

#### The Bullthistle Bulletin

Chenango County Area Agency on Aging 5 Court Street Norwich, NY 13815 607-337-1770



January - February - March 2020



# HAPPY NEW YEAR!

## 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 United Church of Christ.

## Reminder: HEAP Is Open until March 16, 2020!

**HEAP** opened up November 12, 2019 and runs through March 16, 2020.

Emergency HEAP will open January 2, 2020 and will also end March 16, 2020.

Heating Equipment Repair and Replace opened November 4, 2019, no close date as of yet.

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

Lawrence Wilcox, Chairman Board of Supervisors

Website:

www.co.chenango.ny.us/aaoa



of CHENANGO COUNTY (800) 342-9871 (607) 337-1659

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# News Release from Social Security

#### **New Online Reporting Form for Imposter Scam Calls**

Andrew Saul, Commissioner of Social Security, and Gail S. Ennis, the Inspector General for the Social Security Administration, announce the launch of a dedicated online form at <a href="https://oig.ssa.gov">https://oig.ssa.gov</a> to receive reports from the public of Social Security-related scams. These scams-in which fraudulent callers mislead victims into making cash or gift card payments to avoid arrest for purported Social Security number problems-skyrocketed over the past year to become the #1 type of fraud reported to the Federal Trade Commission and the Social Security Administration.

To combat these scams, Social Security and the OIG will use the new online form to capture data that will that will be analyzed for trends and commonalities. The OIG will use the data to identify investigative leads, which could help identify criminal entities or individuals participated in or facilitating the scams. Ultimately, these efforts are expected to disrupt the scammers, help reduce this type of fraud, and reduce the number of victims.

"We are taking action to raise awareness and prevent scammers from harming Americans," Commissioner Saul said. "I am deeply troubled that our country has not been able to stop these crooks from deceiving some of the most vulnerable members of our society."

Commissioner Saul and Inspector General Ennis encourage the public to use the new online form to report Social Security phone scams including robocalls and live callers, as well as email, text, and in-person scams. The form allows people to create a unique Personal Identification Number (PIN), so if OIG contacts a person about their report, they will know the call is legitimate.

"Awareness is our best hope to thwart the scammers," and Inspector General Ennis. "Tell your friends and family about them and report them to us when you receive them, but most importantly, just hang up and ignore the calls."

Social Security employees do occasionally contact people--generally those who have ongoing business with the agency--by telephone for business purposes. However, Social Security employees will never threaten a person or promise a Social Security benefit approval, or increase, in exchange for information or money. In those cases, the call is fraudulent and people should just hang up.

Generally, the agency mainly calls people who have recently applied for a Social Security benefit, someone who is already receiving payments and requires an update to their record, or a person who has requested a phone call from the agency. If a person is not in one of these situations, they normally would not receive a call from the agency.

#### Social Security will not:

- Tell you that your Social Security number has been suspended.
- Contact you to demand an immediate payment.
- Ask you for credit or debit card numbers over the phone.
- Require a specific means of debt repayment, like a prepaid debit card, a retail gift card, or cash.
- Demand that you pay a Social Security debt without the ability to appeal the amount you owe.
- Promise a Social Security benefit approval, or increase, in exchange for information or money.

## News Release from Social Security (Cont'd)

If there is a problem with a person's Social Security number or record, in most cases Social Security will mail a letter. If a person needs to submit payment to Social Security, the agency will send a letter with instructions and payment options. People should never provide information or payment over the phone or Internet unless they are certain of who is receiving it.

The Social Security OIG will also continue to take reports of fraud, waste, and abuse in Social Security's programs and operations. A separate online form for those reports remains available at their website.

Social Security National Press Office Baltimore, MD

March 17, 2020 St. Patrick's Day





## **Reminder:**

You Can Schedule for AARP's Driver's Safety Course through the Chenango County Area Agency on Aging!

If you need to take a course just give a call to (607) 337-1770. We have courses throughout 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!

