



SENIOR UPDATE
AREA AGENCY ON AGING
ADVISORY COMMISSION ON AGING
6955 FOOTHILL BLVD., SUITE 300
OAKLAND, CA 94605-1907

January/February/March 2021

Senior Update

...The Eyes and Ears of Alameda County Seniors

Commission on Aging

The New Year is a Time of Renewal!

Regina Silbert, Advisory Commission on Aging Commissioner

Inside this issue:

The New Year is a Time of Renewal	1-2
Covid-19 Vaccines are Here	2-4
Living a Remote Life	4-6
Dignity at Home Fall Prevention Program	6-7
You Think You're the Only One...Social Isolation? Wrong!!	7-9
It All Adds Up — AAA Services Across the County	9
Social Isolation Resources	10

Happy New Year 2021

When we think of renewal we often think of rebirth; something old dies and something new is born. This year, with the Covid-19 virus still governing much of the way we live our lives, it can feel as though that rebirth is a long way off. But with the rollout of the vaccines, we are again feeling hopeful and we can begin to think about what we can do to renew ourselves and to make new the life in which we live.

The new year is a wonderful time to consider who we are and how we want to be. Here are a few ways to help you renew, reprioritize, regroup, and perhaps, re-invent yourself. Many of these are actual things you can do, while others are ways to “re-think” who you are and what you want to be.

1. Streamline your life — some areas to consider:

- ♦ De-cluttering your living space. Do you use everything you have? If not, get rid of anything you no longer need.
- ♦ Clear out mental and emotional clutter. Use this season of renewal as a reminder to get rid of things that are weighing you down and consuming your time and energy.
- ♦ Reframe your attitude about what happens to you. Think positively even if you're having a hard time. Pair a negative feeling with a positive one.





The New Year is a Time of Renewal! (Continued)

2. Begin something new.

- ♦ Explore your creativity. Find your inner artist, musician, stand-up comedian—whatever floats your boat!
- ♦ Take better care of yourself. Begin slowly, one small change at a time. This is not about making a resolution every year to do better but rather a practical, soulful look at yourself and your health so that the years ahead can be lived to your fullest capacity.
- ♦ Become a volunteer and/or mentor. This can be done by phone or online during this “stay at home” time. Someone or some project can always benefit from your help and expertise.

3. Start a practice.

A new discipline can ensure that you invite mindfulness into your life. This can be a spiritual practice such as meditation, yoga or a commitment to daily exercise.

4. Be in nature — go for a walk, plant a garden (indoor or outdoor), take a drive through a wooded area or along the coast.

Nature represents the cycle of life and is the best reminder that nothing stays still, that life is always in constant flux, and that change is the norm.

You can be whoever you imagine yourself to be. Don’t let the pandemic situation hold you back from being your best self. It's a new year, and a new YOU!

LifeElderCare: Dignity at Home Fall Prevention Program

Patricia Osage, Executive Director, LIFE ElderCare



LIFE ElderCare was pleased to start an additional collaboration with the Alameda County Area Agency on Aging (ACAAA) this year through the Dignity At Home Fall Prevention program; *the core mission of which is to reduce the number of debilitating falls suffered by older adults.*

A good way to share this program’s impact is through the story of 82yo Jimmy T. He lives alone in a subsidized apartment in Oakland and like many older adults; his doctor referred him after two falls that had resulted in injuries and hospital admissions. Dignity At Home helped us provide the multifactorial approach he needed to address the confluence of factors that triggered these falls.

Life ElderCare: Dignity Fall Prevention Program (Continued)

First, we used evidence-based software for a full medication review. Medication, when incorrectly taken, or contraindicated can result in dizziness or confusion – a leading cause of falls. We found Jimmy had been taking all four of his medications less often than prescribed due to difficulty getting to the pharmacy. We showed him how to get them mailed and enrolled him in our rides program for his next vision appointment.

