

ADRC E-Newsletter February, 2021



The ADRC E-Newsletter may also be viewed as a PDF at www.PierceADRC.org “News & Events.”

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NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES

Aging and LTC Providers Network - ONLINE

First Thursday of each month, 8 – 9 a.m.

[Meets online](#). By phone at 253-215-8782 or 888-788-0099; Meeting ID: 995 2118 8402

Feb 4 – “Death Doulas” with Crystal Flores, The Grateful Death

Mar 4 – “Dementia Legal Planning Toolkit” with Meredith Grigg, NW Justice Project

Health Care Providers Council of Pierce County – ONLINE

Second Thursday of each month, 7:30 – 9 a.m.

Meets online.

Contact [Melissa Martin](#), HCPC President, at 253-752-6870

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 8:30 a.m.

Feb. 18 – “NW Healthcare Response Network: Resources and Support for LTC During COVID”

Held online. Be added to the e-mail list by [completing the PCCTC survey](#).

Contact [Jessica Burkard](#) at 206-779-2656 for link.

South End (King County) Coalition

Third Wednesday of each month at 8:15 – 9:15 a.m.

Held online. Contact [Lilia Anderson](#) for details or visit www.secoalition.com

NW Networking

Meets Wednesdays at 11:45 a.m. in Puyallup

Contact Lisa Doyle, CayCare, 253-237-1739 or visit [Facebook page](#)

West Side Senior Providers Networking Group - ONLINE

Third Thursday at 1:00 p.m.

[Meets Online](#). (Meeting ID: 688 732 9812; Passcode: 8yFSWV)

Contact [Debbie Ruvo](#) at 253-370-1947

SASH Coffee Time Networking

Meets online First Wednesday 9:00 – 10:30 a.m.

Online; Use [the Zoom meeting link](#) or contact [Sherry Corney](#) at 206-351-0956

By phone: 253-215-8782; Meeting ID: 868 7085 2941; Passcode: coffee

Lifespan Respite Coalition (statewide)

Fourth Wednesday of every other month, 1:30 – 2:30 p.m.

Next online meeting – Mar 24. Future dates: May 26; July 28; Sept. 22; Nov. 24

Contact Tracy at tkahlo@wapave.org at (206) 799-9454 to obtain event information/link.

LOCAL SERVICES

ADR Mailing Lists Updates

Every few years we update our e-mail subscriber lists. If you'd like to continue receiving our communications, click the links below to renew your monthly subscriptions:

- [ADRC E-Newsletter \(Last work day of each month\)](#)
- [Aging and LTC providers network meetings \(First Thursday each month\)](#)

Subscriber lists will be updated April 2021. If you choose not to renew, your subscription will end March 2021. For more information contact [Bob Riler](#) at 253-254-9852.

Volunteers Needed for Tax Preparation Assistance

Each year, more than 6,000 households in Pierce County are helped by free tax sites. VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance) brings millions of dollars back into our community through tax credits and refunds, and helps hard-working families pay bills and save for the future. Due to COVID-19, the 2020-2021 VITA season will primarily be virtual. Volunteers are needed. Volunteers will have the flexibility to participate safely on their own time. VITA volunteers are provided free training and certification to help with greeting taxpayers and conducting intakes, preparing taxes, coordinating tax sites, reviewing tax returns for quality assurance, and interpreting for non-English speakers. No prior experience is required. [Visit the VITA website to learn more and to volunteer online.](#)

What's Your Risk?

AL TSA has launched [CV19 CheckUp](#), a free, anonymous and personalized online tool that evaluates an individual's risks associated with COVID-19 based on their life situation and individual behavior. After spending a few minutes filling out a survey, CV19 Checkup provides the user with recommendations and resources to reduce those risks.

COVID "Roadmap to Recovery"

Washington is now in the first phase of the state's new reopening plan, "[Healthy Washington: Roadmap to Recovery.](#)" The [plan](#) follows metrics in health systems across eight regions of the state, and each region's ability to move to the next phase of reopening will be based on data updated weekly. As the state sees improvement in COVID activity, each of the eight regions (organized based on health system resources) will have the opportunity to open more activities that are currently restricted. The complete guidance for industries and activities in the new phases can be found [here](#). For the latest statewide report from the Department of Health where on each region currently stands, [click here](#).

Fastest Way to Make Vaccine Appointments

Due to the hotline's high call volume, the fastest service is self-service.

