

## ADRC E-Newsletter November 2018



The ADRC E-Newsletter may also be viewed as a PDF at [www.PierceADRC.org](http://www.PierceADRC.org) "News & Events."

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### **NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES**

#### **Aging and LTC Providers Network**

First Thursday of each month, 8 – 9 a.m. (Refreshments compliments of Spring Ridge)  
Mid-County Community Center, 10205 44<sup>th</sup> Ave E, Tacoma.  
Contact [Bob Riler](#), ADR, 253-798-7384  
Nov 1 – "How to Screw Up Your POA" with Jonete Rehmke, Rehmke Law  
Dec 6 – "Suicide Prevention" with Carl Duman, VA

#### **Health Care Providers Council of Pierce County**

Second Thursday of each month, 7:30 – 9 a.m. (Breakfast \$10 in advance; coffee \$2)  
Purchase breakfast [online](#) by noon the Monday prior. No purchases at the door.  
Mtn. View Funeral Home, Celebration of Life Chapel, 4100 Steilacoom Blvd SW, Lakewood.  
Contact [Trish Cooper](#), HCPC President, at 253-569-1674  
Nov 8 - Networking

#### **East County Providers Network**

Third Tuesday of each month, 8 a.m.  
Location varies monthly  
Contact [Laura Piacitelli](#), Stafford Suites, 253-862-1818

#### **Pierce County Care Transitions Collaborative (PCCTC)**

Third Thursday of each month from 7:30 to 9:00 a.m.  
Brookdale Allenmore Independent Living, 2010 Union Ave., S., Tacoma  
Contact [Melissa McPherson](#) at 253-302-9500

#### **SASH Coffee and Networking**

Tacoma - First Wednesday of each month, 8:30 – 10 a.m.  
La Quinta Inn (Ports of Call Restaurant), Tacoma, 1425 E. 27th St.  
Puyallup - Fourth Wednesday of each month, 9:00 – 10:30 a.m.  
Willow Gardens, 4502 6th St., SE, Puyallup  
Contact [Rebecca Bomann](#) at 206-501-4375

#### **South End (King County) Coalition**

Third Wednesday of each month at 8:15 – 9:15 a.m.  
Nov14 – Mission Healthcare at Renton Rehabilitation Center, 10635 SE 174th St, Renton  
Schedule of meeting locations and times at [www.secoalition.com](http://www.secoalition.com)

#### **NW Networking**

Meets Tuesdays at 8:30 a.m. in Puyallup  
Meets Wednesdays at 8:30 a.m. in Auburn/Kent  
Meets Wednesdays 11:45 a.m. in Tacoma  
Contact Steph Hilfer, CayCare, 253-235-3562 or visit [Facebook page](#)

## **LOCAL SERVICES**

### **Point-In-Time Count**

Each year scores of volunteers fan out across Pierce County to survey individuals experiencing homelessness. Do you want to help? Volunteers are needed for the annual January count. Donations are also needed including socks, sleeping bags, tarps/ponchos, hygiene kits, water, food and boots for men and women. Contact Valerie Knight at 253-798-6931 or [register to volunteer online](#).

### **2019 Medicare Parts A & B Premiums and Deductibles**

CMS has announced the 2019 premiums, deductibles and coinsurance amounts for Medicare Parts A and B. Part A (inpatient) premium for 2019 will be \$437 (12 months) and certain individual will pay \$240 (12 months). Part A deductible for hospital stays is \$1,364, an increase of \$24 from 2018. Part B (outpatient) monthly premium will be \$135.50 for 2019. The annual deductible is \$185. Individuals in Washington State can contact SHIBA – Statewide Health Insurance Benefits Advisors for help with all their Medicare questions. Call 800-562-6900.

### **OIC Posts Part D Medicare Plans and Costs**

Medicare Part D (prescription drug coverage) – Medicare beneficiaries pay for both brand-name and generic drugs. Medicare drug plans are offered by insurance companies and other private companies approved by Medicare. [View the 2019 Part D plans and costs](#).

### **Voters Pamphlet 2018 is accessible**

The voters guide for the 2018 General Election (Nov 6) is available. Click on the [online voters guide](#) or click on the Pierce County [local voters pamphlet](#) (PDF). The [statewide audio voters pamphlet](#) from the Secretary of State is also available.

