Huntsville-Madison County Senior Center, Inc.

More information on p. 4

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Medicare’s Annual Open Enrollment Period is October 15 – December 7, 2020

During this time each year, you can drop or switch health or drug plans. If you want to make sure your DRUG PLAN is the right one for you in 2021, call 256-880-7080 and make an appointment to go over the different drug plan options. ALL MED-D APPOINTMENTS WILL BE ONLINE OR ON THE PHONE. See Page 19 for more info.

If you want an in-person appointment to look at the different Advantage and Supplemental plans, call 256-513-8290 to set up an appointment with one of our SHIP advisors. Limited availability, so call soon!

When’s the EXPO?

We’re going Online!

Our annual EXPO has been a much-anticipated event for businesses and organizations to reach North Alabama Seniors and their families for 22 years. Plans are underway to adapt this signature event to protect the health and safety of our Vendors and our Attendees. Be watching for email news, on social media, and on our website for details in October!

Not on our mailing list? Just send an email to info@seniorview.com and we’ll add you. Thanks!
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More Than Just a Senior Moment?
The number of Americans living with dementia is growing rapidly. More than 5 million Americans are living with dementia today. Like heart disease, dementia is a general term for disorders of memory loss and decline in thinking or reasoning skills that interfere with one’s ability to live life independently. There are several known types of dementia, including Alzheimer’s disease—which account for more than 60-80% of all dementia cases. One in 10 people over the age of 65 suffer from Alzheimer’s.
The death of Robin Williams in 2014, the famous comedian and actor, drew attention to Lewy body dementia, the second most common form of dementia. In addition to memory loss, Lewy body dementia symptoms often include movement problems, depression and hallucinations. The disease is difficult to diagnose because Lewy body dementia manifests like Parkinson’s disease in the early stages.

Various Causes of Memory Loss
A number of conditions can be similar to dementia but are actually reversible causes of memory loss. These include thyroid disease, vitamin B12 deficiency, depression, Normal Pressure Hydrocephalus (NPH) disorder, and side effects of various medications.

It is important that symptoms of memory loss are not disregarded as simply a sign of aging. If you have memory issues, talk to your doctor about whether testing is needed to rule out reversible causes of memory loss, which account for 1-2% of those with conditions that can look like dementia.

When Is It Time To Be Concerned?
The key difference between “senior moments” and dementia is that Alzheimer’s disease and related disorders are progressive, with symptoms including memory loss and loss of ability to live daily life independently. Forgetting why one walked into a room or someone’s name can definitely be a part of normal aging. In fact, the symptoms can be hard to differentiate when dealing with the early stages of dementia.

Symptoms of a more serious progressive degenerative disorder, per the Alzheimer’s Association, can include:
- Memory loss that disrupts daily life
- Challenges in planning or solving problems
- Difficulty completing familiar tasks
- Confusion with times or places
- Trouble understanding visual images and spatial relationships
- Newly developed problems speaking or writing
- Misplacing things and losing the ability to retrace steps
- Decreased or poor judgement
- Withdrawal from work or social activities
- Changes in mood and personality

Prevention is Key
To date, there is no cure for Alzheimer’s disease and related disorders. Thus, it is critical to maintain a healthy brain by undertaking preventive measures whenever possible. Some risk factors for dementia cannot be changed, such as age and genetics. However, less than 1% of those with Alzheimer’s disease have genetic mutations. Currently, genetic testing is not routinely recommended unless there is a family history of early-onset dementia or Huntington’s disease, a rare, inherited disease that causes progressive breakdown of the brain’s nerve cells.

Early-onset dementia is diagnosed before age 65 and can be seen as early as age 30 in certain situations. Three specific genes relate to early-onset Alzheimer’s—APP, PSEN 1 and PSEN 2. In general, if you have a family history of early-onset dementia, you should see a neurologist or geriatrician at a major medical institution who specializes in dementia.

As there is no cure, prevention is crucial. There are a variety of risk factors you can change to help you maintain your memory. It has been estimated that control of 12 major risk factors for dementia will decrease population risk for dementia by 40%. For instance, research from The Cooper Institute showed being highly physically active in mid-life decreased dementia risk by 36% in later life. Additionally, factors that protect your heart also protect your brain, such as maintaining normal blood pressure. The top risk factors within your control for good brain health include:
- Control high blood pressure and other cardiovascular disease risk factors such as diabetes
- Avoid smoking and consuming alcohol excessively
- Correct hearing loss with appropriate devices
- Maintain a healthy weight
- Avoid head trauma
- Practice regular physical activity
- Focus on cognitive training and activities such as volunteering
- Engage in consistent social activity

In summary, while you cannot change your age or family history, healthy lifestyle choices and routine preventive medical examinations are within your control. Optimal heart and brain health start with small healthy choices today and will drastically affect and improve the health of your future.
Results may vary depending on age, condition, treatment compliance, genetics, diagnosis and other factors. Not all patients are candidates for treatment or are accepted for care. This program is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any specific disease. We are working to help relieve the symptoms of neuropathy and other types of inflammatory neuropathic pain conditions.

