

# Plainfield Council on Aging

## November 2020 Newsletter



Plainfield Council on Aging  
Town Offices, 304 Main St.  
Plainfield, MA 01070

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### November Notes and Tips during Covid-19

#### Don't Forget to Vote!

Election Day is Tuesday, November 3rd.



Check your voter registration status:

[www.sec.state.ma.us/  
VoterRegistrationSearch/  
MyVoterRegStatus.aspx](http://www.sec.state.ma.us/VoterRegistrationSearch/MyVoterRegStatus.aspx)

#### Plainfield Mutual Support Network Still Available

The Plainfield Mutual Support Network (PMSN) in coordination with the Plainfield Police Department, Board of Health, and the Council on Aging is still going strong and ever present in town. Our group of volunteers help with grocery shopping, pharmacy needs and will also reach out to individuals who might like a friendly smile or visit on the telephone. We continue in an environment of social distancing and quarantine requirements and are required to wear masks when out in public.

Homemade masks are still available. You may contact either Erin Kelly-Dill at 413-336-0123 or Marissa Valenza at 413-634-5703. Thank you for your continued efforts!

Again, for your information, the PMSN web page is ([plainfield-ma.us/supportnetwork](http://plainfield-ma.us/supportnetwork)). One can also check out our Facebook page, ([plainfield mutual aid and support](https://www.facebook.com/plainfieldmutualaidandsupport)) for additional information. You can also call (413)634-1030 for requests or more information. Please leave a voicemail and we will get back to you as soon as possible. We have also added the HCDC COVID-19 Hilltown Response to our web page ([hilltowncdc.org/covid19](http://hilltowncdc.org/covid19)) for further information and as a valuable resource.

#### Flu Clinic Update

Because of this year's pandemic, the annual flu clinic will not be held in Plainfield. If you need the flu shot for this year the following may be helpful:

- ⇒ **Hilltown Community Health Center** in Worthington: If you are a patient at their facility, they can accommodate you.
- ⇒ **Pharmacy**: Check with your local pharmacy for flu vaccine availability and whether you need to make an appointment. Don't forget to bring your medical information with you, i.e., Medicare card, insurance, etc.

#### Easy Ride Options

Transportation by Easy Ride can take FRTA registered riders to pharmacies. Another option is that we have the driver pool drivers that can take riders to the pharmacy (also need to be registered with us) or they can do pick up and delivery as long as the medicine is paid for. We have one driver in Plainfield. Call us to make an appointment and more information: (413) 296-4232.



## Snap/Hip Locations

### What is HIP?

The Healthy Incentives Program (HIP) is a Massachusetts state program where SNAP recipients get at least \$40 of extra SNAP money every month to spend on local fruits and vegetables. That means if you have SNAP, you automatically have HIP! Shop at these farm locations with your SNAP/EBT card and get at least \$40 extra to spend through the HIP program. Note: you must have at least \$1 on your SNAP/EBT card when you go and shop; in other words, you need to have a balance on your EBT card in order to earn the HIP incentive. HIP can only be used at select locations (several local locations listed below). A client gets at least \$40 of HIP money every month, and it renews at the first of every month (\$40 for families of 1-2 people, \$60 for 3-5, and \$80 for 6 or more people).

Information about open locations can change from month to month. For up-to-date information on locations, as well as other locations in the rest of the Pioneer Valley, see [www.facebook.com/HIP.PioneerValley](http://www.facebook.com/HIP.PioneerValley) or contact Zoey at [zoey@buylocalfood.org](mailto:zoey@buylocalfood.org).



- **Mass Food Delivery** ([massfooddelivery.com](http://massfooddelivery.com)) Home delivery throughout Massachusetts. No delivery fee for SNAP customers (free delivery!). Select SNAP/HIP in checkout and swipe your card when you receive your delivery.
- **Crabapple Farm** 100 Bryant St, Chesterfield Saturdays, 10am-2pm (413) 296-0310. Pre-order for pick-up at the farm on Saturdays. Email [crabapplefarm@verizon.net](mailto:crabapplefarm@verizon.net) to get a weekly price list for pre-ordering.

- **Crimson and Clover**, 215 Spring St. Florence T-F, 12pm-7pm; Sa, 9am-2pm. (413) 570-0337. Offering curbside pickup, email [store@crimsonandcloverfarm.com](mailto:store@crimsonandcloverfarm.com) to order.

## Exercise Classes

For all of us stay-at-homers, Joan Griswold is continuing to offer her exercise classes via Zoom. Because of increased demand, she is now offering her classes on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday each week. If you are registered for one of her classes, you may attend all weekly classes.