### **In-Person Assistance Sites For 2018 Open Enrollment**

Ten full-service enrollment centers will offer in-person assistance to customers signing up for health and dental coverage through *Washington Healthplanfinder* during the upcoming open enrollment period, Nov. 1-Dec. 15. [Addresses and contact information for all 2018 enrollment centers](#)

### **Key Peninsula Senior Resource Guide**

The Mustard Seed Project has produced a [resource guide for the Key Peninsula](#) that covers topics including disability services, falls prevention, health and wellness, home care, legal services, transportation and more. The Key Center Information Center is staffed by trained volunteers and is available 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday at 253-884-9814.

### **WTBBL Patron Council Opening**

The Washington Talking Book & Braille Library Patron Advisory Council (PAC) has an opening for one general patron representative to join the Council beginning January 2019. Applications must be received before Nov15, 2018. The Council provides recommendations on Library practices, policies, and goals of library services to individuals who are blind, visually impaired, deaf-blind, physically disabled, or reading disabled. Complete [the application form](#) online.

### **New Medicare Cards Arriving**

Medicare beneficiaries in Washington state are receiving new Medicare cards. The new cards have a new Medicare number that is an 11-digit mix of numbers and letters. This replaces the old Medicare

number that was a Social Security number. Nothing has changed except the number. The new number has no use other than your health care – not consumer loans, identification at stores, not with the IRS, not for other credit cards. Destroy the old card – it’s useless. When you go to your doctor next time take your new card and they will record the new number. Only share with your health care provider in person. Do not share it with anyone else. Call the ADRC at 253-798-4600 if you have questions.

### **New ACH documents show Medicaid Transformation Progress**

New documents are available outlining the state’s Accountable Communities of Health (ACHs) semiannual reports and implementation plans. ACHs submit reports to provide updates on transformation activities, project implementation, and to show progress on required milestones. [Read a summary of this semiannual reporting period and incentives.](#)

### **State Plan for Falls Prevention**

The Washington State Department of Health and the Washington State Falls Prevention Coalition released a five-year, [statewide action plan](#) to reduce older adult falls – the leading cause of fatal and non-fatal injuries for adults ages 65 and older from 1999 to 2016. [Finding Our Balance: 2018 Washington State Action Plan for Older Adult Falls Prevention](#) (PDF) is a five year plan with six strategy areas of focus. The action plan details the immense impact of falls in Washington and outlines strategies, desired outcomes and timelines for reducing falls.

### **ASL Classes Open to All**

The Tacoma Public Schools is offering ASL classes open to the community. All classes are held on Wednesdays: January 9, 16, 23, 30, February 6, and 13. Beginners Families & Friends held 5 pm to 6 pm. Intermediate Families / Friends held 6 p.m. to 7 p.m. All classes held at Mt. Tahoma High School, Room # 719. Free. For more information contact [Olivia Wood](#).

### **High School Transition Video Provides Tips and Resources for Ages 14-21.**

During these years that your family member is immersed in school, make the most of the support they have to focus on emerging independent living skills, employment opportunities, and connections to your community. Typically, after age 21, school activities and school based services end. It is important to learn as much as you can about the road ahead so that you can begin to prepare your family member for a full life after school. Navigating Your Way, Ages Fourteen to Twenty One, is the fourth in a series of videos that provides a bird's eye view of services, supports and resources for every stage of life. [Watch the Video](#) from Informing Families.

### **Music Mends Minds in Edgewood**

Pierce County Music Mends Minds “The Unforgettables” is looking for volunteer musicians, singers and others to be a part of this unique musical group. Music Mends Minds builds musical support groups in an effort to use “medicine for the mind,” while creating social support. The group is intended for individuals living with early cognitive decline, Parkinson’s, Alzheimer’s, dementia, traumatic brain injury or stroke? Held every Tuesday 3:00 to 4:30 p.m. at the Mountain View Community Center, 3607 122<sup>nd</sup> Ave E. in Edgewood. Contact [Deb Dennison](#) at 253-722-5691.

### **Winter Break Camp**

Campers 16-30 with special needs can join Pierce County Parks & Rec’s Companionship program after the holidays to enjoy field trips, gym time, crafts and more. The Companionship Program is designed to

provide fully inclusive recreation and leisure opportunities for individuals with special needs and their families. The goal is to assist the participants in finding and maintaining strong friendships while playing and trying new activities. Held at the Lakewood Community Center. \$70/camper. [Register online by Dec 14](#) (#12846) or call 253-798-4199.

