

THE COMMUNICATOR

A Wyandotte/Leavenworth Area Agency on Aging Publication

2022 - January/February edition

Volume 30, Issue 1

Ruth E. Jones, Executive Director

A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

On behalf of all the staff, volunteers and contractors of the Wyandotte/Leavenworth Area Agency on Aging, I wish to extend best wishes for a Happy and Healthy 2022.

The staff of the Area Agency on Aging (AAA) has remained vigilant in our service administration to the older adults in the community, even while working through the challenges of a pandemic. We are fortunate to have been able to open a new Congregate Meal Site at the Victory Hills Baptist Church. Meal participants, site volunteers and staff alike, were enthusiastic about the opening of a new site in mid-town KCK.

We were also excited about being able to re-start the hot Meals on Wheels daily delivery to our homebound and at risk seniors on October 1, 2021. The program had been on hiatus, since the loss of our meal provider, as well the shut-downs that were a part of the onset of the pandemic. The hot daily meals are an essential service provided to the seniors, and provide 1/3 daily RDA allowances, and as importantly provides a daily well-check for our most vulnerable and at-risk of isolated older adults. The daily hot meals go a long way in providing and supporting a seniors ability to stay in their own homes and "Age in Place."

The AAA Advisory Council and Silver-Haired Legislators have re-convened virtually in 2021 for our monthly meetings, from an almost 18 month pandemic hiatus.

Our goal for the New Year will be to continue to be responsive to the needs of our older adult population in our community, as long as our resources permit. We are committed to working around the pandemic or any other obstacle that may present, as we administer services to our mission population.

Our dedicated staff promises to hold the line on services being provided, and whenever possible expand services and partner with our local providers to meet more senior needs.

Best wishes for the new year ahead from all of us at the Area Agency on Aging.

Ruth E. Jones
Executive Director

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Social Security Announced a 5.9% Benefit Increase for 2022

Social Security and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits for approximately 70 million Americans increased 5.9 percent for 2022, the Social Security Administration announced.

The 5.9 percent cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) began with benefits payable to more than 64 million Social Security beneficiaries in January 2022. Increased payments to approximately 8 million SSI beneficiaries began on December 30, 2021. The Social Security Act ties the annual COLA to the increase in the Consumer Price Index as determined by the Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics.



Some other adjustments that take effect in January of each year are based on the increase in average wages. Based on that increase, the maximum amount of earnings subject to the Social Security tax (taxable maximum) will increase to \$147,000 from \$142,800.

Social Security and SSI beneficiaries were notified by mail in December about their new benefit amount. Most people who receive Social Security payments will be able to view their COLA notice online through their personal my Social Security account. People may create or access their my Social Security account online at www.ssa.gov.

Information about Medicare changes for 2022, will be available at www.medicare.gov. For Social Security beneficiaries receiving Medicare, Social Security will not be able to compute their new benefit amount until after the Medicare premium amounts for 2022 are announced. Final 2022 benefit amounts should have been communicated to beneficiaries in December through the mailed COLA notice and my Social Security's Message Center or by dialing 1-800-772-1213.

THE KANSAS LOW INCOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (LIEAP)

The Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) is a Federally funded program that helps eligible households pay a portion of their home energy costs by providing a one-time per year benefit.

The 2022 LIEAP application period is from January 3, 2022, through March 31, 2022. Applications must be received post-marked by March 31, 2022. You may also apply online at: <http://www.dcf.ks.gov/services/eas/Pages/EnergyAssistance.aspx>

Inquiries may be directed to Division of Children and Family Services by dialing toll free 1-800-432-0043.

SENIOR CITIZENS UTILITY TAX REBATES

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Wyandotte/Leavenworth Area Agency on Aging & Disability Resource Center (ADRC) will **NOT** be assisting the Unified Government Clerk's Office with the Senior Citizen's Utility Tax Rebate Program applications this year.

You may still apply directly to the Clerk's office by providing the following information:

- Name
- Last 4-digits of your Social Security number
- Address (providing mailing address, if different)
- Date of Birth
- Phone Number
- 2021 Gas bills
- 2021 BPU bills
- 2021 Telephone bills
- 2021 Proof of income (social security, pensions, disability, W-2s, interest, etc.); include your spouses income too.

