



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

April - May - June 2020 Issue



**Office for
the Aging**

Coronavirus - Tips on How to Stay Healthy

- ⇒ Wash hands often with soap and hot water for at least 20 seconds.
- ⇒ Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- ⇒ Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- ⇒ Stay 6 feet away from others.
- ⇒ Get your prescriptions refilled now. Use drive thru to pickup if possible. Many insurance companies are waiving time restrictions and you can get them sooner.
- ⇒ **STAY AT HOME.** Limit exposure. Send family members on errands for you. Leave any items at your door or just inside.
- ⇒ If you feel sick, call your doctor and describe your symptoms. Do not go there without speaking to them first. They will have specific recommendations for you.
- ⇒ Reschedule all unnecessary appointments.



Keep up with all the current information

Like Us On Facebook

Chenango County Area
Agency on Aging



Lawrence Wilcox, Chairman
Board of Supervisors

Website:
www.co.chenango.ny.us/aoa



Brian Wessels, Director
Area Agency on Aging

Email:
chenaaoa@co.chenango.ny.us

Let Us Help You Connect



NY Connects
Your Link to Long Term
Services and Supports

of **CHENANGO COUNTY**

(800) 342-9871

(607) 337-1659

For people of all ages and their caregivers.

What is NY Connects?

NY Connects Chenango provides free, unbiased information and assistance to access long term services and supports. It is a trusted place where you can get the resources needed to make an informed decision. Our primary goal is to help individuals to remain healthy and independent.

Who is Eligible for NY Connects?

NY Connects is for all ages, any disability, and for caregivers. NY Connects can work with anyone who needs information on long term services and supports — children or adults with disabilities, older adults, family members and caregivers, friends or neighbors, veterans and helping professionals.

How can we help YOU?

- Anyone can get help and information by phone, online, or in-person
- We can help link you to long-term services and supports
- We can coordinate with other agencies to guide you through the eligibility processes
- We provide linkages for any necessary assessments you may need
- Help is also available for application and enrollment in public assistance benefits

BY PHONE (607) 337-1659 or 1-800-342-9871

ONLINE www.co.chenango.ny.us/ny-connects

www.nyconnects.ny.gov

IN PERSON Chenango County Health Department

5 Court Street, Norwich NY 13815



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Get help with your long term services and supports needs.

Volunteer Advocates Needed



Imagine being told if and when you are able shower each day. Told what foods you can eat. Lucky if you get a warm meal.

Imagine being treated as though you are incapable of making your own decisions. As though you are mindless. Unable to think for yourself.

Imagine being treated as though you are just another patient each day. As though your care is just another task that must be accomplished. Undeserving of the time necessary for compassion, dignity, and respect.

This is the reality for some long-term care residents. But you can make a difference.

The Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program dedicates itself to protecting the rights and ensuring quality of life for residents in nursing homes, adult care, assisted, and enriched living facilities.

NYS Ombudsmen make weekly visits to an assigned care facility in Broome, Chenango, Delaware, or Tioga County to assist residents in advocating for their rights and addressing any concerns. Ombudsmen attend a free 36 hour certificate training to better understand the issues that may occur within facilities and strategies to find impactful solutions.

Contact Morgan White or Reva Mack at (607) 722-1251 to advocate for one of our community's most vulnerable populations.

The advertisement features a photograph of an elderly woman with white hair, wearing a light-colored jacket and a colorful scarf, smiling as she is helped into a car by a younger woman with blonde hair wearing a dark jacket. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

WE VOLUNTEER DRIVERS!

...and we reimburse for mileage!

If you like to drive, your community needs you and **we want you.**

- Flexible schedule—drive when you want
- Mileage reimbursement
- Insured
- Training provided

Getthere

For info call 1-855-373-4040

gettherescny.org

Diabetes Basics: An Introduction to Diabetes

By Debbie Zampetti, RD, Chenango County Area Agency on Aging

What is Diabetes?

Diabetes occurs when your body has a problem with insulin and the insulin cannot get glucose (sugar from the blood into your body's cells). This causes the amount of glucose in your blood to increase higher than normal. Another name for high blood glucose is called hyperglycemia.

Blood Glucose and Insulin.