### **Welcome to “Foundations”**

Foundations is the new Foundational Community Supports newsletter. Its purpose is to build awareness, advocacy, and partnership for supportive housing and supported employment services in Washington State. Foundations will be published each month. [Subscribe now](#). The Foundational Community Supports (FCS) program is part of the [Healthier Washington Medicaid Transformation](#).

### **Eatonville’s Center Street Junction**

The new Center Street Junction Mercantile and More features a huge vintage thrift store with local merchants and artisans along with Mixed Fixins Eatery (salad bar with tacos and baked spuds). It all goes to help support the Eatonville Family Agency and its many programs. Visit 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Saturday at 101 Mashel Avenue in Eatonville. Call 360-832-2526. Volunteers always needed. Visit the [Center Street Junction Facebook page](#).

### **Safe prescribing Initiative Results in Significant Reductions of Opioid Prescriptions**

A public-private safe prescribing initiative launched in late 2017, called Better Prescribing, Better Treatment, has resulted in significant reductions in Apple Health (Medicaid) opioid prescriptions in less than a year. The partners—the Washington State Medical Association (WSMA), the Washington State Hospital Association (WSHA) and the Washington State Health Care Authority (HCA)—are reporting that the initiative has reduced opioid prescriptions by nearly 70 percent. Better Prescribing, Better Treatment is a component of [the state opioid response plan](#).

### **Health Care Coverage and Access in Washington State**

The Commonwealth Fund has created a fact sheet showing health care coverage nationally – the percentage of uninsured adults and adults going without care because of costs, enrollment in marketplace plans and Medicaid, and the amount of federal support for health coverage. [View the Washington State numbers](#). | [View stats for other states](#). (Source: Commonwealth Fund)

### **Free Home Repairs and Modifications**

[Rebuilding Together South Sound](#) is accepting applications for the annual Rebuild Day event – April 27, 2019. RTSS volunteers can do all kinds of repairs, from plumbing, electrical, and carpentry, to accessibility modifications, windows, and flooring. To be eligible for the Rebuilding Day Program individuals must own their home and up to date on their mortgage and property taxes; be a senior, a person with a disability, or a family with children; be low-income and fall within our income guidelines (50% Median Income); and reside in our service area of Pierce County, Federal Way, and Auburn. [Applications are available online](#) or call 253-238-0977. Deadline to apply for the 2019 Rebuilding Day event is December 1, 2018.

### **Washington Gets Almost \$30 Million From Federal Government to Fight Opioid Abuse**

[Washington state is set to receive \\$29.8 million](#) in federal funding to fight opioid abuse. The award builds on an \$11 million grant the state received last year. \$21.6 million will go toward increasing access to drugs that treat opioid addiction in addition to prevention efforts. Another \$8.2 million will

fund community health centers, academic institutions and rural groups that provide services to people suffering from substance abuse and mental-health issues. (Source: Seattle Times)

### **Mental Health First Aid Trainings**

MHFA is an 8-hour, evidence-based training that introduces participants to risk factors and warning signs of mental health problems and disorders. Participants learn a five-step action plan to provide immediate help to someone developing a mental illness or in mental crisis and connect them to appropriate care and support.

Nov 13 – Adult MHFA, Comprehensive Life Resources, Tacoma

Nov 17 – Adult MHFA, Pierce County Library Admin Center, Tacoma

Dec 3 – Youth MHFA, Pierce County Library Admin Center, Tacoma

All trainings are free (valued at \$170). To register e-mail [Monet Craton](mailto:Monet.Craton) with your name, organization, e-mail address, phone and date of training. Learn more at [www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org](http://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org).

### **SCAMS OF THE MONTH**

#### **Stay Alert: SSA Caller ID Spoofing Scheme**

The Social Security Administration (SSA) is warning the public about an ongoing caller ID “spoofing” scheme misusing their national customer service phone number. Questionable phone calls displaying 1-800-772-1213, SSA’s national customer service number, ask for private information supposedly missing from your file. In other cases, they call to “confirm” your personal details. This is a scam; do not engage with those callers or provide any personal information. [Learn what to do if you receive a call?](#)

#### **New Social Security Scam**

Your Social Security Number isn’t suspended. Ever. (Neither is your Medicare number.) A caller says that he’s from the government and your Social Security number (SSN) has been suspended. He sounds very professional. Do exactly what he says to fix things...right? Wrong. [Read more.](#) (Source: FTC)

### **LOCAL HAPPENINGS** (ADRC events highlighted in color)

#### **Nov 3 – Conversations on Family Caregiving**

An informal conversation about family caregiving with case managers from Pierce County Aging and Disability Resources. Share stories, collect resources, get support, receive help, increase perspective, improve skills. Free; No RSVP required. [View event flyer.](#) Held at 1 p.m. at the Key Center Branch Library, 8905 Key Peninsula Hwy., N.W. For details call the ADRC at 253-798-4600.