#### **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

## **Spring Word Scramble**

<ol> <li>daslguyb</li> <li>uettyfrlb</li> <li>pocsr</li> <li>pnalts</li> </ol>	<b>6</b>
5. fsignhi 6. Ismosbo 7. dwiny	
8. e d s s e	
9. leuabrml	
10. ultlip	

#### **Word List**

Blossom	Plant
Butterfly	Seeds
Crops	Tulip
Fishing	Umbrella
Ladybugs	Windy

## Dear Marci,

\_\_\_\_\_

How does Original Medicare cover inpatient services?

\_\_\_\_\_

Dear Fiona,

Inpatient hospital care and care in a skilled nursing facility (SNF) are both Medicare Part A covered services.





Dear Marci,

I will be having my hip replaced this year, and my doctor told me I will need to stay in the hospital and then likely recover in a skilled nursing facility (SNF). I have original Medicare. How does it cover inpatient services like this?

-Fiona (Culver City, CA)

Part A covers medically necessary inpatient hospital care, which is care that you receive as a formally admitted hospital inpatient. You must be formally admitted into the hospital by a physician in order for your care to be considered inpatient hospital care. You may face different costs if you are a hospital outpatient, meaning you receive services at the hospital but are not formally admitted.

If you are a hospital inpatient, Part A covers:

- A semi-private hospital room and meals
- General nursing care
- Medically necessary medications
- Other hospital services and supplies

#### Medicare does not cover:

- Private duty nursing
- A private room (unless medically necessary or if it is the only room available)
- Personal care items (such as razors or socks)
- A television or telephone in your room

After meeting your Part A deductible, Original Medicare pays in full for the first 60 days of your benefit period. After day 60 you will pay a daily hospital coinsurance. Part B continues to cover any outpatient provider services you receive while in the hospital. You usually owe a separate 20% coinsurance for these services. SNF care is post-hospital care provided at a SNF. Skilled nursing care includes services such as administration of medications, tube feedings, and wound care. Keep in mind that SNFs can be part of nursing homes or hospitals.

## Dear Marci,

## (Continued)



Medicare Part A may cover your SNF care if:

- You were formally admitted as an inpatient to a hospital for at least three consecutive days
- You enter a Medicare-certified SNF within 30 days of leaving the hospital, and receive care for the same condition that you were treated for during your hospital stay
- And, you need skilled nursing care seven days per week or skilled therapy services at least five days per week

Note: the day you become an inpatient counts toward your three-day inpatient stay to qualify for Medicare -covered SNF care. However, the day you are discharged from the hospital does not count toward you qualifying days. Also remember that time spend receiving emergency room care or under observation status does not count toward the three-day hospital inpatient requirements for SNF coverage.

If you meet all of the above requirements, Medicare should cover the SNF care you need to improve your condition, maintain your ability to function, or prevent your health from getting worse.

During a Medicare-covered SNF stay, Part A covers:

- A semi-private room and meals
- Skilled nursing care provided by nursing staff
- Therapy, including physical therapy, speech therapy, and occupational therapy
- Medical social services and dietary counseling
- Medications
- Medical equipment and supplies
- Ambulance transportation to the nearest provider or needed services, when other modes of transportation would endanger your health.

For each benefit period, Part A covers the full cost of your first 20 days in a SNF. For days 21-100, Part A covers part of the cost and you pay a daily coinsurance. If you need more than 100 days of SNF care in a benefit period, you will need to pay out of pocket.

-Marci



#### **VETERANS CORNER**

## <u>Veterans Can Now Access Information</u> <u>Through Health Records on Their IPhone</u>

The Department of Veterans Affairs is introducing nationwide access for veterans to their health data, including their health records from other health care providers in one place.

This can be accessed in the Health Records section of the Health app for iPhone.

Health Records on iPhone is a mobile app that lets users visualize and securely store their health records. All health information including clinical vitals, conditions, lab results, medications and procedures are maintained within a single interface. The app is built with industry standards for security and the connection used to access records is encrypted.

Now patients can see their medical information from different participating institutions including the VA in one view. They will receive notification when their data is updated.

