



Golden Nuggets



Timely News For Older Adults and their Families

Fall 2009

Flu Shots in New Canaan

The Town Flu Clinic will be held Saturday, October 3rd from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Saxe Middle School. Shots will **Postponed** cost \$30 payable by cash, check, Mastercard or Visa. People with Medicare Part B should bring their Medicare card (Medicare will be billed at the allowable Medicare rate). Volunteers will be there to help anyone needing assistance, including wheelchair patrons. The process is quick and efficient! Last year the average time to get a flu shot was less than 10 minutes.

For those who cannot attend that clinic, another flu clinic will be held Wednesday, October 7 by appointment beginning at 1 p.m. at Lapham Center. Payment will be by Medicare card, cash or check; no credit cards. Call 594-3620 to make an appointment.

These clinics are for the traditional seasonal flu shot. When and if the government makes an H1N1 vaccine, the New Canaan Health Department will supply it to the town.

H1N1 Flu Shot Coverage

The U.S. Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services announced in early September that, although Medicare typically pays for just one flu vaccine per year, it will cover both the seasonal flu and H1N1 vaccines if medically necessary.

At this point it appears that other insurance providers will also cover the cost of the H1N1 shot. Call your provider.

Medicare Part D (Prescription Drug) Open Enrollment Assistance

The next open enrollment period, during which you can choose or change Part D plans, is November 15–December 31, 2009. Plan choices made at that time will be effective January 1, 2010.

If you are currently enrolled in a Part D plan, you should compare the 2010 version of your current plan with other 2010 options. Your current plan may have dropped a medication you need or significantly changed premiums or deductibles. Last year, the counselors assisted 147 people of whom 111 changed plans with an average saving of \$628.



Trained Medicare counselors Bill Emmons and Dick Neville will do this for you on the Medicare website. You will need to bring your Medicare card and ALL of your prescription medicines in a bag so the accurate names, dosages and strengths of the medications can be entered into the computer. If you decide to change plans, they can enroll you. There is no fee for this service which is offered at Lapham Center. Call 594-3620 after November 1 for an appointment;

They will also hold a Medicare Part D Update on Wednesday, November 4 at 1:00 p.m. at Lapham Center. They will explain the Part D program, enrollment and changing plans. Please register for this program so there are sufficient chairs and handouts.

If you use the Internet, you will be able to find information on 2010 prescription drug plans on the Medicare website at www.medicare.gov.

Getabout Now Goes to Stamford

Since the New Canaan Red Cross's volunteer driving program is being discontinued, the Getabout will be transporting Seniors and others with special needs to Stamford medical destinations such as the Hospital and Tully Medical Center. They will also continue to drive people to medical appointments in Norwalk and New Canaan.

In New Canaan, the Getabout will also take you shopping, to Lapham Center and more.

For the last three years a grant from the State allowed the Getabout to offer "free" rides to medical offices in Norwalk and New Canaan. The current State budget crunch, however, has meant that that grant has been halted with no assurance that it will ever be resumed.

The Getabout will be asking for a suggested donation of \$3 for each ride, \$6 for a round trip. Reservations should be made at least a day in advance at 972-7433.

Red Cross Needs Driving Volunteers

The New Canaan Red Cross will end its transportation program to non-emergency medical appointments effective December 31, 2009. This decision was made to avoid duplication of services with other community agencies and because of the increase in operating costs.

The Getabout began taking patients to Stamford in early September and will gradually take over the rides to Norwalk (see above article).

The Red Cross still needs volunteers to give two to three rides per month to people who need to see a specialist in towns as far away as Fairfield, New Haven or New York City. These people have no other means of transportation and are desperate to see a certain doctor. They are looking for a church, organization or group of volunteers that will take on these rides that can't be provided otherwise. Call the Red Cross at 966-1663 for more information.

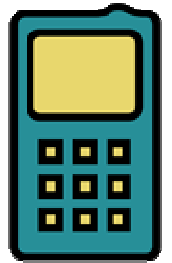
10-Digit Telephone Numbers Required in November

The Department of Public Utility Control reminds telephone users in Connecticut that 10-digit dialing will become mandatory on November 14, 2009. This means that you will have to dial the area code + the seven digit number to call local numbers, even your next door neighbor. A 1 will be necessary in front of the 10-digit number only if the call is long distance.

The switch to 10-digit local dialing is necessary due to the need for new area codes. Your current telephone number will remain in the 203 area code, but new numbers will be issued in the new 475 area code in 2010.

All services, automatic dialing and other equipment using a 7-digit telephone number, such as alarm systems, emergency response devices, Internet dial up numbers, fax machines, speed dialers, contact lists stored in telephones and cell phones, and voicemail services, will have to be reprogrammed.