#### **Nov 5 – Conversations on Family Caregiving**

(See Nov 3 for event details.) Free; No RSVP required. [View event flyer.](#) Held at 11 a.m. at the Eatonville Branch Library, 205 Center Street, W. For details call the ADRC at 253-798-4600.

#### **Nov 5 – Oh My Gosh – Now What?**

(See Oct 1 for event details.) Part 5 – “How do I pay for care? What are the legal things I should do?” Free; No RSVP required. [View event flyer.](#) Held 6-7 p.m. at the Puyallup Library, 324 S. Meridian.

#### **Nov 5 – Conversations on Family Caregiving**

(See Nov 3 for event details.) Free; No RSVP required. [View event flyer](#). Held at 6:30 p.m. at the Lakewood Branch Library, 6300 Wildaire Rd., SW. For details call the ADRC at 253-798-4600.

### **Nov 5 – Suicide**

Two years after he was diagnosed with bipolar disorder, 19-year-old Kevin Hines attempted to take his life by jumping from the Golden Gate Bridge. He is one of only 34 to survive the fall, and the only one to regain full physical mobility. Today, Kevin dedicates his life to saving lives by spreading a message of hope and sharing his ways of living mentally well. Sponsored by the Gig Harbor and Key Peninsula Suicide Prevention Coalition. Held at 6:30 p.m. at the Peninsula High School Auditorium, 14105 Purdy Drive in Gig Harbor.

### **Nov 6 – Election Day**

[View the General Election Local Voters Pamphlet](#). Includes information about ballot drop box locations, voting centers, accessibility assistance, voter registration and more.

### **Nov 6 – Conversations on Family Caregiving**

(See Nov 3 for event details.) Free; No RSVP required. [View event flyer](#). Held at 3 p.m. at the University Place Branch Library, 3609 Market Place, W. For details call the ADRC at 253-798-4600.

### **Nov 7 – Conversations on Family Caregiving**

(See Nov 3 for event details.) Free; No RSVP required. [View event flyer](#). Held at 6:30 p.m. at the South Hill Branch Library, 15420 Meridian E. For details call the ADRC at 253-798-4600.

### **Nov 8 – SAGE Table Conversation**

SAGE Table is an initiative launched to fight loneliness and isolation in the LGBT community through the power of intergenerational connections. The theme of SAGE Table 2018 is “loneliness” – what is it? How has it touched your life? How do you live with it or choose to fight it? Open to all in the LGBT community regardless of age, and allies. Starts at 4 p.m. and wrap up at 7 p.m. Come and go as your schedule allows. Enjoy conversation and food with members of our community. RSVP to 253-798-8787 or by e-mail to [nellis.kim@piercecounitywa.gov](mailto:nellis.kim@piercecounitywa.gov) or [info@tacomaolderlgbt.org](mailto:info@tacomaolderlgbt.org). For more information, please call Nellis at (253) 798-3807.

### **Nov 10 – Films on Caregiving: Glen Campbell: I’LL BE ME**

Musician Glen Campbell starts a farewell tour after he is diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease, and he and his family navigate the unpredictable nature of the disease through love, laughter and music. [Free tickets available starting October 15 at the ADRC website](#) or call the ADRC at 253-798-4600. Doors open 10:30 a.m. Film shows at 10:45 a.m. at the Grand Cinema, 606 Fawcett in Tacoma. Rated PG.

### **Nov 10 – 2018 African American Caregivers Forum**

This forum is an opportunity to support caregivers whose loved ones are experiencing Alzheimer's or a related dementia. This year the forum will feature presentations, exhibits, entertainment, lunch, and prize drawings for caregivers. Held from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., at the Southcenter Doubletree Hotel, 16500 Southcenter Parkway, Tukwila. [Register online](#) or call 206-706-7084. For accessibility information or disability accommodations, e-mail [Karen.Winston@seattle.gov](mailto:Karen.Winston@seattle.gov).