- Use [Phase Finder](#) to see if you're eligible to get vaccinated.
- If you're currently eligible, you will get a confirmation. Print or take a screenshot of this page. If you signed up for emails, it will also be sent to you automatically.
- Phase Finder will show you locations where you can get the vaccine. Use the link provided to schedule your appointment. (Phase Finder does not schedule appointments – it only gives you a list of places where you can schedule an appointment.)
- Take the eligibility confirmation from Phase Finder with you to your appointment.

Those without internet access or who may not be comfortable using online tools can call the COVID-19 hotline for help making appointments for three of the mass vaccination sites – 1-800-525-0127, then

press #. If you can't reach the hotline via our regular number, please call our alternate number, 888-856-5816 (a Spanish option is available). Please note: The hotline does not have special access to appointments -- they use the same scheduling tools available to the public for self-scheduling.

Washington's New Vaccine Dashboard

The Washington State Department of Health (DOH), in partnership with [Microsoft AI for Health](#), announced [vaccine data now available on our dashboard](#), an addition to help share progress being made statewide to get COVID-19 vaccine to millions of people across the state of Washington. The dashboard includes a high-level vaccination snapshot under the Current Status tab as well as a new Vaccinations tab with statewide and county-level data on where, when and how many people are getting vaccinated. You can also view the number of doses given in each county and statewide in a map view or by date. For the state level, you can also see the number of doses delivered to providers and the number of doses delivered through the federal long-term care program.

Is COVID-19 Vaccine Safe?

Vaccines must pass some of the toughest safety measures in medicine. The process to approve and monitor vaccines has been around for decades. It's the same process used to develop vaccines for the measles, mumps, pertussis (whooping cough), and the seasonal flu. View the TPCHD COVID-19 Vaccine infographic in [English](#), [Spanish](#), [Korean](#), [Vietnamese](#), [Tagalog](#), [Russian](#), [Simplified Chinese](#), [Thai](#), [Lao](#) and [Khmer](#).

Health Care Providers Council Plans 2021 Activities

HCPC members are invited to participate on event committees for 2021. Because of COVID restrictions these will be virtual events. Committees include: All Star Caregiver's Awards, Alzheimer's Conference, Holiday Party and Caregiver Conference. There will be no Making the Link 2021. Other virtual events are being discussed. [To become a member visit the HCPC website](#). To join any of these committees [send an email](#) with your information and the name of the committee(s) you would like to join.

ADR Advisory Board Openings

Pierce County Human Services Aging and Disability Resources (ADR) Advisory Board is seeking members interested in improving community-based services for older adults and adults with disabilities. Meetings occur on the third Tuesday every other month. The ADR Advisory Board assists with program planning, funds allocation, evaluation of contracted services and community education. The board's membership is comprised of older adults, persons with disabilities, service recipients, professionals and an elected official. We are currently looking for representatives from various backgrounds to fill four open positions on the ADR Advisory Board. [Apply online](#). For more information contact [Daniel Gross](#) at 253-798-2739.

Virtual Cancer Programs Online

All cancer programs are offered by Harmony Hill at no cost.

[Virtual Cancer Workshop \(Feb 6-7\)](#) – For anyone who has had a cancer diagnosis, looking for an immersive 2-day virtual experience.

[Hospital Sponsored Cancer Wellness Workshops](#) – For all cancer patients and caregivers interested in a monthly, facilitated, and topic-driven group experience. Offered 3 times a month on different days and times.

[Harmony Hill Sponsored Cancer Wellness](#) - For cancer patients and caregivers looking for weekly virtual gatherings to engage in YOGA and Healing Circles for Cancer Patients & Caregivers.

Harmony Hill Offers Tools for Health Care Professionals

Join Harmony Hill online for “[Tools for the Journey](#)” (February 27), a day of learning and practicing skills that are grounding and balancing amid the demands in caring for patients and families. Through the practices of self-care (mindfulness, movement, poetry/art, reflection, and sharing), you may experience the benefits of presence and compassion in your work and your life.

Foot Care Available

Senior Footcare continues to offer services at their Tacoma Mall Office Building location. Patients must call ahead to make an appointment. Appointments are scheduled on Monday or Tuesday. Appointments last 45 minutes to 60 minutes depending upon need. Patients must pay \$40 by cash or check and should bring along a bath towel. Home visits can be arranged for a fee of \$100. There is a waiting room available for friends or family members who accompany the patient to the appointment. Located at 4301 South Pine Street, Suite 27, Tacoma. Call 253-848-9625.

