

Cummington Council on Aging



BINGO

July 15, 2-4 p.m.

FREE FUN CASUAL

Join us in the dining room of the Community House for some fun, free, casual games of Bingo on **Wednesday**,

July 15 from 2-4 p.m.!

A lovely opportunity to get together, play some low-key games of Bingo and win fun prizes!

Next Bingo game: Wednesday, October 14

33 Main Street
P.O. Box 95
Cummington, MA 01026
413-634-2262, option 8
croumeliotis@cummington-ma.gov

<https://www.cummington-ma.gov>
<https://northernhilltownscoas.org>

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Chrisoula Roumeliotis

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Gail Roberge
Brenda Emerson-Camp
Fionnghuala Reagan
Associate member: June Lynds

Make sure you are receiving this newsletter every month!

- by email
- by picking it up at the post office, Hillside Terrace, Community House, transfer station or the library
- by mail (if you are 80 and over)
- on the town or consortium website

If you would like it emailed or mailed to you, please let us know!

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**SAVE THE DATE IN AUGUST\***

Ice Cream Social at Pettingill Park –  
Saturday, August 15, 2-5

**\*look for more information on this event in the August newsletter**

**FARMERS' MARKET COUPONS**

Farmers' Market Coupons will be available in August. We do not yet know how many booklets we will be receiving. Look for more information, including eligibility guidelines, in the August newsletter.

**SAND DELIVERIES - BUCKETS**

If you received a delivery of sand this past winter, please hold onto any leftover sand (as well as the bucket). If your bucket is empty, please return it to the COA or to the transfer station.

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**IMPORTANT INFORMATION FROM THE NORTHWESTERN DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S CONSUMER PROTECTION UNIT**

**SCAM ALERT!**

It's a **SCAM** if someone calls you claiming:

- You are getting a new, plastic Medicare card.
- Medicare is switching to a card with a chip in it.
- It's a new year so you need a new card.
- They need you to verify your Medicare number.

Report Medicare Fraud to:  
**Medicare** 1-800-633-4227  
 or  
**Senior Medicare Patrol** 1-800-892-0890

**Northwestern District Attorney's Consumer Protection Unit**

Northampton (413) 586-9225  
 Greenfield (413) 774-3186

Working in cooperation with the Office of the Massachusetts Attorney General

**WHAT'S ON THE RESOURCE CART?**

Bib/clothing protectors, books, greeting cards, games & puzzles, walking maps, incontinence briefs, file of life forms, personal health care journals, and much more. Everything on the resource cart is free. Located in the Community House dining room, to the left of the COA office.

**ELDER LAW EDUCATION GUIDE**

The 2026 Elder Law Education Guide is now available online. It covers a vast range of subjects including: Estate Planning, Probate & Estate Tax Considerations, Health Care Decisions, Pensions, Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, Veterans' Benefits, Older Adult Driving, Elder Abuse and Exploitation, Bankruptcy, Reverse Mortgages, Long Term Care Insurance, and much more. Find it online here: [https://www.massbar.org/docs/default-source/default-document-library/elep\\_booklet\\_0409-mb-2-\(6\).pdf?sfvrsn=e892eab6](https://www.massbar.org/docs/default-source/default-document-library/elep_booklet_0409-mb-2-(6).pdf?sfvrsn=e892eab6)

**What is the Northern Hilltowns Consortium of COAs?**

The Northern Hilltowns Consortium of COAs includes the town Councils on Aging of Williamsburg, Westhampton, Chesterfield, Goshen, Worthington, Cummington and Plainfield. This group of COAs has been meeting monthly since the late 1990s. It is a partnership, collaboration, support group, and network of dedicated, knowledgeable, and highly effective COA leaders. The group focuses on ways to improve quality of life, help maintain independence, and reduce isolation and loneliness to support aging in place in the Hilltowns. The consortium collaborates to get grants and create worthwhile events to bring to you and our communities.

Residents of the Hilltowns are welcome to attend events at any of the Consortium COAs. For more information, including a calendar of events and the newsletters for all of the seven consortium COAs, check out the website: <https://northernhilltownscoas.org/>

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The Cummington Council on Aging counts on YOUR support to continue our important programs for local seniors! I would like to contribute to the Cummington COA. My contribution of \$\_\_\_ is attached. (Please make out your check to Cummington Council on Aging and mail to Cummington COA, PO Box 95 Cummington, MA 01026.)