### **Nov 13 – Conversations on Family Caregiving**

(See Nov 3 for event details.) Free; No RSVP required. [View event flyer](#). Held at 4 p.m. at the Summit Branch Library, 5107 112<sup>th</sup> Street E. For details call the ADRC at 253-798-4600.

### **Nov 13 - Pierce County Accessible Community Advisory Committee (ACAC)**

The committee is actively involved in a variety of activities: Advising on addressing the needs of persons with disabilities in emergency plans; advising the county and other local governments within the county on access to programs services and activities, new construction or renovation projects, sidewalks, other pedestrian routes of travel, and disability parking enforcement; and developing local initiatives and activities to promote greater awareness of disability issues, and acceptance, involvement, and access for persons with disabilities within the community. Open to the public. New members always welcome. Held 9 to 11 a.m. at the Sound View Building, 3602 Pacific Ave., Tacoma. [Committee Link](#). Volunteer Contact: [Julian Wheeler](#), Chair, Pierce County Accessible Community Advisory Committee (ACAC).

### **Nov 14 – Independent Living Forum**

The Centers for Independent Living (CIL) and WASILC will be holding a forum in Tacoma for consumers, community partners, and other interested parties, to comment on and provide information on the experiences of individuals with disabilities in Washington State and help create a State Plan for Independent Living. Held at the University Place Library, 3609 Market Place W. from 3 to 5 p.m. CART (captioning) will be available on site. For reasonable accommodation requests, please contact CIL at 253-582-1253, at least two (2) weeks prior to the event. This is a fragrance free meeting. Online feedback is open until 12/14/18. Persons with a disability, family member, or care giver [can click here](#). Community partners and/or agencies that provides service to people with disabilities [can click here](#).

### **Nov 15 – Conversations on Family Caregiving**

(See Nov 3 for event details.) Free; No RSVP required. [View event flyer](#). Held at 3 p.m. at the Sumner Branch Library, 1116 Fryar Avenue. For details call the ADRC at 253-798-4600.

### **Nov 16 – ASL Emergency Preparedness Workshop**

Workshop provides educational information to the deaf and hard of hearing community about safety plans, communication plans, emergency kits, exits, local shelters, etc. ASL interpreters will be provided. If other accommodations are needed, please send a request no later Nov 2. Held 1 – 2 p.m. at the Hearing Speech & Deaf Center, 621 Tacoma Ave. Suite 505, Tacoma. RSVP at [Tacoma@hscd.org](mailto:Tacoma@hscd.org) or VP at 253-292- 2210 or (253) 292-2211. Sponsored by Pierce County Emergency Management and Washington State Independent Living Council.

### **Nov 16-18 – Grief & Loss Retreat**

For those who have lost a loved one to cancer, things will never be the same. People carry love and loss. Research now illuminates that people don't grieve in logical stages, one after another. Harmony Hill's Grief and Loss Retreat offers a safe, supportive place to express and explore grief, and find a path forward with new tools and resources. Thanks to generous Harmony Hill donors, this retreat as a part of our Cancer Programs, is offered at no-cost to participants. (\$25 processing fee applies) [Learn more](#).

### **Nov 17 – safeTALK**

This 4-hour suicide alertness training equips participants to recognize persons at risk of suicide, respond effectively and connect them to help. safeTALK is appropriate for anyone age 15 years or older who wants to learn to help prevent suicide. Meets WA State suicide prevention training requirements for

some health care and school professionals. Held 12:30-3:30 p.m. at the Fife Library, 6622 20th St E, Fife. To register please contact [monetcraton@chifranciscan.org](mailto:monetcraton@chifranciscan.org).

### **Nov 19 – Oh My Gosh – Now What?**

(See Oct 1 for event details.) Part 6 – “Where can I turn for help? What are the resources?” Free; No RSVP required. [View event flyer](#). Held 6-7 p.m. at the Puyallup Library, 324 S. Meridian.

### **Nov 20 – Fair Housing & Reasonable Accommodations/Modifications Webinar**

This is a general webinar and will provide an overview of the Fair Housing Act and state/local fair housing laws; definition(s) of disability and accepted forms of verification; dwelling accessibility requirements; reasonable accommodations vs. modifications; what is considered "reasonable"; how to process a request for reasonable accommodation/modification; and common requests for reasonable accommodation/modification. Free. Held 1 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. [Register online](#). Sponsored by the Fair Housing Center of Washington.