When you eat carbohydrate-containing foods, your body breaks these foods down into their simplest form for digestion called glucose. The glucose is absorbed from the small intestine into the blood. Once the glucose is in the blood, the insulin moves the glucose out of the bloodstream into the body's cells. The glucose cannot get into the cells without the help of insulin. Insulin is a hormone made by the beta-cells in your pancreas. The pancreas is an organ located behind your stomach. The beta-cells secrete insulin into your bloodstream when glucose is present. In diabetes, insulin is the problem. Your body either doesn't make enough insulin, can't use the insulin it makes or some combination of both. Depending on the problem, diabetes is classified as Type 1, Type 2 or Gestational Diabetes (diabetes during pregnancy).

What is the Difference between Diabetes Type 1 and Type 2?

Type 1. The beta cells in the pancreas do not make insulin so the person must take insulin in the form of a syringe, insulin pen or insulin pump.

Type 2. This is called insulin resistance. The beta cells of the pancreas make insulin but the body doesn't use it normally. At first the beta cells make extra insulin to make up for the insulin resistance but then over time the pancreas can't keep up and blood glucose levels rise. Eventually, the person has to be treated with oral medications and/or insulin.

Risk Factors associated with Type 2 Diabetes.

Overweight and obesity
Physical inactivity
History of hyperglycemia or prediabetes
High blood pressure
Abnormal Cholesterol
Age
Family History & Genetics
Race and Ethnicity



Symptoms of Diabetes.

Symptoms of Type 1 Diabetes usually occur very quickly and are serious because blood glucose levels run very high. These symptoms include frequent urination, thirst, hungry all the time, feeling tired a lot and blurred vision. Type 1 Diabetics will have weight loss without trying even though they are hungry. They may have nausea and vomiting due to the build-up of ketones in their blood. Type 1 Diabetics can also experience diabetic ketoacidosis (DKA) from having very high blood glucose levels.

Type 2 Diabetics may have these symptoms in common such as hunger, thirst, frequent urination, fatigue and blurred vision as well. Type 2 Diabetics may also experience tingling, pain, or numbness in the hands or feet, and frequent infections or slow healing wounds.

Type 2 Diabetics may only have mild symptoms for years before diabetes is detected.

Early detection and treatment of diabetes can decrease the risk of further complications of other chronic conditions.

How is Diabetes Diagnosed?

There are a few methods used to determine if a person has diabetes. Usually these tests are repeated a second day to confirm diabetes. Testing for diabetes should always be done at a health care facility such as a doctor's office or lab.

Fasting Plasma Glucose (FPG). This is a blood test that is usually done first thing in the morning after an 8 hour fast of nothing to eat or drink, except water. Diabetes is diagnosed at a FPG of 126 mg/dl or higher.

Random Plasma Glucose Test (also called Casual Plasma Glucose Test). Your doctor may use this test if you show acute signs of diabetes. Diabetes is diagnosed with a blood glucose of 200 mg/dl or higher.

Oral Glucose Tolerance Test (OGTT). This is a 2 hour test that checks your blood glucose levels before and 2 hours after you drink a carbohydrate containing drink. It shows how quickly your body processes glucose. Diabetes is diagnosed if your blood glucose after 2 hours is 200 mg/dl or higher.

Hgb A1C. The A1C test measures your average blood glucose level from the past 3 months. No special drinks or fasting is required. Diabetes is diagnosed with an A1C of 6.5% or higher. 6.5% = 140 mg/dl average blood glucose for the past 3 months. (6% = 126 mg/dl. 7% 154 mg/dl.)

Treatments for Diabetes.

Plan your meals. Choose what, how much and when to eat.

Exercise. Be physically active.

Insulin and/or Oral Medications. Take medications as your doctor prescribes them.

More on Meal Planning.

Make healthy choices every day. Start with small steps.

Cut down on sugared beverages and have more water.

Choose fruit instead of high calorie high fat cake, pie or cookies.

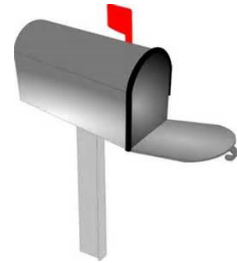
Cut calories by cutting back on portion sizes. Eat smaller serving sizes.

Learn about Carbohydrate Counting to help with meal planning. Along with the right balance of insulin, carbohydrates can help manage your blood glucose.