We discussed behavioral changes with him— drinking plenty of fluids, eating healthy, good fitting shoes – that lower fall risk. We taught him how to stand up from a bed/chair slowly, using support to ameliorate the lightheadedness of postural hypotension.

During the environmental assessment, Jimmy told us he was scared of falling when getting out of his bath and would use his shower curtain to “steady” him. Fortunately, the Dignity program helped purchase a transfer bench for safer bath entry/exits, and the installation of a grab bar.

Finally, we worked with his local provider to get him started with home-delivered meals and a Friendly Visitor (both of which double as well-checks).

Jimmy is now healthier, safer, more knowledgeable, connected to new services, and... another fall is far less likely.



To get more information, contact us at 510-894-0370 or online at <https://lifeeldercare.org>

Living a Remote Life!

Mary Louise Zernicke, AAA Senior Nutritionist

During COVID, there are many ways to stay engaged while staying distant, including intellectual, physical or social engagement.

First, you need a computer or mobile phone, and internet access. If you live in Oakland, you have FREE wifi. Just go to your settings on your phone or computer, and select OAKWIFI. There is no password required. If you are in other parts of Alameda County, you will need to sign up for internet services, or go to a local hotspot—such as Whole Foods, Starbucks, or McDonalds—which you may not want to do. If you are low income, there are two dedicated phone numbers 1-855-846-8376 for English and 1-855-765-6995 for Spanish to get free internet from Comcast during COVID.

Second, you need to learn how to use a virtual communication platform such as Skype, Teams, FreeConferenceCall, or Zoom, to name a few. It is easy. It will take 10-15 minutes to review the tutorials below to become a Zoom expert! You can watch the Youtube videos by...

Living a Remote Life! (Continued)

writing the following into your computer browser:

- ♦ Zoom101: Sign up and Download Zoom
- ♦ How to Join a Zoom Meeting
- ♦ Joining and Configuring Audio and Video Zoom

Another great way to learn zoom is to go to [Dorot.usa.org-zoom](https://dorotusa.org-zoom) for written instructions on how to use zoom, that you can print or download on to your computer.

Third, now you can find classes to engage in- intellectually and socially. There are many, many classes you can take remotely, or via telephone. On your computer, type in your search engine (Google) for the latest class schedules:



- ♦ Well Connected, formerly Senior Center Without Walls
website: <https://covia.org/services/well-connected/>
- ♦ Dorot University Without Walls
<https://www.dorotusa.org/our-programs/at-home/university-without-walls>

Fourth, you can exercise by walking in your neighborhood. You can go to your television and watch Sit and Be Fit, or another exercise program. Or, you can connect with other local seniors on zoom and take your FREE exercise class remotely! Here are some great local options for older adults living at home.

- ♦ DAYBREAK CENTERS: Get Your Zoom On (GYZO) to Get and Stay Physically Active;
 - o Link: <http://us02web.zoom.us/j/81819566536>
 - o Email: Susan at susan@daybreakcenters.org.
- ♦ LIFE ELDERCARE: Bingocize, Fall Prevention and Exercise classes;
 - o Contact Jennifer at 510-894-0370, or
 - o Email her at info@lifeeldercare.org.
- ♦ SENIOR SUPPORT OF THE TRI-VALLEY: Tai Chi for Better Balance, Medication Safety, and Finding Wellness classes remotely.
 - o Call 925-931-5379 X5379 to get more information and to register for one or more classes.

Covid-19 Vaccines are Here!

Diarra Piggué, AAA Outreach Specialist, Senior Information & Assistance Program



In December 2020, The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued Emergency Use Authorizations (EUA) for two COVID-19 vaccines.

- ♦ Pfizer BioNTech Covid-19 Vaccine
- ♦ Moderna Covid-19 Vaccine

How the Covid-19 vaccines work

The vaccines help the immune systems fight off infections. The Covid-19 vaccines will protect us from the virus without getting the illness. Both vaccines require two doses, administered weeks apart, for the vaccine to be fully effective.