Submit your information from January 3 - March 31, 2022, by any of the following methods:

Mail: UG Clerk's Office, 701 North 7th Street, Suite 323, Kansas City, Kansas 66101 (must be postmarked no later than March 31)

Fax: 913-573-5299

In Person: UG Clerk's Office, 701 North 7th Street, Suite 323 (applicants' original documents will be copied and returned to applicant. After staff processes the application, the application and copies of the documents will be mailed to the applicant).

To qualify you must:

- Be a Kansas City, Kansas resident. Residents of Bonner Springs and Edwardsville are NOT eligible.
- Be 65 years of age or older during the entire calendar year of 2021 (Born before January 1, 1956).
- Gross household income from all sources, including that of your spouse shall not exceed \$25,000.

If you are eligible, your refund will be the total of the following, not to exceed \$150.

- Gas franchise tax paid to Kansas Gas or Atmos Energy
- A percentage of water pollution control charges paid to the Board of Public Utilities
- A percentage of water and electricity paid to the Board of Public Utilities
- Franchise tax (special municipal charge) paid to AT&T

For more information, call the Clerk's office at 913-573-5260.

AGAIN, THE AREA AGENCY ON AGING WILL NOT BE ASSISTING WITH THE APPLICATIONS THIS YEAR

What's New for Medicare in 2022?

When can I change my Medicare coverage in 2022?

During the Medicare Advantage Open Enrollment Period (MA OEP), you can switch from your Medicare Advantage Plan to another Medicare Advantage Plan or to Original Medicare with or without a stand-alone prescription drug plan. The MA OEP occurs from January 1 through March 31. Changes made during this period are effective the first of the following month.

If you have Extra Help in 2021, you have a Special Enrollment Period (SEP) to enroll in a Part D plan or switch between plans. This SEP is available once per calendar quarter for the first three quarters of the year (January-March, April-June, and July-September). If you use the Extra Help SEP to change your coverage, the change will become effective the following month.

If you qualify for another Special Enrollment Period, you may be able to make changes to your Medicare health/drug coverage. For example, you may have an SEP if you move outside of your plan's service area or if you think a government employee made a mistake while assisting you. Call 1-800-MEDICARE to use an SEP and contact your State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) by calling 877-839-2675 for more information.

General Enrollment Period: If you must pay for Part A but don't sign up for it and/or don't sign up for Part B (for which you must pay premiums) during your Initial Enrollment Period, and you don't qualify for a Special Enrollment Period, you can sign up during the General Enrollment Period between January 1–March 31 each year. Your coverage won't start until July 1 of that year, and you may have to pay a higher Part A and/or Part B premium for late enrollment. See pages 17-18 in the Medicare & You book. If you're not sure if you qualify for a Special Enrollment Period, or to learn more about enrollment periods, visit Medicare.gov or call 1-800-MEDICARE.

PART B: MEDICAL INSURANCE

| | |
|--|------------------------------------|
| Part B premium (for those with incomes below \$88,000) | \$148.50 is the standard premium |
| Part B deductible | \$203 per year |
| Part B coinsurance | 20% on most services Part B covers |

PART D: PRESCRIPTION DRUG COVERAGE

| | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|
| National average Part D premium | \$33.06 per month |
| Part D maximum deductible | \$445 per year |
| Coverage gap begins | \$4,130 |
| Catastrophic coverage begins | \$6,550 |

Who can I contact if I have Medicare-related questions?

State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP): Contact SHIP if you have questions about changes in costs and coverage to your Medicare in 2022. SHIP counselors provide unbiased Medicare counseling and assistance. The Coordinator for Wyandotte & Leavenworth counties is Lynn Randle, she can be reached at 913-573-8549.



HOME MODIFICATIONS TO KEEP A SENIOR SAFE AT HOME

Care needs change over time. Many home modifications are fairly inexpensive and can be accomplished as do-it-yourself projects with purchases from reputable retailers. In fact, getting started by removing items from the home to reduce fall risks and improve mobility in some spaces can be accomplished without any cost at all.