Poverty Reduction Work Group

In 2015, a group of advocates, legislators, and agency leaders formed [Governor Inslee’s Poverty Reduction Work Group](#). The work group was tasked with creating a 10-year plan to dismantle poverty in Washington State. The final version of the plan is soon to be released. [Sign up](#) to receive a copy of the plan and learn more about the workgroup by reading the [dismantling poverty blogs](#).

Financial Planning for Vulnerable Populations

Sound Outreach provides free guidance and support to economically vulnerable populations in Pierce County through grants and city funding. For anyone concerned about affording food, medicine, or housing, Sound Outreach is for you. Martin Pirgiotis is a dedicated Financial Counselor with nearly a decade of experience in the private banking sector. Contact [by e-mail](#) or phone at 253-719-3075.

Ten-Year Plan to Dismantle Poverty

Gov. Inslee’s Poverty Reduction Work Group released its final report: [A Blueprint for a Just and Equitable Future: The 10-Year Plan to Dismantle Poverty](#). Prior to the current economic downturn, there were 1.75 million Washingtonians – including over 500,000 children – with incomes below 200% of the federal poverty level (\$43,440 for a family of three). Rising unemployment in the wake of COVID-19 is deepening the experience of poverty for those disproportionately affected. The 10-year plan is intended to meet this challenging moment and lay a foundation for a just and equitable future in which all Washingtonians can reach their full potential. [Learn more about the plan](#).

Toolkit Basics: Where to Begin When a Student Needs More Help

When a student living with a disability has unmet needs and may need new or different school-based services, what to do next can feel confusing or overwhelming. PAVE provides this toolkit to support families in taking initial, critical steps. These guidelines apply regardless of where school happens. [Toolkit Basics: Where to Begin When a Student Needs More Help](#).

Update 2021 Senior Programs Eligibility

Northwest Justice Project has provided important information about program eligibility for 2021.

[Key Medicaid Standards as of January 2021](#) | [Medicare Information for 2021](#) | [Social Security Information for 2021](#) | [2021 Supplemental Security Income \(SSI\) & State Supplemental Payment \(SSP\) Standards for Washington State](#).

2021 PC2 Legal Series

Pierce County Coalition for Individuals with Disabilities (PC2) continues with its 2021 legal series featuring Tacoma attorney Timothy Williams. Topics include Estate Planning, Guardianships, Special Needs Trusts and ABLE Accounts. Presentations will be online. [Visit PC2's Facebook page](#), click on videos and then select the presentation you are interested in. For more information call 253-564-0707 or [e-mail PC2](#).

NAMI Pierce County Offers Online Courses

NAMI Pierce County focuses on the concerns of all those affected by mental illness. Members include families, friends, concerned citizens and people living with mental illnesses such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, major depression and many others. [The NAMI class/presentation interest form has a complete listing of available programs](#). Log on to learn more and sign up.

Community Summit 2021

The ninth annual Community Summit will feature weekly webinar sessions beginning in May and running through June, 2021. Presentations and panel discussions will center on the themes of “Resilience, Equity, and Inclusion.” Webinars are free of charge and open to all who share in the goals of the Community Summit. Sponsored by DSHS Developmental Disabilities Administration, Wise, DVR, and Washington State Counties. The Summit website and registration will open in Spring of 2021. Please refer to the [Summit Facebook page](#) for future announcements.

DD Workshops from

The Developmental Disabilities Administration at Washington State Department of Social and Health Services is offering a series of continuing education workshops this Spring. Please register for only one date for each topic.

- Autism in the Community (3 CEUs)
[Register for March 19](#) | [Register for April 5](#)
- Sensory Needs for Adults with Autism (3 CEUs)
[Register for March 25](#) | [Register for April 5](#)
- Adults with Autism: Structure and Predictability (3 CEUs)
[Register for March 19](#) | [Register for March 25](#)
- When Life Hits: Helping Get through the Good Times and the Bad (6 CEUs)
[Register for April 7](#) | [Register for April 15](#) | [Register for April 26](#)

Caregiver Training Requirements Extended

Washington has extended the deadline for caregiver training requirements until the end of the COVID-19 State of Emergency. Currently, all caregivers with impacted training deadlines will have a placeholder deadline of June 30, 2021, as the new training deadline on their training record. This date could be extended in the future. [Read more about the legislation here](#). SEIU 775 Benefits Group is working with DSHS, SEIU 775 and other partners to put in place a plan that will give all caregivers enough time to complete training requirements, regardless of the training deadline.

