



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

October/November/December 2021

Senior Update

...The Eyes and Ears of Alameda County Seniors

Commission on Aging
COVID-19 Vaccine Booster

COVID VACCINE BOOSTER SHOTS: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW (CDC Oct. 27, 2021)

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Older adults age 65 years and older. The risk of illness from COVID-19 increases with age and can also increase for adults of any age with underlying medical conditions.

Long-term care setting residents ages 18 years and older

Residents ages 18 years and older of long-term care settings or older adults who live closely together in group settings.

People with underlying medical conditions ages 18–49 years

People ages 18–49 years with underlying medical conditions **may** get a booster shot based on their individual risks and benefits. The risk of severe illness from COVID-19 can increase for adults of any age with underlying medical conditions. This recommendation may change in the future as more data become available.

People who work or live in high-risk settings ages 18–64 years

People ages 18–64 years at increased risk for COVID-19 exposure and transmission because of occupational or institutional setting **may** get a booster shot based on their individual risks and benefits. Adults who work or reside in certain settings (e.g., health care, schools, correctional facilities, homeless shelters) may be at increased risk of being exposed to COVID-19, which could be spreading where they work or reside. That risk can vary across settings and based on how much COVID-19 is spreading in a community. This recommendation may change in the future as more data become available.

Which booster should you get?

Visit the below link for available vaccines authorized in the United States:

www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/booster-shot.html#choosing-booster

Choosing YOUR COVID-19 Booster Shot

You may choose which COVID-19 vaccine you receive as a booster shot. Some people may have a preference for the vaccine type that they originally received, and others may prefer to get a different booster. CDC's recommendations now allow for this type of mix and match dosing for booster shots.

IF YOU RECEIVED Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna

You are eligible for a booster (at least 6 months after your second shot) if you are:

IF YOU RECEIVED Johnson & Johnson/Janssen

If you received the J&J/Janssen vaccine at least 2 months ago it is recommended to get a booster shot. The J&J/Janssen COVID-19 vaccine has lower effectiveness over time compared to the Pfizer-BioTECH and Moderna vaccines.



MEDICARE OPEN ENROLLMENT - OCTOBER 15th - DECEMBER 7th

You can enroll in Medicare health and drug plans from October 15 – December 7. Get ready for Medicare's Open Enrollment with these 5 tips:

1. Check your mail. You may get important notices from Medicare or Social Security. If you're in a Medicare plan, you'll get an Annual Notice of Changes (ANOC) telling you of any changes in coverage, costs, or service area. Note any 2022 changes to your health coverage or any [Extra Help](#) you may get to pay for prescription drugs. You may also get brochures and other marketing materials from insurance companies that offer Medicare health and prescription drug plans. Remember — plans aren't allowed to call or come to your home without an invitation from you. [Find out how to protect yourself from Medicare fraud.](#)
2. Think about your Medicare coverage needs for 2022. Carefully review your current Medicare coverage, and note any upcoming changes to your costs or benefits. Decide if your current Medicare coverage will meet your needs for the year ahead. If you like your current coverage, and it's still available for 2022, you don't need to take any action to keep it.
3. Review your [2022 "Medicare & You" handbook](#). It has information about Medicare coverage and Medicare plans in your area. If you want to get your handbook electronically, you can go paperless by [logging into \(or creating\) your secure Medicare account](#).
4. [Preview 2022 health and prescription drug plans](#). We make it easy to compare coverage options and shop for health 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 Medicare plan to others, and see prices based on any help you get with drug costs.
5. Get personalized help in your community. You may be able to find free information and events online, or get help from health insurance counselors in your area by phone, like your [State Health Insurance Assistance Program](#).

Visit [Medicare.gov](https://www.medicare.gov) to sign up to get important news & updates by email from Medicare.



VOLUNTEER INCOME TAX (VITA) TAX PREPARATION PROGRAM

Tax season is just around the corner, and the Social Services Agency's **Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Program** needs volunteers more than ever!

Anyone can volunteer. No prior tax preparation experience is necessary; all that is needed is a desire and willingness to help others. We will provide IRS-certified training to all volunteers. At the end of the training, volunteers will officially bear the moniker of "IRS certified tax preparer."

Training options will include in-person and online instruction. We will offer virtual tax preparation services with limited in-person appointments. All COVID safety protocols will be observed throughout the tax season. Food and snacks for volunteers are on the menu again this year.

