



August 18, 2022

Inflation and What You Can Do

The cost of living has continued to rise with utilities going up, groceries going up, and the prospect of additional increases on the horizon. We can adjust some things in our daily lives to help ease the impact. Unplug appliances you're not using ([vampire power](#)). Think about day trips instead of longer stays to save on gas, parking and lodging. Try store brands instead of major brands. Check out clearance sales in store and on line. Schedule your day so you are making the most of your outings (and gas usage!) by making one trip for your stops. Check for discounts through your memberships (AARP, AAA, your state's discount cards, and others.) [Next Avenue offers additional suggestions](#) on what you can do. Be conscientious to help save some money.

Inappropriate Behaviors in Dementia Care

Sexually explicit behaviors can be challenging when caring for someone with dementia. Are they really 'troublesome behaviors' or are they attempts at communicating when they no longer have the words? Think about the situation. What factors are at play? What was the antecedent to the behavior? Assess what is going on with the care receiver and assess the environment. (Are they cold? In pain? Overstimulated? Need to use the bathroom?) Practice empathy. You may be able to avoid situations if you know the triggers and your care receiver. [Teepa Snow, dementia-care professional, offers additional information in her blog.](#)

Over-the-Counter Hearing Aids

Over-the-counter hearing aids are a new category of hearing product that could be available to the public as soon as October 2022. [The US Food & Drug Administration](#) issued a rule regarding over the counter hearing aids which do not need a prescription, and can be obtained without visiting a hearing professional. You fit them yourself. The [National Institute on Hearing and Other Communication Disorders](#) offers additional information for consumers.

Balance & Hearing Assessments

Medicare beneficiaries with hearing loss may want to talk to their health care provider about an assessment for balance and hearing by an audiologist. Medicare will not cover exams for a hearing aid, exams for fitting a hearing aid nor will it pay for hearing aids but [there may be coverage for a balance and hearing screen](#) depending on the source of the hearing impairment. Talk to your primary health care provider about your hearing loss and the possible reasons for the loss. Those with Medicare Advantage plans need to check with their providers about coverage of exams and any value-added benefits.

Medicare vs. Medicare + a Supplement vs. Medicare Advantage Plans

When we sign up for Medicare*, we have the option of taking traditional Medicare alone which leaves consumers with a 20% balance of the approved amount. Or - we may opt for Medicare plus a Medicare Supplement plus a separate prescription drug plan. A Medicare Supplement may cost more but may not have the deductibles and copays of a Medicare Advantage Plan. Or – we may opt for a Medicare Advantage Plan which is usually less expensive than a supplement and includes prescription drug coverage. There may also be value-added benefits for services such as vision and/or dental. When considering your medical providers and your medical care, you need to be aware of what coverage you need (if you're new to Medicare or looking for a change to an Advantage Plan) or what coverage you have. Medicare Advantage plans may have designated networks of care, may offer additional benefits, and may require pre-authorization for certain procedures and/or equipment. Medicare's website



explains the [differences in traditional Medicare and Medicare Advantage](#). For assistance with Medicare questions, contact your state's [Health Insurance Information Program \(SHIP\)](#).

*There are designated periods when consumers can change from a supplement to an Advantage Plan or change to a different Advantage Plan. The only time a beneficiary can sign up for a Medicare supplement without any medical review is when they sign up for Medicare for the first time.

What About Our Personal Information?

If you're reading this, you have no doubt experienced some form of the law that protects our personal information (the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act or HIPAA) including forms we sign in the health care providers' offices. HIPAA applies only to certain "covered entities" but leaves other areas of information vulnerable. What about searches on our phones or our chosen web browser? What about that DNA test you just took to find out about your ancestors? We're vulnerable in many areas that we may not consider. Brain and Life, August / September 2022 addresses how to protect your information in their article "[How to Protect Your Genetic and Health Data Privacy Online](#)". The print version "Data Dump" contains additional information. (Brain and Life is a free publication. You can subscribe at www.myBLsub.com.)

[Source: "Data Dump" (print article), "How to Protect Your Genetic and Health Data Privacy Online" (online article), Brain and Life, August / September 2022, Gina Shaw]

Getting the Care We Need

We're waiting for medical appointments with our primary care providers, we wait even longer if we need a referral to a specialist. Staffing shortages have impacted how quickly the phone is answered at our providers' offices. What can we do to be our own best health care advocate? Stephanie Cajigal, author of "Pandemic Pressures" in the current issue of Brain and Life, suggests that we compile our medical records, write notes on our visits and treatments ([My Health Care Tracker is an excellent tool to record health visits](#)), confirm our referrals, stay focused when we are talking to our health care providers, are open to other options, look for secondhand equipment if possible, take care of ourselves, and stay positive. We don't know when these issues with our health care providers will be resolved so we need to be especially attentive and be prepared to advocate for ourselves and our loved ones.

[Source: Pandemic Pressures, Brain and Life, August / September 2022, Stephanie Cajigal.]