As we age, our needs and abilities change, use the following checklist to improve mobility in the home:

- Move furniture to clear walking paths.
- Improve overall lighting in the home. Add task lights and night lights wherever needed.
- Replace doorknobs with levered handles or add doorknob grips.
- Remove loose carpeting and unnecessary throw rugs.
- Remove all electric, cable and extension cords that run across or near walkways. If necessary, place electric cords behind furniture.
- Replace unsteady chairs with chairs that have study arms to make transitioning from sit-to-stand easier.
- Remove clutter by donating or disposing of items that are no longer of use.
- Repurpose a closet or other area on the main living level to make laundry machines accessible.
- Ensure smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors are placed in all key areas. Test them and change batteries regularly.
- Step-less entries make it easier and safer to gain access, whether the person is in a wheelchair or using a walker or cane. Install threshold ramps wherever possible.
- Install grab bars for additional support while toileting and while getting into and out of the shower/bath.



2021 SHL COMMITTEE ACTION REPORT

Kansas Silver Haired Legislature (SHL) members advocate for older adults and provide a voice for the older community at the state and federal level.

The Silver Haired Legislature (SHL) met virtually on November 16, 2021 for its Annual Session. The following seven issues passed by the delegates are:

- **Bill 3901:** Expansion of Medicaid in Kansas.
- **Resolution 3902:** A resolution supporting wireless broadband access for all senior Kansans, including the training and assistance for use of the wireless internet.
- **Resolution 3903:** A resolution urging the Legislature and the Governor of the State of Kansas to fully fund all KPERS obligations, to stop delaying KPERS employer contribution payments and to fund a cost-of-living adjustment for retired members of KPERS.
- **Resolution 3904:** a resolution urging the Legislature of the State of Kansas to continue supporting and funding collaborative community-based transportation for senior citizens.
- **Bill 3905:** A resolution urging the Legislature of the State of Kansas to support 2021 Senate Bill No.76, or similar legislation, during the 2022 regular session to provide property tax relief for certain senior citizens and allow these individuals to maintain their standard of living amidst continually rising property taxes.
- **Resolution 3906:** A resolution urging the Legislature of the State of Kansas to legalize the expanded medical use of cannabis.
- **Resolution 3907:** A resolution urging the Legislature and the Governor of the State of Kansas to continue to protect grandparent rights, especially when considering the placement, legal guardianship and adoption of grandchildren who are in need of care, and to allow more grandparents in the raising of their grandchildren in Kansas. The resolution includes lowering the age of qualifying grandparents from 50 to 40 as well as provisions for reimbursement of grandparents similar to what foster parents receive.

These issues represent the culmination of the KSHL delegates work that started in April 2021 when 11 KSHL area delegation developed their lists of legislative priorities of concern of Older Kansans. In July, the KSHL Executive Board and delegates met, reviewed and discussed the 64 submitted issues and distilled them in to the seven issues that were discussed and voted to be carried forward.

The Kansas Silver Haired Legislature is composed of 125 representatives. All are over 60 and are elected from their county of residence. The legislature provides an educational experience in the political process and provides an opportunity to identify priority concerns of Kansas senior citizens.

The SHL develops Bills and Resolutions which are presented to the Kansas Legislature and the Governor as recommendations for state policy.

NEWSLETTER DONATIONS ENCOURAGED

For years "The Communicator" has served as a vital means for providing seniors in Wyandotte County important information regarding aging news, events, programs, services and much more! The newsletter's continuity depends on your donations for its existence. Please help us continue to provide this important publication by becoming a sponsor.

Donations should be made payable to:
Wyandotte/Leavenworth Area Agency on Aging
 849 North 47th Street, Suite C, KCK 66102.

Appreciation is extended to the following who have contributed toward the cost of this newsletter.

Dorothy Clark
Karen Goff

- _____ \$100 **Advocate**
defensor
- _____ \$50 **Benefactor**
benefactor
- _____ \$25 **Patron**
patron
- _____ \$10 **Contributor**
contribuidor
- _____ **Other**
otro

Names are listed in alphabetical order.