We anticipate an increase in the demand for our services this tax season from eligible tax-filers needing to claim federal and state tax credits as well as unclaimed stimulus payments. For many low to moderate-income individuals and families, the VITA Program is their only tax filing option. Year after year, we see returning tax-filers who have used our services for the past ten years, or more. A constant refrain among tax-filers last tax season was, "I don't know what I would do if this program weren't here." With the assistance of volunteers, hopefully, they will never have to find out.

The SSA VITA Program wants to ensure that no eligible low-income individual or family leaves any credits unclaimed. This year we will assist with applications for Federal Individual Taxpayer Identification Numbers (federal ITINs) for immigrant tax-filers.

The time is now! Training sessions begin in November 2021. Sign up here:

<https://public.alamedasocialservices.org/VITA/home> or call 510-271-9141.

"HOLIDAY MUNCHIES" - CHRISTMAS CARAMEL CORN

Ingredients needed:

- 8 cups popped popcorn
- 1 ½ cups whole almonds, cashews, or pecans
- 1 (16 ounce) package dried fruit bits (optional)
- 1 cup packed brown sugar
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 2/3 cups (1 1/3 sticks) butter
- 1/3 cup light corn syrup
- 1/2 tsp. baking soda
- 1/2 tsp. vanilla abstract

Instructions:

- Preheat oven to 300 degrees
- Place popcorn, nuts, and dried fruit (optional) on a baking sheet.
- Combine brown sugar, sugar, butter, and syrup in heavy saucepan, and bring to a boil and stir often.
- Continue to cook and stir for about 15 minutes until mixture is golden brown.
- Remove from heat, and stir in baking soda and vanilla abstract and pour over popcorn mixture.
- Stir gently to cover popcorn, nuts, and fruit.
- And lastly, enjoy a holiday treat.



Meet the Alameda County Advisory Commission on Aging Commissioners: Florence Raskin “Flo”



Please welcome Florence Raskin, our newest Alameda County Advisory on Aging Commissioners. Flo joined the Commission on Aging on January 24, 2021 in order to help ensure county resources are focused on services for the frail and elderly. She was raised in New Jersey and in 1980 she moved to California to pursue her graduate studies at UC Berkeley. During her time at Berkeley, she completed a joint MPH/MBA degree and eventually established a long career at Kaiser Permanente in the East Bay. At Kaiser Permanente, she focused on providing services for seniors that included home health, hospice, and skilled nursing services. While working, Flo became an active community volunteer, joining the Board at her synagogue, Temple Beth Abraham, at the Center for Elders' Independence (CEI), and for the Program for All-Inclusive Care of the Elderly (PACE), a provider in the East Bay.

Since retiring, Flo remains active in the senior community and has expanded her volunteer work to help many other groups that provide support services to the elderly and frail population. She works at CEI and is currently serving as the Board Chairperson. She also volunteers as a counselor for the Health Insurance Counseling and Advocacy Program (HICAP). This allows her to share and help community members to learn about Medicare and the options that would work best for them. She dedicates her time to volunteering with Ashby Village, part of the Village Movement, which provides peer to peer support, services, and social activities for seniors living in the community.

One of Flo's goals is to help expand the caregiver workforce in Alameda County. She foresees that Alameda County will need more caregivers in the future as our population ages. She is also interested in increasing access to the internet for seniors, as it can provide a way for people to stay connected with family, friends, and activities even if we are restricted to our homes by mobility challenges or pandemic rules. Flo has appreciated learning more about the county process for funding programs and projects. She hopes to participate in supporting new projects as funding becomes available as part of the Governor's Master Plan on Aging. She currently serves as a Board member with the Meals on Wheels Program of Alameda County where she is actively involved in helping to provide fundraising support to all the Meals on Wheels providers in Alameda County.

Flo and her husband have two adult children. During her free time, Flo enjoys reading, hiking, and traveling. Just before the pandemic, Flo and her husband hiked for 10 days around Mont Blanc in France and Italy.



SELF-CARE FOR THE HOLIDAYS

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

If you were asked the question, “Do you feel added stress in your life during the holiday seasons?”, how might you respond. Many would reply that not only do they experience added stress but they also note a gain in weight between Thanksgiving and the December holidays. The cause of the added stress felt during the holidays is varied and may include, family drama, broken relationships, loss, the health condition, Seasonal Affective Disorder, SAD, finances, irrelevant demands, and unrealistic expectations. When reality fails to live up to the “perfect dream holiday” stress can be the results.



