

# THE COMMUNICATOR

A Wyandotte/Leavenworth Area Agency on Aging Publication

2023 - November/December

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Ruth E. Jones, Executive Director

## TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF AS A CAREGIVER

Information provided by [www.nia.hih.gov](http://www.nia.hih.gov)

Caregiving, especially from a distance, is likely to bring out many different emotions, both positive and negative. Feeling frustrated and angry with everyone, from the care recipient to the doctors, is a common experience. Anger could be a sign that you are overwhelmed or that you are trying to do too much. You should always give yourself a break; take a walk, talk with your friends, get some sleep.

Although they may not feel as physically exhausted and drained as your recipient, hands-on and long-distance caregivers may still be worried and anxious. Sometimes, long-distance caregivers feel guilty about not being closer, not doing enough, not having enough time with the person and perhaps even feeling jealous of those who do. Many caregivers also find that worrying about being able to afford to take time off from work, being away from family or the cost of travel increases these frustrations. Remember that you are doing the best you can given the circumstances and that you can only do what you can do. It may help to know that these are feelings shared by many other long-distance caregivers - you are not alone in this.



Taking care of yourself is one of the most important things you can do as a caregiver. Make sure you are making time for yourself, eating healthy foods, and being active. Consider joining a caregiver support group, either in your own community or online. Meeting other caregivers can relieve your sense of isolation and will give you a chance to exchange stories and ideas. If you need help, don't be afraid to ask for it. Caregiving is not easy for anyone - not for the caregiver and not for the care recipient. There are sacrifices and adjustments for everyone. When you don't live where the care is needed, it may be especially hard to feel that what you are doing is enough and that what you are doing is important. It often is.

**Whether you are expecting to become a caregiver or have been thrust into the role overnight, it is useful to know where you can obtain information and assistance.**

**The Caregiver Program is designed to assist the caregiver and may include the following services: Respite, Homemaker and Attendant Care, Adult Day Care and Grandparent Support.**

**Call the Wyandotte/Leavenworth Area Agency on Aging and Disability Resource Center at 913-573-8531.**

### IN THIS EDITION:

- Medicare Open Enrollment in Kansas 2024
- Food Safety: Its Especially Important For You
- How To Boost Self Esteem
- Silver-Haired Legislature Holds 41st Annual Session
- Scams To Watch Out For If You Consider Yourself To Be Among The Elderly Group
- Recipe - Fast Baked Fish

**60Plus?...Call On Us!**

## MEDICARE OPEN ENROLLMENT IN KANSAS 2024

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) offers seniors, people with end-stage renal disease (ESRD), and people with disabilities several insurance options, including Traditional Medicare, Medicare Advantage and Medicare Part D prescription drug plans. The costs and covered benefits of different plan options can change from year to year. People with Medicare can review coverage choices and make changes during Medicare Open Enrollment, October 15 thru December 7, 2023.

Nationally, the average premiums and benefits for Medicare Advantage plans - private health plans that generally cover all Medicare Part A and Part B benefits, as well as plan choice will remain stable in 2024. Total Medicare Part D premiums are also expected to remain stable.

In 2024, through the Inflation Reduction Act, people with Medicare prescription drug coverage who fall into the catastrophic phase of the prescription drug benefit won't have to pay anything out of pocket during that phase for covered Medicare prescription drugs. Because of



# SHIP

## State Health Insurance Assistance Program

the Inflation Reduction Act, people with Medicare Part D coverage already see improved benefits, including a \$35 cost-sharing limit on a month's supply of each covered insulin product and recommended adult vaccines at no cost.

Thanks to the Inflation Reduction Act, people with Medicare may qualify for even more savings through the Extra Help program. This program helps some people pay their Medicare drug coverage (Part D) costs like premiums, deductibles, and cost sharing. In 2024, there will be expanded eligibility for full benefits under the program, meaning all enrollees will pay no deductible, no premium and benefit from fixed lower copayments for certain medications. Learn more about the Extra Help Program, including eligibility criteria and how to apply.

CMS provides price and quality information to empower people with Medicare to choose coverage options that are the best fit for them. While reviewing their health care coverage, enrollees can consider new or different plans and possibly save money.

Individuals should watch their mail for notices from Medicare with information about changes in 2024. Individuals should begin reviewing plans in October at the Medicare.gov website. All changes made during the Medicare Open Enrollment Period are effective January 1, 2024.