How can I appeal a Part D enrollment penalty?

Dear Marci,



I enrolled in Medicare about three years ago when I turned 65, but I just enrolled in a Part D plan. I recently found out that my plan is going to charge me a late enrollment penalty. What is this penalty, and what can I do about it?

-Sharon (Nashville, TN)

For each month you delayed enrollment in Medicare Part D, you will have to pay a Part D late enrollment penalty (LEP), unless you:

- Had creditable coverage, meaning coverage that is as good as or better than the basic Part D benefit.
- Qualify for the Extra Help program.
- Prove that you received inadequate information about whether your drug cover was creditable.

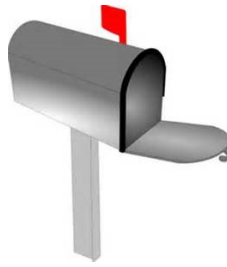
In most cases, you will have to pay that penalty every month for a long as you have Medicare. There are some exceptions:

- If you receive Extra Help, your penalty will be permanently erased.
- If you are under 65 and have Medicare, your LEP will end when you turn 65.
- If you qualify for a state pharmaceutical assistance program (SPAP), it may pay your penalty for you. To find out if your state has an SPAP, how it works, and how you can apply, contact your local State Health Insurance Program (SHIP) by calling 877-839-2675, by visiting www.shiptocenter.org or call The Area Agency on Aging at 607-337-1770.

Everyone has a right to file an appeal with MAXIMUS regarding their LEP determination. MAXIMUS is the company contracted by Medicare to handle these appeals. You can appeal the penalty (if you think you were continuously covered) or its amount (if you think it was calculated incorrectly). You should complete the appeal form you received from your plan, attach any evidence you have, and mail everything to MAXIMUS.

Unfortunately, being unaware of the requirement to have prescription drug coverage is unlikely to be a successful basis for your appeal. However, the following are good reasons to appeal and may result in the elimination or reduction of your penalty:

Dear Marci,



- You have Extra Help.
- You had creditable drug coverage during some or all of the time period in question.

Call your former plan and ask for a letter proving that you were enrolled in creditable drug coverage. Make sure to attach this letter to your appeal form. Your employer or union may also be able to confirm the fact that you had creditable drug coverage.

- You had non-creditable drug coverage, but your or your spouse’s employer or insurer told you it was creditable or didn’t inform you that it was not creditable.
- You were ineligible for Medicare prescription drug coverage (e.g., if you were living outside of the U.S. or you were incarcerated).
- You could not enroll into drug coverage because of a serious medical emergency.

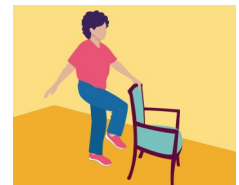
The appeal deadline is 60 days from the date you received the letter informing you about the penalty. If you miss this deadline, you can write a letter explaining why you had a good cause, or a good reason—like serious illness—that prevented you from appealing on time. Attach this letter to your appeal. Once your appeal is submitted, you can expect a determination from MAXIMUS within 90 days. In the meantime, pay the LEP to your plan along with your premium. If your appeal is successful, your plan has to pay you back for the LEP payments you made while your appeal was pending.

- Marci

A Fall Could Change Everything! Check out our Stepping On Balance Class!

Stepping On can help you avoid a dangerous and costly fall so you can keep doing the things you love to do. In seven weeks you’ll learn:

- **To identify and remove or avoid fall hazards in your home and outside**
- **How vision, hearing, medication, and footwear affect your risk of falling**
- **Strength and balance exercises you can adapt to your individual level**
- **To get back on your feet the right way if you do fall.**



We currently have 2 classes this summer, May 7th-June 25 at the Oxford Library and July 9-August 20 at the Guernsey Library in Norwich. Please call 607-337-1770 to register.

April 20, 2020 is Volunteer Appreciation Day!



Volunteers come in all shapes and sizes, but they are all the real-life saints and superheroes of this world. And although they don't ask to be paid for all of their selfless work, they definitely deserve our utmost respect and appreciation, which is exactly what Volunteer Recognition Day is all about.

There are many ways you can celebrate this day in such a way as to honor those who have dedicated a large part of their lives to helping the needy the world has forgotten about. The best one is to find a way you can help someone—of course, this does not mean you should drop everything and move to a third-world country.

