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Services and Supports

of CHENANGO COUNTY

(800) 342-9871 (607) 337-1659

The Bullthistle Bulletin Quarterly Newsletter

January-February-March 2017

Chenango County Area Agency on Aging
5 Court Street

Norwich, NY 13815

(607) 337-1770



Website: www.co.chenango.ny.us

Email: chenaaoa@co.chenango.ny.us

Lawrence Wilcox, Chairman
Board of Supervisors

Brian Wessels
Director

THANK YOU VOLUNTEERS!

The Chenango County Area Agency on Aging hosted a Volunteer Recognition Event at the Silo Restaurant and Carriage House in November.

Volunteers are a crucial part of the Nutrition Program at the Agency, providing countless hours of dedicated service to the Senior Citizens in our County. The Agency relies on Volunteers to help at the seven Senior Centers and to deliver meals in several communities as well. Over 100 volunteers and guests were in attendance to enjoy lunch and conversation.

THANK YOU VOLUNTEERS!



Pictured here are Lois Aylesworth, Volunteer, Victoria LaCroce, Sherburne Site Manager, Gladys Benjamin, Volunteer and Gladys Slentz, New Berlin Site Manager



2017 EPIC Program Highlights

EPIC Program:

- Annual income for eligibility is up to \$75,000 for singles and \$100,000 for married couples.
- Members must be enrolled in a Medicare Part D drug plan to receive EPIC benefits.
- Provides secondary coverage for Medicare Part D and EPIC covered drugs purchased after the Part D deductible, if any, is met.
- Covers many Part D excluded drugs.
- EPIC co-payments continue to be \$3, \$7, \$15 or \$20 based on the cost of the drug.
- Provides Medicare Part D drug plan premium assistance for many members.

Fee Plan Members:

- EPIC annual fees range from \$8 - \$300 based on the previous year's income.

EPIC pays the Part D monthly drug plan premiums up to the average cost of a basic Medicare drug plan, \$41 per month in 2017.

- Bills are mailed quarterly for EPIC fee plan members. Members with full Extra Help from Medicare will continue to have their EPIC fees waived.
- Members will pay EPIC co-payments for Part D and EPIC covered drugs after the Part D deductible, if any is met. Members will pay EPIC co-payments for Part D excluded drugs.

Deductible Plan Members:

- EPIC deductibles range from \$530 - \$3,215 based on the previous year's income.
- EPIC pays the monthly Part D drug plan premiums up to the average cost of a basic Part D drug plan for members with income up to \$23,000 single and \$29,000 married.

1. Members with higher incomes must pay their Medicare Part D premiums each month. Their EPIC deductible will be lowered by the annual cost of a basic Part D plan (approximately \$492) to help them pay.

- After a member meets their EPIC deductible, they will pay EPIC co-payments for covered drugs. Drug costs in the Part D deductible phase cannot be applied to the EPIC deductible.

4 COMMON FOOD-DRUG INTERACTIONS

Adapted from an Article by Rachel Begun, MS, RDN

Written By: Michelle Gimbar, MS, RD

Most people are likely to have heard the warnings of drinking grapefruit juice with certain medications, however, this is not the only food-drug interaction we need to be careful of. Here are four foods that commonly interact with medications.

1. **Grapefruit Juice:** This juice can actually increase the effects of certain drugs, and it is commonly known to do so with cholesterol-lowering statins. Grapefruit juice contains a specific compound that other citrus fruits do not include, which is why orange juice is not a concern.
2. **Green Leafy Vegetables:** Drugs that are used for blood thinning, such as Coumadin (warfarin) interfere with the blood clotting properties of Vitamin K. The goal here is to maintain your current level of Vitamin K intake, significantly increasing or decreasing Vitamin K intake is when problems can arise. Foods high in Vitamin K are green leafy vegetables, broccoli, cabbage, brussels sprouts and prunes which are still great to eat in **moderation**.
3. **Natural Black Licorice:** A component of natural black licorice has been shown to decrease the amount of potassium in the body which results in sodium retention, which can cause more severe issue when you are on blood pressure medication or certain medication to treat heart failure. Artificially flavored black licorice does not contain these compounds.
4. **Salt Substitutes:** Individuals taking digoxin for heart failure or ACE inhibitors for high blood pressure should use caution when it comes to salt substitutes. These substitutes use potassium in place of sodium which decreases the effect of certain medications, and those on ACE inhibitors may see an increase in blood potassium levels. These substitutes do not need to be avoided but used with caution. If you have decreased kidney function its is best to speak with your doctor about using salt substitutes.

