



SENIOR UPDATE
AREA AGENCY ON AGING
ADVISORY COMMISSION ON AGING
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January/February/March 2020

Senior Update

...The Eyes and Ears of Alameda County Seniors

Commission on Aging

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Shine in the New Year! Join Medication Safety!

Marjory Tilley, Medication Safety Program Manager, Senior Support Program of the Tri-Valley



2020 brings with its new light a reminder for all older adults in Alameda County, to enroll and Join a Medication Safety Program!

Medications work differently in older adults due to age-related changes that occur in the body. A medication works most effectively when it is 1) absorbed into the body; 2) is distributed to where it is needed; 3) chemically changes to become effective; 4) and is eliminated from the body. To get the most from your prescribed medication it is important to take the proper dosage for the time your healthcare provider recommends.

Most older adults have more than one medical condition and cope with five or more medicines. Medicines interact with each other and can increase negative side effects or decrease desired effects. Your healthcare provider knows about the negative effects that taking multiple medication can cause, that is why it is vital that you tell your healthcare provider about all the medicines you are taking.

At times, a medication you are taking may cause new symptoms, or make symptoms you already have get worse. This is what is called a "prescribing cascade", when a side effect of a medication is mistaken for a new medical condition, so the healthcare provider uses a new medicine to treat the side effect of other medication.

Older adults are encouraged to speak with their healthcare provider(s) at least once a year to review all medications, particularly any sleep or pain medication and over-the-counter medication, for potential drug interactions.

Shine in the New Year! Join Medication Safety! (Continued)

Medication Safety Programs offer older adults a personal medication record, a confidential, individualized medication review, use of evidence-based protocols including a medication risk assessment screen and alert process with a comprehensive report, assistive devices (pill box), education, strategies to manage medication along with safe disposal guidelines.

Shine this New Year! by locating a Medication Safety Program near you, older adults in Alameda County can contact Carol Powers, Senior Injury Prevention Coordinator, EMS, (510) 667-2050.

Resources:

Health in Aging Foundation, www.HealthinAging.org

Educate before You Medicate, www.TalkBeforeYouTake.org

Script Your RX Future, www.scriptyourfuture.org



The Vietnamese American Community Center of the East Bay

Howard Kirsch, Advisory Commission on Aging Commissioner



On Friday, August 30th, I had the privilege of visiting the Vietnamese American Community Center of the East Bay (VACCEB), along with other Commissioners for the Advisory Commission on Aging (ACA). Our tour was led by Shirley Gee, the Executive Director of the center, and Shannon Meredith, the Program Manager. VACCEB has been around for more than 15 years. The center itself was once an Oakland public school, and it has been converted, over the years, to provide for the expanding services of the center. Ms.

Gee started our tour with a slide presentation describing the services the center provides for the community, and the impact it has had. The services consist of a complete wrap around, client centrist approach that offers 4800 low income individuals a package of benefits in a culturally and appropriate way. The community is made up of immigrants from South-East Asia, and other underrepresented immigrant communities, including Bhutanese, and Burmese. VACCEB services include serving nutritious meals, housing and legal immigration assistance, employment development, educational and cultural programs, all designed to provide the necessary support systems to enable their clients and their families to become self-sufficient within a year after their arrival to the U.S.

The VACCEB (Continued)

VACCEB provides over 15,360 nutritious meals annually, to seniors and their families four days a week; handle over 1200 case sessions from translation services, to advocacy for residence; as well as educate 200+ students in ESL, computer literacy, and job preparation. We were able to observe classes in ESL and computer literacy on the tour, where the students were very engaged with their instructors. Another activity we able to observe was a karaoke contest, in Vietnamese. This is part of the Senior Center's activity programing which includes music, creative arts, education and leadership development.

The center also provides health-related fairs that serve over 1,000 participants for prevention and wellness, and additionally run a weekly food bank program, which we also had the opportunity to observe, that passes out 8,640 grocery bags annually. All these services are provided on a modest annual budget of \$600,000. The center leverages relationships with other non-profits and community partners to provide excellent value and quality of funds. The Agency on Aging specifically provides funding for food security, senior activities, and information and referral programs.

All in all, I was very impressed with the staff and their dedication to enriching the lives of this new immigrant community to the East Bay.



(Pictured L-R: ACA Chair Donna Ireland, ACA Commissioner Howard Kirsch, VACCEB Exe. Dir. Shirley Gee, ACA Commissioner Eric Eisenberg, ACA Commissioner Barbara Price, VACCEB Program Manager Shannon Meredith; Not Pictured: AAA Staff Ramil Rivera)

Social Security Benefits Increases in 2020

Sarah Kim-Lee, Social Security Regional Public Affairs Specialist & ACA Commissioner

Each year, we announce the annual cost-of-living adjustment (COLA). By law, federal benefits increase when the cost of living rises, as measured by the Department of Labor's Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W). Usually, there is an increase in the benefit amount people will receive each month, starting the following January.

