

RESPECT FOR  
YESTERDAY,  
SUPPORT FOR  
TODAY,  
PLAN FOR  
TOMORROW



## Aging Matters

Fall 2020 Newsletter from the Illinois Department on Aging

Office of Governor  
JB Pritzker

Be Socially  
Engaged While  
Practicing Social  
Distancing

Disaster  
Preparedness Tips

Information About  
Flu Shots

Looking For  
Services?

Request a Vote By  
Mail Ballot

### Message From Director Paula Basta



September was an incredibly busy month as I began to hit the road again - conducting site visits after a brief hiatus due to COVID-19. In case you were unaware, **between March and December of 2019, I conducted 103 site visits** - travelling over 15,000 miles across the State of Illinois - visiting our providers, organizations that provide programming for our seniors, and of course our #ILOlderAdults themselves! Although it doesn't look like I will be able to surpass my original goal of at least 104 site visits in 2020, it was good to get out there and start visiting again with our Provider Network.

National Suicide Prevention Month took place during the month of September, and although now over, that does not mean that our socially isolated older adults are no longer at risk. Nothing in our lifetimes can be compared with the magnitude of the COVID-19 pandemic. Our lives have changed since the pandemic began more than 6 months ago. From grandparents watching valuable time slip by as they are not able to see their grandchildren, to older neighbors living by themselves - not having a visitor in days; social isolation and loneliness are serious health risks that affect a large portion of our older adults.

Research tells us that being connected is an important protective factor against suicide. With the holiday seasons quickly approaching, we all need to stay focused and be able to identify individuals who may need our help. Reach out and **#BeThere** for our older adults. As Governor Pritzker continues to say, we are all safer and stronger when we look out for one another and go all in, for Illinois. I encourage you all to take a look at the resources from the [National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention](#) which includes identifying ways on how to save lives.

## Upcoming Webinar Events

IDoA, and our Aging Network are all doing the best we can during these unprecedented times - working diligently to ensure that the services and supports provided will not be interrupted. If you or an older family member, friend, or neighbor are in need of any kind of assistance, please know we are here to help you. Please visit our website or contact our **Senior HelpLine at 1-800-252-8966 (hearing impaired call 888-206-1327)** or by email [aging.ilsenior@illinois.gov](mailto:aging.ilsenior@illinois.gov).

[Read more messages from Director Basta](#)

## Senior and Adult Day Centers Re-Open Director Paula Basta conducts site visits



September was National Senior Center Month. Senior centers deliver vital connections to support older adults aging well. Preventing social isolation is a core senior center mission. While the delivery methods have changed during the pandemic, our senior centers have succeeded in continuing to provide knowledge, programming, and resources to our older Illinoisans in innovative ways. Parking lot bingo games, wellness classes in online forums, remote Memory Cafes,

and virtual adult literacy, art and physical fitness classes are the new normal. Our senior centers are finding new and creative ways that were otherwise absent.

Additionally, last month, our Adult Day Service providers began to re-open. Cautiously, 23% of our providers began operating - safely - adhering to guidance from the Illinois Department of Public Health and the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services. Today, we are happy to report that close to 50% of our Adult Day Service providers have now re-opened! This couldn't have come at a more critical time. IDoA is extremely proud of our providers who have resumed services for our older Illinoisans. Keep up the great work, and stay safe!



## Do you know about Illinois Care Connections?

The Department along with the Illinois Assistive Technology Program (IATP), and IDHS' Division of Developmental Disabilities and Division of



## Illinois Care Connections

### FAQ's

#### What is Illinois Care Connections?

The Illinois Department on Aging (IDoA) and the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) received \$1.7 million through the CARES Act from the Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Community Living to provide services to older adults and persons with disabilities who are socially isolated as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Illinois Care Connections will provide technology devices such as iPads or Tablets to participants to help facilitate social connections with family and friends. The agencies are working in partnership with the Illinois Assistive Technology Program (IATP) to provide the devices.

#### Who is eligible to receive technology devices through Illinois Care Connections?

Participants MUST be receiving services through 1) IDoA, 2) IDHS-Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) OR 3) Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) providers and programs. Participants are eligible if they have been socially isolated as a result of the Coronavirus and are experiencing loneliness and a lack of connectedness.

- For IDoA, the participant must be receiving services from the Community Care Program or through an Area Agency on Aging.

#### Can individuals complete the referral process themselves?

No. Only IDoA, IDHS-DDD or DRS and/or their approved provider organizations statewide can submit an referral on the participant's behalf. The online referral form is available here: <https://care.iltech.org>

#### Who will be processing the online referrals?

The Illinois Assistive Technology Program (IATP) will be procuring the needed devices and assembling the bundle for each participant. The online referral form is available here: <https://care.iltech.org>

#### How long will it take for the participant to receive the technology device?

Items will be shipped as quickly as possible, but may be subject to delays based on the availability of the needed technology devices due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### How will participants be provided the technology devices?

