



JB Pritzker, Governor
Paula A. Basta, M.Div., Director

Respect for Yesterday
Support for Today
Plan for Tomorrow

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Dear Aging Network:

Where did the past year go? For me, it seems to have flown by. I recently did the math and calculated I've logged over 9,600 miles of work-related travel by car in 2022, from Moline to Mascoutah, from Chicago to Carbondale, and to many communities in between. While I'm grateful for these opportunities to hear directly from our funded providers and get some face time with older adults, I am looking forward to the upcoming holidays as a chance to rest, reset, and spend some much-needed time with loved ones. I hope you can say the same!

As we quickly approach the holiday season, right in the midst of an unwelcome "tridemic" of COVID-19, influenza and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), the Department on Aging is once again ramping up our efforts to ensure older adults are up to date on their vaccinations. We have a newly updated winter edition of the [Long Live Illinois campaign partner toolkit](#), which includes holiday-themed social media graphics as well as a holiday PSA in which Department of Public Health Director Vohra and I answer common questions and highlight fact-based information on the vaccines. Please use the toolkit to share these messages on social media and at any in-person events you have planned.

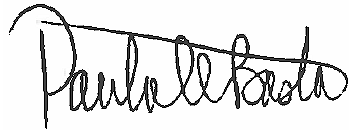
If your organization would like printed collateral for an upcoming event, we have materials available at the Department on Aging's Springfield and Chicago offices and can place an order specifically for your group.

Despite our best efforts to spread holiday cheer, not COVID-19, this winter, if you do find yourself feeling under the weather, this [comparison chart](#) from Nationwide Children's Hospital can help you determine whether you might be dealing with allergies, a cold, the flu, COVID-19 or RSV. If you have concerns about your symptoms, please seek medical advice from your primary care provider's office. Don't let respiratory illnesses get cozy this holiday season!

Whether you're hanging ornaments on the Christmas tree or lighting candles on the menorah, traveling or staying home, however you celebrate the holidays, I wish you and your loved ones health and happiness during this special time of year. I so enjoyed celebrating the magic of the season with more than 1,300 older adults at the Chicago Housing Authority's annual senior gala last Saturday, where attendees were dressed to the nines and we were even joined by a special guest, Governor JB Pritzker. You can watch Governor Pritzker's remarks [here](#) and find photos from the event [here](#).

As I look back on 2022 and look forward to what's to come, I am overwhelmed with gratitude for our Aging Network and the 100% effort you've put in all year to serve, support and celebrate older adults across our state. Thank you for your hard work, and here's to our continued partnership in 2023.

With warmest holiday wishes from all of us at the Department on Aging,



Paula Basta, M.Div.
Director, Illinois Department on Aging

The Illinois Department on Aging does not discriminate in admission to programs or treatment of employment in programs or activities in compliance with appropriate State and Federal statutes. If you feel you have been discriminated against, call the **Senior HelpLine at (800) 252-8966; (888) 206-1327 (TTY)**



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