



SENIOR UPDATE
AREA AGENCY ON AGING
ADVISORY COMMISSION ON AGING
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April/May/June 2016

Senior Update

...The Eyes and Ears of Alameda County Seniors

Commission on Aging

Older Americans Month May 2016

Administration for Community Living

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OLDER AMERICANS MONTH



BLAZE A TRAIL: MAY 2016

May is a month of fresh beginnings. Perennials bloom once again, blazing a trail of bright color. May is also when we celebrate Older American's Month (OAM), acknowledging the perennial contributions of older adults to our nation. The 2016 OAM theme is **Blaze a Trail**. The Administration for Community Living will use this opportunity to raise awareness about important issues facing older adults. We will also highlight the ways that older Americans are advocating for themselves, their peers, and their communities.

Be a trailblazer! Join us in promoting activities, inclusion, and wellness for older Americans in your community. Additional outreach tools coming soon!

Congressman Swalwell Visits the Aging Commission

Bernie Nillo, Commissioner



In December, the Alameda County Aging Commission was honored to have Congressman Eric Swalwell attend our final Advisory Commission meeting of 2015. He spoke about his responsibility of serving on the Homeland Security Committee during his first term as a Congressman.

Congressman Swalwell proudly represents California's Fifteenth Congressional District, which

includes a large portion of the East Bay. In January 2015, he was sworn in for his second term in the U.S. House of Representatives, continuing his work to bring new energy, ideas, and a problem-solving spirit to Congress and advance policies that will support equality, opportunity, and security. He also is on the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, where he addresses climate change

and advocates for renewable energy.

Legislative accomplishments in Congressman Swalwell's first term include two of his bills (H.R. 3771 and H.R. 1671) being signed into law, which tied him for the most of any freshman Member of the House.

Swalwell bill H.R.. 3771 provides another incentive for Americans to donate food, water, support, and supplies.

Congressman Swalwell Visits the Aging Commission

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- when their help is needed most." On March 25, 2014 this legislation was signed into law by President Obama.

On June 17, 2014, as a part of the renaming of multiple post offices around the country, Congressman Swalwell introduced HR 1671 to rename the post office in Dublin, CA as the James "Jim" Kohnen Post Office. It was voted into law on a unanimous 398-0 vote. Congressman Swalwell holds important leadership



roles within the House Democratic Caucus. As Regional Whip and Assistant Democratic Whip he is tasked with informing colleagues about upcoming legislation and mobilizing votes. He also was appointed to the House Democratic Steering & Policy Committee, which helps set the Democratic policy agenda, and leads the Future Forum, a group of 16 young Democratic Members of Congress focused on issues and opportunities for millennial Americans.



The New Dietary Guidelines

Mary Louise Zernicke, MS MPH RD CSG

The goal of the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* is for individuals throughout all stages of the lifespan to have eating patterns that promote overall health and help prevent chronic disease. Evidence shows that eating patterns, as outlined in the *2015-20 Dietary Guidelines*, are associated with good health.

The creation of *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* is required under a 1990 law, and they must be updated every five years. They are published jointly by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). Key recommendations focus on healthy eating patterns, the need for all of us to step up to the plate to change behaviors, and recommend a shift in our beverage choices away from sugary drinks to healthier choices. There is also an acknowledgement that a healthy eating pattern can come from a variety of

cultural eating practices and within tight budgets.

The guidelines are the basis for the requirements for all government funded nutrition programs, such as our meals on wheels and senior dining site programs. As such, there is LOTS of lobbying by the food industry to NOT include recommendations for which the evidence is at all ambiguous. These guidelines have become very political as food advocates lobby the scientists for stricter standards and the food industry tries to keep the guidelines as bland as possible.

So, what are these recommendations that have generated such controversy?