We are extremely fortunate that she has been willing to invest her time and knowledge in order for us to stay active and healthy. Because we are not meeting in person during the pandemic, donations have decreased. **The Plainfield COA would appreciate any assistance you can give to defray costs.** Please send your donation to: The Plainfield COA Exercise Class, 818 West Main Street, Plainfield, MA 01070.



### ***The Plainfield Council on Aging counts on YOUR support to help build important programming for local seniors!***

I would like to contribute to the Plainfield Council on Aging. My contribution of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ is attached.  
(Please write your check to The Town of Plainfield and mail to Plainfield COA, 304 Main St. Plainfield, MA 01070)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

*Thank You for Helping to Support Your Neighbors!*

**Plainfield Council on Aging**

Seniors Aware of Fire Education



The focus of Fire Safety Month was how to prevent cooking fires. The theme was chosen with a few facts in mind.

1. The leading cause of house fires has been kitchen fires.
  2. The leading cause of kitchen fires is unattended cooking.
  3. Most cooking fires in the home involve the kitchen stove. Here are a few ways by which you can prevent fires in your kitchen:
- ⇒ If you are sleepy or have consumed a bit too much alcohol, do not use the stove.
  - ⇒ Stay in the kitchen when you are frying, boiling, broiling or grilling food.
  - ⇒ Stay in your home when food is cooking.
  - ⇒ Use a timer to remind you that you are cooking.
  - ⇒ Keep anything that can catch fire away from your stove top.
  - ⇒ One extra idea -- don't let pan and pot handles overhang the stove top edge where they can be bumped into and pour scalding liquid on you.

Have a safe Thanksgiving!

--Worth Noyes, SAFE Educator  
Williamsburg & Cumington Fire Departments

*The Senior SAFE program is sponsored by many of your fire departments and the Massachusetts Department of Fire Services.*



**Would you like to receive your newsletter, in color, by email instead of snail mail?**

If so, please email Kristen at [regionalcoanews@gmail.com](mailto:regionalcoanews@gmail.com) to be put on the email list. Include your address so I will know which mailing list to take you off of. Thanks!

**Phone scams, Medicare style**

So my latest irritation is those calls telling me I am eligible for Medicare supplies and they will be HAPPY to send me a back brace, knee brace, or Medical Item of the Day. The source of the calls will be some town in Massachusetts, or most recently a Williamsburg number. So far they haven't sent me anything... what if they do?

**From the FTC: "Don't accept medical equipment you get in the mail — unless you or your doctor ordered it. If it comes to your door and you didn't order it, you can keep it as a gift. You don't have to pay for things you didn't order... if you give them your information, they'll use it to fraudulently bill Medicare. This uses up your medical benefits, which means you might not be able to get the right brace later, if your doctor prescribes one."**

How do you tell if the scammers have been successful? Every now and again you will get a letter from Medicare in the mail, a Medicare Summary Notice, that says "This is not a bill" and it will show charges that Medicare paid. If you do not recognize a charge, or know it is one of those braces, call the phone number on the letter and report the blinking buggers.

The same rule holds if the mail brings you other merchandise with a bill, but you didn't order it. You can keep it, try to send it back at their expense, give it away, or use it to line a trash can.

Stay safe,  
Jean O'Neil, TRIAD committee member  
413-268-2228, [jeanoneilmass@gmail.com](mailto:jeanoneilmass@gmail.com)

## Good News!

By Deborah Hollingworth

As I sit down to write, we are about three weeks away from the Presidential election, so it's difficult to think about anything else these days. But we are also in the midst of Open Enrollment for Medicare beneficiaries who might like to look over their coverage and compare plans for this coming year, especially if you've received a letter from your Medicare Rx plan saying coverage is changing and cost is increasing. And if that's not good news...our mailboxes are filled with advertising from other insurance plans saying they can do a better job for us. Can all that go straight to the recycling bin? Or do we need to do something?

There are 1,326,207 Medicare beneficiaries in Massachusetts. Many of us can ignore all this advertising, and ignore the fact that it's Open Enrollment season, because we get our health insurance coverage through our retirement/pension plans, or through the VA. And those who have MassHealth or X-tra help (also called the Low Income Subsidy), do not have to make any changes to their coverage. They can ignore and recycle all the advertising in their mailbox.

