readers, and other popular software for free are more likely to include malware.

Don't treat public computers or a friend's phone like it's your own device. If it's not **your** computer or phone, don't let a web browser remember your passwords. Avoid going to personal accounts — like bank accounts or email — from anywhere besides your own personal devices. And make sure to log out of any accounts when you're done. Limiting where you put your personal information reduces the chance that your information will get hacked. Also always avoid logging into your personal accounts when you're on **public Wi-Fi** because it's usually not secure.

Source: <https://consumer.ftc.gov/articles/how-recover-your-hacked-email-or-social-media-account>

Taxpayers Should Know that an Extension to File is Not an Extension to Pay Taxes

Taxpayers who aren't able to file by the April 18, 2023, deadline can request **an extension** before that deadline, but they should know that an extension to file is not an extension to pay taxes. If they owe taxes, they should pay them before the due date to avoid potential **penalties and interest** on the amount owed.

Taxpayers who request a six-month extension to file their taxes have until October 16, 2023, to file their 2022 federal income tax return.

How to request a free extension to file for a return with no tax due.

Individual taxpayers, regardless of income, can use IRS Free File at [IRS.gov/FreeFile](https://www.irs.gov/FreeFile) to request an automatic six-month tax-filing extension. Alternatively, taxpayers can file Form 4868, Application for Automatic Extension of Time to File.

How to request an extension when making a payment for a return with taxes due.

Taxpayers can choose to submit an **electronic payment** and select Form 4868 or extension as the payment type. The IRS will count it as an extension

automatically, and taxpayers won't need to file Form 4868.

Victims in FEMA disaster areas may have an automatic extension.

The IRS may offer an automatic extension to areas designated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency. To check whether an area is included, see [IRS.gov/disasters](https://www.irs.gov/disasters). Taxpayers in the affected areas do not need to file any extension paperwork, and they do not need to call the IRS to qualify for the extended time.

U.S. citizens and resident aliens abroad and military members in combat zones may have more time to pay.

Taxpayers living overseas, including members of the military and **eligible support personnel serving in combat zones** may also have extra time to file their tax returns and pay any taxes due.

Find More Information at:

[What Is the Due Date of My Federal Tax Return or Am I Eligible to Request an Extension?](#)

Frago Webinar Answers Questions About the VA Claims Process for Military Members

The NH Department of Military Affairs and Veterans Services presents the Frago Series, a series of informative webinars for those who have a history of military experience (individuals or family members) or have an interest in supporting the Service Member, Veteran and Family community. The series is available to anyone actively serving, who has previously served, military/Veteran family members, or those who support the military/Veteran community.

The next workshop in the series will be presented on April 7, 2023 from 11:00am-12:00.

On April 7, 2023 Upcoming on April 7, 2023
11:00am – 12:00pm NH Department of Military Affairs & “Frago with a VSO (Veterans Service Officer)” with feature Jamie Cummings, Veterans Service Officer Supervisor for NH Division of Veterans Services. Jamie has worked for NH DVS for 16 years and has been a VSO for 10 years. DVS’s mission statement is

to assist Veterans and their family members to obtain state and federal benefits.

In this webinar, Jamie will answer questions about the VA claims process: What to expect from a VSO; Where to locate a VSO; Benefits; Mistakes to avoid; The Pact Act and so much more. You will not want to miss this webinar, so make sure to pre-register for this event.

This series is hosted online via Zoom. Those wishing to attend much pre-register register for the webinar at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/frago-series-presents-conversation-with-a-veteran-service-officer-tickets-565104341297>. A link will be sent to you upon registration.

For information about the new webinar series, held every other month, can be found at <https://www.dmavs.nh.gov/transition-and-career-resources-militaryveterans/militaryveteran-learning-series>

Filing Season Information and Resources for Military Members and Veterans

The IRS offers a variety of tax resources and information designed to help members of the military community navigate their unique and sometimes complex tax situations. Reviewing these resources before filing can make completing an accurate tax return easier.

Here are some of these resources.

Tax Information for Members of the Military is the main page on IRS.gov where people can go to find links to helpful info, resources and services.