Some things that might surprise you include:

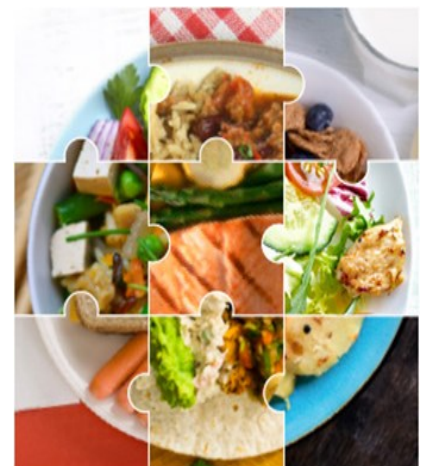
Eggs are no longer “bad guys”, and there are no longer dietary restrictions on cholesterol.

The guidelines, for the first time, endorse coffee.

They suggest that 3-5 cups/day have no harm and may have benefit for the general population.

Over 73% of Americans take in MORE THAN THE MAXIMUM sodium (salt) that is recommended. The case for reducing sodium is strong, as lowering sodium will reduce your risk of hypertension and heart disease. 75% of our sodium comes from processed foods, including canned soups and salad dressing. The soup at the senior centers is made without extra salt and uses vegetables to flavor the stock—you might want to give your local senior lunch a try!

The new guidelines advise us to advocate



The New Dietary Guidelines

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towards improving the food environment. That might mean that you steer your grandkids away from fast food or help with the garden at their school. Maybe you can teach them how to cook! Half your grains should be whole grain.

Have you tried brown rice or whole wheat pasta for meat?

There is a recommendation to limit saturated fat because it clogs your arteries (atherosclerosis). Saturated fats are those that are solid at room temperature, coming mostly from meats and fatty dairy foods. Lean meats are recommended but nuts and legumes (beans) can easily substituted.

There are many ways to consume a healthy eating pattern. Use the Dietary Guidelines to help guide your overall food choices --whether you follow a Mediterranean diet, are a vegetarian, or stick very much to the cultural foods you ate when you were younger. Enjoy!

Older Americans Month

Bernie Nillo, Commissioner

Every May, older adults are in the spotlight. It's about a month set aside to celebrate older Americans for their contributions to the nation. Recognition of the value of older adults has become an annual tradition, acknowledging the contributions of past and current older persons and particularly those who served our country.

It all began with President Kennedy in 1963 when he designated May as "Senior Citizens Month" during a meeting

with the National Council of Senior Citizens. Every president since Kennedy has issued a formal proclamation asking the entire nation to pay tribute to older persons in their communities.

In 1980, President Carter changed the name to Older Americans Month. Older Americans Month is celebrated across the country through ceremonies, events, fairs, and other such activities.

President Carter, stated,

"To celebrate Older Americans Month, we acknowledge the contributions of our older adult population as well as their potential. So let's recognize one another for all the good we do and at the same time be fully engaged for the greater good. It's a win-win for all and moves us closer to aging successfully."

Last year in 2015, President Obama proclaimed "Our elders forged a bright future for all our Nation's children, and they

Older Americans Month

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deserve the best America has to offer. As heirs to their proud legacy, we must reach for the world they have made possible. During Older Americans Month, we lift up all those whose life's work has made ours a little easier, and we recommit to showing them the fullest care, support, and respect of a grateful Nation.”

Older Americans Month provides an opportunity to raise awareness of the importance of community engagement as a tool for enhancing the well-being of older adults. Together we can promote healthy aging, increase community involvement for older adults, and tackle important issues like the prevention of elder abuse – and a senior wellness program.

A good senior wellness program will offer adequate resources for seniors regarding a large number of medical conditions that generally affect those over 50 years of age, including but not limited to osteoporosis, arthritis, diabetes and nutritional needs. Regular exercise and fitness is encouraged to help seniors maintain and improve mobility, range of motion, balance, stability and strength and endurance.