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A SERVING AND A PORTION SIZE?

A serving size is the amount of food listed on a product's food label and it varies from product to product. A portion is how much food you choose to eat at one time, whether in a restaurant from a package, or at home. Sometimes the serving size and portion size match; sometimes they do not.



For example, according to a food label, 1 cup of macaroni and cheese is one serving. But if you make yourself a large bowl of macaroni and cheese, that portion is much bigger than one serving. The same may be true if you pour yourself a large bowl of cereal for breakfast. You should be the judge of how the portion you choose to eat relates to the serving size noted on the food label.

Join our mailing list

Send an email to:
60Plus@wycokck.org
 with your request.



Did you know you can hire family and friends to provide your care?

With self-direction, you can stay in your home and choose who supports you, including family or friends that you love and trust.

GT takes care of the paperwork and payroll, so you can live your life hassle-free.



Want to learn more?

Erica Miller | Program Manager
 emiller@gtindependence.com | 316.350.7210

Andrea Johnson | Director of Operations
 ajohnson@gtindependence.com | 316.350.7210

gtindependence.com

Termination of CST Link to Life Service

Critical Signal Technologies (CST) Link to Life will terminate the life alert services for all WY/LV AAA clients effective February 28, 2022, due to the carrier moving to different networks.

The current network supporting your life alert service will then be obsolete (outdated) and will no longer work.

If you receive your life alert service from CST through our agency or at a reduced rate through our agency, please contact Betty Ewell at 913-573-8538.

SPINACH PARMESAN PASTA

INGREDIENTS:

- 8oz spaghetti or pasta of your choice
- 3 tablespoons butter
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 6 cups packed baby spinach
- 1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

DIRECTIONS:

1. Add the pasta to a large pot of boiling salted water and cook until done. Drain the pasta, reserving 1/2 cup of the pasta water. Set pasta aside.
2. Using the same pot, melt the butter over medium heat. Add garlic and cook for 2-3 minutes. Add in the pasta and spinach. Gently toss and cook until spinach leaves are wilted. If the pasta starts to dry out, add in some of the reserved pasta water. We usually add about 1/3 cup. Stir in 1/4 cup of the parmesan cheese and toss until combined. Season with salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste.
3. Pour pasta into a large bowl. Garnish with additional Parmesan Cheese and service immediately.



THE NEW YEAR IS UPON US!

Find and circle all the words hidden in the grid.

- AQUARIUS
- BALL DROP
- BLACK EYED PEAS
- BLACK HISTORY MONTH
- CANDY
- CAPRICORN
- CHAMPAGNE
- CHOCOLATE
- CONFETTI
- COUNTDOWN
- CUPID
- DANCE
- DIET
- FLOWERS
- GOALS
- GROUND HOG DAY
- HEART
- HOMESTEAD
- KISS
- LOVE
- MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY
- MIDNIGHT
- NEW YEARS
- NOISEMAKER
- PISCES
- PRESIDENTS DAY
- PUNXSUTAWNEY PHIL
- RED
- RESOLUTIONS
- ROSES
- SUPERBOWL
- TAX REBATE
- TOAST
- VALENTINE DAY
- WEIGHT LOSS

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TELL US ABOUT YOU

GENDER: ___ MALE ___ FEMALE **AGE GROUP:** ___ UNDER 60 ___ 60+

MARITAL STATUS: ___ SINGLE ___ MARRIED ___ WIDOWED ___ DIVORCED

RACE: ___ AFRICAN AMERICAN ___ HISPANIC ___ AMERICAN INDIAN/NATIVE ALASKAN
 ___ ASIAN AMERICAN/PACIFIC ISLANDER ___ NON-MINORITY CAUCASIAN OTHER: _____

RESIDENCE: ___ SENIOR RESIDENCE ___ OWN HOME ___ WITH FAMILY ___ ASSISTED LIVING
 ___ NURSING FACILITY ___ OTHER: _____

HOUSEHOLD INCOME: ___ BELOW \$20,000 ___ OVER \$20,000 **RESIDENTIAL ZIP CODE:** _____

REASON YOU CONTACTED US

___ **INFORMATION** - You received information on a single topic.

___ **REFERRAL** - You received a referral to a community service provider.

___ **ASSISTANCE** - You received assistance on how to access needed services in your community.

___ **OPTIONS COUNSELING** - You received information on service options, provider options, or other options which helped you make an informed decision on your choices. This included a follow-up contact from our staff.