A taxpayer’s military status affects whether they are eligible for certain benefits. Taxpayers can check their **eligibility for military tax benefits** by visiting IRS.gov. Qualifying employers include the Armed Forces, uniformed services and support organizations.

The **Armed Forces’ Tax Guide** is a comprehensive IRS publication for military members. It covers:

Special rules for military personnel serving abroad, including deadline extensions

Unreimbursed moving expenses

Reserve component travel expenses

The Department of Defense provides **MilTax** as a free tax resource for the military community. Those eligible for MilTax include members of the Air Force, Army, Navy, Marines and National Guard. Coast

Guard members serving under Title 10 authority are entitled to this resource as well. **Retired and honorably discharged members are authorized to use the program for up to 180 days past their separation.** Those who do not qualify for MilTax have other options to **prepare and e-file their federal taxes for free** online.

Many military installations offer free income tax assistance in-person through the military Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program. Military service members can contact their installation’s legal office for details. Veterans may also qualify for free tax help at several locations nationwide if they meet income or age requirements.

Specific rules apply to those who serve in combat zones. These taxpayers and their families can visit the **Tax Exclusion for Combat Service** page of IRS.gov to learn more. They should also review **special rules for the earned income tax credit**. If these apply to their tax situation, it could lead to a larger refund.

Information for veterans is available at www.irs.gov/veterans. This page has federal tax-related information about tax credits and benefits, free tax preparation, financial education and asset-building opportunities available to veterans.

What to Know Before the Public Health Emergency Ends in May

By **JULIE CARTER**, Medicare Rights Center

The COVID-19 public health emergency (PHE) will end in May. This will mean **several changes** in health programs like Medicare and Medicaid and for providers, including hospitals, nursing homes, and certain specialists.

While there are still significant numbers of COVID-19 cases in many communities, the end of the PHE will **end guaranteed access to free at-home diagnostic tests through Medicare**. Some Medicare Advantage plans may choose to continue to cover such tests. Laboratory-conducted COVID-19 tests ordered by a provider will still be covered at no charge, and coverage for COVID treatments and vaccines will not change. For Medicaid, current coverage of at-home testing, treatment, and vaccines will stay in place until September 2024. After that, states may make coverage changes.

Many Medicare telehealth services will remain in place until the end of 2024, allowing people to use telehealth no matter where they are, instead of just from rural areas; to access telehealth visits from home rather than traveling to a health care facility; and to use a telephone for certain telehealth visits like mental health care instead of using both audio and video. Medicaid telehealth coverage was not PHE-related, so it will be left to states to decide how and when to cover it. To help protect public health, some states and territories have provided COVID-19 vaccinations, testing, and treatment for uninsured individuals using Medicaid funds. This coverage will end with the PHE.

Medicaid's enrollment changes **are extremely important**. As Medicare Rights has **outlined before**, Congress put continuous enrollment requirements onto state Medicaid programs at the start of the pandemic, and these requirements are set to expire in April. People who no longer qualify for Medicaid will lose coverage, and enrollees who have difficulties navigating burdensome administrative processes are also at risk. As part of this shift, **Medicaid enrollees who first became eligible for Medicare during the pandemic** but did not sign up will have to do so.

Certain providers have also had greater flexibility during the PHE, including waivers that allow greater autonomy for certain specialties, reduced or delayed paperwork, and initiatives like Acute Hospital Care at Home, which allowed hospitals to provide hospital-like care to people in their own homes. Each of these flexibilities is on a different timeline for expiration.

As Medicare and Medicaid finances take center stage, take this opportunity to check your health coverage and see what is in store for you as the PHE ends. If you think you will still qualify for Medicaid, be sure to check in with your state to see what you need to do to ensure your coverage is uninterrupted. Think you might no longer qualify? You might still be eligible for **help covering your Medicare costs**.

Source: <https://www.medicarerights.org/medicare-watch/2023/03/09/what-to-know-before-the-public-health-emergency-ends-in-may>

NE Conference for Dementia Care Professionals

Registration is now open for the NE Conference for Dementia Care Professionals scheduled for April 3-4, 2023.