No matter where you live, there are people all around you who have been dealt a bad hand in life, and who need things that most of us take for granted, like a roof over their heads, clothing, a hot meal, or just a little bit of love and attention. This doesn't just go for people. Animal shelters are always bursting at the seams with lonely animals who just need someone to cuddle up to.

So choose a cause that is especially close to your heart, and spend this day helping someone else. Chances are, you'll find the experience more rewarding than any salary could ever be.

Allergy Season is Upon Us!



What you need to know:

- Pollen is the most common cause of allergic rhinitis.
- Pollen is microscopic in size.
- Pollen from trees, grasses and weeds is easily windblown and knows to cause allergies.

What is Pollen?

Pollen is the tiny egg-shaped male cells of flowering plants, including trees, grasses, and weeds.

Which plants produce pollen that cause allergic reactions?

Trees, Grasses and Weeds

When is pollen season?

Each plant has a pollen season. It usually starts in the spring, but may begin as early as January in the southern areas of the U.S. The season usually lasts until November.

Can allergic rhinitis in pollen season be prevented?

To lessen the effects of allergic rhinitis during pollen season, the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology suggests the following:

Keep windows closed at night and use air conditioning

Minimize outdoor activities early in the morning, between 5 and 10 am.

Keep car windows closed when traveling.

Don't rake leaves during pollen season.

If you are allergic to grass, wear a mask or have someone else mow the lawn.



Free Wellness Workshops!



Learn tools and knowledge to improve your health. Secure your spot!

Learn and practice ways to support your physical, mental and emotional health by creating action plans and achievable steps towards your wellness goals. The 7-week workshop atmosphere is supportive and encouraging. Caregivers are welcome! Sign up by: calling 607-547-3948; emailing: livingwellsessions@bassett.org; or online: www.bassett.org/livingwell. Follow on Facebook at www.facebook.com/BassettLivingWell.

Living Well with Diabetes is for those living with diabetes (Type 1, Type 2, gestational, or prediabetes). Self-management techniques include:

Whether a newly diagnosed diabetic or someone who has had diabetes for years, this course will keep you updated and aware of ways you can help yourself maintain a healthy lifestyle."

- The importance of monitoring glucose levels
- Observing symptoms and knowing what to do
- Following a healthy eating plan
- Engaging in regular physical activity
- Managing stress and emotions (fatigue, depression)
- Dealing with sick days, infections and illnesses
- Using medications in a safe and effective way
- Getting necessary tests, exams and immunizations

Living Well with Chronic Pain Self-management techniques include:

- Manage chronic pain symptoms
- Using your mind to manage pain symptoms
- Pacing: balancing activity and rest
- Exercising safely (use the Moving Easy Program)
- The impact of healthy eating on chronic pain
- Identifying ways to cope with difficult emotions
- Discover effective ways to talk to doctors, family, and friends about your needs and type of pain
- Understand medications for chronic pain

I found the group setting to be very beneficial. I came into this having a pretty good grasp of pain management. Turns out I learned even more



Bassett Healthcare Network

Living Well with a Chronic Condition includes any ongoing condition such as depression, anxiety, respiratory conditions, and heart conditions. Self-management techniques include:

Well rounded program that offers a wide view of managing your illness. It makes you think about multiple ways of dealing with it. Helps to know you're not alone."

- Using your mind to manage symptoms and emotions
- Fall prevention, improving balance
- Ways to improve strength, flexibility, and endurance
- Effectively communicate with doctors, family, and friends
- Making healthy food choices
- Maintaining a healthy weight
- Making informed treatment decisions



Call: 607-547-3948
www.facebook.com/BassettLivingWell
Email: LivingWellSessions@bassett.org
Online: www.bassett.org/LivingWell

Spring 2020 Schedule

Living Well with Diabetes

Cobleskill: Tuesdays 9:30am-12pm at Schoharie Office for the Aging starting 5/12/2020

