

RESPECT FOR
YESTERDAY,
SUPPORT FOR
TODAY,
PLAN FOR
TOMORROW



Aging Matters

November - December 2022 Newsletter from the Illinois
Department on Aging

Office of
Governor JB
Pritzker

Message From Director Paula Basta



Be Socially
Engaged While
Practicing
Social
Distancing

The holiday season is quickly approaching, and this time of year is a busy one for many reasons. Between [prepping your contribution to Thanksgiving dinner](#) and [getting a head start on buying gifts](#), there's a lot to do, and also a lot to be grateful for. As a gentle reminder, there's no right or wrong way to celebrate the holidays. Pick and choose the traditions that feel right to you in your current stage of life, whether those traditions involve your family, friends, neighbors, pets, or just yourself.

Find a Vaccine
Location Near
You

For anyone who recently transitioned into a long-term care facility, you don't have to give up the holiday traditions that bring you joy. [Click here](#) to view the Illinois Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program's (LTCOP) virtual discussion about how to maintain your favorite traditions during the upcoming holiday season. The LTCOP will host another virtual discussion during the week of Thanksgiving, titled "Giving Thanks for Family Caregivers in Long-Term Care." You can find more information, including the Zoom link, [here](#).

IDoA COVID-19
Vaccine
Resources

And amid all the holiday craziness, don't forget about the deadline to make changes to your Medicare coverage for 2023. Compare and review plans before open enrollment ends on Dec. 7 at [medicare.gov/plan-compare](https://www.medicare.gov/plan-compare), or contact our Senior Health Insurance Program (SHIP) to review your options with a certified health insurance counselor. You can reach our SHIP staff by calling 1-800-252-8966 or by emailing Aging.SHIP@Illinois.gov.

Looking For
Services?

As always, the Department on Aging is here to assist you however we can. For information about our programs and services for older adults and persons with disabilities, contact the Senior HelpLine toll-free at 1-800-252-8966, 1-888-206-1327

Upcoming

Please continue to stay safe and well.

Sincerely,



**#VaxUpIL - All
in Illinois
Campaign**

Medicare Open Enrollment Runs Through Dec. 7

MEDICARE OPEN ENROLLMENT | OCT. 15–DEC. 7

**PLANS CHANGE.
SO CAN YOUR
NEEDS.**



Medicare
.gov

During Medicare's open enrollment period, older adults looking to change their existing Medicare plan can receive free, personalized assistance through the Illinois Department on Aging's [Senior Health Insurance Program \(SHIP\)](#). Illinois' SHIP program offers statewide health insurance counseling services through a network of 300 sites and over 1,000 trained and certified counselors. Illinois has trained 256 new SHIP counselors over the past year, and all counselors have received additional training on how to assist older adults specifically during open enrollment.

SHIP counselors can answer questions about Medicare, Medicare Advantage plans such as HMOs and PPOs, Medicare Part D drug plans, Medicare Supplement policies, retiree group insurance and other health insurances. Additionally, all Medicare participants with prescription coverage will have their insulin copay capped at \$35 per month in 2023, and SHIP counselors can explain participants' options and cost savings due to this new law.

To find a SHIP counselor near you, call 1-800-252-8966 or email Aging.SHIP@Illinois.gov.

Additional reading/viewing:

[Biden-Harris Administration Strengthens Medicare with Finalized Policies to Simplify Enrollment and Expand Access to Coverage](#)

[Watch Rep. Lauren Underwood's Medicare Open Enrollment Workshop on Facebook Live](#)

November is National Family Caregivers Month



National Family Caregivers Month



Unpaid family caregivers are a primary source of support for older adults and persons with disabilities; however, many caregivers experience conflicts between providing care and competing responsibilities, such as work, raising children and caring for their own health. Studies show that coordinated support services can reduce caregiver depression, anxiety and stress, and enable them to provide care longer, which avoids or delays the need for placement of the care recipient in a long-term care facility.