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Why Get the Flu Vaccine?
Experts said it’s crucial to get the flu vaccine this year because the coronavirus pandemic has overwhelmed hospitals in parts of the country and taken the lives of more than 176,000 people in the USA, according to Johns Hopkins data. “It is more important now than ever to get a flu vaccine because flu symptoms are very similar to those of COVID-19, and preventing the flu will save lives and preserve health resources,” said Dr. Lawrence Madoff, medical director of the Bureau of Infectious Disease and Laboratory Sciences at the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. The CDC recommends people get a flu vaccine no later than the end of October- because it takes a few weeks for the vaccine to become fully protective- but encourages people to get vaccinated later rather than not at all.

Is the Flu Vaccine Safe?
According to the CDC, hundreds of millions of Americans have safely received flu vaccine over the past 50 years. Common side effects for the vaccine include soreness at the injection spot, headache, fever, nausea and muscle aches. Dr. William Schaffner, professor of infectious diseases at Vanderbilt Medical Center, emphasized that these symptoms are not the flu because the vaccine cannot cause influenza. “That’s just your body working on the vaccine and your immune response responding to the vaccine,” he said.

Is it the Flu or Covid?
Influenza (flu) is a highly contagious respiratory infection caused by the influenza A,B or C virus. The US flu season typically lasts from October to March, but flu is present year round.

Hallmarks: Fever, muscle aches, and cough.
Other potential symptoms: Sore throat, diarrhea, congestion, runny nose, chills, shivering, headache, fatigue, loss of appetite.

Different from COVID-19: Flu usually does not cause shortness of breath.

COVID 19 is an extremely contagious respiratory illness caused by a type of virus called SARS-CoV-2. It’s a cousin to the common cold, but its potential consequences are far more serious, including hospitalization, lasting complications, and death.

Hallmarks: Loss of taste and smell (in the absence of nasal congestion), fever, cough, shortness of breath, and muscle aches.

Other potential symptoms: Sore throat, diarrhea, congestion, runny nose, chills, shivering, headache, fatigue, and loss of appetite.

Note: Some infected people don’t have any symptoms of COVID-19, but they are still contagious.

What should you do?
Call your doctor to report any concerning symptoms. You may need a test and treatment. The earlier you call, the sooner you can be treated if you need care.

2020 Flu Clinic
It is important to get immunized for the flu, especially this year. Flu shots will be available in the Drake Avenue parking lot of the Senior Center located at 2200 Drake Avenue on October 6th from 10 am until 2pm. Be sure to wear your mask and remember to bring your insurance cards!
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**Support Groups**

**ALFRA Alabama Family Rights Association** meets on the 2nd Thursday of the month at 6 pm at the Huntsville Public Library. Contact Suzanna Flinn at 256-532-2362 or www.ALFRA.org.

**Alcoholics Anonymous** - If you want to drink, that’s your business. If you want to stop, that’s our business. Contact us at 256-885-0323 or online www.aahuntsvilleal.com.

**AL-Anon/Alateen** - 12-step program for those who have a loved one faced with a drinking problem. Contact us at 877-786-2843 or visit www.alanon-alateen.org.

**ALS (Lou Gehrig’s Disease) Support Group** - The Alabama chapter of the ALS Association sponsors a Support Group held on the second Thursday of each month, 5:30 to 7 pm. Crestwood Care Clinic at 610 Airport Rd. Ste 100. For more information call 256-519-9030.

**Alzheimer’s Support Group** - For information call 256-880-1575.

**Brain Injury Support Group** meets 3rd Wednesday of the month from 12:30 - 2:30 at Southside Baptist Church at 201 Marsheutz Ave. For more information, please call 256-812-3109.

**Christian Cancer Support Group** For information call 256-539-8044 or email ccsg.hsv@gmail.com.

**Diabetic Support Group** meets the 1st Tuesday of each month, 10:00 until 11:30 am in the Merrimac Room at the Senior Center. Call 256-880-7080 x 274.

**Essential Tremor Support Group** A support group for people with Essential Tremors. Meets the last Saturday of the month from 11:00 until noon at the main branch of the Huntsville Public Library in meeting rooms A & B. Call 256-337-4616 for more information.

**Families Anonymous** - A 12-step program for relatives and friends who are concerned about a loved one’s drug/alcohol use. Call 256-880-6969 for meeting info.

**Healing Steps Labyrinth** - A handicap-accessible sacred space for contemplative thought and spiritual unburdening. Located between St Stephen’s and United Church with parking adjacent at 8020 Whitesburg Drive. Open daily and free to the public. For more information, email healingstepsinc@gmail.com.