"We have delivered veterans an innovative new way to easily and securely access their health information," said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. "Veterans deserve access to their health data at any time and in one place, and with Health Records on the Health app, VA has pushed the veterans experience forward."

This capability was developed through VA's Veterans Health Application Programming Interface (Veterans Health API), first released in February, and has topped 2,000 users. The Veterans Health API allows private sector organizations to create and deploy innovative digital applications that help veteran access their health records in new ways. Health Records data is encrypted and protected with the user's iPhone passcode, Touch ID or Face ID.

#### Reminder:

Our office and senior centers will be closed for the following holidays:



Wednesday, January 1 for New Year's Day

Monday, January 20 for Martin Luther King Day

Monday, February 17 for President's Day

#### **Answers for the Spring Word Scramble**

- 1. Ladybugs
- 2. Butterfly
  - 3. Crops
- 4. Plants
- 5. Fishing
- 6. Blossom
  - 7. Windy
  - 8. Seeds
- 9. Umbrella



#### Social Security Expands Public Hours at Offices Nationwide

Starting on January 8, 2020, Social Security offices nationwide will be open to the public on Wednesday afternoons, Andrew Saul, Commissioner of Social Security, announced. This change restores Wednesday public service hours that were last in place in late 2012. "I don't want someone to come to our office at 2:30 on a Wednesday only to find our doors closed," Commissioner Saul said.

In another move to improve service to the public, Commissioner Saul announce in his Open Letter to the Public at www.sa.gov/agency/coss-message.html that the agency is hiring 1,100 front lien employees to provide service on the agency National 800 Number and in its processing centers. The agency is currently bringing onboard 100 new process center employees and approximately 500 new teleservice representatives for the 800 Number. An additional 500 hires for the 800 Number will occur later in 2020.

"Improving service is my top priority. Increasing full public service hours at our nationwide network of more tan 1,200 field offices is the right thing to do and will provide additional access," Commissioner Saul said. "The hiring of a thousand new employees to provide service through our National 800 Number and additional 100 hires to process people's Social Security benefits at our processing centers around the country are step in the right direction in our mission to greatly improve the service we provide."

Currently, a field office is generally open to the pubic from 9:00 am to Noon on Wednesdays. Beginning on January 8, 2020, offices will remain open until 4:00pm on Wednesdays, with typical field office hours from 9:00 am until 4:00 pm, Monday through Friday.

While the agency continues to improve both the access to and the experience with its services, it is important to note that most Social Security services do not require the public to take time to visit an office. People may create a *my* Social Security account, a personalized online service, at www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount.

Through their personal my Social Security account, people can check personal information and conduct business with Social Security. If they already receive Social Security benefits, they can start or change direct deposit online, and if they need proof of their benefits, they can print or download a current Benefit Verification Letter from their account.

People not yet receiving benefits can use their online account to get a personalized *Social Security Statement*, which provides earnings history information as well as estimates of future benefits. Currently, residents in 40 states and the District of Columbia may request a replacement Social Security card online if they meet certain requirements. The portal also includes a retirement calculator and links to information about other online services, such as applications for retirement, disability, and Medicare benefits.

Many Social Security services are also conveniently available by dialing toll-free, **1-800-772-1213**. People who are deaf or hard of hearing may call Social Security's TTY number, **1-800-325-0778**.

# New Year's Day Traditional Foods By Debbie Zampetti, RD

# Did you know traditional New Year's Day foods were prepared with the idea they would bring good luck for the coming New Year?