AARP TAX-AIDE PROGRAM



The Income Tax season will be here soon. AARP volunteers will again be available to assist taxpayers in Chenango County. Here at the AAOA office we take appointments for those 60 and older. This program is available free of charge, and provides safe electronic filing for returns. The volunteers are certified to prepare individual income tax returns.

Starting in January please call the Chenango County Area Agency on Aging at 607 337-1770 to make an appointment to have your taxes done. Again this year they will be at the Guernsey Library.

Stepping On

“A Wellness Workshop to Prevent Falls”

Stepping On is a well researched falls prevention program building confidence and reducing falls.

The Stepping On workshop meets for two hours a week for seven weeks.

**WATCH FOR UPCOMING
DETAILS ON THE NEXT
CLASS**

Transportation - You Can Get There with ***GetThere!***

The GetThere Call Center (toll free: 1-855-373-4040) is available to help older adults and others with transportation needs by providing information, referrals, and trip assistance. This service is run by Mobility Management of South Central New York (SCNY) and is free of charge. You can call weekdays between 8:30AM and 4:30 PM and talk to a trained agent who will help you with your transportation needs.



GetThere’s toll free number again is 1-855-373-4040. If calling during the evening or weekends, please leave a message and your contact information and GetThere will return your call promptly.

For additional information, visit www.rhnsny.org/programs/mmscny.

Reminder: HEAP Is Open until March 15!

HEAP opened up November 14, 2016 and runs through March 15, 2017.

Emergency HEAP will open January 3, 2017 and will also end March 15, 2017.

Heating Equipment Repair and Replace opened November 9, 2016. No close date as of yet.

HEAP (Home Energy Assistance Program) helps low-income people pay for their energy bills. If your bills are more than you can handle, HEAP may be able to help you heat your home. The Chenango County Area Aging on Aging handles applications for the 60 and older living in Chenango County.

HEAP may be able to help you if your source of heat is:

- * Electricity
- * Natural Gas
- * Oil
- * Coal
- * Propane
- * Wood/Wood Pellets
- * Kerosene
- * Corn

If you have questions or need an application for HEAP please call The Area Agency On Aging at 607-337-1770.



Legal Services At The Chenango County Area Agency on Aging

Legal services for seniors are now being provided at our office by Legal Aid Society of Mid New York, Inc. To be eligible you must be at least 60 years old and living in Chenango County. Priority will be given to individuals experiencing problems with Social Security, SSI, Medicare, Medicaid, financial management, or adult protective services. Legal Services can also help with simple Wills, Power of Attorney, Health Care Proxy, debt collection issues and house - landlord/tenant issues. There is a suggested contribution.

For an appointment or if you have a question you can call the Area Agency on Aging at 607-337-1770.

Reminder:

You Can Schedule for AARP’s Driver’s Safety Course through Area Agency on Aging!
If you need to take a course just give a call to (607) 337-1770. We have courses through out the year. If one is not currently scheduled we can put you on our call list and call you when the next class is scheduled. **Don’t Miss Out!**



HAPPY VALENTINE’S DAY
FEBRUARY 14TH

Interpretation Services

Available

Chenango County Area Agency on Aging offers interpretation services for more than 200 languages. To inquire about our agency’s services for the aging at no cost to you, please call (607) 337-1770.

Chenango Condado Agencia de área sobre el envejecimiento ofrece servicios de interpretación para más de 200 idiomas. Para solicitar información sobre nuestros servicios de agencias para el envejecimiento sin costo para usted.

希南戈县地区机构老龄问题提供超过 200 种语言的口译服务。来电咨询有关我们机构服务的无代价地你衰老.

Chenango County Area Agentur auf Alterung bietet Dolmetschdienste für mehr als 200 Sprachen. Über unsere Agenturen-Dienstleistungen für das Altern ohne Kosten für Sie zu erkundigen

Staff Spotlight!

In each edition of the Bullthistle we will be introducing you to a member of our staff.