The conference will be held virtually and feature presentations from professionals in the field of Alzheimer's and dementia.

This year's event is a combination of the previously-held "A Map Through the Maze" and the Connecticut Dementia Education Conference.

Those interested in attending can register at <https://www.alz.org/manh/events/necdcp>.

If unable to attend, conference material will be available on the MANH Chapter's website following the conference.

Information and session recordings from the 2023 Family Conference held in February are now available at <https://www.alz.org/manh/events/family-conference>.

Prefer a Printed Copy of AgingMatters?

The Commission on Aging has a limited ability to provide printed copies of AgingMatters to individuals who are unable to connect to the Internet to read a copy online or download it from the Commission's website.

Email your request to NHCOAnews@gmail.com or send it to NHCOA Newsletter, NH Commission on Aging, 117 Pleasant St., Dolloff Building, 4th Floor, Concord, NH 03301.

Weighing the Risks of Major Surgery

Questions Older Adults Should Ask Their Surgeon

By JUDITH GRAHAM, Kaiser Health News

Larry McMahon, who turned 80 in December, is weighing whether to undergo a major surgery. Over the past five years, his back pain has intensified. Physical therapy, muscle relaxants, and injections aren't offering relief.

"It's a pain that leaves me hardly able to do anything," he said.

Should McMahon, a retired Virginia state trooper who now lives in Southport, North Carolina, try spinal fusion surgery, a procedure that can take up to six hours? (Eight years ago, he had a lumbar laminectomy, another arduous back surgery.)

"Will I recover in six months — or in a couple of years? Is it safe for a man of my age with various health issues to be put to sleep for a long period of time?" McMahon asked, relaying some of his concerns to me in a phone conversation.

Older adults contemplating major surgery often aren't sure whether to proceed. In many cases, surgery can be lifesaving or improve a senior's quality of life. But advanced age puts people at greater risk of unwanted outcomes, including difficulty with daily activities, extended hospitalizations, problems moving around, and the **loss of independence**.

I **wrote in November** about a new study that shed light on some risks seniors face when having invasive procedures. But readers wanted to know more. How does one determine if potential benefits from major surgery are worth the risks? And what questions should older adults ask as they try to figure this out? I asked several experts for their recommendations. Here's some of what they suggested.

What's the goal of this surgery? Ask your surgeon, "How is this surgery going to make things better for me?" said Margaret "Gretchen" Schwarze, an associate professor of surgery at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health. Will it extend your life by removing a fast-growing tumor? Will your quality of life improve by making it easier to walk? Will it prevent you from becoming disabled, akin to a hip replacement?

If your surgeon says, "We need to remove this growth or clear this blockage," ask what impact that will have on your daily life. Just because an abnormality such as a hernia has been found doesn't mean it has to be addressed, especially if you don't have bothersome symptoms and the procedure comes with complications, said Drs. Robert Becher

and Thomas Gill of Yale University, authors of that recent paper on major surgery in older adults.

If things go well, what can I expect? Schwarze, a vascular surgeon, often cares for patients with abdominal aortic aneurysms, an enlargement in a major blood vessel that can be life-threatening if it bursts.

Here's how she describes a "best case" surgical scenario for that condition: "Surgery will be about four to five hours. When it's over, you'll be in the ICU with a breathing tube overnight for a day or two. Then, you'll be in the hospital for another week or so. Afterwards, you'll probably have to go to rehab to get your strength back, but I think you can get back home in three to four weeks, and it'll probably take you two to three months to feel like you did before surgery."

Among other things people might ask their surgeon, according to a **patient brochure** Schwarze's team has created: What will my daily life look like right after surgery? Three months later? One year later? Will I need help, and for how long? Will tubes or drains be inserted?

If things don't go well, what can I expect? A "worst case" scenario might look like this, according to Schwarze: "You have surgery, and you go to the ICU, and you have serious complications. You have a heart attack. Three weeks after surgery, you're still in the ICU with a breathing tube, and you've lost most of your strength, and there's no chance of ever getting home again. Or, the surgery didn't work, and still you've gone through all this."