- Pork dishes were served in order to welcome the New Year! A pig will 'root forward' when it eats. So,
  people felt this would welcome the New Year and bring good luck to all! The colors green and gold were
  displayed as they were thought to bring wealth and prosperity.
- In New York during the colonial period, New Year's Day celebrations included 'opening the house' to family and friends with food and spirits. This became so popular that the custom of 'open house' hospitality was spread westward in the United States through the 19th century.
- Seeds have always been associated with fertility. In Greece on New Years they hurl whole pomegranates to the floor to release a flood of seeds that symbolize life and abundance.
- New Year's traditional foods varied by areas of our country. For example, in the south, traditional foods included 'Hoppin John' (rice with black-eyed peas) and fried greens. In New England, crab and oyster dishes were popular as well as ham, minced pie, fruit cake and eggnog.
- In the 1950's and 1960's, a traditional New Year's Meal included eggnog, baked ham, roast turkey, rib roast with horseradish sauce, olives, radishes, pickle trays, cranberry jelly, and fruit cake.

**Is eating healthier one of your New Year's Resolutions?** If so, skip the 'fad' diets and overly restrictive diets. Try to make simple changes, move more; make healthier food choices to achieve your New Year's resolutions without feeling 'deprived.'

 Choose colorful vegetables and fill you plate or bowl with them. Veggies are loaded with vitamins, antioxidants and fiber. They can fill you up so you are less likely to binge on high fat or processed foods.
 Snack on fresh or dried fruits instead of chips or cookies. They are also loaded with vitamins and antioxidants.

#### Apple Cider Chicken (Makes 4 Servings)

1½ pounds boneless skinless chicken thighs

4 tsp extra virgin olive oil

1 tsp Kosher salt, divided

2 tsp Dijon-style Mustard

1/2 cup apple cider

3 med apples, cored and sliced (Gala, Empire)

2 tsp chopped fresh rosemary

2 tsp black pepper

- Heat 2 tsp oil in large skillet over medium heat. Sprinkle top of chicken evenly w/half of salt and ¼ tsp pepper. Add chicken to pan, top-side down, cook 4 minutes then flip and cook until meat reaches 160 degrees, 4-5 additional minutes. Remove to plate and cover w/ foil.
- In a small bowl stir together the cider and mustard. Add additional oil to pan over med heat. Once hot, add apples, remaining salt, pepper and rosemary. Cook for 5 minutes until apples are tender and golden. Return chicken to pan, add cider mixture.

Cook 4-5 mins. ENJOY!

Nutrition Facts: 286 Calories, 10gms Total Fat, 1gm Sat Fat, 21gms Carbohydrate,

### NEWS FROM THE NUTRITION DEPARTMENT......

The Chenango County Area Agency on Aging is very excited to announce that its' Home Delivered Meal program is now affiliated with Meals on Wheels of America (MOW). This affiliation will enable our Agency to

take advantage of the vast resources, brand recognition and fundraising campaigns that MOW is known for.

Did you know that Meals on Wheels provides one million meals every day across the U.S. through 5,000 community based programs? This nutritious meal comes with a friendly visit and a safety check that 92% of our recipients say enables them to live at home, where they want to be. Right here in Chenango County, we deliver over 1,200 each week to seniors throughout Chenango County. Meals on Wheels is the only network that's already in



place and there day in and day out for every aging person in America. We help seniors age with greater dignity, respect, independence and vitality – and the billions in taxpayer spending saved nationwide by keeping seniors in their homes instead of in hospitals and nursing homes is felt right here in this community.

Be on the lookout in March 2020 for the MOW annual March for Meals campaign. The month of March mobilizes hundreds of local Meals on Wheels programs across the country to reach out to their communities and build the support that will enable them to serve America's seniors all year long. The 18th annual March for Meals campaign gives the businesses, organizations, governments and volunteers who contribute so generously in their communities an opportunity to support homebound seniors in a variety of ways to make America stronger and healthier.

To find out more information about meal delivery or how you can help by becoming a volunteer, please call 607-337-1770.



This is Nellie Davis, from the Brightman Senior Center in Greene, NY. She was Senior of the Year for 2019. She rode in the car in the Chenango County Fair parade. Congratulations Nellie!





## **Traveling**

Living with Alzheimer's or another dementia does not mean it's necessary to stop participating in meaningful activities such as travel. However, it does require planning to ensure safety, comfort and enjoyment for everyone.