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Email \_\_\_\_\_

| Monday                                                  | Tuesday                              | Wednesday                                       | Thursday                                                                | Friday                         | Sat/Sun |
|---------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------|
|                                                         |                                      | 1<br>9:30 <b>Mahjong</b>                        | 2<br>9:30 Healthy Bones & Balance<br>10:30 coffee hour<br>1 Needlework  | 3<br>9 <b>Foot Care Clinic</b> | 4/5     |
| 6<br>9:30 Healthy Bones & Balance<br>10:30 coffee hour  | 7<br>12 Grab & Go                    | 8<br>9:30 <b>Mahjong</b>                        | 9<br>9:30 Healthy Bones & Balance<br>10:30 coffee hour<br>1 Needlework  | 10                             | 11/12   |
| 13<br>9:30 Healthy Bones & Balance<br>10:30 coffee hour | 14<br>12 Grab & Go<br>1 Living Fully | 15<br>9:30 <b>Mahjong</b><br><br>2 <b>Bingo</b> | 16<br>9:30 Healthy Bones & Balance<br>10:30 coffee hour<br>1 Needlework | 17                             | 18/19   |
| 20<br>9:30 Healthy Bones & Balance<br>10:30 coffee hour | 21<br>12 Grab & Go                   | 22<br>9:30 <b>Mahjong</b>                       | 23<br>9:30 Healthy Bones & Balance<br>10:30 coffee hour<br>1 Needlework | 24                             | 25/26   |
| 27<br>9:30 Healthy Bones & Balance<br>10:30 coffee hour | 28<br>12 Grab & Go                   | 29<br>9:30 <b>Mahjong</b>                       | 30<br>9:30 Healthy Bones & Balance<br>10:30 coffee hour<br>1 Needlework | 31                             |         |

More information on these events or activities can be found throughout the newsletter.

**ONGOING PROGRAMS, ACTIVITIES AND RESOURCES** -- for more information on any of these programs, activities and resources, contact the COA at [croumeliotis@cummington-ma.gov](mailto:croumeliotis@cummington-ma.gov) or 634-2262, option 8. Unless otherwise indicated, these programs take place in the dining room of the Community House.

**Grab and Go meal** – every Tuesday

Leave your name and phone number with the COA to reserve your meal. Suggested donation of \$4 per meal goes to HVES.

**Healthy Bones and Balance**

Mondays and Thursdays from 9:30 to 10:30 a.m.;

**NOTE:** The Tuesday class is cancelled for the summer

**Coffee hour**

Mondays and Thursdays from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.

**Needlework group**

Thursdays from 1 to 3 p.m.

**Mahjong**

Wednesdays from 9:30-11:30. **Beginners are welcome!**

**Foot care clinic - NEW DAY**

The next foot care clinic will be on **Friday, July 3** with Piper Sagan at the Community House. The cost is \$50 for Cummington residents and \$60 for non-residents. Contact the COA to make an appointment.

**Medical Equipment**

Walkers, crutches, shower seats and tub transfer seats, toilet seat risers, and more are available for your use. We also accept donations of clean equipment in good condition; please reach out if you have something to donate.

**Easy Ride Van & Driver Pool**

The Hilltown Easy Ride van and the Driver Pool program provide rides for medical appointments, medical errands and shopping to Northampton and Pittsfield. Contact Ed Pelletier of the Hilltown CDC Transportation program at 413-296-4232 for more information and to arrange a ride.

**Exercise Equipment**

Pedal exercisers and sets of hand weights (1, 3 and 5 pounds) are available for you to borrow.

**Living Fully, Aging Gracefully**

The next Zoom meeting for this group is Tuesday, July 14. For more information, contact [annieb@crocker.com](mailto:annieb@crocker.com) or [fandellaf@gmail.com](mailto:fandellaf@gmail.com) or call Lucy at 413-634-5576.