Mountaineer Rental Assistance Beginning Phase Out

The new phase of the program will focus on first-time applicants only. The program has stopped taking applications from those who have already received assistance. The Rental Assistance Online Application portal will continue to take and process new applications until funds are depleted per the US Treasury guidelines. Landlords and tenants can go to the [WV Rental Assistance website](#) to review eligibility and document requirements. For help call 866 623-6284.

Mountaineer Food Bank Mobile Pantry

There will be a food distribution at Wheeling Island Casino, Parking Lot C on August 24 from 11am – 12:30pm (or as long as supplies last). This is for WV residents only. For more information, contact the Ohio County FRN at 304 232-5600.

Up Coming Workshops

Fall workshop – our workshop committee is busy organizing a veterans workshop for fall. You can email your contact information to me at akoegler1995@gmail.com to receive updates as we finalize details.



Up Coming Events

Sunset Senior Fair – August 31, 2022, 5pm-8pm, Heritage Port, Wheeling

Community Shred & E-Cycling – September 10, 2022 from 9am – 1pm at St Michael Angelus Center, 1225 National Road, Wheeling WV. For more info, call 330 454-9401 or [go to the website](#).

COVID and Flu Season

Flu season is coming up and vaccinations will be available soon. Consult your health care provider about your annual flu shot and any Covid vaccinations or boosters. Continue to be vigilant and proactive about your health. Wash your hands. Observe social distancing. If you're sick, stay home. Wearing masks is optional in many places but if you feel better wearing a mask, wear a mask! We don't know what health issues someone is facing nor do we know others' comfort levels. Be respectful.

Vaccinations & Boosters

Check out [West Virginia availability](#). (Click Cancel to go to website.) Check out [Ohio availability](#).

The Centers for Disease Control offers a great deal of [information about the COVID vaccines](#). Be an informed consumer. Talk to your physician and read about the vaccines. Make the choice that is right for your health considerations.

Local Adult Service Coalitions

Adult Service Coalitions offer networking and educational opportunities for professionals who serve older adults. Meeting dates, times, and contacts are listed below.

OHIO

Belmont County: 1st Thursday at 11am akoegler1995@gmail.com

Guernsey County: 3rd Wednesday at 3pm Stacey.clark-frame@altercareonline.net

Jefferson County: 3rd Thursday at 3pm starr.decariarx@gmail.com

Harrison County: 4th Wednesday at 3pm tblanchard@iccare.com

WEST VIRGINIA

Brooke / Hancock County: 2nd Monday at 3pm tblanchard@iccare.com

Ohio / Marshall County: 2nd Wednesday at 2pm pcalvert@fsuov.com

Timely Resources for Readers

Learn about Medicare's enrollment periods for Medicare Advantage Plans and Prescription Drug Plans. You can make changes but what are Medicare's regulations? What products can be changed? When can we switch and what can we switch? [Check out your options for changes](#).

Hiring

- *Mulberry Street Management* (Coordinating Council for Independent Living) is hiring in all 55 West Virginia counties for Direct Care Workers. There is a sign-on bonus right now. The company is also 100% employee owned now so hirees can become part of the company ownership in time! Apply: moundsvillejobs@mulberrystreetmanagement.com or go to westvirginiaschoice.com.
- [IC Care](#): Experienced in-home caregivers
- [Visiting Angels](#): In-home caregivers
- *Family Service-UOV*: drivers, in home caregivers. Contact Paula Calvert at pcalvert@fsuov.com
- [Good Shepherd Nursing Home](#): contact HR at 304 242-1093



Altenheim Retirement Community

Altenheim Retirement Community
130 years of housing for older adults
1891-2021

Over 130 years in Wheeling

Altenheim Retirement Community is located behind our Main House at 1387 National Road, Wheeling along Reymann Way and Anton Place. We are close to medical care, churches, shopping, restaurants, groceries, and other conveniences.

Offering 8 independent cottages for women, men, and couples who are 65 and older. Two bedroom, two bath, living room, kitchen room, dining room. Stove, refrigerator, dishwasher, microwave, washer and dryer are included. Lawn care, snow removal, general maintenance, general repairs included in monthly rent. Utilities are not included.

We are accepting applications!

Contact George A. Dakovic, Executive Director at gam.dakovic@gmail.com.



Altenheim Resource Services

Altenheim Resource Services, a division of Altenheim Retirement Community

Empowering older adults and caregivers with information on aging, services and resources for over 25 years

Free & confidential information and no geographic limitations

Let us be YOUR GATEWAY TO CARE FOR OLDER ADULTS!

Ann Koegler, M.A., L.S.W., Resource Services Coordinator Akoegler1995@gmail.com

<https://www.altenheimcommunity.com>

Information on Altenheim, calendar of events, blog, and a photo gallery

Contact us at 304 280-8701 with questions about resources and issues concerning older adults and caregiving.