___ **ASSESSMENT** - You received a functional assessment to determine your functional eligibility for Home and Community Based Services

___ **CAREGIVER SERVICES** - You received services as a caregiver OR grandparent raising your grandchild(ren).

___ **CARE or Nursing Home Admission** - You received a CARE assessment for nursing home admission.

___ **CASE MANAGEMENT** - A case manager met with you to help set up in-home services.

___ **HOME DELIVERED MEALS** (Meals on Wheels) - You receive: ___ Hot ___ Frozen ___ Other

___ **CONGREGATE MEAL SITE** - You eat at one of our nutrition sites.

___ **LEGAL SERVICES** - You received legal assistance through Kansas Legal Services.

___ **TRANSPORTATION SERVICE** - You used either: ___ Assisted Services ___ RideKC

___ **OTHER:** (Please Specify) - _____

THE OVERALL SERVICE YOU RECEIVED? ___ Very Satisfied ___ Satisfied ___ Not Satisfied ___ Does Not Apply

THE COURTESY OF OUR STAFF? ___ Very Satisfied ___ Satisfied ___ Not Satisfied ___ Does Not Apply

THE KNOWLEDGE OF OUR STAFF WITH YOUR ISSUE. ___ Very Satisfied ___ Satisfied ___ Not Satisfied ___ Does Not Apply

THE HELPFULNESS OF OUR STAFF? ___ Very Satisfied ___ Satisfied ___ Not Satisfied ___ Does Not Apply

THE ACCURACY OF THE INFORMATION YOU RECEIVED. ___ Very Satisfied ___ Satisfied ___ Not Satisfied ___ Does Not Apply

THE PROFESSIONALISM OF OUR STAFF. ___ Very Satisfied ___ Satisfied ___ Not Satisfied ___ Does Not Apply

WAS YOUR CONCERN ADDRESSED? ___ Very Satisfied ___ Satisfied ___ Not Satisfied ___ Does Not Apply

THE TIME IT TOOK OUR STAFF TO ASSIST YOU? ___ Very Satisfied ___ Satisfied ___ Not Satisfied ___ Does Not Apply

HOW SATISFIED WERE YOU OUR SERVICES? ___ Very Satisfied ___ Satisfied ___ Not Satisfied ___ Does Not Apply

If not, explain. _____

IF YOU HAD A NEED OR CONCERN THAT WE COULD NOT ASSIST WITH, PLEASE SPECIFY YOUR UNMET NEED.

ANY COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS TO IMPROVE OUR SERVICE?

IF YOU WOULD LIKE A FOLLOW-UP CALL TO DISCUSS ANY OTHER CONCERNS, PLEASE LEAVE US YOUR NAME, PHONE NUMBER.

ANY OTHER COMMENTS:

MAIL SURVEY TO: WY/LV AAA, ATTN: SURVEY TEAM, 849 NORTH 47TH STREET, SUITE C, KANSAS CITY, KANSAS 66102

DEADLINE: January 31, 2022

WYANDOTTE/LEAVENWORTH AREA AGENCY ON AGING

849 North 47th Street, Suite C
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Phone: 913-573-8531
Fax: 913-573-8577
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Web: www.wycokck.org/aging
60Plus...Call on Us!

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JANUARY >>>

NEW YEARS DAY

Saturday, January 1, 2022

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR BIRTHDAY

Monday, January 17, 2022
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.

FEBRUARY >>>

GROUNDHOG DAY

Wednesday, February 2, 2022

VALENTINES DAY

Monday, February 14, 2022

PRESIDENTS DAY

Monday, February 21, 2022
Unified Government Offices Closed



Linda Ramirez, Editor