### **Nov 27 – Developmental Disabilities Legislative Forum**

Join the Pierce County Coalition for Developmental Disabilities (PC2), PAVE and other community groups for an evening with legislators from across the county. Held at 7:00 p.m. at [Tacoma Community College](#), Building 11, 6501 South 19<sup>th</sup> Street, Tacoma. For information call 253-564-0707.

### **Dec 3 – Social Security Retirement 2019**

This is a fast-paced presentation for anyone anticipating their retirement benefits and those currently receiving benefits. The workshop will update recent changes, discuss early retirement and present effective strategies that can maximize benefits. Participants will also learn how to negotiate the rules about working, either full or part time, while receiving benefits. Presenter is Kirk Larson, Public Affairs Specialist, from the Social Security Administration. Held 4:00 – 5:30 p.m. at the Tacoma Pierce County Health Department Auditorium, 3629 S. D Street in Tacoma. For information call 253-798-4600. Free; No RSVP required.

### **Dec 8 – Films on Caregiving: THE DESCENDANTS**

A husband becomes caregiver to his wife following a series accident. She and her husband have to confront her impending death. Film looks at how family dynamics play into caregiving and how a healthcare crisis brings family healing. Free tickets available starting Nov 12 at the ADRC website or call the ADRC at 253-798-4600. Doors open 10:30 a.m. Film shows at 10:45 a.m. at the Grand Cinema, 606 Fawcett in Tacoma. Note: Rated R (for strong language and sexual references)

### **Dec 8 – Victory Summit**

The Davis Phinney Foundation, the Northwest Parkinson’s Foundation and the American Parkinson Disease Association Northwest Chapter sponsor this [free Parkinson’s symposium in SeaTac](#). This will be a moving day of information and inspiration, featuring dynamic presentations from leading movement disorder neurologists and therapists from across the country. It’s an upbeat, fast-paced event of community and connection, filled with laughter and conversation. You will leave feeling motivated and armed with tools to help you be more involved in your own treatment and to improve your quality of life. Held 9:30 a.m. to 3:45 p.m. at the Hilton Seattle Airport Hotel & Conference Center, 17620 International Blvd. Free with complimentary lunch. Limited seating. [Registration is now open](#).



## **Jan 9 – Fair Housing Basics Webinar**

This is a general webinar and will provide an overview of the Fair Housing Act and state/local fair housing laws; federal, state, and local protected classes; housing activities subject to fair housing laws and common fair housing law violations. Free. Held 1 to 11 a.m. [Register online](#). Sponsored by the Fair Housing Center of Washington.

## **Q&A of the Month**

**Question:** Why am I getting all kinds of Medicare information in the mail? I'm satisfied with what I have currently.

**Answer:** Annual Medicare Open Enrollment for the 2019 calendar year goes until December 7, 2018. You may be satisfied right now but every year plans can change important components of their benefits including doctors and hospitals in network, co-pays, premiums, deductibles, services and prescriptions. In addition to that, your health may have changed and your needs as well. So, what may have been good in 2018 might not be so good for you in 2019. Medicare's open enrollment period is the perfect time to do a "Medicare Check-up" and make sure that you are in the right Medicare insurance plan for your situation. Learn about the coverage options available to you and compare existing plans to see what fits your needs best. Visit [www.Medicare.gov](http://www.Medicare.gov) or you can call SHIBA – Statewide Health Insurance Benefits Advisors associated with the Washington State Department of the Insurance Commissioner. Trained (and impartial) volunteers can walk you through the comparison process. You can even get a free one-on-one consummation session. Call 1-800-562-6900.

## **NATIONALLY**

### **Social Security Benefits Increase**

Social Security and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits will increase 2.8 percent in 2019. The 2.8 percent cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) will begin with benefits payable to more than 62 million Social Security beneficiaries in January 2019. The monthly maximum federal benefit amounts for SSI in 2019 are \$771 for an eligible individual, and \$1,157 for an eligible couple. Increased payments to more than 8 million SSI beneficiaries will begin on December 31, 2018. Some other adjustments that take effect in January of each year are based on the increase in average wages. The maximum amount of earnings subject to the Social Security tax (taxable maximum) will increase to \$132,900 from \$128,400. (Source: SSA)

### **Health Coverage Premiums Rise**

Annual family premiums for employer-sponsored health insurance rose 5 percent to average \$19,616 this year, extending a seven-year run of moderate increases, finds the [2018 benchmark Kaiser Family Foundation Employer Health Benefits Survey](#). On average, workers contribute \$5,547 toward the cost of family coverage, with employers paying the rest. Annual premiums for single coverage increased 3 percent to \$6,896 this year, with workers contributing an average of \$1,186. (Source: KHN)

