



The Senior Advocate

Volume 7, Issue 3

Fall 2010

Windows of Opportunity



A "WOO" is an opportunity for you to benefit from a free event, class or service. Look for the WOO Window throughout this issue of The Senior Advocate!

Did You Know???

- * Falls are the leading cause of fatal injuries to people over 65 in NC
- * Free computer classes are available at your public libraries.
- * The latest flu vaccination information is available on the health dept's flu line 703-3350.
- * www.iparticipatenc.org lists activities for adults in Forsyth County.

Medicare Questions?

Seniors Health Insurance Information Program (SHIIP) has counselors at:

Senior Services:

724-2040

Shepherd's Center W-S:

748-0217

Shepherd's Center

Kernersville 996-6696

How Will The New Health Reform Law Effect You?

As if Medicare isn't confusing enough, the Affordable Care Act was signed into law on March 23, 2010. We constantly hear conflicting news reports about what will and will not happen. According to The National Council on Aging (NCOA), **the law will not cut your basic Medicare benefits.** The NCOA has provided some facts you should know about how this new law will affect Medicare recipients. Here are just a few of them. **Beginning in 2011:**

You will receive a free annual wellness visit and prevention plan that will allow you and your doctor to develop a prevention plan to keep you healthy. And a range of prevention services, such as cancer and diabetes screenings, will be provided free—no more cost sharing.

The law will reduce payments to Medicare Advantage (MA) plans. About 75% of seniors have original Medicare. The rest are enrolled in MA managed care plans, such as HMOs and PPOs, offered by private insurance companies. Because of these changes, some MA plans may cut some of the extra benefits they offer that original Medicare does not cover—such as eye-glasses or hearing aids. Some MA plans may increase premiums. And some plans may drop out of the Medicare program completely. However, MA plans cannot cut **any** benefits that Medicare guarantees, such as hospital care or doctors' visits. If you're in an MA plan, you will have the same right you have now to switch to another plan or go back to original Medicare. You will never lose your basic Medicare benefits because of the new law.

The law will require people with higher incomes to pay higher Medicare premiums for prescription drug coverage. This change will affect about 5% of people with Medicare—singles with incomes above \$85,000 and couples with adjusted gross incomes above \$170,000.

The law will make it easier to receive and pay for long-term care at home. Medicare currently does not cover long-term care. The law will make it easier for lower income people who are on Medicaid to get long-term care at home instead of in a nursing home by providing extra federal funds to states that provide in-home services. Beginning in 2013, a new national long-term care insurance program called CLASS (Community Living Assistance Services and Supports) will become available. Full and part-time workers with salaries of at least \$1,200 per year will be eligible to participate in CLASS and may choose to have the premiums deducted from their paychecks. Non-working retirees are not eligible for the program.

Preventing Ourselves From Falling

North Carolina Falls Prevention Awareness Week September 20-26

Falls are not just the result of getting older. Many falls can be prevented. Falls are usually caused by a number of things. By changing some of these things, you can lower your chances of falling.

You can reduce your chances of falling by doing these things:

Begin a regular exercise program. Exercise is one of the most important ways to reduce your chances of falling. It makes you stronger and helps you feel better. Exercises that improve balance and coordination (like Tai Chi) are the most helpful. Lack of exercise leads to weakness and increases your chances of falling. Ask your doctor or health care worker about the best type of exercise program for you.

Make your home safer. About half of all falls happen at home. To make your home safer:

- Remove things you can trip over (such as papers, books, clothes, and shoes) from stairs and places where you walk.
- Remove small throw rugs or use double-sided tape to keep the rugs from slipping.
- Keep items you use often in cabinets you can reach easily without using a step stool.
- Have grab bars put in next to your toilet and in the tub or shower.
- Use non-slip mats in the bathtub and on shower floors.
- Improve the lighting in your home. As you get older, you need brighter lights to see well. Lamp shades or frosted bulbs can reduce glare.
- Have handrails and lights put in on all staircases.
- Wear shoes that give good support and have thin non-slip soles. Avoid wearing slippers and athletic shoes with deep treads.

Have your health care provider review your medicines. Have your doctor or pharmacist look at all the medicines you take (including ones that don't need prescriptions such as cold medicines). As you get older, the way some medicines work in your body can change. Some medicines, or combinations of medicines, can make you drowsy or light-headed which can lead to a fall.

Have your vision checked. Have your eyes checked by an eye doctor. You may be wearing the wrong glasses or have a condition such as glaucoma or cataracts that limits your vision. Poor vision can increase your chances of falling.

—National Center for Injury Prevention and Control

One-third of adults over 65 and one-half of those over 80 fall each year.

NW Piedmont Falls Free Coalition

The Northwest Piedmont Falls Free Coalition has been formed to address falls in our region. It is part of a statewide initiative to reduce the number of falls and fall-related injuries. The vision of the group is that older adults will be empowered with knowledge about falls and fall preven-

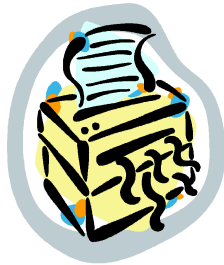


tion, leading to increased independence and health-related quality of life. Interested in becoming involved in the Northwest Piedmont Falls Free Coalition? New task groups are forming now. For more information and to get connected, contact Alexis Gabard, at 336.761.2111



Secure Your I.D. Shred Day October 23rd

The Forsyth County Chapter of AARP, in conjunction with the Better Business Bureau are sponsoring a "Shred Day" on **Saturday, October 23rd, from 9:00 am-12:00 noon**. The event will be held in the front parking lot of the LJVM Coliseum on University Parkway in Winston-Salem. This is a great opportunity to get rid of old records that you don't want to throw in your trash. Shredding protects



No need to remove staples, paper clips or rubber bands!

your identity and the security of your bank and credit card accounts.