Wellness Wednesdays

The Alzheimer's Association and UW Memory and Brain Wellness Center offer Wellness Wednesdays, a free weekly webinar series for people with memory loss and their families. Join online and enjoy dynamic speakers exploring topics and resources to help you thrive on your memory loss journey. Learn more and [register online](#) or call 1.800.272.3900.

New Service Focuses on Positive Aging

Silver Linings Integrative Health offers individual and group services in geriatric mental health and personal training. Areas of focus are dementia, grief, aging and mind-body integration. One-on-one sessions are offered in-person or online through Doxy.com. Live group meditation and yoga sessions are available as well. For more information on Silver Linings' services visit yes2aging.com.

ORCA Cards

Pierce Transit is pleased to announce that individuals needing new adult or youth ORCA cards will not have to pay the \$5 card fee now through February 28, 2021. All transit agencies accepting ORCA are waiving the fee to encourage contactless forms of payment to reduce the spread of COVID-19. (First-time ORCA Regional Reduced Fare Permit (RRFP) or LIFT cards have been and will continue to be free.) [Learn more on PierceTransit.org](http://PierceTransit.org).

Career Hub Empowers Careers

Join the Goodwill Career Hub Workshop series, Voices of Empowerment. [Register online](#). This three-part series on Wed Feb. 3, 10 & 17, all @ 2pm, features Erin Jones and Tyler Monk, who will speak about why working towards equity and justice matters, along with sharing their career journey's and providing advice to help you reach your employment goals.

Safe Medication Disposal

Safe medication return is a unified, statewide program that gives Washington residents free, convenient, and environmentally responsible options to dispose of unwanted medication. Safe medication return is operated by MED-Project. There are two main ways to return your unused medication and both options are free.

- Mail in your unused medication - Request a [free prepaid envelope](#) and it will be sent to you. Place your unused medication in the envelope and then mail the package as you would any other parcel.
- Take it to a drop off site - Find your nearest [drop off site](#), and deposit your medication in the kiosk. You do not need to provide an ID, talk with anyone, or complete paperwork.

If you have questions contact by [email](#) or phone 360-236-4698.

Earned Income Tax Credit: Don't Miss Out

The IRS estimates that as many as 1.5 million people with disabilities miss out on a valuable credit for low to moderate income workers because they fail to file a tax return. Many of these non-filers fall below the income threshold requiring them to file; however, in order to claim the EITC, you have to file a tax return—even if you don't owe taxes for the previous year. Those who qualify could pay less federal tax, pay no tax at all or even get a tax refund that puts an extra \$2 to \$6,660 into their pocket. Learn more about the [Earned Income Tax Credit](#).

Lutheran Community Services Has Moved

LCSNW has move to a new Tacoma location near the Tacoma Mall at 3848 S. Junett, Tacoma, WA 98409. Most employees are providing services remotely. The new facility offers ample parking, better accessibility and more space. Essential services including Home Care, Meals on Wheels and Santa for Seniors will use the new facility immediately. [Read more about the new “Senior Hub.”](#)

Lifeline Connections Seeks Peer Services Specialists

Lifeline Connections is a not-for-profit agency that is recognized as a leading behavioral health treatment provider in Washington State. They offer a full continuum of care for individuals who have a behavioral health condition. Lifeline Connections' patients receive an unprecedented level of care by highly skilled professionals who know how to help people find and sustain long-term recovery. This position provides peer support services to participants in the HARPS/Pathfinder program. Submit a cover letter and resume to employment@lifelineconnections.org.