Cooperstown: Wednesdays 5-7:30pm at Clark Sports Center starting 5/13/2020

Delhi: Thursdays 3-5:30pm at O'Connor Hospital starting 5/14/2020

Hamilton: Tuesdays 5-7:30pm at Hamilton Bassett Clinic starting 5/12/2020

Little Falls: Tuesdays 5-7:30pm at Little Falls Hospital starting 5/12/2020

Norwich: Wednesdays 1-3:30pm at the Eaton Center starting 5/13/2020

Oneonta: Thursdays 12:30-3:00pm at FoxCare starting 5/14/2020

Living Well with Chronic Pain

Cobleskill: Tuesdays 1:30-4pm at Calvary Assembly of God starting 3/24/2020

Cooperstown: Mondays 5-7:30pm at Clark Sports Center starting 3/23/2020

Hamilton: Tuesdays 9:30am-12pm at Hamilton Public Library starting 3/24/2020

Herkimer: Tuesdays 5-7:30pm at Herkimer County Chamber of Commerce starting 3/24/2020

Little Falls: Wednesdays 2-4:30pm at Little Falls Hospital starting 3/25/2020

Norwich: Wednesdays 9:30am-12pm at the Eaton Center starting 3/25/2020

Oneida: Wednesdays 5-7:30pm at Oneida Healthcare Center starting 3/25/2020

Oneonta: Fridays 9:30am-12pm at FoxCare starting 3/27/2020

Sidney: Tuesdays 9:30am-12pm at Tri-Town Hospital starting 3/31/2020

Living Well with Chronic Conditions

Canastota: Tuesdays 1-3:30pm at Madison Office for the Aging starting 5/12/2020

Cobleskill: Thursdays 9:30am-12pm at Schoharie Office for the Aging starting 5/14/2020

Cooperstown: Tuesdays 1-3:30pm at Clark Sports Center starting 5/12/2020

Ilion: Wednesdays 9:30am-12pm at John Guy Prindle Apts. starting 5/13/2020

Norwich: Tuesdays 5-7:30pm at the Eaton Center starting 5/12/2020

Oneonta: Mondays 5-7:30pm at FoxCare starting 5/11/2020

Living Well Workshops are offered in spring and fall. Locations, times and days change from season to season. Contact the Living Well Program for workshop schedule change updates.

FACTS ABOUT THE 2020 CENSUS YOU SHOULD KNOW!



What is the 2020 Census?

The 2020 Census counts every person living in the 50 states, district of Columbia, and five U.S. territories (Puerto Rico, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands).

The count is mandated by the Constitution and conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau, a non partisan government agency.

Why We Conduct This Count?

The census provides critical data that lawmakers, business owners, teachers, and many others use to provide daily services, products, and support for you and your community. Every year, billions of dollars in federal funding go to hospitals, fire departments, schools, roads, and other resources based on census data.

The results of the census also determine the number of seats each state will have in the U.S. House of Representatives, and they are used to draw congressional and state legislative districts.

It's also in the Constitution: Article 1, Section 2, mandates that the country conduct a count of its population once every 10 years.

Ways to Respond

By April 1, 2020, every home will receive an invitation to participate in the 2020 Census. You will have three options for responding, online, by phone and by mail. If you do not respond online by phone or mail a census worker may come to your home. If they do be sure to cooperate with them.

Importance of the Data

The 2020 Census will determine congressional representation, inform hundreds of billions in federal funding, and provide data that will impact communities for the next decade.

The 2020 Census will provide a snapshot of our nation-who we are, where we live, and so much more.

The results of this once-a-decade count determine the number of seats each state has in the House of Representatives. They are also used to draw congressional and state legislative districts.

Over the next decade, lawmakers, business owners, and many others will use 2020 Census data to make critical decisions. The results will show where communities need new schools, new clinics, new roads, and more services for families, older adults, and children.

The results will also inform how hundreds of billions of dollars in federal funding are allocated to more than 100 programs, including Medicaid, Head Start, block grants for community mental health services, and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, also known as SNAP.

The U.S. Constitution mandates that the country count its population once every 10 years. The results are used to adjust or redraw electoral districts, based on where populations have increased or decreased.

State legislatures or independent bipartisan commissions are responsible for redrawing congressional districts. The U.S. Census Bureau provides states with population counts for this purpose.

Federal Funding

The results of the 2020 Census will inform decisions about allocating hundreds of billions of dollars in federal funding to communities across the country-for hospitals, fire departments, school lunch programs, and other critical programs and services.