IATP will utilize UPS to ship the devices to the participants. A signature will be required for delivery.

Rehabilitation Services launched Illinois Care Connections as a result of a successful grant application to the federal Administration on Community Living.

Illinois Care Connections provides technology devices such as iPads or Tablets to older adults and persons with disabilities who are socially isolated as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, to help facilitate social connections with family and friends. The devices have applications like FaceTime, Zoom, mental stimulation, telehealth and others so individuals can connect with family members, friends, and providers. Eligible recipients are those 60 years of age and older, who are enrolled in the Community

Care Program (CCP) or receive services from an Area Agency on Aging (AAA), or an associated provider.

Individuals cannot complete the referral process themselves, and must be referred by their IDoA, IDHS-DDD, or DRS approved provider organizations statewide on the participant's behalf. If you have any questions, please contact the Illinois Assistive Technology Program at (217) 522-7985 or by email [iatp.care@iltech.org](mailto:iatp.care@iltech.org).

## State Plan on Aging 2021-2023

The State Plan on Aging is a report required by the U.S. Administration on Aging, outlining Department program structure and financial plan for service delivery over a three-year period. IDoA is holding Public Stakeholder Hearings, and we invite any and all public participation. Call in on the day of the event: (415) 655-0002. Use the event number listed for the day you choose. Event password is aging2020. Registration is encouraged, but not required. To view IDoA's previous State Plan on Aging, [click here](#).




### 2021-2023 State Plan on Aging Public Stakeholder Hearings

October 19	October 22	October 29
3:00-5:00pm	1:00-3:00pm	10:00am-Noon
<a href="#">REGISTER HERE</a>	<a href="#">REGISTER HERE</a>	<a href="#">REGISTER HERE</a>
Event #: 133 427 8117	Event #: 133 232 1173	Event #: 133 469 2876

Call in on the day of the event: +1-415-655-0002. Use the event number listed for the day you choose. Event password is aging2020

Registration is encouraged, but not required. We ask that you DO register, especially if you would like to provide public comments during the meeting. Instructions are found via the registration links.

All hearings will be conducted via virtual meeting, closed captioning will be available. All sessions will be recorded and available for future viewing. Comments can be submitted until November 15 via writing (to the address below), email ([aging.feedback@illinois.gov](mailto:aging.feedback@illinois.gov)) or through the comment form.

State Plan on Aging  
c/o Amy Lulich  
Illinois Department on Aging  
160 N. LaSalle Street, Suite N-700  
Chicago, IL 60601-3117

## Public Stakeholder Hearings

**Register for  
October 19**

**Register for  
October 22**

**Register for  
October 29**

## IDoA Launches Campaign to Protect Seniors and Adults with Disabilities from Abuse

IDoA recently launched a new public and professional awareness campaign to



remind everyone about the importance of reporting suspected abuse, neglect and exploitation of persons ages 60 and older and persons with disabilities ages 18-59.

Specifically, [Engage2Change](#) is a three-year campaign theme for IDoA's Office of Adult Protective Services (APS). APS received a \$2.1 million grant from the federal Administration for

Community Living. The grant will execute a public awareness campaign through the CBS Community Partnership Division to include broadcast television, email marketing, and digital platforms which encourage people to do their part to assist in preventing abuse, neglect, and exploitation of vulnerable Illinoisans. Additionally, other components of the grant include APS Caseworker Simulation Training, Caseworker Trauma-Informed Training, and Legal Professional Training to educate the judiciary and legal professions about APS.

**#Engage2Change**

## 'Hispanics: Be Proud of Your Past, Embrace the Future'

Each year, Americans observe National Hispanic Heritage Month from September 15 to October 15 by celebrating the histories, cultures and contributions of American citizens whose ancestors came from Spain, Mexico, the Caribbean and Central and South America. This year's theme - *Hispanics: Be Proud of Your Past, Embrace the Future* - invites Hispanics to embrace their backgrounds - to be proud of who they are and where they came from. Please support the many activities taking place around the Nation in commemoration of National Hispanic Heritage Month and the many contributions Hispanics have made to the United States. To celebrate, the Chicago Tribune has put together [a list of 11 books by Latinx authors to read](#) during National Hispanic Heritage Month.