"People often think I'll just die on the operating table if things go wrong," said Dr. Emily Finlayson, director of the UCSF Center for Surgery in Older Adults in San Francisco. "But we're very good at rescuing people, and we can keep you alive for a long time. The reality is, there can be a lot of pain and suffering and interventions like feeding tubes and ventilators if things don't go the way we hope."

Given my health, age, and functional status, what's the most likely outcome? Once your surgeon has walked you through various scenarios, ask, "Do I really need to have this surgery, in your opinion?" and "What outcomes do you think are most likely for me?" Finlayson advised. Research suggests that older adults who are frail, have cognitive impairment, or other serious conditions such as heart disease have worse experiences with major surgery. Also, seniors in their 80s and 90s are at higher risk of

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things going wrong.

"It's important to have family or friends in the room for these conversations with high-risk patients," Finlayson said. Many seniors have some level of cognitive difficulties and may need assistance working through complex decisions.

What are the alternatives? Make sure your physician tells you what the nonsurgical options are, Finlayson said. Older men with prostate cancer, for instance, might want to consider **"watchful waiting,"** ongoing monitoring of their symptoms, rather than risk invasive surgery. Women in their 80s who develop a small breast cancer may opt to leave it alone if removing it poses a risk, given other health factors.

Because of Larry McMahon's age and underlying medical issues (a 2021 knee replacement that hasn't healed, arthritis, high blood pressure), his neurosurgeon suggested he explore other interventions, including more injections and physical therapy, before surgery. "He told me, 'I make my money from surgery, but that's a last resort,'" McMahon said.

What can I do to prepare myself? "Preparing for surgery is really vital for older adults: If patients do a few things that doctors recommend — stop smoking, lose weight, walk more, eat better — they can decrease the likelihood of complications and the number of days spent in the hospital," said Dr. Sandhya Lagoo-Deenadayalan, a leader in Duke University Medical Center's Perioperative Optimization of Senior Health program.

When older patients are recommended to POSH, they receive a comprehensive evaluation of their medications, nutritional status, mobility, preexisting conditions, ability to perform daily activities, and support at home. They leave with a "to-do" list of **recommended actions**, usually starting several weeks before surgery.

If your hospital doesn't have a program of this kind, ask your physician, "How can I get my body and mind ready" before having surgery, Finlayson said. Also ask: "How can I prepare my home in advance to anticipate what I'll need during recovery?"

What will recovery look like? There are three levels to consider: What will recovery in the hospital entail? Will you be transferred to a facility for rehabilitation? And what will recovery be like at home?

Ask how long you're likely to stay in the hospital. Will you have pain, or aftereffects from the anesthesia? Preserving cognition is a concern, and you might want to ask your anesthesiologist what you can do to maintain cognitive functioning following

surgery. If you go to a rehab center, you'll want to know what kind of therapy you'll need and whether you can expect to return to your baseline level of functioning.

During the covid-19 pandemic, "a lot of older adults have opted to go home instead of to rehab, and it's really important to make sure they have appropriate support," said Dr. Rachele Bernacki, director of care transformation and postoperative services at the Center for Geriatric Surgery at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston.

For some older adults, a loss of independence after surgery may be permanent. Be sure to inquire what your options are should that occur.

Kaiser Health News is eager to hear from readers about questions you'd like answered, problems you've been having with your care, and advice you need in dealing with the health care system. Visit khn.org/columnists to submit your requests or tips.

Source: **Weighing Risks of a Major Surgery: 7 Questions Older Americans Should Ask Their Surgeon** | Kaiser Health News (khn.org)

National Healthcare Decisions Day April 16

National Healthcare Decisions Day (NHDD) exists to inspire, educate and empower the public and providers about the importance of advance care planning. It was founded in 2008; The Conversation Project has been responsible for its management since 2016. The program's goal is to provide clear, concise, and consistent information on healthcare decision-making to both the public and providers/facilities through the widespread availability of simple, free, and uniform tools (not just forms) to guide the process.

Learn more about NHDD at <https://theconversationproject.org/nhdd/>. Access Advance Care planning tools available through The Conversation Project at <https://theconversationproject.org/nhdd/advance-care-planning/>

RAISE YOUR VOICE!