The Wyandotte/Leavenworth Area Agency on Aging will assist with Medicare Counseling by appointment only. If you'd like to schedule an appointment, please contact the Area Agency on Aging at 913-573-8531.

**MEDICARE OPEN ENROLLMENT  
Runs October 15th through December 7th**



## FOOD SAFETY: IT'S ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT FOR YOU

Information provided by: US Department of Agriculture

As we age, it is normal for our bodies not to work as well as they did when we were younger. Changes in our organs and body systems are expected as we grow older. These changes often make us more susceptible to contracting a foodborne illness or food poisoning. For example, our stomach and intestinal tract may hold on to foods for a longer period of time; our liver and kidneys may not readily rid our bodies of toxins; and our sense of taste or smell may be altered. By the age of 65, many of us have been diagnosed with one or more chronic conditions, such as diabetes, arthritis, cancer, or cardiovascular disease, and are taking at least one medication. The side effects of some medications or the chronic disease process may weaken the immune system, causing older adults to be more susceptible to contracting a foodborne illness. Essentially our organs in our bodies have become a bit sluggish in recognizing and ridding the body of harmful bacteria and other pathogens that cause infections, such as foodborne illness. Should older adults contract a foodborne illness, you are more likely to have a lengthier illness and/or undergo hospitalization. To avoid contracting a foodborne illness, older adults must be especially vigilant when handling, preparing, and consuming foods.



### Making Wise Food Choices

Some foods are riskier for you than others. In general, the foods that are most likely to contain harmful bacteria or viruses fall into two categories, uncooked fresh fruits/vegetables and some animal products. Interestingly, the risk these foods may actually pose depends on the origin or source of the food and how the food is processed, stored, and prepared. When in doubt, throw it out!

### Four Basic Steps to Food Safety

- 1) Wash hands and surfaces often. Bacteria can spread throughout the kitchen and get onto cutting boards, utensils, counter tops, and food. To ensure that your hands and surfaces are clean, be sure to: Wash hands in warm soapy water for at least 20 seconds before and after handling food and after using the bathroom, changing diapers, or handling pets.
- 2) Wash cutting boards, dishes, utensils, and counter tops with hot soapy water between the preparation of raw meat, poultry, and seafood products and preparation of any other food that will not be cooked.
- 3) Use paper towels to clean up kitchen surfaces. If using cloth towels, you should wash them often in the hot cycle of the washing machine.
- 4) Wash produce. Rinse fruits and vegetables and rub firm-skin fruits and vegetables under running tap water, including those with skins and rinds that are not eaten.

### Foodborne Illness: Know the Symptoms

Despite your best efforts, you may find yourself in a situation where you suspect you have a foodborne illness. Foodborne illness often presents itself with flu-like symptoms. These symptoms include: nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and fever. If you suspect that you could have a foodborne illness, consult your physician or health care provider, or seek medical treatment as appropriate.

## HOW TO BOOST SELF-ESTEEM

www.agingcare.com

Research indicates that, after a lifetime peak that occurs somewhere around age 60, the average senior experiences a decline in their self-esteem. The unique challenges that elders face, such as adjustment to retirement, decreased productivity, and the deaths of close friends and family members, can severely impact how one feels about the world and their role in it. Older adults can play an active role in cultivating healthier levels of self-esteem with the following suggestions:

**Seek Out Social Connections** - Regardless of age, individuals who have supportive, loving relationships with friends and family consistently report higher self-esteem and overall happiness.

**Promote Feelings of Independence** - One possible cause of age-related decreases in self-esteem is a loss of independence due to physical and/or cognitive decline.

**Find a Senior Group** - Finding a group that gathers is an important part of maintaining self-worth. If activities are no longer possible, senior centers host groups aimed at supporting members through various life transitions - from sharing war stories to dealing with a loved one's death. Maintaining regular contact with people you can relate to serves as a great source of support.



Of course, unraveling negative stereotypes about aging or improving self-esteem won't work miracles for the millions of people who are struggling with serious illnesses, such as cancer, heart disease, and dementia. You must embrace the aging process with a positive mindset. The earlier one adopts this outlook, the more one stands to gain.