For the rest of us, we might do well to check out our coverage. Typically the letter from our insurance plan says they have changed their Formulary, switching some of the generics we take into "another tier", which is another way to say they are going to charge us more for our generic Rx than they did last year. You may have received a letter from your Rx Plan that said they were increasing your monthly premium? We expect shrinking coverage and increasing costs as a way of life. But here's a new wrinkle. It has become more important to know where to shop, and which pharmacy to use. Pharmacy chains, pharmaceutical companies and health insurance plans are connected in ways that are not apparent to us, meaning they often own, or are in business with each other. So picking up your medications at Stop and Shop might be a different price than shopping at CVS.

We are in luck because the **Medicare.gov** website can sort this all out for us. By typing in your list of Rx, and the zip code where you live, the website program can sort through the details of all 27 Medicare Rx plans in our area and rank them in order of least cost for best coverage! You can try using the website yourself, or call your senior center for a SHINE appointment.

One more piece of good news is the **Massachusetts Pharmacy Outreach Program**. This is especially helpful for situations where your Rx is expensive, or is not something you've taken before

and you'd like to know more about the drug. The Pharmacy Outreach Program is a free service provided by the University of Massachusetts and Executive Office of Elder Affairs. It's your reference librarian, available by phone, Monday through Friday from 8:30am - 5pm: **1-866-633-1617**. They look for affordable solutions for you, and can help submit Patient Assistance applications if you qualify to get your Rx free or greatly reduced from the pharmaceutical manufacturer. One of my favorite stories is about my Mom calling them to find out if it might be safe to double the dose of her particular Rx and cut the pill in half. That way she'd save almost \$300 for the year. They said it should be OK, and to ask her doctor. She did. And saved enough money to get her chair reupholstered.

Open Enrollment runs from October 15th-December 7th each year. Call your senior center for a SHINE appointment if you need help sorting it all out.



"You get a call from this number about a busted oven, you're busy. Understand?"

## Joan Griswold's Zoom Exercise Classes

Thank you to all who join Joan Griswold's zoom exercise classes! We are very thankful that she does such a great job keeping our muscle strengthening class going and that she is interested in continuing this through the winter months.



Most of our COAs receive grants from Highland Valley Elder Services that partially fund many of our classes. We also use donations to keep paying teachers like Joan. Your donations make her classes possible.

### **In order to continue, we need donations from each of the seven Hilltowns.**

Joan works for each town in six-week sessions. When we were meeting in person, we had a donation jar in which we asked everyone to put in a donation that they could afford. We are very thankful for the donations that have been sent in, but we still need your support. Otherwise, we will not have the funds to keep Joan's classes on Zoom.

When sending in a donation, please send it to the town you would like to support. Joan lists them on her email that she sends out every week. If you would like to join Joan's classes, send her an email: [joan@bybhealth.com](mailto:joan@bybhealth.com)

[careconsultationmanh@alz.org](mailto:careconsultationmanh@alz.org) to schedule a Care Consultation today.

We know this is an unprecedented time, and no one should be doing this alone. The Alzheimer's Association staff are still operational and continue to help families each day living with dementia. Our 24/7 Helpline is available at 1-800-272-3900 to anyone who needs to talk about the challenges of dementia during this time. Our Helpline staff are available around the clock for any questions or concerns you might have. They can help address feelings of isolation, and link you to other resources.

Additionally, we are now offering all of our educational programs and support groups via video conference or over the phone. We also offer Meet Ups for those living with dementia. Virtual Alz Meet Ups are a fun, social hour that provide an opportunity to connect with others living through a similar experience.



## Free Resources from the Alzheimer's Association

Did you or someone in your family recently receive a diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease or another form of dementia? Would you like some help navigating decisions after a diagnosis? Are you worried about how to provide the best care for a loved one? Are you concerned about your own memory?



The Alzheimer's Association provides free Care Consultations that are confidential and personalized to the needs of individuals and families. Consultations can be provided by phone or video conference and can include family members in separate locations. Call 617-393-2100 or email

## Diane Meehan retires from the Hilltown Food Pantry after 30 Years

A familiar face to many, Diane Meehan recently retired from her position as Director of the Hilltown Food Pantry in Goshen. She started as a volunteer coordinator of the Pantry which has been in numerous locations (Cummington, Chesterfield, Haydenville and finally, in Goshen).

Thank you, Diane, for your many years of dedication and hard work. As the Goshen select board wrote in their letter to you, "You truly embody the popular phrase, 'Think Globally, Act Locally'. The many volunteers and people whom you have touched have enjoyed working with you and wish you all the best as you retire."

**Plainfield Council on Aging**  
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This is going to be the  
first year our family  
won't be going to Hawaii  
because of the virus.

Usually it's because  
we can't afford it.

COFFEE AND JELLY BEANS