SCAMS OF THE MONTH

Scammers Cash in on COVID-19 Vaccination Confusion

With every passing day, the news on COVID-19 vaccine distribution seems to change. One reason is that distribution varies by state and territory. And scammers, always at the ready, are taking advantage of the confusion. [Read more.](#) (Source: FTC)

See How Texts from Unknown Senders Could Be Fake

Many people communicate with loved ones through text messages. But texting is a primary way scammers contact their victims to steal money and personal information. Text scammers may try to offer you a free prize, gift card, or tell you they can help you pay off a loan. Others may warn you about suspicious activities tied to one of your personal accounts or that a bill remains unpaid due to an issue with your payment information. [Get more information about spotting text scams.](#) (Source: FTC)

LOCAL HAPPENINGS (ADRC events highlighted)

Feb 10 – Virtual Alzheimer’s Community Forum

Learn about Alzheimer's, dementia and memory loss in this brief community-focused listening session. We'll review the basics of these conditions, services of the Alzheimer's Association and how we can expand the reach of local programs and services. This is a virtual, online program. A smart phone or computer with speakers, headphones or ear buds is required. You will receive the access link upon registration. [Click here to register](#) or call 1-800-272-3900.

Feb 11 – All About Funerals: Making the Most of a Stressful Time

([Event Calendar](#)) In our culture, thinking about death or funerals is avoided. But the passing of a loved one is a most turbulent and confusing time for those who remain. Caught up in the grief process, families frequently do things that the deceased would not have wished or spent money foolishly. There are many things that can be done to make life so much easier to family survivors. And there are many innovative alternatives to “traditional funerals” and “traditional burials.” This information-only presentation will explore important issues to help individuals and families plan ahead. Free event. [Advance registration is required.](#) Join by phone at 253-215-8782 or 888-788-0099 – Webinar ID: 938 3022 4121. Held 6:30 p.m. For more information call the ADRC at 253-798-4600. [View event flyer.](#)

Feb 13 – All About Funerals: Making the Most of a Stressful Time

([Event Calendar](#)) (See Feb 11 for event description) Free event. [Advance registration is required](#). Join by phone at 253-215-8782 or 888-788-0099 – Webinar ID: 951 0968 0909. Held 10:00 a.m. For more information call the ADRC at 253-798-4600. [View event flyer](#).

Feb 15-19 – NAMI Washington First-Ever Virtual Lobby Week

NAMI members and supporters are the most effective people to educate legislators about mental illness and the need to change our current “mental illness” system to a “mental health” system. Join us for this opportunity in meeting with your lawmakers, connecting with other advocates, and hearing from keynote speakers. Feb 15 virtual events including an issues brief, keynote speakers; Feb 16 – Feb 19; Legislative visits and connection with other advocates \offered during the week. [Click here for more info and to Register](#).

Feb 18 – Talking with Your Doctor

([Event Calendar](#)) Going to the doctor isn’t what it used to be. The “good old days” are gone now and there’s a whole new way of thinking surrounding the doctor-patient relationship. Communication is key in building good relationships with your health care providers and getting the best possible care. Learn to communicate effectively with doctors and other providers. Understand the fresh mindset that healthcare providers have today. [Register in advance online](#). Zoom link provided at registration. Join by phone at 253-215-8782 or 888-788-0099 – Webinar ID: 913 2484 5538. For more information call the ADRC at 253-798-4600. [View event flyer](#).

Feb 20 – Talking with Your Doctor

([Event Calendar](#)) (See Feb 18 for event information) [Register in advance online](#). Zoom link provided at registration. Join by phone at 253-215-8782 or 888-788-0099 – Webinar ID: 942 7025 4423. For more information call the ADRC at 253-798-4600. [View event flyer](#).

Feb 21 – Night to Shine

Night to Shine is an unforgettable prom night experience for people with special needs, 14 years and older. Hosted as a “Shine-Thru” virtual event. Held 5 to 8 p.m. [Register online](#).

Feb 25 – Fair Housing Updates with Northwest Fair Housing Alliance

In this webinar we will refresh your understanding of fair housing basics, including a review of HUD’s reasonable accommodation and assistance animal guidance; learn about a new Washington State protected class; and get an update on the status of HUD’s Disparate Impact and Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing rules. Held 8:30 to 10 a.m. [Advance registration online](#).

Mar 11 – An Ounce of Prevention: A Positive Approach to Scams

([Event Calendar](#)) Thousands of Pierce County residents are approached by scammers daily and hundreds fall victim every year. The targets are all ages, all incomes, all occupations, all education levels. They come by way of e-mail, telephone, US postal mail, flyers and in-person appeals. Victims lose thousands of dollars, sometimes their whole life savings. Learn about successful tools that we can all use to remain safe from these predatory scams. [View event flyer](#). Free event held at 6:30 p.m. Presented in collaboration with the Washington State Department of Financial Institutions. [Register to join online](#) or join by phone at 253-215-8782 or 888-788-0099 – Webinar ID: 944 4755 9156.