Since July 1, IDoA has distributed \$4 million in state funding, plus additional federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding, to Illinois' regional Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) to strengthen support services for unpaid family caregivers. Depending on where in the state a caregiver resides, available services may include:

- Respite care, which allows family caregivers to take a break from the daily routine of caregiving. Respite care can take place in the home, at adult day care centers, or at residential or nursing facilities that offer overnight stays.
- One-on-one counseling, support groups, and workshops to help family caregivers cope with the demands of caregiving and identify signs of burnout before it becomes unmanageable.

IDoA also provided funding to the AAAs to purchase TCARE, an assessment tool that identifies the stressors of individual caregivers and provides personalized tools and resources to support their caregiving journey. Many communities have designated caregiver specialists who conduct the TCARE assessments and are available on an ongoing basis to share information and connect caregivers to specific services and tools. To find a caregiver specialist in your area, please call 1-800-252-8966 or contact your local [AAA](#).

Additional resources to support you on your caregiving journey:

[10 Tips for Family Caregivers](#)

[Make Yourself a Priority, Too: Tips for Caregivers](#)



Alzheimer's Awareness Month

November is also Alzheimer's Awareness Month, a time to heighten awareness about Alzheimer's disease and show support for the more than 6.2 million Americans living with it.

In 2019, there were 230,000 people with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias living in Illinois. This figure is projected to reach 260,000 in 2025, a 13 percent increase. If all the people with Alzheimer's disease in Illinois lived in one city, it would be the state's second largest, [according to the Illinois Department of Public Health](#). Alzheimer's disease is not a disease that limits itself to a particular race, marital status, country of origin, religion, or sexual preference.

With support and guidance from [Dementia Friendly America](#), communities across Illinois are working to become dementia-capable, where people living with dementia can engage and thrive in day-to-day living. In a dementia-friendly community:

- Businesses and banks support customers with dementia by accommodating cognitive impairment.
- Law enforcement and first responders recognize signs of dementia respond accordingly.
- Health care systems promote early diagnosis and connect individuals with community services.
- Faith communities are welcoming and have specialized programs, services or accommodations.
- Local governments plan and implement housing, transportation, public spaces, and emergency response that enable people with dementia and care partners to thrive.
- Community members learn how to interact sensitively and create networks of support.
- Restaurants, grocery stores, and libraries offer services and supports that foster access and independence.
- Employers support employees who are caregivers through proactive personnel policies.
- Residential care and community services offer a range of services to maximize independence and support ongoing community engagement.

We're thrilled to share that the city of Decatur has been designated a Dementia Friendly Community by the Dementia Friendly Network of America. Last month, IDoA staff members participated in a summit at the Scovill Zoo conference center featuring keynote speakers, a panel discussion, and an opportunity for persons with dementia and their caregivers to experience Scovill Zoo and provide feedback on what would make it easier to navigate for those with dementia.



Additional reading:

[Decatur designated a Dementia Friendly Community](#)

[Forgetfulness: Normal or Not?](#)

[Understanding Different Types of Dementia](#)

[If a Family Member Has Alzheimer's Disease, Will I Have It, Too?](#)

[Read Illinois' Alzheimer's Disease Plan for 2020-2023](#)

Two More Older Adults Join Senior Illinoisan Hall of Fame

Our 2022 Senior Illinoisan Hall of Fame honoree in the community service category is David Risley of Rochester. A former career federal prosecutor and Director of Public Safety Policy in the Illinois Governor's office, Risley founded and hosts a podcast called "Justice Voices," alongside his former defendant-turned-friend Lynard Joiner. The podcast explores the root causes of crime and the importance of upholding a fair and equitable justice system for victims, defendants, and the community at large.



Phil Bratta of Davis Junction is our 2022 Senior Illinoisan Hall of Fame honoree in the education category. Bratta is a retired high school biology teacher, chess coach and Master Gardener with the University of Illinois Extension serving Ogle County. Long after his retirement from



Stillman Valley High School, Bratta has remained committed to the lives of the school's students and staff, serving as a much-needed substitute teacher most weeks and attending many extracurricular and athletic events. He has also volunteered more than 1,500 hours to the Ogle County community through the University of Illinois Extension office's Master Gardener and Master Naturalist programs, which require ongoing training to maintain certification. Bratta is a beloved figure in the Ogle County community and a prime example of what it means to volunteer and give back.