We all can help foster an environment of esteem, understanding, and kindness towards everyone in the community. Treating aging adults with respect and valuing their contributions to society is something that can provide countless benefits to members of all generations.



## SILVER HAired LEGISLATURE HOLDS 41ST ANNUAL SESSION

The Kansas Silver Haired Legislature held their 41st Annual Session on October 3-5 in Topeka. A hybrid format was used to provide both in-person and remote participation. The business meeting featured Lacey Kennett, Communications Director for the Alliance for Health Kansans presenting information about Medicaid Expansion; and Juanita Ramos, President/Founder of Center for Botanical, Innovation, Research & Development (CBIRD) presenting information about Medical Cannabis.

The high point of the three-day conference was the Wednesday activity at the State Capitol. In the morning, the SHL divided into three committees, which reviewed, discussed, and debated the various resolutions that were presented to them. The above mentioned speakers provided testimony as well as Todd Scattini, Founder Harvest 360; and George Hanna, Veteran. Those receiving a favorable vote were then brought before the entire body during the afternoon session, where each issue was once again discussed, debated and voted upon. Those receiving favorable passage then progressed to the Thursday morning session for final action.

The five resolutions that received favorable passage this year are:

- **Resolution 4006** - Support the Expansion of Medicaid in Kansas
- **Resolution 4007** - Expand the Grandparents as Caregivers Act to Include Certain Relatives and Allow Such Relatives to be Eligible for Assistance to Provide Kansas Children with Appropriate and Safe Placements and Access to Services
- **Resolution 4008** - Establish a Medical Cannabis Advisory Board in Order to Explore and Make Recommendations Regarding the Expanded Use of Cannabis
- **Resolution 4009** - Eliminate the Tax Cliff to Qualify for an Exemption of Social Security Benefits from State Income Tax
- **Resolution 4010** - Oppose Efforts to Restrict Voting Rights

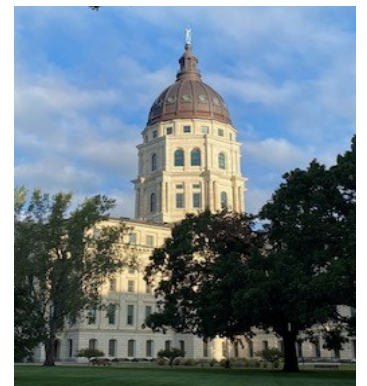
The above resolutions will be forwarded to the Kansas Legislature during the 2024 Legislative Session, where the SHL will advocate for their enactment into Kansas Law.



*Pictured Above from left to right is the delegation for PSA01, representing Wyandotte and Leavenworth Counties. SHL President, Thomas Gordon; 2nd Vice President, Sherri Grogan; Alfred Rangel and Jacques Barber. Not Pictured: Elton Hale.*



The Silver Haired Legislature gives a voice to approximately 600,000 Senior Citizens over the age 60 in the State of Kansas. Each county in the state is allowed a delegate to the SHL, with the four largest counties having five additional delegates each. For more information on the SHL, you are invited to view the web-site at [www.kansas-shl.org](http://www.kansas-shl.org).





# Area Agency on Aging Media Relations



## Join our Facebook Group!

Wyandotte/Leavenworth Area Agency on Aging

- Find Out About Upcoming Events
- See Flyers on Our Services
- Learn Fun Facts About Wyandotte/Leavenworth Area Agency on Aging

Like  
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and  
Share



nextdoor

Donate to Meals on Wheels!  
<https://pay.payitgov.com/wyco>

Topics Covered on Our YouTube Channel:  
Wyandotte/Leavenworth Area Agency on Aging

- Medicare vs. Medicaid
- Social Security Disability in Kansas
- Introduction to the SHICK Program
- Identity Theft

Go to Unified Government's YouTube Channel

- Select Playlists Tab
- Click Wyandotte/Leavenworth Area Agency on Aging

Want to learn more about our services?

- Go to <https://www.wycokck.org/Home>
- Select the Departments Tab
- Click Area Agency on Aging

## DO YOU HAVE....

- DIFFICULTY HEARING?
- RINGING IN EARS?
- FIND IT HARD TO HEAR IN NOISY PLACES?
- FAMILY HISTORY OF HEARING LOSS?
- DIZZINESS/IMBALANCE?

If you answered YES,  
you may have hearing loss!