Let us know what's on your mind and what's important to you. Email us today!

NHCOAnews@gmail.com

'A System of Care for Healthy Aging' Passes the NH Senate

By **MARTHA McLEOD**

NHAHA Community Engagement Coordinator

Many individuals and organizations serving older adults came out to tell their stories and to advocate for passing Senate Bill (SB) 36, the System of Care for Healthy Aging bill. As a result the bill passed both the Senate Health and Human Services and Finance Committees. The Senate Finance Committee voted unanimously to support the bill and recommended Ought to Pass (OTP). We expect the bill to pass the full Senate and then be tabled-the Senate will then take up SB36 as part of their budget work that will begin in early April.

Why does New Hampshire need a system of care for healthy aging? New Hampshire is ranked as having one of the fastest growing number of older adults in the country and the need for long-term care is expected to increase. The federal Older Americans Act (OAA) requires New Hampshire to promote the development and implementation of a statewide system of long-term services and supports that is responsive to the needs and preferences of older individuals and their family caregivers. The federal Americans with Disabilities Act prohibits unnecessary institutionalization of individuals with disabilities. Despite these federal and state mandates, historically there has been a lack of investment in our state's system and programs for older adults and adults with disabilities. Rebalancing New Hampshire's systems to expand home and community-based options will reduce the cost of providing services and allow our state to serve more people.

SB36 was amended with some changes from the original introduced bill yet still contains the important components of a system of care for healthy aging.

The policy in SB36. The intention of the bill is to establish and implement a comprehensive and coordinated system of care that promotes healthy aging and enables older adults and adults with disabilities to have a meaningful choice in care options, including the ability to receive the care they need in their homes and communities. The bill is written to build upon existing infrastructure to expand the availability of less costly home and community-based services and ensure a meaningful range of options to reduce the cost of providing long-term care. The bill requires the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to expand and improve access to

home and community-based services for older adults and adults with disabilities in alignment with New Hampshire's state plan on aging, the federal Older Americans Act, Americans with Disabilities Act, and Medicaid law.

Characteristics of a system of care. The bill requires a comprehensive array of long-term services and supports to enable older adults and adults with disabilities to remain independent and in the setting of their choice with no significant gaps in services and barriers to services. The system is consumer-driven, community-based, and culturally and linguistically competent. The system has transparency as well as a funding system and a performance measurement system for accountability.

Role of DHHS. The bill describes the role to modify the current policies and practices of DHHS and to coordinate the plans and activities of various bureaus in order to implement the system of care and reduce duplication of efforts. It requires DHHS to develop a plan for establishing and maintaining the system-addressing capacity, workforce, changes to statutes and rules, and projections and cost savings. Timelines are included in the bill for adjusting rates, submitting waivers, improving the NH EASY system for applying for services, and providing an online portal to identify available services.

Creates a new person-centered counseling program in each ServiceLink office (Aging and Disability Resource Center) to provide support and assistance to people living at home or in short- or long-term institutional settings, including hospitals, to transition into community-based settings.

Ensures funding for services. During each state budget process, DHHS will prepare data showing the amount that provider rates would be increased to align with the rate plan. The department will provide the legislature a rate study that utilizes the CMS (Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services) Market Basket Index as an inflation benchmark for rate-setting purposes and seek input from stakeholders.

Requires reporting. DHHS will report on the total cost of Medicaid long-term care services, a description of any changes in DHHS policy or practice or developments that will affect implementation of a system of care, the result of any pilots, a review of options to enhance the system, and the status

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of reimbursement rates and the rate study. In future years, DHHS will report on significant gaps in supports and services and projections for future demand in services, shortfalls in workforce sufficiency, information on any waiting lists, statistical information regarding older adults and adults with disabilities serviced, service need and provision, financial information, and an assessment of any external influences which may be affecting establishment of the system of care.

Expands the authorization of reimbursement to a Guardian, or Person Granted Power of Attorney who provides personal care to an eligible consumer with special health care needs residing at home.