Belleville Rehabilitation Facility Staff Honored With Governor's Engaging Aging Award

Illinois Department on Aging (IDoA) Director Paula Basta presented a special award to the Memorial Care Center activity department this month for their efforts to support residents' spiritual well-being as part of a holistic approach to rehabilitation and recovery. The Belleville rehabilitation facility is the recipient of a 2022 Governor's Engaging Aging Award, presented annually to up to 13 community-based organizations that serve older adults and their caregivers.



In Memorandum

Robert J. O'Connor, 78, a former mayor of Aurora and an alderman-at-large for 36 years, recently passed away following a battle with cancer.

He was a board member of the Northern Illinois Area Agency on Aging since its creation in 1974, and was appointed by the governor's office as a member of the Illinois Council on Aging. Governor Pritzker issued a proclamation honoring Mr. O'Connor's life and accomplishments, which is linked below.

Energy, Mortgage Assistance Now Available

UTILITY BILL ASSISTANCE:

Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) is here to help.

Apply at HelpIllinoisFamilies.com or call 1-833-711-0374



Illinois
Department of Commerce
& Economic Opportunity
JB Pritzker, Governor



The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) application period is currently accepting applications through May 31, 2023 or until funding is exhausted. Eligible low-income households are encouraged to apply for natural gas, propane, or electricity bill assistance. Assistance is available to persons making up to two-times the federal poverty level, which is around \$55,000 a year/\$4,625 30-day gross income for a family of four or \$2,265 30-day gross income for a single person household. One-time payments will be made directly to energy service providers on behalf of recipients.

Interested applicants may apply online at helpillinoisfamilies.com or in person at their [local agency](#). Applicants may also call 1-833-711-0374 for assistance in 30 languages.

Additionally, the Illinois Housing Development Authority reopened its mortgage assistance program on November 1, 2022.

ILHAF provides up to \$30,000 in mortgage assistance to eligible homeowners — paid directly to the servicer, taxing body or other approved entity.

Homeowners in need of assistance can find more information at illinoishousinghelp.org.

Applications will be accepted until 11:59 p.m. on Tuesday, Jan. 31, 2023.

Are you behind on Housing Payments?

Find out if you qualify for **up to \$60,000** in emergency mortgage assistance.

APPLY NOW

IllinoisHousingHelp.org/ILHAF
OR CALL (866) 454-3571



Apply to be a Community Care Program Provider

The [Community Care Program](#) (CCP), administered by the Illinois Department on Aging, offers a statewide network of services to persons age 60 and over. These services offer eligible older Illinoisans the opportunity to remain in their own homes as an alternative to unnecessary

or premature placement in a long-term care facility. IDoA recently launched an online application *for agencies seeking to become CCP providers.*

Community Care Program Online Application

For individuals seeking to receive CCP services, contact the Senior HelpLine at 1-800-252-8966, or you can locate programs and services by county using the [Service Locator](#) feature on our website.

October Events Round-up

We had a great time connecting with older adults and family caregivers at state Rep. Lisa Hernandez's Su Estado a Su Alcance (Your State at Your Reach) community resource fair. Thank you Leader Hernandez for the invitation to participate and for bringing together this one-stop shop for state services!



Located in Chicago's Ravenswood neighborhood, Ravenswood Senior Living offers independent living and supportive living for low-income older adults in a single location, allowing residents to age in place as their needs and lives change. We had a wonderful tour along with staff from the Chicago Housing Authority.

Home Care Powered by AUAF has served as a Chicagoland elderly in-home care agency for over 25 years, serving a diverse population of older adults and employing staff who

speak eight different languages. IDoA Director Paula Basta recently [visited their Lincolnwood office](#).



Our Senior Health Insurance Program (SHIP) staff met with Chiquita Brooks-LaSure, the Administrator for the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, to discuss the Inflation Reduction Act and the new pricing structure for insulin under Medicare Part D plans in 2023. Beginning next year, Medicare recipients will see insulin prices capped at \$35/month under this federal law.