Nearly 69 million Americans will see a 1.6 percent increase in their Social Security benefits and SSI payments in 2020.



Other changes that will happen in January 2020 reflect the increase in the national average wage index. For example, the maximum amount of earnings subject to Social Security payroll tax will increase to \$137,700 from \$132,900. The earnings limit for workers who are younger than "full" retirement age (age 66 for people born in 1943 through 1954) will increase to \$18,240. (We deduct \$1 from benefits for each \$2 earned over \$18,240.)

The earnings limit for people turning 66 in 2020 will increase to \$48,600. (We deduct \$1 from benefits for each \$3 earned over \$48,600 until the month the worker turns age 66.)

In December 2019, we will post Social Security COLA notices online for retirement, survivors, and disability beneficiaries who have a **my Social Security** account. You will be able to view and save future COLA notices via the Message Center inside **my Social Security**.

You can log in to or sign up for a **my Social Security** account today at www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount to get more information about your new benefit amount. You can choose to receive an electronic notification by email, text, or both ways under "Message Center Preferences." Our notification will let you know that a new message is waiting for you. We will not send any personal information in the notification. The Message Center also allows you to go paperless by opting out of receiving agency notices by mail that you can get online, including annual cost-of-living adjustments and the income-related monthly adjustment amount increases. The Message Center is a secure portal where you can conveniently receive sensitive communications that we don't send through email or text.

More information about the 2020 COLA is available at www.socialsecurity.gov/cola.

Healthy Diets and Sustainable Food Systems

Mary Louise Zernicke, Senior Nutritionist

Nearly one billion people in the world are going hungry and another two billion are overweight or obese, resulting in chronic health problems. At the same time, food production is driving the destruction of natural resources that support human life.

Did you know that food production?

- ◆ Contributes about 30% of global greenhouse gas emissions, and that livestock alone represents almost half (14.5%) of gas emissions;
- ◆ Occupies 40% of global land;
- ◆ Uses 70% of freshwater;
- ◆ Is the largest factor threatening the human species with extinction;
- ◆ Has led to about 60% of fish stocks to be fully or over-fished

Why is a sustainable food supply important?

Sustainability includes environment, economics, health, and nutrition combining to protect our ecosystems while allowing health and safe food that is affordable and culturally acceptable. It means enacting practices that protect the well being of our long-term survival, our environment. The goal is to ensure a future that has enough food available to eat and access to high quality, nutritious food.

How can we help support a quality food system for the planet and future generations?

- ◆ Have a vegetarian day a week;
 - ◇ You could join one of our dining site programs that have delicious “Meatless Mondays” and try the many flavorful and tasty plant-based Monday meals
- ◆ Reduce food waste by only buying and eating what you need;
 - ◇ Avoid all-you-can-eat buffets that encourage waste and overeating
- ◆ Buy fruits and vegetables from local vendors;
 - ◇ Farmers markets are tasty and local
 - ◇ Most local market food that is not organic has not been sprayed with pesticides and is cheaper than organic
- ◆ Grow produce and herbs at home for flavor, price, AND supporting sustainability;
- ◆ Use re-usable shopping bags and avoid plastic bags;
- ◆ Avoid plastic water bottles when possible and recycle them if using them;
 - ◇ Travel mugs can be stylish and keep away bio-carbonates in your body
 - ◇ Coffee is often cheaper when you bring your own mug
- ◆ Avoid overpacked foods in the grocery store and recycle the packaging if using them;

While some of the suggestions above may seem small, together we create large change. Our federal, state and local government, food service professionals, health care professionals, and policymakers must join consumers in creating a sustainable food future. Food can be a powerful driver of change. We can all enjoy the fruits of improved sustainability, but we must do our part!



New Year's Resolution: Reducing Risk of Falls

Regina Silbert, Advisory Commission on Aging Commissioner



Each new year is a gift and an opportunity for us to take stock of our lives and decide what changes we would like to make for the better. Hence, the New Year's resolution becomes a goal that we can work on to achieve throughout the coming months.