PARTNERS WITH

## NEUROAUDIOLOGY

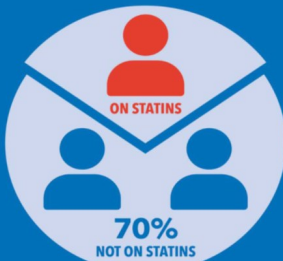


TO OFFER:

**HEARING TEST**  
**HEARING AID RESOURCES**

340 Southwest Blvd.  
Kansas City, KS 66103  
jaydocfreeclinic@kumc.edu  
(913) 387-1202

Starting a statin even after  
age 75 may lower the  
risk of developing  
dementia.



BUT WE DON'T REALLY KNOW.  
Results from PREVENTABLE  
will help us understand.

[www.preventabletrial.org](http://www.preventabletrial.org)

The #PREVENTABLEtrial is one of the largest research studies in adults 75 years or older. The study will test if taking a statin could help prevent dementia in older adults. Study participants will contribute valuable information on how we age and may benefit from additional memory and physical function monitoring. Compensation is available for those who participate!

### Who is eligible?

- Adults over 75 years of age
- Those NOT currently taking statin medication.
- Those without a history of stroke or heart attack.

Find out more by contacting Erica Lower, Project Coordinator at [elower@kumc.edu](mailto:elower@kumc.edu) or 913-588-6052.

## NOVEMBER PRODUCE GUIDE



BRUSSELS SPROUTS



BUTTERNUT SQUASH



CABBAGE



KIWI



PEARS



POMEGRANATE



POTATOES



PUMPKIN



WINTER MELON

## HEALTHY NIBBLES

## SCAMS TO WATCH OUT FOR IF YOU CONSIDER YOURSELF TO BE AMONG THE ELDERLY GROUP

*Willie Jenkins, Wyandotte County District Attorney Office*

Many of the elderly have probably heard some of the horror stories shared by others in this group about how they were scammed by caregivers, family members, and complete strangers into losing their life savings or a large portion of it. A former attorney, who served as San Diego's deputy district attorney for more than 22 years, working on mostly caregiver abuse issues is named Paul Greenwood. Mr. Greenwood continues to be an ambassador against elder abuse.

When he spoke at a recent conference in Virginia in 2023, in his remarks he said, "it's important to focus on the crime, and not the victim. Everyone needs to be part of the solution." Elder abuse, which is recognized by the Center for Disease Control as a public health crisis, relies on silence with many people afraid to talk about their experiences.

### Here are the top 10 tips shared by Greenwood for avoiding fraud:

**Tip #1:** Choose caregivers with caution. "Don't ever hire through newspaper ads or services like Craigslist." Conduct background checks and even hire a private detective if necessary. Advise financial institutions about caregiver situations so they can be alert to any unusual activity, because dishonest caregivers usually have access to a person's valuables.

**Tip #2:** Lock up all valuables. The most frequently stolen item is jewelry, so it was suggested that you make up an inventory and then lock up jewelry and other valuables. People like maintenance workers at these facilities have an opportunity to steal a senior's valuables when they have access to their apartments while performing needed repairs and/or services.

**Tip #3:** Shred all material with personal information.

**Tip #4:** Protect your incoming and outgoing mail, because scammers can steal and reuse paper checks. It might be in your best interest to use a locked mailbox or a post office box for security purposes. If you do use paper checks it is recommended you order checks with just a first initial and last name, with no address, phone number, or other information. And don't have those paper checks mailed to you but instead pick them up from the financial institution.

**Tip #5:** Do a credit search on yourself to look for anomalies, using the major credit companies like Equifax, Experian, or TransUnion. And, if you don't need credit for a loan or mortgage it is recommended you place a freeze on your credit.

**Tip #6:** Use Caller ID, but recognize it is not foolproof. It is best to let calls from unknown numbers go to voicemail, but if you do answer be prepared to hang up right away if the call seems suspicious. If using a cell phone, then find an app such as Robokiller to screen spam calls.