Common Vaccine Side Effects

It typically takes a few weeks after the last dose in a series to become fully protected. On the days after taking the vaccine, you may have a sore arm, aches, fatigue or fever, but these are not harmful. These symptoms signal that the immune system is developing protection from the virus.

State and local planning

Initially vaccine supply will be very limited. At first, vaccines will be provided to healthcare workers and long-term care residents in accordance with the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) Allocation Guidelines.

After healthcare workers and long-term care residents, the next to be vaccinated will be individuals 75 years old and older, those who have higher risk for severe disease or death, essential workers (including education, childcare, emergency services, and food and agricultural) or those who are most likely to spread disease to other workers or to the public.

Vaccine Community Advisory Group

Residents and representatives from a variety of organizations across Alameda County have been invited to support safe, equitable vaccine distribution. While the State's framework prioritizes vaccination for different groups of people over four phases, Alameda County has some local control over how those priorities are put into practice.

The goals of the Covid-19 Vaccine Community Advisory group are to provide accurate and timely information to help people make informed decisions about the vaccines, build trust with the community, and to co-design messaging and outreach strategies.



Covid-19 Vaccines are Here! (Continued)

The Community Advisory Group meets regularly, and all meetings are open to the public in webinar mode. Meeting materials and webinar recordings will be posted on the Health Care Service Agency (HCSA) website, under the Community Advisory Group section: <https://covid-19.acgov.org/vaccines>.

Stay Safe, Continue to Wear a Mask

This is only the beginning and we must all continue to do our part to stay safe while we wait for the vaccine to be widely available. Stay home as much as possible. If you must leave, continue to wear a face mask and keep at least 6 feet of distance from anyone you don't live with. Wash your hands frequently and avoid gathering with other households.



SMP SCAM WATCH: COVID-19 VACCINE

**Contact the SMP to
report Medicare fraud,
errors, or abuse at
877.808.2468 or
at smpresource.org.**

SUPPORTED BY GRANT # 90MPRC0002 FROM ACL

Be on the lookout for COVID-19 scams:

- ☒ You *likely* will not need to pay anything out-of-pocket to get the vaccine during this public health emergency.
- ☒ You cannot pay to put your name on a list to get the vaccine early.
- ☒ No one from Medicare or the Health Department will contact you.
- ☒ Beware of providers offering other products, treatments, or medicines to prevent the virus.
- ☒ No one from a vaccine distribution site or health care payer will call and ask for your Medicare number, Social Security number, or banking information to sign you up for a vaccine.

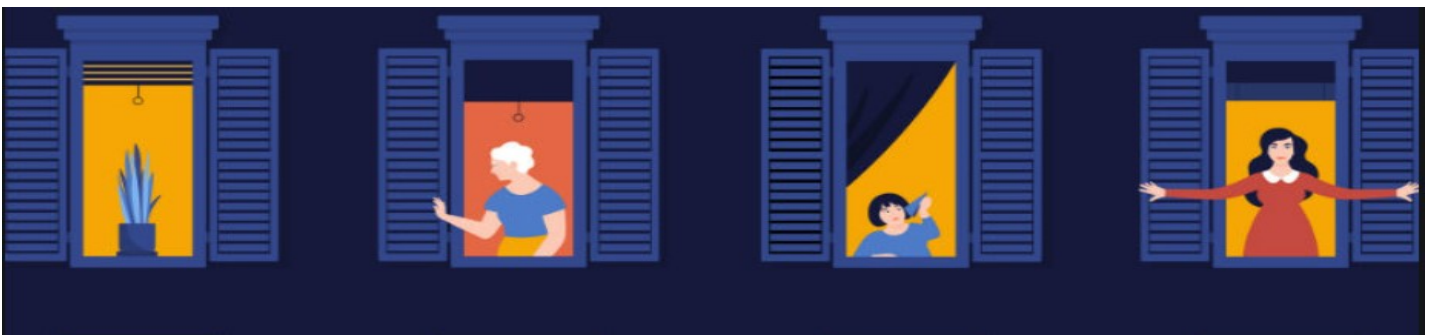
Living a Remote Life! (Continued)