People with Medicare looking to fill gaps in their coverage and/or get assistance with Medicare costs can choose to enroll in a supplemental insurance policy (Medigap) in addition to Original Medicare or to enroll in a Medicare Advantage Plan. Here's a look at the differences between these two options.

Medigap

Polices that provide insurance through private companies and help fill cost-sharing gaps

Medigaps may help pay for Medicare deductibles, coinsurances, and copayments. Depending on where you live, and when you became eligible for Medicare, you have up to 10 different Medigap plans to choose from : A, B, C, F, G, K, L, M, and N. Each lettered Medigap offers a different set of benefits, but all plans with the same letter must offer the same benefits (regardless of the company you buy it from). Premiums vary, depending on both the plan you choose and the company you buy from.

Medicare Advantage

Private plans that contract with the federal government to provide Medicare benefits

Medicare Advantage Plans must provide at least the same set of benefits offered by Original Medicare, but they may have different rules, costs, and restrictions. For instance, Medicare Advantage Plans may require that you see health care providers in their network, and/or that you get a referral from your doctor before seeing specialists. Some MA Plans offer extra, Medicare-excluded benefits, such as dental care.

If you sign up for Original Medicare and Medigap and later decide you would like to try a Medicare Advantage Plan-or vice versa-be aware that there are certain enrollment periods when you are allowed to make changes. Additionally, Medigap enrollment rules vary by state. Familiarize yourself with your state's rules before disenrolling from your Medigap.

Keep in mind that different areas have different Medicare Advantage Plans and Medigap options. A particular plan may not be available where you live. For assistance finding Medicare Advantage Plans in your area, call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800- 633-4227) or your State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP).

The table below compares Original Medicare with a Medigap and Medicare Advantage. Remember that there are several different kinds of plans. If you are interest in joining a plan, make sure to speak to a plan representative for more information.

	Medigap	Medicare Advantage
Cost-sharing	Pays part or all of certain remaining costs after Original Medicare pays first.	Cost-sharing varies depending on plan. Usually pay a copay for in-network care. Make sure to compare a particular plan's cost-sharing to Original Medicare.
Premium	Plans charge a monthly premium in addition to the Part B premium.	Plans may charge a monthly premium in addition to the Part B premium.
Provider Access	See any provider and use any facility that accepts Medicare (Note: If you have a Medicare SELECT plan, you must use your Medigap plan's network)	Typically see only in-network providers
Referrals	Do not need referrals for specialists	Typically need referrals for specialists
Other benefits	Generally only covers Medicare cost-sharing. However, may cover costs Medicare does not cover at all, like 365 additional lifetime days for hospital or care received when traveling abroad.	May cover additional services, including vision, hearing, and dental (additional benefits may increase your premium or other out-of-pocket costs)
Enrollment	In most states, insurance Companies must only sell you a policy at certain times and if you meet certain requirements. Call your local SHIP office or Medicare.	May use the Fall Open Enrollment Period (October 15 through December 7) Pick a new Medicare Advantage Plan or switch between Original Medicare and Medicare Advantage

Veterans News

VA to Begin Processing Blue Water Vietnam Vet Benefits Jan 1

The Blue Water Navy veterans - those who were stationed on ships in deep waters off the coast of Vietnam - their survivors and certain dependents will soon receive their long awaited benefits for exposure related to Agent Orange.

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) will begin processing claims January 1, 2020. Before President Donald Trump signed the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2019 into law in June, only Vietnam War veterans who served on the ground or within inland waterways were eligible to receive disability compensation and other benefits based on a resumption of herbicide exposure.

Benefits include health care, compensation and an Agent Orange Registry health exam.

Veterans who served as far as 12 nautical miles offshore from Vietnam between January 6, 1962 and May 7, 1975, as well as those who served in the Korean demilitarized zone between January 1, 1967, and August 31, 1971, can apply for compensation if they have developed one of 14 conditions. These conditions are AL Amyloidosis, Chloracne, Diabetes Millitus Type 2, Hodgkin's Disease, Ischemic Heart Disease, Multiple Myeloma, Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma, Parkinson's Disease, Peripheral Neuropathy, Early-Onset, Porphyria Cutanea Tarda, Prostate Cancer, Respiratory Cancers (includes lung cancer) and Soft Tissue Sarcomas.