If you need help changing the numbers in your cell phone to 10-digit, you can make an appointment with a member of the Service League of Boys (S.L.O.B.s) who will help you with this or any other cell phone questions. There is no fee for this service which is held at Lapham Center. Call 594-3620 to schedule an appointment.



Medicare Guide for Families and Friends

"Medicare: A Guide for Families and Friends of People with Medicare," is now available at NIHSeniorHealth.gov, the easy-to-read Web site for older adults from the National Institutes of Health. This brief, yet comprehensive introduction to Medicare is a useful tool for persons unfamiliar with Medicare or the other resources that are available for the person in need of care. It can also be helpful to those who just want to brush up on what they already know. Click on "M" under All Topics A-Z.

Tools for Senior Drivers at AAASeniors.com

AAASeniors.com is a senior safety and mobility website of the American Automobile Association. It includes content and resources based on extensive research, provides families of older drivers with valuable information related to senior mobility challenges and tools to help extend safe driving.

It also offers assistance in difficult discussions about transitioning from driver to passenger. AAASeniors.com gives seniors and their families the tools necessary to create an action plan to help seniors manage the inevitable consequences of aging, continue to drive safely or transition to alternative modes of transportation, and remain independent.”

To learn more go to www.aaaseniors.com/.



AAA winter driving tips:

- Avoid driving while you're fatigued. Getting the proper amount of rest before taking on winter weather tasks reduces driving risks.
- Never warm up a vehicle in an enclosed area, such as a garage.
- Make certain your tires are properly inflated.
- Never mix radial tires with other tire types.
- Keep your gas tank at least half full to avoid gas line freeze-up.
- If possible, avoid using your parking brake in cold, rainy and snowy weather.
- Do not use cruise control when driving on any slippery surface (wet, ice, sand).
- Always look and steer where you want to go.
- Use your seat belt every time you get into your vehicle.

Diabetes and Your Heart

Did you know that 21 million older Americans have diabetes or pre-diabetes—and 60% of people with diabetes also have hypertension? If left untreated, these conditions can increase the risk of heart attack; stroke; angina; coronary artery disease; and kidney, eye, and nerve disease.

The National Council on Aging (NCOA) has launched a consumer education program to raise awareness about the risk factors for these diseases and the links between them. Risk factors include age; being overweight and/or physically inactive; smoking; having high blood sugar, high cholesterol, and/or consistently high blood pressure readings; and having a family history of diabetes or heart disease.

Medicare covers a number of screenings and supplies that can help you stay healthy. For example, Medicare Part B preventive benefits include diabetes screenings, eye exams and glaucoma tests, and foot exams. Medicare Part B also covers diabetes self-management training and supplies, medical nutrition therapy services, and smoking cessation programs. Medicare Part D plans typically cover insulin, oral therapies for diabetes, and hypertension medications.

If you're diagnosed with pre-diabetes, diabetes, or hypertension, you also can take the following steps to manage the condition:

- Become active for 30 minutes a day.
- Eat a healthy diet full of fresh fruits and vegetables and exercise portion control.
- Take medication, if prescribed.
- Monitor your glucose levels.
- Quit smoking.

You also can call 1-800-MEDICARE or visit www.medicare.gov to learn more about Medicare preventive services.

Autumn is a season followed immediately by looking forward to spring. Doug Larson

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Apply for Social Security Online

You can now apply for Social Security retirement benefits online at www.ssa.gov. You can also get an estimate of your benefits and read information about when you should apply.

If you cannot apply online or if you decide not to finish applying online for any reason, you can apply by phone or in person at any Social Security office.

Call 1-800-772-1213 to make an appointment; if you are hard of hearing, call the toll-free TTY number, 1-800-325-0778, Monday - Friday, 7 am to 7 pm.

You will still have to go to the Social Security office to apply for Medicare. If you are turning 65 this year, you should attend Welcome to Medicare at Lapham Center on Tuesday, September 29 at 10 a.m. Trained Medicare counselors will discuss enrollment, Parts A and B, covered services, Medigap, Part D and more. Call 594-3620 to reserve a space.

The Nurse is IN

Susan Klehm, R.N. will be at Lapham Center Tuesday mornings from 10:30-11:30 a.m. She will answer your health questions and check your BP. She will also have a healthy tip of the week handout. No fee, no appointments needed.

Nurse Jackie Mola will continue her free Blood Pressure Clinics at Lapham on Thursdays from 10:30-11:30 a.m. First come, first served.

Fun Stuff

If your car is making a funny noise, visit the "Car Noise Emporium" at cartalk.com. You may be able to diagnose your problem with help from Tom and Ray on NPR's *Car Talk*.

Golden Nuggets is published in Spring and Fall by the Senior Center of New Canaan at Lapham Community Center with support from the Department of Human Services, the Senior Center and the Kavetas Family Fund.