- ♦ SPECTRUM COMMUNITY SERVICES: has moved their popular *Enhanced Wellness* classes online, and they are offered many times during the week.
 - Contact Stacey: 510-209-0238 or email at sblackard@spectrumcs.org or
 - Spectrum Community Services: Fall Prevention, website: www.spectrumcs.org/senior-services/fall-risk-reduction
- ♦ EDEN MEDICAL CENTER: Offers Tai Chi for Better Balance and *Matter of Balance* (remotely).
 - Contact Pam Stoker, at 510-727-8485 or email at hallstp@sutterhealth.org

Lastly, be sure to download the excellent book from the National Institute on Aging (NIA), website: www.nia.nih.gov/health/exercise-physical-activity. Exercise and Physical Activity, if you want to go at it alone! It has great photos and descriptions of exercise you can do at home.

You Think You're the Only One Dealing with Social Isolation? Wrong!!

Regina Silbert, Advisory Commission on Aging Commissioner



Social distancing and “stay at home” mandates...it's how we spent most of 2020 and how we will be ushering in 2021. The good news is that these measures will save lives during this time of Covid-19. The bad news is that these safety measures can lead to social isolation and loneliness. For seniors, social isolation and loneliness are linked to higher risks for a variety of health problems, including high blood pressure, anxiety, depression, cognitive decline, Alzheimer's disease, and even death.

It sounds like a cliché, but we are all in the same boat right now with regard to trying to dodge the bullet that is “the virus”. You are NOT the only one experiencing difficulty, even if it feels that way some times. So our goal as older adults is to adopt some strategies and coping mechanisms to help us deal with social isolation so that when the world returns to normal, our health will not have been further compromised.

You Think You're the Only One Dealing with Social Isolation? Wrong!! (Continued)

1. **STAY POSITIVE**—obviously, this can be easier said than done. On a personal note, I am dealing with a dislocated hip (great difficulty walking) and was recently diagnosed with osteoporosis and coronary artery disease. But all I have to do is look around me—friends and family—to realize that everyone I know is going through some type of personal crisis, be it related to health, finances, employment, housing, family. I find comfort in the fact that everyone has something to deal with, and it really does help me to develop a more positive attitude towards my own situation. Perhaps it is the concept of “strength in numbers”....but we must remember that when times seem the darkest, there is always light at the end of the tunnel.
2. **KNOW WHAT YOU ARE GRATEFUL FOR**—Gratitude means showing appreciation for all the good in your life, instead of focusing on the negative. Get clear about what it is that you're grateful for. Write out everything in your life you can think of that you're grateful for having or experiencing. An even more powerful exercise is to think of the one person you're most grateful for, and write a note explaining why you're so grateful for having that person. Then give him or her a call and read that note to them. The difficult time you're going through will start to seem less significant when it's compared to everything that's going right in your life.
3. **FOCUS ON WHAT YOU CAN CONTROL, NOT WHAT YOU CAN'T**
Some situations are beyond your control and no matter what you do, you can't change a thing. You're setting yourself up for frustration when you focus your time and energy on things you can't control. You're also making the situation seem even more bleak than it actually is because you're focusing on the negatives.

You should instead focus on the things that are within your control because that's the only way you can make a change that's actually going to help you. Make a list of everything you can control about the situation and divert all of your focus towards those things. Anything that's not on the list doesn't get any attention.
4. **BE KIND TO YOURSELF**
You need to care of yourself to survive tough times. Take a walk through the park, lift some weights, read an amazing book, binge watch TV. It doesn't matter what you do, just do something that gets your mind and body engaged at a higher level than wallowing in self pity.