Mar 13 – An Ounce of Prevention: A Positive Approach to Scams

([Event Calendar](#)) (See Mar 11 for event description) [View event flyer](#). Free event held at 9:30 a.m. Presented in collaboration with the Washington State Department of Financial Institutions. [Register to join online](#) or join by phone at 253-215-8782 or 888-788-0099 – Webinar ID: 936 6787 6353.

Mar 18 – Normal Aging Vs. Dementia

([Event Calendar](#)) Many people get a little more forgetful as we get older - during our 40s, 50s and early 60s – onwards - needing a bit longer to remember things, getting distracted more easily or struggling to multi-task as well as they once did. Can these episodes be an early sign of dementia? How do you know for sure? This information-only presentation will explore the differences and what to do if questions arise. [View event flyer](#). Free event held at 6:30 p.m. [Register to join online](#) or join by phone at 253-215-8782 or 888-788-0099 – Webinar ID: 972 3158 3215.

Mar 20 – Normal Aging Vs. Dementia

(See Mar 18 for event description) [View event flyer](#). Free event held at 9:30 a.m. [Register to join online](#) or join by phone at 253-215-8782 or 888-788-0099 – Webinar ID: 967 1614 1733.

April 8, 15, 22 and 29 – “Dotting the i’s and Crossing the t’s: Providing Legal Peace of Mind”

Save the Date. This series of free presentations will provide in-depth understanding of the most important planning tools that everyone – regardless of age – needs to have. April 8 – Durable Powers of Attorney; April 15 – Health Care Directives and Living Wills; April 22 – Wills and Probate; April 29 – Trusts and Trust Administration. All sessions presented at 6:30 p.m. Registration info coming soon.

May 8 and 15 – Pierce County Caregiver Conference

Save the date for this virtual event. Details to be announced.

ADRC Q&A

Question: I’ve been getting a lot of robocalls. What should I do?

Answer: If you answer the phone and hear a recorded message instead of a live person, it's a robocall. (Note: The Do Not Call provisions do not cover calls from political organizations, charities, telephone surveyors, or companies with which a consumer has an existing business relationship.) The robocalls logic is simple. If you answer their call, your number is considered “good,” even if you don't fall for the scam. They will try again next time because they know there's someone on the other side who is a potential victim for fraud. The less you answer, the fewer the calls – but that takes Caller ID. The best way to respond to robocalls is simple. As tempting as it may be, don't speak. Don't press any keys. Don't call back a number provided during the call. Don't give away any person or financial information. Don't say “yes.” Don't bother cursing or swearing or calling them bad names. You can register your numbers on the national Do Not Call list at no cost by calling 1-888-382-1222 (voice) or 1-866-290-4236 (TTY). You only need to do this once – not every year, not every five years. You must call from the phone number you wish to register. That way you'll know if it's a spammer or not. Honest companies won't call. Spammers will.

NATIONAL NEWS

How to Resolve Nursing Home Problems

Justice in Aging has updated its essential guide, [25 Common Nursing Home Problems—& How to Resolve Them](#). The revised guide includes, among other things, COVID-19 specific information, 2021 Medicare eligibility standards, and advice on how to refuse arbitration agreements under a recently revised federal regulation. The 25 problems identified in the guide are common across the country and in all types of nursing homes. The guide gives residents, family members, friends, and other advocates tools to identify and solve the problems residents most frequently face. (Source: Justice in Aging)

SNAP Benefits Increase

The [new federal stimulus package includes \\$26 billion for nutrition assistance](#) that increases Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits by raising maximum allotments to 115 percent of the June 2020 value of the Thrifty Food Plan (TFP). For a family of four receiving a maximum allotment in the 48 states and D.C., benefits will be \$782, an increase of \$102. The minimum benefit for the 48 states and D.C. will increase by \$3 to \$19. The legislation requires that the increased maximum allotments remain through June 30, 2021. On July 1, 2021, state agencies will revert to the FY 2021. (Source: Washington Post)

Medicare Advantage Open Enrollment Period

If you have a Medicare Advantage Plan, you may be able to use the Medicare Advantage Open Enrollment Period (MA OEP). The MA OEP continues through March 31. During the MA OEP you can switch from your Medicare Advantage Plan to another Medicare Advantage Plan or to Original Medicare with or without a prescription drug plan. You may only make one change during this period, and it will be effective the first of the next month after you make the change. Remember, you can only use this enrollment period if you have a Medicare Advantage Plan. (Source: MRC)

2020 COVID Relief & Omnibus Spending Bill – More than Just \$600

Justice in Aging has created a [summary for advocates that outlines the major provisions impacting low-income older adults](#) in the COVID-19 relief package and the omnibus spending bill. While the relief package includes some important financial relief, vaccination funding, and other supports, it does not address the most urgent needs of low-income older adults in this crisis. (Source: Justice in Aging)

If I Have Cancer, Dementia or MS, Should I Get the COVID Vaccine?