### **Medicare Enrollment Fraud**

We are now in the midst of the annual Medicare Open Enrollment period (Oct 15 – Dec 7). There are some unscrupulous agents who try to trick seniors into buying the wrong plan or simply steal individual identity. [Watch this special video](#) (5:36) about how fraudsters game the system. (Source: HHS)

## **New Medicare Advantage and Part D Plan Landscape Reveals Challenges Ahead**

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS)—the federal agency that oversees the Medicare program—[released an overview](#) of the upcoming year in Medicare Advantage (MA) and the Part D prescription drug program. Among the notable inclusions, CMS expects more people to join MA plans than ever before, shows a sharp increase in the number of plans available, and reveals the number of plans that will offer expanded supplemental benefits. (Source: Medicare Rights Center)

### **Introducing eMedicare**

eMedicare is a multi-year initiative aimed at giving you a more seamless Medicare experience – whether you interact with Medicare online, on the phone, or through other channels. The goal is to offer simple, personalized guidance to help beneficiaries save time and make good decisions about your health care and coverage. Visit [Medicare.gov](https://www.medicare.gov) to learn more, and stay tuned for additional eMedicare updates.

### **Implications of “Medicare for All” and “Public Plan” Strategies**

The idea of has received renewed attention on Capitol Hill and on the campaign trail this year as policymakers consider ways to expand health insurance coverage and moderate health care costs. Eight proposals have been introduced in Congress expanding the role of government programs such as Medicare and Medicaid. They range from bills that would create a new, all-encompassing national health insurance program (sometimes called “Medicare-for-All”) to less sweeping measures that would create a new public plan option to supplement private sources of coverage and existing public programs. A [new issue brief](#) from KFF (the Kaiser Family Foundation) summarizes key features of these proposals and highlights their similarities and differences. It also compares the policy implications and tradeoffs involved in these proposals, and examines the plans’ potential implications for consumers, health care providers and payers. An accompanying [interactive tool](#) allows users to compare key elements of the proposals in a side-by-side format. (Source: KFF)

### **Republicans Look to Cut Social Security and Medicare**

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell explicitly stated that Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid need to be cut in an interview with [Bloomberg](#). The comments followed a [Treasury Department report](#) showing that the federal deficit grew to \$779 billion in fiscal year 2018, a 17% increase from FY 2017. McConnell placed the blame for the ballooning debt on a bipartisan unwillingness to cut earned benefit programs. (Source: Bloomberg)

### **VA Changes Aid & Attendance Benefit**

The VA will now review not just current assets, but records from the previous three years when deciding a veteran’s asset-based eligibility for VA Pension benefits -- commonly called Aid and Attendance (A&A) benefits. However, transfers of assets completed before Oct. 18, 2018 will not be counted against veterans or their surviving spouses. [Read more](#). (Source: Today’s Caregiver)

### **‘Transgender’ Could Be Defined Out of Existence Under Trump Administration**

The Trump administration is [considering narrowly defining gender](#) as a biological, immutable condition determined by genitalia at birth, the most drastic move yet in a governmentwide effort to roll back recognition and protections of transgender people under federal civil rights law. (Source: NYTimes)

### **Elder Justice Compendium for Elder Abuse Advocates**

The National Center on Law & Elder Rights has released the [Elder Justice Compendium](#), a resource hub for civil legal aid attorneys and advocates working with elder abuse victims. It provides guidance and

links to existing legal resources, divided into core subject areas, e.g., ethical issues, client-centered advocacy, non-litigation and litigation remedies, collaborative approaches, and more. (Source: NCLER)

### **Ready for Action: Your Guide to Making Alzheimer's the Next Public Health Success Story**

The Alzheimer's Association and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released the Healthy Brain Initiative's [State and Local Public Health Partnerships to Address Dementia: The 2018-2023 Road Map](#). As the number of people with Alzheimer's grows — and grows quickly — a robust public health response is needed now to mitigate the future impacts of dementia. The updated road map emphasizes health equity, collaboration, and sustainability. (Source: Alz Assoc)

### **Help Inform the Cost of Care for Parkinson's**

Parkinson's doesn't just affect overall health, it can also lead to increased costs for patients and families. Some costs are tangible, such as co-pays for doctor's visits and medications, but others are more difficult to quantify, such as taking time off work to care for a loved one with the disease. [Participate in a survey](#) supported in part by the American Parkinson Disease Association to help researchers better understand the costs associated with Parkinson's and the impact the disease has on family finances. The survey will remain open until November 7. (Source: APDA)