I have been the Budget Technician since 2001. Working with the Director, Brian Wessels, we create our budget and it is approved by the Chenango County Board of Supervisors every year in the month of November. Some of my other duties include monitoring expense to ensure we don't go over budget, compiling and submitting a budget into New York State Office for the Aging, and submitting claims into New York State Office for the Aging for reimbursement of expenses. We also track trends and statistics based on information supplied by you. This allows us to see what works and what doesn't work for our County and our participants. During the summer months, if I'm not in the office you will probably find me on the golf course. Even though I practice my game as much as possible, I don't seem to get any better at it.

Ellen Cleveland



MEDICATION TAKE BACK EVENTS FOR 2017

The Harm Reduction Group for the Chenango Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition (CSAPC) will be coordinating Medication Take Back Events throughout Chenango County in 2017. The events will be held at Senior Centers, community events and various sites throughout the County.

The Medication Take Back Events will be a collaborative effort between community partners including local law enforcement. Events will be held on a monthly basis in 2017. The focus of each event will be to remove outdated or unused prescription medication from homes as well as to educate the public regarding safe medication practices. Statistics show substance abuse begins with easy access to prescription drugs. Removing unused prescription medications from the home is a step toward decreasing drug related experimentation, addiction, crime and toxicity.

At each event staff will provide community education regarding the potential health and safety risks around having unused prescription medications in the home and accessible to family members and visitors. The events serve to promote a clean, safe, addiction-free community and a healthier Chenango County.

The first 3 Drug Take Back's will be in our local Senior Centers. [Watch for upcoming information.](#) Thank you for helping us to promote this important initiative.



Spring and Nice Weather are Right Around the Corner. How About Getting Some Exercise!

Safety First - Start Out Slowly

Most older adults, regardless of age or condition, will do just fine increasing their physical activity to a moderate level. However, if you haven't been active for a long time, it's important to start out at a low level of effort and work your way up slowly.

When to Check with Your Doctor

If you are at high risk for any chronic diseases such as heart disease or diabetes, or if you smoke or are obese, you should check first with your doctor before becoming more physically active.

Discuss Your Activity Level

Your activity level is an important topic to discuss with your doctor as part of your ongoing preventive health care. Talk about exercise at least once a year if your health is stable, and more often if your health is getting better or worse over time so that you can adjust your exercise program. Your doctor can help you choose activities that are best for you and reduce any risks.

Tips to Avoid Injury

When you exercise, it is important to do it safely. Follow these tips to avoid injury.

- ◇ When starting an exercise program, begin slowly with low intensity exercises.
- ◇ Wait at least 2 hours after eating a large meal before doing strenuous exercise.
- ◇ Wear appropriate shoes for your activity and comfortable, loose-fitting clothing that allows you to move freely but won't catch on other objects.
- ◇ Warm up with low-intensity exercises at the beginning of each exercise session.
- ◇ Drink water before, during, and after your exercise session.
- ◇ When exercising outdoors, pay attention to your surroundings — consider possible traffic hazards, the weather, uneven walking surfaces, and strangers.

When to Stop Exercising

Stop exercising if you

- Have pain or pressure in your chest, neck, shoulder, or arm
- Feel dizzy or sick to your stomach
- Break out in a cold sweat
- Have muscle cramps
- Feel severe pain in joints, feet, ankles, or legs



SPRING FIND-A-WORD



K G W I Y N R M N N K S S L T
 Z J L T E S Y O D L E F U S U
 B L Z D T W R F B I C S N E L
 M A R D A N D E L I O N S L I
 E A S T E R A F W F N F H D P
 G M F E Z N R L T O L S I D S
 C O B R B E A B P O L E N U J
 D O O D T A A E G G R F E P S
 F L M T N L L P D R I Q X E W
 O B U Q L D V L P T F M E L K
 D B M J W Y N B R I K D P T J
 R W O B N I A R H S S A R G S
 F A L T M Y Q M Q X W Y B F H
 R E H F U K I G P M R O P Y I
 S H Y L H S D N J Z R A I N C

BASEBALL
 BLOOM
 BUTTERFLIES
 DANDELIONS
 EASTER
 FLOWERS

GARDEN
 GOLF
 GRASS
 PLANT
 PUDDLES
 RAIN

RAINBOW
 ROBINS
 SEEDS
 SOFTBALL
 SUNSHINE
 TULIPS

scraplydaycare.com

Random Acts of Kindness Day - February 17th

February 17 is Random Acts of Kindness Day and you know what to do...perform a few random acts of kindness. Almost any kind deed will do. We highly recommend you perform kind acts on as many people as you can.