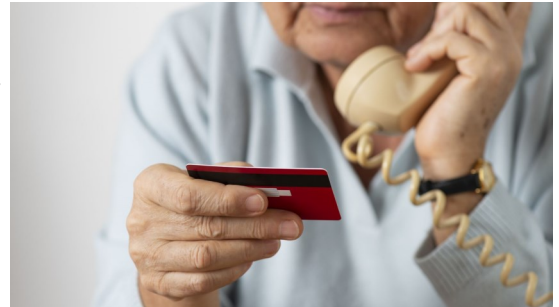
**Tip #7:** You might never win the foreign lottery. There are still some people out there who still fall for this scam. It is recommended you be cautious about any correspondence that looks like a payoff from a legitimate entity. Be on the lookout for misspelled words or foreign postmarks.

**Tip #8:** The IRS will never call you. The Internal Revenue Service will communicate using mailed correspondence. If you get a call, you know it is a scam.

**Tip #9:** Your grandson will never call you from jail. Seniors are particularly vulnerable to this scam where the caller mimics a grandchild, often using artificial intelligence to mimic the grandchild's voice more accurately.

**Tip #10:** Don't look for love in all the wrong places. Scammers use fake social media accounts to prey upon vulnerable individuals and rob them of their savings. Often, the victim ends up being a "money mule" or a conduit to illegally pass funds from one entity to another.

If you find yourself to be the victim of a scam, you should contact the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) at [www.ReportFraud.ftc.gov](http://www.ReportFraud.ftc.gov). Or, if you gave a scammer your personal information such as a social security number, you can go to [www.IdentityTheft.gov](http://www.IdentityTheft.gov) for instructions on how to report it.



## FAST BAKED FISH

### INGREDIENTS:

- 1 1/4 pounds fish fillets
- 1 teaspoon seasoned salt
- Pepper to taste
- Paprika, optional
- 3 tablespoons butter, melted

### DIRECTIONS:

- Preheat oven to 400°. Place fish in a greased 11x7 inch baking dish. Sprinkle with seasoned salt, pepper and if desired, paprika. Drizzle butter.
- Cover and bake until fish just begins to flake easily with fork, 15-20 minutes.



**What is the best fish to bake?** For this recipe, your best bet is to use a flaky white fish, such as tilapia, halibut, cod, bass, grouper, haddock, catfish or snapper. White fish doesn't mean that the fish is white in color; rather, it is a mild-flavored fish that cooks quickly and seasons very well.

Find and circle all the words hidden in the grid.

- CANDY CANE
- CARVING KNIFE
- CHRISTMAS
- COOKIES
- CORN BREAD
- CORNUCOPIA
- CRANBERRIES
- DRUMSTICK
- EGGNOG
- FAMILY TIME
- FEAST
- FOOTBALL
- GRAVY
- HARVEST
- JINGLE BELLS
- MAYFLOWER
- NEW YEARS EVE
- NORTH POLE
- ORNAMENTS
- PILGRIMS
- PRESENTS
- PUMPKIN PIE
- REINDEER
- SANTA CLAUS
- SLEIGH
- STUFFING
- SWEET POTATOES
- THANKSGIVING
- TINSEL
- TREE TOPPER
- TURKEY
- VETERANS DAY
- WRAPPING PAPER
- WREATH
- YULETIDE

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## NOVEMBER >>>

### DAYLIGHT SAVINGS

*Sunday, November 5, 2023*

### VETERANS DAY

*Saturday, November 11, 2023*

*Holiday Observed November 10th  
Unified Government Offices Closed*

### THANKSGIVING

*Thursday, November 23, 2023*

*Thanksgiving Holiday Observed November 23rd & 24th  
Unified Government Offices Closed*

The Communicator is published bi-monthly by the Wyandotte/Leavenworth Area Agency on Aging. It is funded by the Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services through the Older Americans' Act. We assume no responsibility for the care and return of unsolicited material.

Donations are suggested.

The Wyandotte/Leavenworth Area Agency on Aging does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, age, national origin, sex, or handicap.

If you feel you have been discriminated against, you may file a complaint with the Kansas Department for Aging & Disability Services at 1-800-432-3535.



Linda Ramirez, Editor

## DECEMBER >>>

### PEARL HARBOR REMEMBRANCE

*Thursday, December 7, 2023*

### CHRISTMAS EVE

*Sunday, December 24, 2023*

### CHRISTMAS DAY

*Monday, December 25, 2023*

*Unified Government Offices Closed*

### NEW YEARS EVE

*Sunday, December 31, 2023*