#### Tips for a calm traveling experience

- Plan ahead.
- Learn to recognize the warning signs of anxiety and agitation and identify strategies to reduce them. Discuss this plan with the person living with dementia.
- Try not to overload the person with a lot of directions or too much information.

#### General travel considerations

- Environmental changes can trigger wandering or confusion. Consider enrolling in a wandering response service.
- It may be helpful to stick with the familiar. Travel to known destinations that involve as few changes in daily routine as possible.
- Evaluate options for the best mode of travel. Based on needs, abilities, safety and preferences, decide what would provide the most comfort and the least anxiety.
- When selecting destinations, consider those that have easy access to emergency health services and pharmacies.
- Consider everyone's needs and desires as you plan your trip; elaborate sightseeing trips or complicated tours may cause anxiety and confusion.
- If you will be staying in a hotel, consider informing the staff ahead of time of our specific needs so they can be prepared to assist you.
- Have a backup plan in case your trip needs to change unexpectedly. This may mean purchasing travel insurance if you have booked flights or hotels.
- Carry with you're an itinerary that includes details about each destination. Give copies to family members or friend you will be visiting or to emergency contacts at home.
- Travel during the time of day that is best for the person. For example, if he or she becomes tired or more agitated in the late afternoon, avoid traveling at this time.

- Have a bag of essentials with you at all times that includes medications, your travel itinerary, a comfortable change of clothes, water, snacks and activities.
- Remember to pack necessary medications, up-to-date medical information, a list of emergency contacts and photocopies of important legal documents.
- Allow plenty of time for rest. Don't over-schedule.
- Doctors' names and contact information.
- A list of current medications and dosages.
- Phone numbers and addresses of the local police and fire departments, hospitals and poison control.
- A list of food or drug allergies.
- Copies of legal papers (living will, advanced directives, power of attorney, etc)
- Names and contact information of friends and family members to call in case of an emergency.
- Insurance information (policy number, member name)

#### Visits to family and friends

Prepare friends or family members for the visit by explaining dementia and any changes it has caused. Go over any special needs and explain that the visit could be short or that you may need to change activities on short notice. Some additional considerations.

- It May be helpful to stay as close to your normal routine as possible. For example, keep meal and bed times on a similar schedule to that followed at home. Eating in may be a better choice that at a crowed restaurant.
- Be realistic about abilities and limitations. Allow extra time when scheduling activities.

#### **Air Travel**

Moving through an airport requires focus and attention, as the level of activity can be distracting, overwhelming and difficult to understand. Consider the following for air travel.

- Make your reservation through a travel agency or by working with the airline directly. Doing so allows
  you to add notes or instructions to the reservation for special needs such as wheelchair assistance or in
  -flight meals.
- Avoid scheduling flights that require tight connections.
- If traveling through an unfamiliar airport, review a map of the facility to plan for distance between connecting flights, locations where security re-entry may be required to locate convenient locations such as restrooms.
- If walking is difficult, consider requesting a wheelchair or motorized cart so that an airport employee is assigned to help you get from place to place. Most airlines ask for at least 48 hours of notice.
- Even if the passenger does not require support for mobility, consider requesting a wheelchair assistance to help with navigation through security checkpoints. This support may help expedite the process and reduce stress.
- While at the airport, ask what to expect and inform the TSA agent at the security checkpoint about the dementia diagnosis.
- Do not hesitate to ask for assistance from airport employees and in-flight crew.
- If the person needs help using the restroom, look for companion care bathrooms so you can more easily assist.
- Stay with your travel companion at all times.

#### Traveling alone with dementia

Some individuals in the early stage of Alzheimers who remain independent may be able to travel alone, but planning ahead is necessary. Consider the following:

- When booking flights, inquire if the airline offers a "meet-and-greet" service to escort passengers through security and to their gate terminal. This service may also be used to help passengers transfer between connecting flights.
- Inquire about any other services that would offer companion support to meet the safety needs of the passenger.
- Include all emergency contacts on the airline reservation.
- Contact TSA to determine if a pass can be issued to family members or friends to escort the passenger through security to their gate terminal.
- Make sure that all travel documents and identification are readily accessible. It may be helpful for the person to wear a document holder.