This is a favorite day of many people and groups. People like the idea of showing a little kindness to others. It's a fun and good thing to do. They like being on the receiving end of this day as well. It makes both the giver and receiver feel good.

Caution: What comes around, goes around. Random Acts of Kindness is highly contagious.

HAPPENINGS AT OUR SENIOR CENTERS!
JANUARY-FEBRUARY-MARCH 2017

GREENE.....(607) 656-4789

Brightman Senior Center
25 Birdsell Street
Greene, NY 13778
Hours: M-W-F 10-2pm
Lunch Served at Noon

Daily Activities: Cards, Bingo and Puzzles.
Every other week: Crossword Puzzles,
Word Searches and Trivia Plus

Special Activities:

- 01/02/2017 - Office & Site Closed
New Year's Day
- 01/10/2017 - Celebrate Birthdays
- 02/14/2017 - Valentine's Day and
Celebrate Birthdays
- 02/20/2017 - Office & Site Closed
President's Day
- 03/14/2017 - Celebrate Birthdays



NORWICH (607) 334-2910

First Baptist Church
10 West Park Place
Norwich, NY 13815
Hours: M-F 9-1pm
Lunch Served at 11:45AM

Daily Activities: Cards (Tues/Fri), Crossword
Puzzles, Word Searches, Trivia Plus and Bingo
and other activities

Special Activities:

- 01/02/2017 - Office & Site Closed
New Year's Day
- 01/10/2017 - Celebrate Birthdays
- 02/14/2017 - Valentine's Day and
Celebrate Birthdays
- 02/20/2017 - Office & Site Closed
President's Day
- 03/14/2017 - Celebrate Birthdays

NEW BERLIN(607) 847-6350

Unadilla Valley Senior Center
First United Methodist Church
51 S. Main Street
New Berlin, NY 13411
Hours: Tues & Thurs 10-2pm
Lunch Served at Noon

Daily Activities: Cards (Pitch & Golf) and
Puzzles

Special Activities:

- 01/10/2017 - Celebrate Birthdays
- 02/14/2017 - Celebrate Birthdays and
Valentine's Day
- 03/14/2017 - Celebrate Birthdays



COVENTRY.....(607) 656-8602

Windy Hill Senior Center
Coventry Town Hall
1839 Route 235
Coventry, NY 13778
Hours: Tues & Thurs 10-2pm
Lunch Served at Noon

Daily Activities: Bingo and Cards
Every other week: Crossword Puzzles,
Word Searches and Trivia Plus

Special Activities:

- 01/10/2017 - Cele-
Birthdays brate
- 02/14/2017 - Cele-
Birthdays and
Valentine's Day brate
- 03/14/2017 - Celebrate Birthdays

HAPPENINGS AT OUR SENIOR CENTERS!
 JANUARY-FEBRUARY-MARCH 2017

SHERBURNE.....(607) 674-4600

The Welcome Center

12 Knapp Street
 Sherburne, NY 13460
 Hours: M-W-F 10-2pm
 Lunch Served at Noon

Daily Activities: Cards and Puzzles

Special Activities:

- 01/02/2017 - Office & Site Closed
 New Year's Day
- 01/10/2017 - Celebrate Birthdays
- 02/14/2017 - Valentine's Day and
 Celebrate Birthdays
- 02/20/2017 - Office & Site Closed
 President's Day
- 03/14/2017 - Celebrate Birthdays



SOUTH OTSELIC (607) 337-1770

Plum Valley Forever Young Center
 Methodist Church
 102 Clarence Church Street
 S. Otselic, NY 13155

Hours: One Evening Dine a Month 3-8pm
 Dinner Served at 5 PM

- 01/20/2017
- 02/17/2017
- 03/24/2017

MCDONOUGH (607) 337-1770

Genegantslet Activity Center
 McDonough United Methodist Church
 County Route 5
 McDonough, NY 13801

Hours: Two Evening Dines a Month
 3-8pm/ Dinner Served at 5:30PM

- 01/05/2017
- 01/09/2017
- 02/02/2017
- 02/16/2017
- 03/09/2017
- 03/23/2017

*March 20 - First Day
 of Spring*



St. Patrick's Day
 March 17th



February is American Heart Month



February is American Heart Month. Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death in the United States; one in every three deaths is from heart disease and stroke, equal to 2,200 deaths per day.