As public demand grows for limited supplies of covid-19 vaccines, questions remain about the vaccines' appropriateness for older adults with various illnesses. Among them are cancer patients receiving active treatment, dementia patients near the end of their lives and people with autoimmune conditions. Medical experts strongly suggested that people with questions contact their doctors and discuss their individual medical circumstances. [Read what they are saying](#). (Source: KHN)

Make Educated, Safe Decisions Until Widespread COVID Vaccine Adoption

The National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a) and other key Aging Network organizational partners are participating in a [national education campaign collaborative](#) to promote [CV19 CheckUp](#), a free [online tool](#) to assess individual risk factors, inform and encourage safe behaviors, inform and empower communities about high-risk populations and risk mitigation strategies. (Source: n4a)

COVID May Lead to Alzheimer's

Many patients who are hospitalized for COVID-19 are discharged with symptoms such as those associated with a brain injury. These include forgetfulness that impairs their ability to function.

COVID-19 also appears to produce many other brain-related symptoms ranging from seizures to psychosis and [severe COVID-19 may even increase a person's risk of developing Alzheimer's disease](#). (Source: NPR)

Alzheimer's Clinical Trials Need Participants

Different clinical trials need different kinds of participants, including caregivers, people with Alzheimer's disease or a related dementia, and healthy individuals. To find out more about participating in Alzheimer's studies, you can:

- Sign up for a [registry or matching service](#) to be invited to participate in studies or trials.
- Ask your doctor about local research studies that may be right for you.
- Contact [Alzheimer's Disease Research Centers](#) or local memory or neurology clinics.
- [Search for clinical trials](#) at the Alzheimer's and related Dementias Education and Referral Center.
- Contact an Information Specialist at the ADEAR Center by phone (800-438-4380) or [email](#).
- Sign up to receive NIA's monthly [Alzheimer's & Related Dementias Clinical Trials E-alerts](#).

Learn more about [participating in Alzheimer's research](#) on NIA's website. (Source: NIA)

Consumer Voice Podcasts

Too often, caregivers are ill-equipped to address the needs of persons living with dementia, especially those related to behavioral health. Consumer Voice offers [recorded episodes of their podcasts](#) focusing on pursuing quality long-term care. Produced in collaboration with the AARP Foundation and the University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing. (Consumer Voice)

New Research on Life Plan Community Residents' Happiness

The Mather Institute has released the latest findings from its landmark, five-year Age Well Study being conducted with Northwestern University. The report explores associations between residents' happiness and their individual personality traits, resources, communal factors, and behaviors. [The Age Well Study is available as a free download](#). (Source: Mather Institute)

2020-2025 Edition of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans, released by the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Health and Human Services, provides science-based advice on what to eat and drink to promote health, help reduce risk of chronic disease, and meet nutrient needs. The DGA highlights the importance of dietary patterns across the lifespan and provides recommendations for each life stage. [Visit DietaryGuidelines.gov](#) | [View the downloadable PDF](#) (Source: ACL)

Chemo Toxicity Scoring Tool Developed for Breast Cancer

Researchers have developed a scoring tool that can aid in forecasting chemotherapy toxicity in breast cancer patients aged 65 and older, based on findings published in the Journal of Clinical Oncology. The tool has been validated and consists of eight separate predictors for grade 3 to grade 5 chemotherapy toxicity. [Read the full story](#). (Source: Physician's Briefing/HealthDay News)

California Releases Master Plan for Aging

California Governor Gavin Newsom announced a statewide [Master Plan for Aging](#). The ten-year plan addresses a range of issues critical to fighting senior poverty in California and nationally, including equity, access and affordability of long-term services and supports, health care, economic security and safety, and building age- and disability-friendly communities. (Source: Justice in Aging)