**Drop in Tech support (no appointment needed)**

Chesterfield Community Center, every Tuesday, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. For more information, contact TechConnect at 413-296-5080. **See information on other drop-in centers in the Regional section of this newsletter.**

**In-home Tech Support (by appointment)**

Call or text 413-296-5080 or email [coaTechHelp@gmail.com](mailto:coaTechHelp@gmail.com) to arrange a home visit.

**Shine counselor (Medicare related insurance issues)**

Caroline Solan at 413-586-2000 or [csolan@lifepathma.org](mailto:csolan@lifepathma.org)

**MassHealth/Medicaid**

Buliah Mae Thomas at the Hilltown Community Health Center at 413-238-5511 or [bthomas@hchcweb.org](mailto:bthomas@hchcweb.org).

**Community Connector program (services beyond health insurance)**

Jennifer O’Connell at 413-296-4536 ext. 110 or [communityconnectjo@gmail.com](mailto:communityconnectjo@gmail.com) -services include assistance with obtaining benefits, such as Fuel Assistance, SNAP, Social Security; helping you live independently in your home; assistance with home repairs and transportation; and more.

**Happy Birthday in July**

Patricia Lorda, Ruth Dexheimer, Allan Douglas, Richard Wolf, Worth Noyes, Shelley Rieman, Russell Clark, Richard Gooding, Jean Schreier, Janice Loux, Sandra Shapiro, Margaret Allard, Gerald Howes, Joseph Pagano, Kristin Jay, Delia Nash, William Hoehne, William Dynok, Edward Stempniewicz, Michael Holden, James Wettereau, Dennis Carr, John Dudek, Althea Frary, Christopher Mesmer, Steven Schiff, Shaun Hebert, Mark Yamilkoski, Roger Huebner, Bryna Greenspan, Laurel Greenberg, Kristin Hook, Pamela McLean, Wayne Higgins, James Toomey, Martin Pixley, Deborah Jordan, John Taylor, John Burns, Hannah Abdelhalim, Christine Reeves, Linda Leigh, Yuri Khibkin, Stephanie Bean, Kathleen Whelihan, Nicole Wortis, Lyle Hazel

# PUBLIC HEALTH PRESENTATIONS will resume in the fall. Look for more information in upcoming newsletters.

The most recent presentation focused on the health impact of heat on older adults. Some of the information that was discussed is copied below and on the next page.

## Prevent and treat heat-related illness

**Know the signs and beat the heat!**



### Heat cramps

**Actions to take:**

- Provide water, clear juice, or a sports drink
- Encourage individuals to stop exerting themselves physically and move to a cool place
- Have them wait for the cramps to go away before doing any more physical activity

**Look for:**

- Lots of sweating
- Muscle cramps (often in the stomach, arms, or legs)

**Seek medical attention if:**

- The person's symptoms are getting worse
- Cramps last longer than 1 hour
- The person is on a low sodium diet, has heart problems, high blood pressure, or other medical conditions like asthma or diabetes.

## Heat exhaustion

**Look for:**

**Symptoms above plus:**

- Feeling tired or weak
- Fast or weak pulse
- Cold, pale, and clammy skin
- Nausea or vomiting
- Headache or dizziness
- Irritability

**Actions to take:**

- Provide water and encourage them to drink more fluids
- Move them to a cool place
- Encourage them to lie down
- Loosen their clothes or change into lightweight clothing
- Apply cool wet towels or cloths on the person

**Seek medical attention if:**

- The person is throwing up
- The person is getting worse
- Symptoms last longer than 1 hour
- The person has heart problems, high blood pressure, or other medical conditions like asthma or diabetes

## Heat stroke

**Look for:**

**Symptoms above plus:**

- High body temperature (higher than 103 °F)
- Throbbing headache
- Seizures
- Altered mental state or confusion
- Unconsciousness (passing out)

**Actions to take:**

- **CALL 911 – THIS IS A MEDICAL EMERGENCY**
- **Cool Immediately:**
  - Apply cool wet towels or soak with cool water
  - Remove outer clothing
- **Keep them safe:**
  - If there is vomiting, turn the person on their side to keep the airway open
  - If they are having a seizure, make the area safe by removing anything that may cause injury