We can fight back against heart disease and stroke.

Prevention starts with everyone. Protect yourself and your loved ones from heart disease and stroke by understanding the risks and taking these steps:

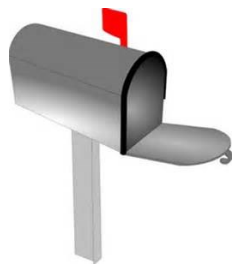
- ⇒ Get up and get active by being physically active for at least 30 minutes on most days of the week.
- ⇒ Know your ABCS:
 - Ask your doctor if you should take an **Aspirin** every day.
 - Find out if you have high **Blood Pressure** or **Cholesterol**, and if you do, get effective treatment.
 - If you smoke, get help to quit.
- ⇒ Make your calories count by eating a heart-healthy diet high in fresh fruits and vegetables and low in sodium and trans fat.
- ⇒ Take control of your heart health by following your doctor's prescription instructions.

American Heart Association - www.heart.org

Council Members Needed!

The Older American Act Advisory Council (OAAAC) in Chenango County is an Advisory Council which is mandated by the Older Americans Act and consists of a voluntary group of citizens who provide information, guidance, advice and support to the Area Agency of Aging.

The Area Agency on Aging is looking for volunteers who are interested in becoming a council member. Please call Brian Wessels, Agency Director, at 607-337-1770.



Dear Marci,

Can I delay my Medicare Enrollment?

Dear Marci,

I am turning 65 soon and I'm still working. Do I need to enroll in Medicare Part B when I'm first eligible, or can I delay it?

-Riley (Albany, OR)

Dear Riley,

Deciding to delay Part B enrollment depends on a number of factors. Some people may want to delay Medicare Part B enrollment because they already have coverage from another source, and they do not want to pay the Part B premium on top of what they already pay for their other coverage. Before delaying Part B enrollment, you should consider the following questions.

1. Will I have a Part B Special Enrollment Period (SEP) to sign up for Medicare later? You must have access to a Part B SEP to be able to enroll in Part B outside of your Initial Enrollment Period (three months before, the month of and three months after your 65th birthday month) or the General Enrollment Period (January 1 through March 31 each year; coverage becomes effective July 1). If you have a Part B SEP, then you will not have a late enrollment penalty for delaying Part B enrollment.

The Part B SEP begins when you are first eligible for Medicare and are covered by insurance as a result of your, your spouse's, or in some circumstances, your family member's current work. You have this SEP while you are covered by insurance from current work, and it extends for eight months after the coverage or work ends, whichever is sooner. If you use this SEP to enroll, then you will not have a late enrollment penalty for delaying Part B enrollment.

You cannot use this SEP if you delay Medicare enrollment while covered by retiree insurance from a former employer, COBRA, or retiree FEHB. If you delay Medicare Part B enrollment while covered by any of those types of insurance, you will have to wait for the General Enrollment Period (January 1 through March 31 each year; coverage becomes effective July 1) to enroll in Medicare and you may have a late enrollment penalty.



Dear Marci (Continued)



2. **Will my other coverage pay primary or secondary to Medicare?** If your other health insurance coverage will pay secondary to Medicare once you are eligible, then it is usually not advisable to delay Medicare Part B enrollment. Secondary insurance pays only after the Primary insurer has paid, and an insurance that is secondary to Medicare may refuse to pay for care and may take back any primary payments that it has made.

Your insurance from current employment may pay primary to Medicare. Whether this type of insurance will pay primary or not depends on how you are eligible for Medicare and how many people work for the company that provides the insurance. Insurance from your or your spouse's current employment pays primary to Medicare if you are eligible for Medicare because you are 65 or older and the company has **20 or more employees**. Insurance from your or your spouse's current employment pays secondary to Medicare if you are eligible for Medicare because you are 65 or older and the company has **fewer than 20 employees**.

Riley, before you make a decision about Medicare Part B, you should always contact Social Security by dialing 800-772-1213 or visiting your local Social Security office.