Some things to bring to the shredding include:

- *bank statements
- *old/cancelled checks
- *personal records
- *medical records
- *legal papers
- *credit card receipts
- *invoices
- *financial statements
- *insurance records

For more information contact: Melissa Tierney at BBB, mtierney@nwnccbbb.com (336) 231-6462.



Step Up Forsyth! 7th Annual Community Physical Activity Program September 12-November 6, 2010

Step Up Forsyth! is a free community-wide program that aims to improve quality of life through increased physical activity. Participants may engage in physical activity on their own, as a family or as a team.

The 2010 Step Up Forsyth! program will run for 8 weeks beginning September 12th. Participants are encouraged to start the program on September 12th but may join any time during the program. Our goal for 2010 is to recruit 75 teams and log a total of 1.5 million minutes of physical activity! **How to join:**

- Pledge to engage in physical activity 30 minutes a day for at least 5 days each week
- Form or join a team or engage in activity on your own
- Register by September 10th to enjoy the entire 8-week program. It is okay to join anytime during the program.
- Engage in physical activity and record your minutes.
- Turn in your physical activity log at the end of the program and possibly win an award or be entered in a raffle for prizes.

Registration forms and information are available on the internet at: www.forsyth.cc/publichealth/stepup_forsyth OR call the BeHealthy Coalition Coordinator, LaShun Huntley, at 703-3175 or e-mail him at huntlela@forsyth.cc



Older Adult Pedestrian Safety Workshops

Forsyth County Aging Services Planning Committee will be sponsoring **Pedestrian Safety Workshop: A Focus on Older Adults** throughout the county during the coming months. The workshops are free and refreshments will be served.

Join community members, health and transportation professionals, law enforcement officers, decision makers and others to look at ways to improved pedestrian safety and walkability for older adults in our community. Highlights include:

- Common situations in which older adults are injured

- Ways in which changes to the physical environment, education & enforcement can improved safety for pedestrians
- Strategies to encourage more walking in our community
- An observational walk
- Discussion about how to make our community more pedestrian-friendly

The first workshop will be held with the Shepherd's Center of Kernersville on **Tuesday, October 5, 2010, 9:00 am – noon at the Kernersville Senior Enrichment Center**. Space is limited, so please register early by contacting Vicki at 703-3883 or pooreva@forsyth.cc or Lisa Miller at the Senior Enrichment Center, 992-0591.

Senior Power Think Tank

A subcommittee of:

Forsyth County Aging Services
Planning Committee
741 North Highland Avenue
Winston-Salem, NC 27101

Phone: 336-703-3883

E-mail: pooreva@forsyth.cc

**Working Together to
Make Forsyth County
Senior Friendly**

Keeping Up With the Times—Check in by E-mail!

I remember when I was a young child we would take Sunday trips to my grandparents house. My grandfather always worried about his daughter (my mom) driving home alone with us children at night. So they had a system: when we arrived home, mom would call Grandpa's phone number, let the phone ring three times, and hang up. Grandpa knew we'd arrived safe, without the expense of a toll call.

Recently Annette Lance, one of our committee members, sent me this updated version of the "I'm okay" call. She said an older gentleman that she knows emails his offspring every morning and every night so they know that he is alright without them spending time and energy to check on him daily. It only takes a moment, costs nothing, and gives the recipient peace of mind knowing their loved one is okay.



Put Life Back Into Your Life

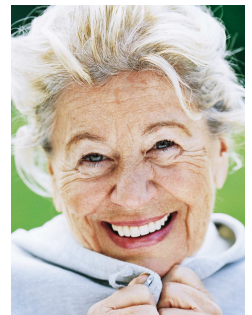
Consider a Living Healthy Workshop

A **FREE** program offered by NW Piedmont Area Agency on Aging

Are you an adult age 60 or older with an ongoing health condition?

You'll get the support you need, find practical ways to deal with pain and fatigue, discover better nutrition and exercise choices, understand new treatment choices, and learn better ways to talk with your doctor and family about your health.

If you have conditions such as diabetes, arthritis, high blood pressure, heart disease, chronic pain, or anxiety, the **Living Healthy** Workshop can help you take charge of your life. The two hour workshop is held once a week for six weeks. Call the **Living Healthy Hotline** at **336-608-3568** to find a workshop near you!



Presented by the BBB Education Alliance

The Senior Family Celebration is a celebration of different foods, entertainment, exercise, financial planning, information, scams & fraud awareness, Medicare, self-defense, and more! Music from the 40's to the 90's, and games, prizes and fun for the whole family. **FREE** admission with two cans of food, to be donated to the Second Harvest Food Bank.

For more information call (336) 201-0787.