# What Should I Do During an Extreme Heat Event?

## Do

- Use air conditioners or spend time in air-conditioned places, such as cooling centers, malls, or libraries.
- Use electric fans to provide comfort when the temperature is below 95°F.<sup>18</sup> Fans can make sweat evaporate more quickly from your body. More evaporation means more heat can leave your body.
- Take a cool shower or bath to help cool off.
- Minimize direct exposure to the sun.
- Stay hydrated—drink water or beverages **without** caffeine, sugar, or alcohol throughout the day.
- Eat light, cool, and easy-to-digest foods such as fruit or salads.
- Wear loose-fitting, light-colored clothes.
- Know the symptoms of heat-related illnesses and the appropriate responses.
- Check the local news for health and safety updates.<sup>15</sup>

## Don't

- Leave children, pets, or persons with mobility problems alone in cars for **any amount of time**.
- Drink alcohol to try to stay cool.
- Use the stove or oven to cook—it will make you and your house hotter.<sup>13</sup>
- Eat heavy, hot, or hard-to-digest foods.
- Wear heavy, dark clothing, which absorbs heat from the sun.
- Exercise outdoors during the hottest hours of the day (usually 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.).
- Use an electric fan when the temperature is over 95°F. When the temperature is in the mid-90s or higher, electric fans will not prevent heat-related illness.

### Help Others Cope with Extreme Heat

- Check on **older, sick, or disabled people**, including neighbors, family members, or friends who may need help responding to the heat. Be sure to check on those who live alone to ensure that they stay hydrated and cool. Some chronic conditions, such as diabetes or kidney disorders, can be made worse by heat exposure, and individuals affected by those conditions should be closely monitored in an extreme heat event.<sup>5</sup>
- Call your local public officials if you see **homeless people** in need of help. In some places, the non-emergency services hotline is 311, but check your local availability. Homeless people can be at great risk during extreme heat events,<sup>19</sup> especially if they are elderly or disabled, struggle with alcohol or drug addiction, or suffer from medical conditions such as diabetes, high blood pressure, or mental illness.
- Limit strenuous outdoor activity for **young children**, and make sure they take regular water breaks when playing outside. If possible, bring outdoor activities inside.
- Schedule workouts for **athletes** earlier or later in the day when the temperature is cooler. If possible, limit outdoor activity or bring outdoor events inside.
- If you are an **athlete or work outside**, monitor your teammates or co-workers, and watch for symptoms of heat-related illnesses.



### Additional resources:

**Extreme Heat:** A central hub for resources, tools, and guidance to stay safe during periods of extreme heat. <https://www.mass.gov/extreme-heat>

**Unhealthy Heat Forecast:** Track upcoming heat conditions in your community with a 7-day forecast and color-coded risk levels. <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massachusetts-unhealthy-heat-forecast>



# July Regional News

## On the Road Again... TRIPS IN 2026



**Contact Francine Frenier to reserve your seat BEFORE mailing payments.**

For more info call **413-296-4291**

Email: [francine.frenier@gmail.com](mailto:francine.frenier@gmail.com)

**Mail: 11 Stage Rd. Williamsburg, MA 01096**

**Day Trip August 3rd Encore Casino.** \$50 Cost Includes: bus transportation round trip, driver's gratuity & \$20 in free slot play. Meals on your own. Make check payable to Francine Frenier and mail to address above by July 1, 2026. **Just 3 more** passengers are needed for this trip to go.

**Day Trip September** Date TBD Big E.

**Day Trip December 8th Merry Christmazz Holiday Variety Show.** Jimmy Mazz performs seasonal traditional and contemporary tunes from various artists. Yankee Pot Roast lunch and show at Storowton's Carriage House, W. Springfield. A drive through Bright Nights follows. Make an \$80 check payable to Francine Frenier and mail to address above by October 6, 2026.

## Trips in 2027

Watch for upcoming details on a 3-days/2 nights trip to Baltimore to see the Red Sox play the Baltimore Orioles along with some sightseeing. Waiting for 2027 MLB schedule to come out in December.

## TECH CONNECT SUCCESS FOR OLDER ADULTS TECH HELP FOR JULY

**Tech Support home visit is available by appointment.**

Call or message 413-296-5080 to arrange a home visit.