[Learn more about National Hispanic Heritage Month](#)

## Protect Yourself Against the Flu

The Illinois Department on Aging (IDoA) is encouraging all older Illinoisans that getting a flu vaccine during the 2020-2021 flu season is especially important in order to protect yourself and the people around you from the flu. Doing so will also help reduce the strain on healthcare systems, keeping hospital beds and other medical resources available for COVID-19 patients.

According to the Illinois Department of Public Health, the elderly and people with chronic health problems are much



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According to the Illinois Department of Public Health, the elderly and people with chronic health problems are much more likely to develop serious complications after influenza infection than are young, healthier people.

The best way to protect against the flu and its potentially serious complications is with a flu vaccine. **Most insurance plans, including Medicare and Medicaid cover one flu shot per flu season.** Beneficiaries pay nothing for a flu shot if their doctor or other qualified healthcare provider accepts Medicare payment for giving the shot.

**Always seek the advice of your healthcare provider before accepting medical treatment.**

Contact your local health department to ask about flu vaccination in your area:  
<http://www.idoha.state.il.us/IDoA/healthregions.aspx>

Illinois Department of Public Health Influenza (Flu) site:  
<http://www.idph.state.il.us/chronic-diseases-and-conditions/influenza>

Vaccine Finder: <https://vaccinefinder.org/find-vaccine>

Questions: 2020-2021 Season: <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/season/faq-flu-season-2020-2021.htm>



more likely to develop serious complications after influenza infection than are young, healthier people. This risk is due in part to changes in immune defenses with increasing age. While flu seasons vary in severity, during most seasons, people 65 years of age and older bear the greatest burden of severe flu disease. In recent years, for example, [it's estimated](#) that between 70% and 85% of seasonal flu-related deaths have occurred in individuals 65 years of age and older, and between 50% and 70% of seasonal flu-related hospitalizations have occurred among people in this age group.

Flu vaccination is especially important for older Illinoisans, individuals with underlying medical conditions, and persons with disabilities because they have an increased risk of developing serious complications from the flu; coupled with being at higher risk for contracting COVID -19. Flu vaccines are updated each season as needed to keep up with changing viruses. Also, immunity wanes over a year so annual vaccination is needed to ensure the best possible protection against flu.

The best way to protect against the flu and its potentially serious complications is with a flu vaccine. [Find flu vaccines in your area with Vaccine Finder](#). Most insurance plans, including Medicare and Medicaid cover one flu shot per flu season. Beneficiaries pay nothing for a flu shot if their doctor or other qualified healthcare provider accepts Medicare payment for giving the shot. Always seek the advice of your healthcare provider before accepting medical treatment.

## Illinois Lottery Partners with Alzheimer's Association Illinois Chapter

### 'The End of Alzheimer's Begins With Me' Ticket



The Illinois Lottery has launched its inaugural 'The End of Alzheimer's Begins With Me' instant ticket. This ticket provides 100% of its proceeds to the Alzheimer's Awareness Fund, which supports expanded care, education and awareness initiatives provided by the Alzheimer's Association Illinois to families and caregivers who need help tackling Alzheimer's disease in Illinois.

There are approximately 5.8 million Americans 65 year of age and older living with Alzheimer's disease, including 230,000 in Illinois. 'The End of Alzheimer's Begins with Me' instant ticket is widely available across the state, costs \$3, and players can win up to \$50,000.

[Learn more about #DoingGood](#)



## Help Build the Future of Housing in Illinois

The Illinois Housing Development Authority (IHDA) is coordinating a new plan called the Housing Blueprint, and they are asking for feedback from organizations and residents

throughout the state.

The Housing Blueprint is a collaborative planning effort that is bringing together agencies, organizations, and residents across Illinois to identify our state's most pressing housing needs and goals, and create a vision for achieving them. The goals and strategies identified in this plan will be formed by the many people and communities across Illinois, and IHDA is encouraging all residents to complete the [Statewide Resident Survey](#) to share their perspectives and recommendations for the future. Please help us raise the voices of all Illinoisans by taking the survey and sharing it throughout your community.

[Learn more and take the survey here](#)

## Items of Interest

[Beware of Scams](#)

[Cancer and COVID-19](#)

[COVID-19 Employment Effects by Age, Gender, Education, and Race/Ethnicity](#)

[COVID-19's Toll on Mental Health](#)

[How to Protect Vulnerable Older Patients during the Pandemic](#)

[Illinois Seniors Get Extension on Driver's License Renewals](#)

[Social Isolation and Psychological Distress Among Older Adults Related to COVID-19](#)

[Eldercare Locator](#)

[IDoA Senior HelpLine](#): 800-252-8966

[SAGE National LGBT Elder Hotline](#): 877-360-LGBT (5428)

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)