### **Without Safety Net, 'Elder Orphans' Need Fearless Fallback Plan**

Older adults who lack a conventional support system should plan ahead to deal with life's predictable challenges as they age. About 22 percent of older adults in the U.S. fall into this category or are at risk of doing so in the future. [Read more](#). (Source: KHN)

### **AARP Highlights Intergenerational Skills**

When computers, cameras, cellphones and websites are the subject, New Jersey's Piscataway Township knows it's smart for seniors to learn from students. The free Senior + Computer Buddy program, which pairs an older adult in need of tech training with a high school or college student turned technology teacher. [Read more about the Senior+Computer Buddy program](#). Elsewhere, the Boys & Girls Club in Augusta, Maine, was looking for creative projects to engage local teenagers after school. When Carol MacDougall, a retired nurse and active volunteer, heard that five sewing machines had been donated to the club, she wondered if the kids might want to learn to sew. Nearly 15 teens showed interest (more boys than girls, in fact) and MacDougall decided to stitch together [a sewing program](#). (Source: AARP)

### **5 Strategies to Use When People Do Not Understand Mental Illness**

You recently went to see a counselor to get help for your mental health, and you were diagnosed with a mental health condition. You then decide to tell your relatives and closest friends about your diagnosis. Unfortunately, some of them do not understand. [Learn the Five Strategies](#). (Source: NAMI)

### **How Much Physical Activity Do You Truly Need?**

No matter your age, exercising regularly can help improve your overall health and lower your risk for many chronic diseases. However, the recommended number of hours per day and types of exercise depend on your age group and other factors, such as if you're pregnant or have a limiting physical condition. [Learn more with help from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#), and remember, even a little physical activity is better than none at all. (Source: CDC)

### **Scams against older adults: reporting to Congress**

You might have read media stories about older people losing lots of money to scams. It does happen – and FTC data show that when people over 80 report losing money, the amount they lose is a lot higher than the amount younger people lose. But that’s not the whole story. In fact, FTC data also show that people 60 and older are great at reporting the fraud they see – and can be great at avoiding it, too. According to the FTC’s 2017 data, people 60+ are much more likely to report fraud than people in their 20s. [Read the story](#). (Source: FTC)

**A Trip to Intensive Care Starts a Downward Spiral Toward Dementia**

Each year, 5.7 million in the U.S. spend time in the ICU; doctors say [as many as half develop potentially serious problems with their memory and thinking processes](#). For many the problems are permanent. To combat the effect, hospitals are adopting a philosophy of limiting patients' sedation and stepping up physical activity [to stop delirium from setting in](#). (Source: NPR)

**Vaccines Keep Older Adults Healthy**

With the arrival of Fall comes cold weather and concerns about illnesses such as influenza. Seniors should know that there are four vaccines covered by Medicare, all of which can prevent or limit illness. [Read more](#). (Source: NCOA)

**BenefitsCheckUp: New Disaster Preparation and Recovery Tool**

Get reliable information when preparing for a storm or rebuilding after a disaster. BenefitsCheckUp® now has [disaster resources in one consumer-guided tool](#). Tell the tool what you need and it walks you through making a plan or connects you to recovery programs nearest you.

**PLAN AHEAD (Always 2 months ahead) – January 2019**

Bath Safety, Cervical health, Financial Wellness, Get Organized, Braille Literacy, Glaucoma Awareness, Self-Defense, Soup, Blood donor and Thyroid Awareness Month; Diet Resolution (1-7), Healthy Weight (20-26), Activity Professionals (20-26) and Tax Identity Theft (28-2/3) weeks; Braille (4), Winter Skin Relief (8), Law Enforcement Appreciation (9), Human Trafficking Awareness (9), Milk (11), Korean American (13), Thesaurus (18), Migrants & Refugees (19), Martin Luther King (21), Day of Service (21), Puzzle (29), Seeing Eye Dog (29) and Art (31) Days.

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This information is provided as a service of the Pierce County Aging & Disability Resource Center and is intended for sharing throughout the county. To receive or discontinue this e-newsletter, please contact Bob Riler at (253) 798-7384 or [bob.riler@piercecountywa.gov](mailto:bob.riler@piercecountywa.gov).