“Nearly one in four community dwelling older adults are socially isolated.” “Social isolation and loneliness are serious yet underappreciated public health risks for older adults.” Add to this, the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, management of chronic health conditions, transportation, financial advance care planning, memory concerns, balance concerns, managing medications and housing needs and it can seem overwhelming. Managing expectations, taking time for yourself and focusing on the present rather than dwelling on the past or worrying about the future are valuable strategies to have in place as you approach the holiday season.

Listen

Consider taking action by being quick to listen. “We have two ears and one mouth so we can listen twice as much as we speak.” is attributed to the Greek philosopher, Epictetus. Make time to be mindful and listen to your inner self voice. The presence of negative self-talk patterns may harm your overall health, add stress to the holidays and impact relationships with friends and family.

Make Memorable Conversations

Communicate clearly with your friends and family what matters most to you during the holidays and plan for what you will do during this time in advance. Share with friends and family how they can support or assist you during the holiday season. Reflect and digest what friends and family say before replying. Practice pausing a few beats before speaking.

Put in Place and Practice Self-Care Actions

Give yourself a holiday present, clear your mind and engage with others by joining an exercise class at your local senior center or through a local community-based organization to reduce stress, produce beneficial endorphins in the brain and keep you fit. Enroll in a Medication Safety Program offered by an Alameda County community-based organization to help you, become better-informed about your medications and to screen for potential medication problems, duplication of therapies and ingredients. An over-the-counter and prescription medicine checkup is suggested at least once a year. Use tools from the evidence-based medication safety program to talk to your team of health care professional about your medical conditions, and health concerns. The more your doctors know, the more they can help.

We all have different requirements for self-care yet the goal remains the same to improve overall well-being. The holiday period is filled with many choices, choose to establish or re-establish a good routine of self-care. As the flight attendant instructs during the safety briefing before departure, “Put your own mask on first before assisting others.” An excellent reminder as we move towards the holidays.

Older adults in Alameda County can learn more about Medication Safety Programs by contacting Alameda County Emergency Services’, Senior Injury Prevention, Laura A. Fultz, Program Specialist, (510) 618-2028 or by calling Alameda County Area Agency on Aging at (510) 577-3530.

CHRISTMAS 1945 (Story from: The World Comes to Alameda)

Miriam Schiffman, Mastick Senior Center, Alameda

My earliest years, in the neighborhood of Dorchester in Boston, Massachusetts, were spent in a world of nighttime darkness. During World War II all buildings on the eastern coast of the US were darkened at night so that enemy bombers would not be able to see what they were flying over. This meant that our window coverings had to be drawn before any light was turned on. During the day I was constantly being warned to be quiet because my father was trying to sleep. He worked the graveyard shift at the Chelsea shipyards. In his forties, with flat feet, he had not been eligible for the armed services. Instead, he contributed to the war effort by helping to build destroyers for the navy. When I was old enough to climb out of bed by myself, I made sure to be at the breakfast table when he arrived home in the early morning. On occasion I would wake up in the middle of the night sneak into the kitchen to sit on his lap while he ate before leaving for work.

Although I was young, I remember rationing, especially for sugar and butter. My mother would make it a point to count out ration coupons she had left before we walked the mile or so to the store. I remember rationing, especially for sugar and butter. My mother would make it a point to count out the ration coupons she had left before we walked the mile or so to the store. I remember saving string and rubber bands and pennies to buy bonds for the war effort. I lived on a street with very large families and we all went to the public health nurse, based in a nearby school, for our booster shots because most of the doctors in the area, including our own family physician, had been drafted. I especially remember being reminded to eat everything on my plate: "Think of the poor starving children overseas." I would not learn how true that statement was until I was a teenager. I remember my oldest cousins in army uniforms, saying goodbye to our grandmother, who lived in the flat above me. They were handsome I decided I wanted to marry one of them – my cousin Charlie – when I grew. My cousins fortunately returned safely, and then my childhood dreams had moved on to becoming a cowgirl and riding my pony alongside Roy Rogers.