Changes the resource limits for financial eligibility for Medicaid adult home and community-based waiver programs for married individual so that only the resources in the name of the applicant, and not the resources in the name of the applicant's spouse are counted for purposes of determining Medicaid resource eligibility; and for single individuals, establish a resource disregard of \$6,000, which would have an effective resource limit of \$7,500. And, in the case of an applicant for public assistance who has made a transfer of assets for less than fair market value or to a trust, changes the look back from 60 months to 36 months.

Includes funding appropriations for developing a plan to establish the system of care, funds for developing and implementing the online portal, dashboard, and data collection systems and for completing the reporting requirements, and funding for implementing the Person-Centered Counseling Program and staffing in DHHS to support the efforts. *Rate increases for Medicaid providers were removed by the Senate Committee and are included in SB 86.*

The section in the original bill that included home and community-based services being covered by the Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman was removed by the amendment and reporting responsibilities were instead included in DHHS duties. This is an area that we will monitor and consider introducing a bill in subsequent years if warranted.

We expect that **SB36, System of Care for Healthy Aging**, will be taken up by the Senate again in mid-April when the Senate begins their work on the state budget. If you would like to stay informed of action needed on SB36, please send your email to mmcleod@new-futures.org and you will added to the action alert email list.

This column is a regular feature of Aging Matters. We thank the [New Hampshire Alliance for Healthy Aging](#) and [New Futures](#) for the information they provide to keep readers informed on activities with the NH State Legislature.

Your Local Resources

ServiceLink Aging & Disability Resource Center: (866) 634-9412, <https://www.servicelink.nh.gov/>

2-1-1 NH is the connection for NH residents to the most up-to-date resources they need from specially trained Information and Referral Specialists. 211 NH is available 24 hours, 365 days a year. Multilingual assistance and TDD access are also available, <https://www.211nh.org>

Who is My NH Legislator?

Use this link to find and contact your

- **State Representative:** <https://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/house/members/>
- **State Senator:** <https://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/senate/members/wml.aspx>

Visit your town or city's website to find contact information for your local elected officials.

Contact Information for NH Members of the U.S. Congress

U.S. Senator Maggie Hassan,
(202) 224-3324
<https://www.hassan.senate.gov/content/contact-senator>

U.S. Senator Jeanne Shaheen,
(202) 224-2841
www.shaheen.senate.gov/contact/contact-jeanne

U.S. Rep. Chris Pappas,
1st Congressional District
(202) 225-5456
<https://pappas.house.gov/>

U.S. Rep Ann Kuster,
2nd Congressional District
(202) 225-5206
<https://kuster.house.gov/contact/>

We welcome all points of view and invite your submissions.

To send articles or to add your name to our mailing list, contact: NHCOAnews@gmail.com

Links to Learn More

The following is a sample of information regarding older adults that came across our desk this month. We thought our readers might find this information interesting. Please follow the links or type the URL address into your browser for the complete story.

Understanding Hospice: Questions & Answers

Explore the basics of hospice, including who, what, when, where, and how at a educational workshop offered at the Nashua Public Library on Thursday, April 13 at 6:00pm. Also addressed will be some of the myths and barriers that can get in the way of accessing care. Panel members include Anica Naprta, Medical Director at Home Health & Hospice Care; Chris Howard, HHC Psychosocial Manager; and Mary Wiseman, the family member of a loved one who received hospice care. Community members are encouraged to bring their questions.

More information is available by clicking the Events tab for April 13 at the Nashua Public Library website: <https://nashualibrary.org/attend/>

Reading for pleasure strengthens memory in older adults

Baseball may be America's favorite pastime, but in rankings of the most popular hobbies, reading is more consistently ranked highly. It's not hard to see why: reading is simultaneously engaging and relaxing, and it's fun to do alone and with friends.

A team of researchers at the Beckman Institute for Advanced Science and Technology have uncovered yet another reason to love reading: it may help preserve memory skills as people—and their brains—grow older. Their work is reported in *Frontiers in Psychology*.