## 2019 Senior Center Christmas Party Pictures





Carols from New York Central Mutual at Sherburne

















#### February is American Heart Month!

- The purpose is to increase awareness about heart health.
- Every year, many American families are subjected to heart disease and stroke.
- It is still the leading cause of death and accounts for \$1 of every \$6 spent on healthcare.
- The causes of heart disease can vary among people. But many cases are directly related to a person's lifestyle.
- Portion sizes of foods have grown to almost 5 times bigger than they were years ago.
- Beverages have calories too. These portion sizes have continued to increase. In the 1970's, the average sweetened beverage was about 13 ounces. Today, the average size is 20 ounces!
- Americans are eating 31% more calories than 40 years ago.
- This includes 56% more fat and 14% more sugars and sweeteners.
- The average person eats 15 MORE pounds of sugar a year than in the 1970's.

#### Here are some simple steps that can help you prevent or control heart disease:

#### Remember Your ABC'S!

**A**: Appropriate Aspirin Therapy \*\*See your healthcare provider before taking aspirin.

**B**: Blood Pressure Control

C: Cholesterol Management

**S**: Smoking Cessation

#### Slow Cooker Turkey Chili w/ Sweet Potatoes (Makes 6 Servings)

1 TBSP Olive Oil ½ tsp black pepper

1 pound lean ground turkey 2 TBSP chili powder

1 large yellow onion, chopped 2 tsp ground cumin

1 tsp salt 2 large sweet potatoes, peeled and diced

1 tsp garlic powder 1 cup uncooked Quinoa

28oz crushed tomatoes 1 15oz can black beans rinsed and drained

4 cups low-sodium chicken stock

- 1. Heat the olive oil in a large skillet or Dutch oven over medium heat. Add the turkey, onion, salt, garlic pow der, and black pepper. Break up turkey while cooking until no longer pink about 5 mins. Stir in chili powder and cumin transfer to a slow cooker.
- 2. Add sweet potatoes, quinoa, stock, tomatoes and black beans to slow cooker. Cover and cook on high for 3-4 hrs. Serve warm with shredded cheese and sour cream
- Nutritional Facts: Per Serving: 450 calories, 10gms total fat, 2gms saturated fat, 57mg cholesterol,
   563mg sodium,7gms



#### February 29, 2020...Is Leap Day!

Leap Day is every four years...almost. It's every four years except years ending with "00" that are not divisible by 400. The year in which Leap Day occurs, is called a Leap Year. Upcoming Leap years will be February 29, 2024; February 29, 2028; February 29, 2032.

Why the fancy calculation? The earth rotates around the sun once every 365 and about 1/4 days. So, by adding an extra day every four years, we get mighty close to keeping the calendar consistent with the earth's annual trip around the sun. And to be very precise, the earth orbits the sun every 365.242190 days. So, on years ending in "00", (except those not divisible by 400) we skip Leap Year and Leap Day. With all

that fancy calculating out of the way, lets just celebrate the day.

**Did you know?** There are occasional "Leap Seconds". We will spare you the detail on those, except to say it helps to correct minor variations. On December 31, 2015, the folks who maintain the official time for the planet, added an extra second to the day!

If your birthday is on Leap Day, congratulations, you finally get to celebrate your birthday on your birth date. Just how many of us are celebrating our Birthday on Leap Day? Only about one in 1461 people. If you were born on this day, consider yourself very, very special.



## To Make a Donation, Subscribe or Change of Address

Please clip and send this coupon along with your contribution payable to or address change to:

Chenango County Area Agency on Aging 5 Court Street Norwich, NY 13815

The Chenango County Area Agency on Aging
appreciates and gratefully accepts financial
contributions to help off-set needs beyond
available resources.

I would like my contribution to go to:

Home Delivered Meals
Legal Services
Health Insurance Counseling
Where it is most needed
In Memory of

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.