**Hospice Family Care Adult Bereavement Groups** - Tuesday, 5:30 to 7:15 pm; Wednesday, 1 to 2 pm; Thursday: (second and fourth Thursdays) 6 pm to 7:15 pm. 3304 Westmill Drive. 256-650-1212.

**HopeKeepers** - A non-denominational Christian-based support group existing to serve people with chronic illness or pain. Meetings are at 10:30 am on the first Thursday of the month. Call 256-885-1720 or 256-533-3188 for information.

**H.O.P.E.** is for parents who have lost a child. Thursday, 5:30 to 7 pm 3304 Westmill Drive. 256-650-1212

**Huntsville VIPS (Visually Impaired Persons Support)** meets at the AL Dept. of Rehab Services, 3000 Johnson Road every 3rd Thursday, from 10:00 until 11:30. Call Jennifer Rehfel at 256-539-7881.

**Lilies of the Valley** - Ovarian Cancer Support Group meets at 5:30 the last Tuesday of every month at Clearview Cancer Institute, 3601 CCI Drive (off Holmes Ave.). Call Kristi Kelly 256-880-7366 or visit liliesofthevalley.com for information.

**Mended Hearts** - A support group for heart surgery survivors and their caregivers. Meets on the 3rd Thursday at Huntsville Hospital Dowdle Center at 6:30 pm. For more information call Dr. Fredonia B. Williams at 256-837-7354.

**The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)** - A support group for families coping with mental illness of a loved one, meets 1st and 3rd Tuesdays at 7:00 pm at United Way Bldg, 701 Andrew Jackson Way. Phone 256-534-2628.

**Ostomy Chapter for the Huntsville Area** meets at 2 pm on the 3rd Sunday of every other month. For more info call Greg Nave, 256-881-8702.

**Parkinson’s Support Group** Parkinson’s Support Group meets on the 2nd Sunday of each month at 1:30 pm at Willowbrook Baptist Church, 7625 Bailey Cove Road. Call Jim Johnston at 256-294-0003.

**Stroke Support Group** - Survivors, family members and friends are welcome! Meets 1st and 3rd Mondays every month from 3:30 - 4:30 at Encompass Health Rehabilitation Hospital, 107 Governors Dr. 35801 For info, call 256-535-2300.

**Tenn Valley Post-Polio Support Group** - Contact Leon Trotter, 256-883-7576 for information. email: trotter1000@hotmail.com

**Widows or Widowers of Alabama** meets at Fern Bell Park Recreation Center, 107-A Sanders Road SW (behind Whitesburg Middle School), 2nd Sunday 2 - 4 pm. For more information/directions, call Jean Arndt, 256-534-3349.

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SeniorLife is available online! Just go to the Senior Center website at http://www.seniorview.com/home and scroll down the right margin until you see SeniorLife. Click on the link to open the current issue of SeniorLife. You can also like us on Facebook. Just log into FB, search for Huntsville-Madison County Senior Center and check us out!
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And Oh, the Places We’ll Go...
Look for Our Future Trips!
Helpful Tips on Choosing the Right Nursing Home

By Alicia Howard MSW, CLTCO

The most difficult decision one can ever make is placing their loved one into a nursing home facility. It is normal to experience fear and apprehension especially when there are so many uncertainties as to knowing which long-term care facility is right for your loved one. Long-term care facilities cover a wide range of services from skilled care/(rehab), to long-term care. Most long-term care facilities strive to provide quality care with the mission to maintain the safety, well-being and quality of life the resident deserves.

When choosing the right facility, it is important for caregivers to follow these certain helpful tips which include the following:

1. Check for licensure and certifications required (i.e. Medicare/Medicaid)
2. Review annual survey results
3. Take notice of environmental factors (i.e. cleanliness, safety hazards, lighting, smells etc.)
4. Pay attention to staff interactions and staff turnover
5. Evaluate the facility’s routines and activities
6. Observe staff and resident interactions
7. Know if the services provided model a person-centered rather than a facility/institutionalized-centered model.

If you or someone you know needs assistance in acquiring information about nursing homes or long-term care you can contact The Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program through the Top of Alabama Regional Council of Governments (TARCOG) Area Agency on Aging at (256) 830-0818.
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Medicare Open Enrollment 2021

Medicare’s Open Enrollment Period is just a few days away. From October 15 to December 7, you can enroll in health and drug plans for 2021. Use these quick tips to get ready for Medicare’s Open Enrollment.

1. Check your mail. You may get important notices from your current plan, Medicare, or Social Security about changes to your coverage or any Extra Help you may get paying for prescription drugs. You’ll also get brochures from companies that offer Medicare health and prescription drug plans. Just remember — plans aren’t allowed to call or come to your home without an invitation from you.