What I remember most vividly about that time is the war's end in the fall of 1945. My dad began to work regular daytime hours. Other dads, brothers and sons on our street came home from overseas. Our family pediatrician returned safe and sound, just in time to tend to an outbreak of mumps on our street. And I especially remember the novelty of seeing lights in our neighbors' windows after dark.

We lived in a mostly Irish Catholic neighborhood. My parents and I, my cousins Carol and Morris and their parents, my Aunt Esther and Uncle Nelson, along with my grandmother, were the only Jewish folk around. We did not celebrate Christmas. However, we were always invited into our neighbors' homes to see their trees and nativity scenes. I found the sight and scent of those beautifully decorated fir trees reaching to living room ceilings wonderful. My friends would always point out their wrapped gifts waiting to be open on Christmas Day. I wasn't jealous of them because Hanukkah occurred during the same season. We lit candles for eight days, ate special foods like doughnuts and potato pancakes, called latkes, and best of all, received a shiny silver dollar from our grandmother.

But Christmas Eve 1945 was special. On December 24th I was allowed to stay up late. I was bundled up against the winter's chill, and when the door to the outside was opened I was led outside to what I still think of as a wonderland: Snow had fallen during the day but had stopped by nightfall, leaving the street, sidewalks, and lawns covered in a white blanket. The stars were shining overhead and the bright moon in a clear sky cast its light on the neighborhood. Everyone else was outside too, slowly wandering up and down sidewalks. Most of the buildings in the neighborhood were three stories high, with family flat on each floor, and there were a few scattered single-family homes, all very large. The windows of every house (except ours) were lit up with lights; the trees I had only seen on visits to friends' homes now filled the living room windows with bright color. In some windows candles of different colors were shining; in most home, from top to bottom, a single lit candle was in each window, some actual candles but most of them electric. All the homes in the neighborhood were lit this way, no longer curtained from the outside world. After five years of nighttime darkness this was truly the end of the war.



A message from
Board of Supervisors
Susan S. Muranishi, County Administrator



Alameda County District 3 Supervisor Wilma Chan

Dear Alameda County Colleagues and Commissioners,

It is with profound sadness that we share the unexpected and untimely passing of Supervisor Wilma Chan on Wednesday, November 3, 2021. We remember and honor her as a champion of the community, a fierce leader, and a trusted colleague. Supervisor Chan led an illustrious and trailblazing career in service to Alameda County residents, as the first Asian American to serve on our Board of Supervisors, and also the first Asian American to serve as majority leader in the California State Assembly.

Her deep devotion to health care was evident throughout her career, including service as Chair of the Assembly Health Committee and Chair of the Board's Health Committee. During her six years in the Assembly, Wilma served as the majority leader and whip, and sat on several committees. She passed more than 70 bills and resolutions to champion health care coverage for all, senior services, early childhood education, environmental health, jobs, and economic development. Wilma also carried landmark legislation to make affordable health insurance available to 800,000 uninsured California children.

As a County Supervisor, Wilma led multiple efforts to support the county's safety net hospitals, including Alameda Health System, San Leandro, Alameda and St. Rose. She expanded the number of school-based health clinics, championed the Measure A sales tax, and launched ALL IN, her signature initiative to address basic needs, economic development, and quality education for all families in Alameda County. Wilma also served as the first chair of the Alameda County Children and Families Commission and piloted a welfare-to-work project in Oakland's San Antonio neighborhood.

The County has lowered our flags in honor of Supervisor Chan's service to Alameda County, the State, and our diverse communities. Please keep Wilma's family in your thoughts and prayers, and support each other as you continue serving our residents. We encourage you to reach out to our Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for emotional support if needed during this extraordinarily difficult moment in our County's history. Claremont EAP can be reached at 1-800-834-3773.

The Board and executive leadership will be addressing the sudden loss of a valued colleague, community leader, and friend in the coming days and weeks. We will keep you informed as the situation evolves, but first, as we keep Wilma's family in our thoughts, please pause to reflect on her legacy and pay tribute to our distinguished leader, colleague and friend.

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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>

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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>

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.

Senior Update Editorial Board: Ramil Rivera
Diarra Piggue, Christine Sevier, Belinda Llaguno,
Delbert Walker, Maaza Michael

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

- ♦ October 11, 2021
- ♦ November 8, 2021
- ♦ December 13, 2021

Information & Assistance Roundtable

- ♦ November 19, 2021
- ♦ January 28, 2022
- ♦ March 25, 2022