Learn more in this article written by Melinh Lai of the Beckman Institute: <https://beckman.illinois.edu/about/news/article/2022/12/05/reading-for-pleasure-can-strengthen-memory-in-older-adults-beckman-researchers-find>

How Sleep Works

Sleep is a period of rest that alternates with wakefulness. You have internal body clocks that control when you are awake and when your body is ready for sleep. These clocks have cycles of approximately 24 hours. The clocks are regulated by multiple factors, including light, darkness, and sleep schedules. Once asleep, you cycle through the stages of sleep throughout the night in a predictable pattern. Sleep is important because it affects many of your body's systems. Not getting enough sleep or enough quality sleep raises your risk for heart and respiratory problems and affects your metabolism and ability to think clearly and focus on tasks.

The "Your Guide to Healthy Sleep" booklet provides science-based information about sleep, as well as an overview of certain sleep disorders. Download the booklet at <https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/resources/your-guide-healthy-sleep>.

Take the Lung Cancer Risk Quiz to Determine Your Screening Eligibility

Thanks to the latest advances in medical technology, there is new hope for patients and families at risk for lung cancer. Our screening eligibility quiz will let you know if you should talk to your doctor about being screened for lung cancer via low-dose CT scan. Screening is key to early detection — when lung cancer is diagnosed at an early stage it is more likely to be curable.

Take the Quiz at <https://www.lung.org/lung-health-diseases/lung-disease-lookup/lung-cancer/saved-by-the-scan/quiz>

'Time to Care' Summit April 25 & 27

The 2023 Tri-State Learning Collaborative on Aging Spring Summit: Age Positive Culture: A Public Health Imperative takes place April 25 & 27. It will bring together public health and aging network leaders to explore how our often unconscious age bias impacts quality of life and health outcomes, what role public health messaging and initiatives can play in changing the narrative around aging positively, and how we can be each other's champions and collaborators to catalyze meaningful culture change.

For updated information on the event, its exhibitors and how to register, go to <https://agefriendly.community/upcoming-events/>

April Medicare Minute

"Medicare Minutes" are short, engaging presentations on current Medicare topics hosted by the Medicare Rights Center. The presentation is streamed live using a Medicare Interactive profile.

April Topic: Speaking with Your Doctor

• Thursday, April 20, 2023 • 3:00 - 3:30 PM (EST)

Doctors' appointments can sometimes be quick and confusing, leaving you with more questions than answers. Join us for this Medicare Minute to learn strategies for making the most of your medical appointments and becoming a stronger advocate for yourself.

REGISTER: <https://www.medicareinteractive.org/medicare-minute-login>

It's Time to Celebrate NH's Older Americans!



Older Americans Month – May 2023

Established in 1963, Older Americans Month (OAM) is celebrated every May. Led by the Administration for Community Living (ACL), OAM is a time for us to acknowledge the contributions and achievements of older Americans, highlight important trends, and strengthen our commitment to honoring our older citizens.

This year's theme, *Aging Unbound*, offers an opportunity to explore a wide range of aging experiences and to promote the importance of enjoying independence and fulfillment by paving our own paths as we age.

This May, join us as we recognize the 60th anniversary of OAM and challenge the narrative on aging. Here are some ways we can all participate in *Aging Unbound*:

Embrace the opportunity to change. Find a new passion, go on an adventure, and push boundaries by not letting age define your limits. Invite creativity and purpose into your life by trying new activities in your community to bring in more growth, joy, and energy.

Explore the rewards of growing older. With age comes knowledge, which provides insight and confidence to understand and experience the world more deeply. Continue to grow that knowledge through reading, listening, classes,

and creative activities.

Stay engaged in your community. Everyone benefits when everyone is connected and involved. Stay active by volunteering, working, mentoring, participating in social clubs, and taking part in activities at your local senior center or elsewhere in the community.

Form relationships. As an essential ingredient of well-being, relationships can enhance your quality of life by introducing new ideas and unique perspectives. Invest time with people to discover deeper connections with family, friends, and community members.

What is your organization doing to celebrate Older Americans Month?

Share any special events you have planned with Aging Matters no later than Monday, April 17 and they will be listed in a special calendar section published in the May edition of the newsletter. Have photos of your 2023 event? Send them along for future publication. All information can be sent via email to nhcoanews@gmail.com.