Conference Explores Potential Age-Friendly Alameda County

Wendy Peterson, Director Senior Services Coalition of Alameda County

What would an age-friendly Alameda County look like? That is the question explored by community-based health and social service providers, policy makers and consumer advocates at a November 2015 conference called *Making the Difference: Creating Age-Friendly Institutions and Community in Alameda County*.

Hosted by the Senior Services Coalition, the conference featured an introduction to the World Health Organization's (WHO) model for age-

friendly communities by Anabel Pelham, a Professor of Gerontology at SFSU and an international expert in the WHO model. Age-friendly communities enable people of all ages to actively participate in community activities and treat everyone with respect, regardless of their age. They make it easy for older adults to stay connected to people that are important to them. They help people stay healthy and active even at the oldest ages, and provide appropriate support to those who need it. With WHO

guidance, many communities are already taking active steps towards becoming more age-friendly, working on better adapting their structures and services to the needs of their aging populations. The November conference provided a forum for exploring what this could mean for Alameda County, not only in terms of transforming public institutions so that they operate in age-friendly ways, but also in terms of encouraging community change so day-to-day interactions become age-friendly. Conference materials can be found at seniorservicescoalition.org.

Women's History and Social Security

Sarah Kim-Lee, Social Security Regional Public Affairs Specialist

March is Women's History Month — a time to focus not just on the past, but on the challenges women continue to face in the 21st century.

Ida May Fuller, born on September 6, 1874, was the first American to receive a monthly Social Security benefit check. Along with Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins — who was instrumental in the creation of the Social Security Act — Ida May Fuller was one of the first famous women of Social Security. She received the check, amounting to \$22.54, on January 31, 1940. Back then, people understood that she would be one of millions that would be positively affected by retirement benefits.

Seventy-six years after that first check, Social Security continues to play a vital role in the lives of women. With longer life expectancies than men, women tend to live more years in retirement and have a greater chance of exhausting other sources of income. With the national average life expectancy for

women in the United States rising, many women will have decades to enjoy retirement. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, a girl born today can expect to live more than 80 years. As a result, experts generally agree that if women want to ensure that their retirement years are comfortable, they need to plan early and wisely.

What you can do.

“The best place to begin is by knowing what you can expect to receive from Social Security, and how much more you are likely to need to enjoy a comfortable retirement,” said Carolyn W. Colvin, Social Security's Acting Commissioner and a Social Security pioneer woman in her own right.

You can start with a visit to Social Security's Retirement Estimator. There, in just a few minutes, you can get a personalized, instant estimate of your retirement benefits. Plug in different scenarios, such as retirement ages or projected earnings, to get an idea of how such things

might change your future benefit amounts. You can find it at www.socialsecurity.gov/estimator.

You should also visit Social Security's financial planning website at www.socialsecurity.gov/planners. It provides detailed information about how marriage, widowhood, divorce, self-employment, government service, and other life or career events can affect your Social Security.

Your benefits are based on your earnings, so you should create your personal my Social Security account to verify that your earnings were reported correctly.

If you want more information about the role of Social Security in women's lives today, Social Security has a booklet that you may find useful. It is called Social Security: What Every Woman Should Know. You can find it online at www.socialsecurity.gov/pubs/10127.html.

Call Information and Assistance at (800) 510-2020 or (510) 577-3530



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We're On The Web!

http://www.alamedasocialservices.org/public/services/elders_and_disabled_adults/aaa.cfm

***Senior Update Editorial Board: Sandra Johnson
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Ireland, Shelley Zak, Delbert Walker, Jose Villaflor***

Senior Information

Dates to Remember:

Last Day to File Taxes– April 18,
2016

Older Americans Month– May 2016

Mother's Day– May 8, 2016

Senior Resource Fair, Senior Community Center, San Leandro– May
20, 2016

16th Annual California Senior Injury Prevention Forum– May 25,
2016

Memorial Day Holiday– May 30,
2016

Father's Day– June 19, 2016