You can get through these times...WE can get through these times. We are not alone. As my father used to quote from the great poet John Donne, “No man is an island”...

It All Adds Up — AAA Services Across the County

Jennifer Stephens-Pierre, Director, Area Agency on Aging

While 2020 brought unprecedented challenges and changes, the dozens of community groups providing hundreds of services and thousands of meals on behalf of the Area Agency on Aging (AAA) have weathered them all with ingenuity and collaboration.

When it became impossible to serve congregate meals in person, those meals shifted to grab-and-go and delivery. For some providers, bagging up meals presented an opportunity to share information about safety during the COVID-19 pandemic.

When it was no longer safe to do in-person assessments, AAA partners jumped on launching and strengthening telephone and online outreach, which raised a flag on extensive digital divides that reflect inequities in our communities. Clearly, we have much work in front of us but, as we head into 2021, we would like to take a look back at services provided in Alameda County.

Service	FY: 2018-2019	FY: 2019-2020	↑↓	Change
Home Delivered Meals <i>(meals served)</i>	570,000	595,753	↑	5%
Group Dining Meals <i>(to-go or delivered meals during Covid-19 pandemic)</i>	179,000	186,136	↑	4%
Nutrition Education <i>(participants)</i>	29,300	20,548	↓	-30%
Senior Center Activities <i>(participants)</i>	45,930	41,103	↓	-11%
Information & Assistance <i>(contacts)</i>	28,455	29,305	↑	3%
Case Management Received <i>(hours)</i>	7,802	9,048	↑	16%

Services provided are measured by service units, shown above in parenthesis. Fiscal Year (FY) reflects July 1st – June 30th.

Senior Update
Area Agency On Aging
Advisory Commission on Aging
6955 Foothill Blvd, Suite 300
Oakland, CA 94605-1907

Senior Information

Phone: 1-800-510-2020
<http://seniorinfo.acgov.org>

PRSRT STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
SAN LEANDRO, CA
PERMIT NO. 45



Alameda County
**Social Services
Agency**

SSA has launched a brand new website, take a look at the new user friendly layout and services search engine at <http://alamedacountysocialservices.org>

***Senior Update Editorial Board: Ramil Rivera
Diarra Piggue, Regina Silbert, Mary Louise
Zernicke, Delbert Walker***

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 to be a reemerging ADRC 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.

Social Engagement Resources: Friendly Visitors Programs

- ♦ **Crisis Support Services of Alameda County**
24-hour crisis support line
1-800-309-2131; Website: www.crisissupport.org
- ♦ **Family Bridges, Inc., Friendly Visitors Program**
Provides companionship for socially-isolated Cantonese or Mandarin speaking seniors in North Alameda County
510-763-9017; Website: www.familybridges.org/friendly-visitors
- ♦ **J-SEI, Friendly Visitors & Callers Program**
Culturally sensitive and/or bilingual companion services for older adults
510-654-4000 ext. 13; Email: lisa@j-sei.org;
Website: <https://j-sei.org/seniorservices/services>
- ♦ **LIFE ElderCare, Inc., Friendly “Phone Visitors” Program**
510-894-0370; Email: lhoyne@LifeElderCare.org;
Website: <https://lifeeldercare.org/get-help/friendly-visitors>
- ♦ **Senior Support Program of the Tri-Valley, Friendly Visitors Program**
Provides companionship services for older adults in the East Alameda County
925-931-5388; Website: www.ssptv.org/friendly-visiting-volunteer-program.html
- ♦ **St. Mary’s Center, Friendly Visitors Program**
510-923-9600; Website: <https://stmaryscenter.org>

Upcoming Meetings:

Advisory Commission on Aging

- ♦ January 11, 2021
- ♦ February 8, 2021
- ♦ March 8, 2021

Information & Assistance Roundtable

- ♦ January 22, 2021
- ♦ March 26, 2021