There are many worthwhile new year's resolutions that older adults can make, but an especially important one should be "I resolve to take positive steps to reduce my risk of falls." It is a fact of life that 1 in 3 older adults fall every year and that falls are the leading cause of injury in people over the age of 65. Even if you are an active older adult in good health, falls can happen as a result of clutter, medications, improper footwear, slippery floors, stepping off curbs, reaching for items that are too high, and dozens of other reasons. But there are steps you can take to reduce your risk of falling, and here is a partial list:



I RESOLVE TO:

- ♦ Keep moving – Many older adults remain too sedentary because they are afraid of falling. Fear of falling can actually make you more of a fall risk, so resolve to do whatever exercise your health will permit and don't be afraid to move. Even 10-minute blocks of mild exercise will help, and you can work up to exercise that is more aerobic and more intense. Many senior centers offer free classes or workshops that teach balance exercises and you can do them at home on a regular basis.
- ♦ Make my environment safer — This is one that most people need to work on. Our homes often present many common fall hazards for older adults, but there are many simple things that people can do to decrease their risk of a fall in the home. Decluttering rooms and stairways, getting rid of throw rugs, keeping appliance and electronic cords out of the way of foot traffic, putting grab bars in the bathroom, making sure rooms are well lit, making sure that floors (especially bathroom and kitchen) are dry, moving items to within easy reach, having the bed at the right height—and so much more. The internet and local libraries have a lot of information about lowering your fall risk at home, and again, most senior centers offer workshops on this topic.
- ♦ Wear appropriate clothing and footwear — Flip flops are comfortable, but not appropriate footwear for older adults. Shoes should have good soles that don't slide on floors and fasten with a buckle, Velcro or laces that tie. Clothing (especially for women) shouldn't be dragging on the floor so as to create a trip hazard. If you need glasses to see where you are going, make sure that the prescription is adequate and wear them!
- ♦ Use a mobility device if you need one — Don't let vanity keep you from using a cane or walker if you need one to get around safely. Too many people think that a cane or walker makes them look "old", and risk falling for the sake of vanity. Make sure that the cane or walker is properly adjusted, as they are not "one height fits all".





California Senior Legislature: Celebrating 39 Years of Service

Sylvia Stadmire, Senior Senator Legislative Committee & ACA Commissioner

History of CSL

In 1979 State Assembly Member Henry Mello introduced legislation to create the California Senior Legislature (CSL). The purpose of the CSL, is to provide model legislation addressing the needs of older citizens and for advocating for the needs of older adults. The CSL is an independent state agency supporting 120 Senior Assembly Members and Seniors, 55 years of age and older, elected by their peers. The funding for the CSL is provided primarily by individual taxpayer contributions to the California Senior Legislature Fund.

The first session was convened in July of 1981 and was deemed such a success that the Honorable Mello introduced SCR 44 (1982) providing for the annual California Senior Legislative sessions to begin in October 1982.

Between its annual sessions, the work of the CSL, continues with the guidance of two Standing committees. The Joint Rules Committee (JRC) provides for the governance of the CSL and plans the annual session. The Legislative Committee directs the presentation and advocacy activities of proposals to the legislature, as well as advocating through the life of each authored proposal.

The results of these Legislative efforts have resulted in several critically important advances impacting this vulnerable population. Between 1982 and 2019, 207 proposals authored by CSL members have been picked up by California legislators and chartered into law.

Community-Based Advocacy and Education

CSL Senior Assembly Members and Senators work closely with local Area Agencies on Aging (AAA), And often serve on their advisory councils and commissions, at city, county, and multi-county levels of government. The California Department of Aging (CDA) administers the AAA network. The work of CSL is consistent with the CDA 2017-2021 State Plan's priority areas especially with regard to promoting the independence and well being of older adults and their families throughout the State. The importance of coordination between the state level and local community-based grassroots efforts addressing emergency aging and long-term care issues in California cannot be overstated.

Senior Update
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We're On The Web!

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

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Senior Information

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Proud Core Partner of the:



The Alameda County Area Agency on Aging, along with The Center for Independent Living and Community Resources for Independent Living working together to promote and provide easy, uniform, and streamlined access to a broad array of services, support, and advocacy for individuals seeking long-term supports and services (LTSS) and information about LTSS.

COMING SOON...

An ADRC Workshop will be scheduled soon for community partners to learn more about the ADRC network, including ways to join!

Dates to Remember:

New Year's Day - January 1, 2020

Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday - January 20, 2020

Super Bowl Sunday - February 2, 2020

Thank a Mailman Day - February 4, 2020

Lincoln's Birthday - February 12, 2020

Valentine's Day - February 14, 2020

President's Day - February 17, 2020

Love Your Pet Day - February 20, 2020

Ash Wednesday - February 26, 2020

Leap Day - February 29, 2020 (2020 is a Leap Year)

Presidential Primary Election - March 3, 2020

St. Patrick's Day - March 17, 2020

First Day of Spring - March 19, 2020



Upcoming Meetings:

Advisory Commission on Aging

- ♦ January 13, 2020
- ♦ February 10, 2020
- ♦ March 9, 2020

Information & Assistance Roundtable

- ♦ January 17, 2020
- ♦ March 20, 2020

**HAPPY
NEW YEAR**

2020