"For six months, VA worked diligently to gather and digitize records from the Naval History and Heritage Command in order to support faster claims decisions," VA Secretary Robert Wilkie said in a news release. "These efforts will positively impact the claims process for veterans filing for these benefits."

Survivors can file claims for benefits based on the veteran's service and cause of death from one of the conditions associated with Agent Orange. Children born with spina bifida, if the parent was a veteran and verified services from January 1962 to May 1975 in Thailand, also qualify.

According to the news release, veterans filing a claim for herbicide-related disability should use VA Form 21-526EZ or work with a VA recognized veterans service organization to assist in the application process. They may also contact their state Veterans Affairs office.

Blue Water veterans who previously filed a claim that was denied may provide new or additional information regarding their claim when reapplying. To do so, veterans should use VA Form 20-0995. The new law allows Veterans Affairs to automatically review claims now in the review process or under appeal.

Although the VA has said that as many as 560,000 veterans could qualify under the law, advocates say the number is closer to 90,000.

Priority Processing

To speed up the review process, Department of Veterans Affairs officials say they are compiling ship information, digitizing naval records and developing a communication campaign to reach Vietnam veterans.

Veterans in one or more of these circumstance will move up in the claims line:

- Older than age 85
- With life-threatening illnesses
- At risk of homelessness
- In financial hardship



**TO MAKE A CONTRIBUTION FOR “THE BULLTHISTLE BULLETIN” OR
FOR A CHANGE OF ADDRESS**

CONTRIBUTION – Wish to make a contribution to “The Bullthistle Bulletin” but can’t remember when you last made one? Here’s a suggestion – consider contributing on your birthday, the first of the year or any holiday you choose. Planning tasks and yearly appointments on or around a specific day during the year that you already know and can easily remember makes it much easier to plan for those things which only occur once a year.

SUGGESTED CONTRIBUTION: \$10 PER YEAR

Most services provided have no fee, but you are welcome to contribute towards their cost. No one is ever denied service due to an inability or unwillingness to contribute. Those with a self-declared income at or above 185% of the Federal Poverty line are encouraged to contribute at levels based on the actual cost. All contributions are used to expand services to all who need them in Chenango County. We are grateful for your support.

SEND YOUR CONTRIBUTION,
(a check made payable to **CCAaA**)

TO: CHENANGO COUNTY AREA AGENCY ON AGING, 5 COURT ST., NORWICH, NY 13815

Address Change – Are you going away or moving from the area? Do you live in Chenango County seasonally, heading to warmer climates during the winter months? Please let us know of your new address so that we can update our mailing list. Keeping our mailing list current helps keep mailing costs down.

Email Delivery – Would you like to help us be more environmentally friendly and defray costs by subscribing to our email edition? Please provide us with your email address:

FOR CHANGE OF ADDRESS: PERMANENT TEMPORARY

From (Date): _____; if TEMPORARY, to (Date): _____

New Address

Name _____ Street _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Please remove from mailing list.

Why do we paint Easter eggs?

Because it's easier than trying to wallpaper

What shouldn't you tickle an Easter egg?

Because it might crack up!

Where does the Easter Bunny eat breakfast?

At the IHOP of course!



HELP US HELP OTHERS

Our needs are always greater than the resources that are available. The Chenango County Area Agency on Aging encourages and appreciates your financial contribution to our programs and services that help area seniors.

Please print

Name _____ Phone: _____

Address _____
Street/PO Box City NY Zip

I/We designate my/our contribution of \$_____ for:

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Use where most needed | <input type="checkbox"/> Insurance Counseling | <input type="checkbox"/> Legal Services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Home Delivered Meals | <input type="checkbox"/> Nutrition Counseling | <input type="checkbox"/> Tax Assistance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Caregiver/Respite Services | <input type="checkbox"/> Personal Care Services | <input type="checkbox"/> Case Management |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personal Emergency Response Program (PERS) | | |

In honor/memory (please circle one) of: _____

If you have designated someone special to honor/remember, then you (and your designee) will be acknowledged in "The Bullthistle Bulletin" for your contribution.

If you wish your name to remain anonymous then please check here

PLEASE MAKE CHECK PAYABLE TO:

CCAAoA

Clip and return this coupon with your contribution to:
Chenango County Area Agency on Aging, 5 Court Street, Norwich, NY 13815

THANK YOU!! All contributions are greatly appreciated!

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.