2. Review your new “Medicare & You” handbook. It has information about Medicare coverage, as well as Medicare plans in your area. If you’re still getting your handbook by mail, you can opt to go paperless by filling out the form found at https://www.medicare.gov/gopaperless/home.aspx for next fall or you can download an electronic copy of the current issue.

3. Review your current coverage. Plans change and your needs change. Carefully review any materials and changes in costs or coverage that will happen in 2021, and decide if your current Medicare coverage will meet your needs for the year ahead.

4. Preview 2021 health & prescription drug plans online beginning in October. Our new and improved Medicare Plan Finder at https://www.medicare.gov/plan-compare/ makes it easier than ever to compare coverage options and shop for plans. For a personalized search, log in or create an account (if you have a Medicare Number) to create or access a list of your drugs, compare your current plan to others, and see prices based on any help you get with drug costs.

5. Get personalized help in your community. You may find a free local event nearby, with health insurance counselors to help you, like your State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP).

The Huntsville-Madison County Senior Center will be taking appointments for Medicare counseling for your 2021 drug plans starting October 1, 2020. Appointments will be conducted either by email, ship.coordinator@seniorview.com or by phone. Make phone appointments by calling 256-880-7080.

If you send an email, include your name, list of medicines with dosage and frequency (for example: Losartan, 100-12.5 tablet, once a day), and what drug store you prefer (you can also note if you’re willing to change drug stores for cost savings.)

If the appointment is by phone, please have your Medicare card and medicine bottles handy when the counselor calls. Be sure to tell the scheduler if the appointment is for more than one person so enough time will be allotted.

If you are wanting to switch from a Part D drug plan to a Medicare Advantage plan, please call 256-513-8290 and leave your name and phone number. The insurance counselor will call you back to set up an appointment.

DISCLAIMER: Advertising in SeniorLife does not constitute endorsement of services and/or products by the Senior Center or any of its staff, board members, sponsors or funding sources. We reserve the right to refuse any and all advertising at our discretion.
The Huntsville AARP Chapter normally meets on the first Thursday of the month. Due to the closure of the Senior Center, meetings are cancelled at this time. For information, call 256-851-9725.

NARFE Chapter 443 will have a Virtual Meeting on October 10th, 2020. Members will receive the “Communicator” through email, which will include login details for the Zoom meeting. A phone number will be provided to any member without online access so they may listen to the meeting over the phone. Still Serving Seniors will present. For any questions about the meeting or your benefits, call the Service Office at 256-382-5693 and leave a message. The Service Officer will return your call.

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SeniorLife Subscription Form

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Address: _______________________________________
City: ____________________ ST: _____ Zip: ___________
Home Phone Number: _____________________________
Email Address: _________________________________

Full Year’s Subscription $15.00  ☐ CHECK  ☐ CASH (Please check One)
☐ This is a NEW subscription  ☐ This is a renewal

Please make your check payable to:
Senior Center
Mail this form to:
Huntsville-Madison County
Senior Center
Attn.: SeniorLife
2200 Drake Ave SW
Huntsville, AL 35805
"If you have questions about Medicare, I have the answers!"

Ask Me About:
✓ Medicare Supplement
✓ Medicare Advantage
✓ Prescription Drug Plans

Due to COVID, the Senior Center is closed. However, Medicare enrollment assistance will be offered BY APPOINTMENT ONLY between October 15th through December 7th. Call today for your appointment!

Stephanie Kirk

1-866-688-0588
Before you enroll in any Medicare Plan -
Do your homework. Read the fine print.

Don’t be fooled by plans that sound too good to be true.

- Read the summary of benefits.
- Add up all the possible copays and out-of-pocket costs.
- Look closely at any physician or network restrictions, referrals, or prior authorizations required.

Ask yourself these questions: Yes | No

Do you want to keep your trusted doctor?   ☑   ☐
Do you want predictable monthly costs?    ☑   ☐
Do you like that Original Medicare covers 80% of eligible medical charges? ☑     ☐
Do you like that MedSups pick up the other 20% of eligible medical charges? ☑     ☐
Do you like having NO copays ever?        ☑   ☐
Do you want access to the leading hospitals in north Alabama? ☑     ☐
Do you want lower premiums than BCBS C Plus? ☑     ☐
Do you want your plan to be guaranteed renewable? ☑     ☐
Even though you may pay more upfront in premiums, do you want the peace of mind knowing you’ve got comprehensive coverage on the back end? ☑     ☐

If you answered “yes” to these questions, then a Medicare Supplement is for you!
Huntsville Hospital and FirstCommunity Senior Select offer seniors an affordable Medicare Supplement that beats the competition. All you have to do is call!

FirstCommunity Senior Select
Medicare Supplement
256-532-2783 or 256-532-2785
699-A Gallatin Street Huntsville AL  firstcomm.org