-Marci

Welcome Michelle Gimbar! Our new Registered Dietitian!

Michelle joins us as our new Registered Dietitian. Michelle is a native of Oneonta, NY who currently lives in Binghamton with her husband, and this year they welcomed a little baby boy into their family. She attended SUNY Oneonta where she completed her Masters and Dietetic Internship in 2016. She loves to come up with new recipes in the kitchen using whatever she has on hand as well as taking their cockapoo Gus for walks!



Chenango County Area Agency on Agency Has New Funding Available for Dementia-Related Caregivers

This past year, New York State awarded \$67.5 million toward the Alzheimer's Caregiver Support Initiative. This funding was distributed to nine organizations across the state for the development of programs that support the family members who care for individuals living with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias. We, at the AAOA, talk to many caregivers, often spouses or adult children, who provide significant hours of care to a loved one, and rarely get a break. The new Caregiver Support Initiative is specifically designed to provide support to these family members.

One important component to the initiative, which will bring additional resources to Chenango County, is respite.

Respite care provides temporary relief from the stresses associated with caregiving. This may be in the form of in-home support, adult day programs, or facility-based care such as an assisted living residence or nursing home. Caregivers are eligible to receive up to 120 hours of respite care annually.

Some examples of how respite care might be helpful:

- Pay for respite care at a local facility for up to five days to allow a caregiver to take a vacation
- Pay for a home care aide to come to the home and stay with a loved one for a few hours on a weekly basis so the caregiver can get away, such as grocery shopping, running errands, meeting a friend for lunch, etc.
- Pay for a loved one to attend a local adult day program periodically so the caregiver has free time to rest, relax or take care of other responsibilities

There are no income guidelines associated with the initiative, so anyone who may be providing care for someone with dementia is eligible for services. For more information or to set up an appointment please call Chenango County Area Agency on Aging at (607) 337-1770.

Top Reasons To Celebrate Groundhog Day

It's on nearly every calendar

It helps relieve cabin fever

Forecast is no less reliable than the National Weather Service

At least one of them critters is bound to see things your way

Unlike the Easter Bunny, he keeps his dirty paws outside

It's fun to say "Punxsutawney"

If a rodent can bring us an early spring, more power to him



Make Holiday Visits with Loves Ones Count

The holidays are a natural time for families to get together, and sometimes the only occasion they'll have to physically "check in" with each other during the course of the year. This is a great opportunity to look for signals that your older loved one may need some extra help or attention. While you're visiting, here are some signs to look for:

Physical Changes

When you haven't seen your loved one recently, some times it's easier for you to spot physical changes such as weight loss or weight gain than someone who sees them regularly. Additionally, pay attention to reduced mobility, as indicated by difficulty walking or getting up from chairs or couches. Bumps, bruises or cuts may indicate they've had a fall. Any significant physical changes to your loved one should prompt a conversation about scheduling an appointment with a medical professional for a check –up.

Housekeeping

Maybe mom has never been June Cleaver, but check out the refrigerator - is it well stocked? Is trash accumulating in the garage? Does the stove work properly? A decline in home cleanliness as well as the ability to prepare healthy meals are warning signals. If you have concerns about your loved one's ability to maintain their independence, call your local NY Connects program at 1.800.342.9871 to get information about long-term services and supports.

Memory/Mood/Behavior

It's not unusual for dad to repeat the story about that time his senior class pranked the principal in high school. What is unusual is when he repeats questions or stories more than once every 30 minutes. Or if there are any unusually large number of QVC boxes in your normally frugal mother's recycling. Perhaps your typically placid and agreeable father-in-law is surly throughout your entire visit, or your social butterfly grandmother has withdrawn from her knitting club and other friends. These observations may warrant a discussion with their primary care physician, or the scheduling of an appointment with a specialist.

So this year, as your spending time during the holidays with those you love, seize the opportunity to address preventable crises and ensure you're prepared to address any situations that arise as your loved one ages. After all, that's what family is for.

aging.ny.gov/news/2016

The Mission of the Chenango County Area Agency on Aging is to advocate for, plan and provide a coordinated system of services designed to help county residents 60 years of age and older remain independent, secure and active in their community. The Chenango County Area Agency on Aging does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, age, sex, national origin or sponsor, or sexual orientation.