Our Office of Adult Protective Services held an in-person Supervisor's Conference at the ILEAS Training Center and Headquarters in Urbana, our first in-person event since 2019. More than 100 attendees learned about person-centered care planning and alternatives to guardianship, and will take back what they learned to share with their supervisees.



Employment Opportunities

[Benefit Access Program Manager](#)

If your expertise includes interpreting and applying laws and regulations, as well as streamlining policies and procedures, this job is for you! This position helps older adults and persons with disabilities save on their annual license plate renewals and access free rides on

fixed route transit systems throughout Illinois.

Job Responsibilities

1. Supervises staff.
2. Provides guidance and assistance to subordinates in resolving the more complex and technical issues or in the proper application of the law to specific problem cases.
3. Prepares responses to complex, confidential, sensitive or controversial inquiries following the guidelines of specific program requirements, program related laws, regulations and rulings.
4. Acts as a Program liaison with other Divisions of the Department, Secretary of State, local transit agencies, or other Federal/State Departments, who are requesting procedural or information assistance with reference to interrelated problems.
5. Confers with Aging network and provider professionals, answering inquiries or resolving highly technical problems.
6. Advises manager of corrective action taken in reassigning priorities to ensure completion of work in a satisfactory manner.
7. Prepares and maintains productions and inquiry status records.
8. Performs other duties as required or assigned which are reasonably with the scope of the duties enumerated above.

Minimum Qualifications

1. Requires knowledge, skill and mental development equivalent to the completion of 4 years of college, preferably with courses in business, public administration, statistics, economics or gerontology.
2. Requires 3 years of progressively responsible administrative experience in a public or business organization, with specific skills in program design, implementation and evaluation.

Preferred Qualifications

1. More than 3 years of progressively responsible administrative experience in a public or business organization, with specific skills in program management, including design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.
2. Master's degree or higher in business, public administration, healthcare administration, or gerontology.
3. Three years or more of experience interpreting rules, regulations, policies, laws, and statutes.
4. Three years or more of experience working in project management including working with IT systems.
5. Three years or more of experience supervising staff.
6. Three years or more of experience collaborating with internal and external stakeholders.
7. Three years or more of experience working with highly confidential information.
8. Prefers previous collegiate coursework in accounting or previous experience utilizing Generally Accepted Accounting Principles.

Conditions of Employment

1. Requires the ability to travel to offsite professional meetings and conferences.

Work Hours: Monday - Friday 8:30 am - 5:00 pm

Work Location: One Natural Resources Way, Springfield, IL 62702-1813

Agency Contact: Aging.HR.Assist@illinois.gov

Job Function: Administration/Management

Apply [here](#) by November 21.

Upcoming Events

Join AARP Illinois at our

MAXIMIZING YOUR MONEY SUMMIT

WITH TERRY SAVAGE
Nationally Syndicated
Financial Columnist



SATURDAY, DECEMBER 3
8:00 AM - 3:00 PM
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT CHICAGO

Registration is
required.



AARP Illinois presents Maximizing Your Money Virtual Summit with nationally syndicated financial columnist Terry Savage. The one-day virtual summit at Chicago's renowned University of Illinois at Chicago will feature three sessions to help get your finances back on track, one of which will be led by IDoA Director Paula Basta. Registration is required. [Register here.](#)

**GET YOUR
FLU SHOT**
It's not too late.



National Influenza Vaccination Week | December 5-9

Medicare
.gov

December 5-9 is National Influenza Vaccination Week! If you haven't gotten your flu shot yet, it's the best way to protect yourself from getting the flu and keep you from spreading it to others. Don't forget - the flu shot is covered for people with Medicare.

Items of Interest

[5 Ways to Organize Your Recipes and Save Time Cooking](#)

[7 Tips for Avoiding Fraud When Donating to Charities](#)

[Staying Healthy This Winter: 10 Questions, Answered](#)

[Over-the-Counter \(OTC\) Hearing Aids—What to Know](#)

[Autocorrect Messing Up Your Texts, Emails? Here's What to Do About It](#)

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)**



[Visit our website](#)