**Devices for you: Refurbished PC laptops**

We have free refurbished laptops while supplies last. Please call 413-296-5080 and leave us a message if you are interested. If you have received a device from us and are not using it, please call our number to arrange a return so someone else can use it.

**Drop-in Centers - (no appointment needed)**

Sites open to residents of all towns  
(except Nash Hill location)

Chesterfield Community Center 400 Main Rd.  
Weekly on all Tuesdays from 11:00 to 2:00

Goshen Library, Drop-In tech support from 12:00 to 2:00, 3rd Thursday, 7/16

Westhampton Library Drop-In tech support, from 2:00 to 4:00, 4th Thursday 7/23

Williamsburg

**Meekins Library** Drop-In tech support (call library for latest information)

**Nash Hill Place** Resident Drop-In tech support from 10:00 to Noon, 2nd Tuesday, 7/14

Worthington tech support - contact Eileen Daneri [eadaneri@gmail.com](mailto:eadaneri@gmail.com).



## GOOD NEWS FOR JULY 2026

By Deb Hollingworth

This month we talk about nursing home care. Something you don't want to know until you need to know. Statistics say for those of us 65 or older, 70 percent will need nursing home care in our lifetime. But only 20 percent will need long term placement. (The rest being short term rehab stays after a medical event.)

What if you are part of that 20 percent?

How does a nursing home placement happen?

Usually this starts with a hospitalization, perhaps after a 911 event, maybe after a planned surgery when you are discharged from the hospital to a nursing home for rehab. If you were admitted to the hospital and stayed the 3 midnights....Medicare pays for this short term rehab stay which is usually a few weeks at best.

At some point the nursing home determines you have maxed out your Medicare rehab benefit and you need to be discharged. Home? What if you are "not ready", and you or your family caregiver(s) feel it is "unsafe" for you to go home.

You can stay in the nursing home, but switch from being a rehab patient, to being a long term resident, which means Medicare stops paying your monthly bill and you either pay the bill yourself or apply and get approved for MassHealth which pays most long term residents ongoing monthly bills.

What if you are home, and your situation has deteriorated to the point where you need to be a residential placement, a long term, not rehab nursing home resident. How to you make the transition from home to nursing home without the 911 event or hospitalization?

This is called a Community Admission.

You can contact the nursing home of your choice and make arrangements. They will need a medical summary from your doctor, and a payment source, either you plan to pay your bill yourself, or you complete and submit a MassHealth application. If you already have MassHealth, this process is simpler in that you only need to file the long term supplement section which gives MassHealth current verification of your income and assets. If your countable assets are less than \$2,000

(and you haven't transferred or 'gifted' any significant assets in the past 5 years)..... then you would be eligible for MassHealth to pay your ongoing nursing home bill. If your assets are more, you submit verifications and MassHealth will determine your "spend down" amount before becoming eligible.

Unlike a hospital discharge to a nursing home, a community admission takes longer, because we are waiting for an available bed in the nursing home of our choice. (With hospital discharges to nursing home...you take the first available bed, not necessarily the nursing home of your choice). With a community admission, the nursing home you choose, may put you on a waiting list when your paperwork is complete and call you when a bed becomes available . You can accept the bed, or delay and ask to be kept on their waiting list for the next bed. This is sometimes common when caregivers feel they can postpone placement a little longer. Getting the process started, getting on a waiting list is recommended if you wish to avoid the 911/hospitalization admission process.

Another option is a short term nursing home stay, called a Respite placement. Respite is for caregivers providing 24/7 care where the person needing care is placed in a nursing home, giving the caregiver a "respite" break. These are usually at least 2 weeks, and depend on bed availability. Not all nursing homes offer Respite stays. Check with the Highland Valley Ombudsman director, Michele Wolf, 413-588-5744. Michele provides oversight for the nursing homes in our area. She can give you a listing of all facilities and speak with you about which. provide dementia care, or dialysis, or specialized rehab programs. She may also know nursing homes who have a VA contract. Which brings us to how to pay for short term Respite stays which are not covered by Medicare.

The VA contracts with a few facilities and may pay for short term placement for veterans, check with your veteran's agent. And MassHealth may also pay for short term placement if you have MassHealth. Odds are, you won't need this information, but if you do, you might have a conversation with the Ombudsman program director at Highland Valley.