

# Plainfield Council on Aging

## November 2021 Newsletter



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

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### SAVE THE DATE!

### *Thanksgiving Luncheon*



When: **November 10, 2021**  
*(unless otherwise restricted by the Board of Health)*

Time: **12 noon**

Where: Plainfield Town Hall

Menu: Turkey with stuffing

The COA luncheons are back! We have had two successful luncheons, one in September with a delicious spaghetti meal and then in October with ham and scalloped potatoes. Side dishes to compliment the meals were provided by the guests and everyone had a grand time visiting and catching up on the news. If you can, bring a side dish to go with turkey and stuffing. We look forward to seeing you all once again where we can catch up with one another and enjoy a wonderful meal.

Remember we require **proof of vaccination** to attend these luncheons as our way of insuring everyone present is protected and comfortable meeting together in the dining hall.

### Suggestions for COA day trips

We are still looking for suggestions for day trips. If there is something you would like to do, please place it in the suggestion box provided in the kiosk at the Town Hall. All requests will be considered.

### Booster shots for Covid-19 are now available

If you received the Pfizer 2-shot vaccination and are 65 years or older, immunocompromised, or in a high-risk work or institutional environment, you

are now eligible to receive the Pfizer booster shot. It is recommended that you get this shot to further protect yourself against the virus as the efficiency of the Pfizer vaccine declines over time. Booster shot locations can be found in CVS, Stop n Shop markets, Walgreens, or perhaps your own personal physician's office. Check with **vaxfinder.mass.gov** or call **211** or **(877) 211-6277** for further information. Persons who received Moderna or J&J vaccinations can check to see when they are scheduled for their booster shots.

If you have trouble getting to a vaccine clinic, you can use the In-Home Vaccination Program. Visit **mass.gov/vaccinesathome** for more information

Check to see if your chosen location will be able to provide you with your annual flu shot. It is considered safe to receive the booster and the flu shot at the same time.

Remember, even if you have been vaccinated, there is a slight chance of developing typical symptoms of mild COVID-19. Per the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), those symptoms include: Fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, a new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, or diarrhea. Even if your symptoms are mild, experts say it's still a good idea to check with your doctor as you might be eligible for a monoclonal antibody treatment which can prevent the evolution of a mild infection becoming a more serious infection.

Although there are still areas of increased outbreak, it appears that the COVID-19 virus is slowing down its spread. Wearing a mask in public is still a good idea and most places require their use.

### Northern Hilltowns Consortium Of COAs

The Northern Hilltowns Consortium of COAs has been developing a website for its town members consisting of Chesterfield, Cummington, Goshen, Plainfield, Westhampton, Williamsburg, and Worthington. You can connect at **www.northernhilltownscoas.org** and find a

wealth of information including past COA newsletters. The directors and coordinators from each town listed have been undergoing training as to how to edit and add information to the perspective towns. Stay tuned for more updates.

### Exercise Classes

Joan Griswold is providing Zoom classes on **Mondays at 10:00 am** for Plainfield residents. Email Joan for the link: joan@bybhealth.com.

Regular physical activity can help us recover more quickly, heal more easily, and get an edge on all kinds of disease and injury. In fact, exercise may just be nature's best medicine. "There is no medication or nutritional supplement that even comes close to having all of the effects exercise does," says David C. Nieman, PhD, author of *The Exercise-Health Connection: How to Reduce Your Risk of Disease and Other Illnesses by Making Exercise Your Medicine*. "It's truly the best medicine we know of."

### Plainfield Walkability

Along with Joan Griswold, several members in Plainfield are looking into the feasibility of creating walking routes in Plainfield. This group is planning a Zoom meeting on **November 15th at 6:30 pm**. Anyone interested in joining this group is more than welcome. Please contact Sue Honneus for more info at shonneus@town.plainfield.ma.us.



### Medical Equipment Swap

Remember, the Plainfield COA has medical equipment available. The inventory includes wheelchairs, walkers, crutches and canes, shower chairs, raised toilet seats and free-standing commodes plus assorted splints and braces, pedal exercisers, bed guards, sox assists and trekking poles. Call Susan Pearson at **634-0025** for further information or to borrow some equipment. If there is something we do not have, Ashfield has additional equipment. Call Deb Scott at **413-628-4547** or email her at **cbbuilders95@yahoo.com**



As we approach **Thanksgiving Day**, let's take time to remember all that we can be thankful for: our health, our dear friends, neighbors and family as well as thinking about those less fortunate than ourselves.



***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**



**Hear A Beep.  
Get On Your Feet!**

**Hear A Chirp  
Make A Change!**

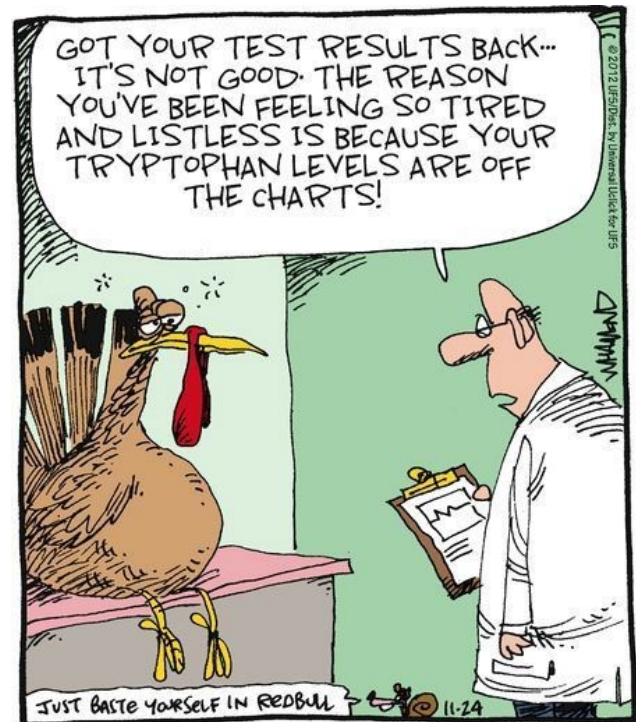
Last month's topic was the "Sound You Can Live With," your smoke detector. Remember? This month's topic is Carbon Monoxide (CO) alarms:

- Carbon Monoxide is a colorless gas that you cannot see or smell and it takes away the ability of your body to get and use the oxygen your body needs to survive.
- The CO alarm gives off a continuous set of four loud beeps to let you know you have dangerous amount of CO in your house.
- When you hear the continuous beep, beep, beep, go outside, then call 911 and stay out of the house.
- A single chirp every 30 to 60 seconds means the battery is low and must be replaced.
- CO alarms also have "end of life" sounds that vary by manufacturer. Check their instructions.
- Chirping that continues after replacing the battery means the alarm needs to be replaced.

Have a SAFE November!

--Worth Noyes, SAFE Educator  
Williamsburg & Cummington 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!

## ROBO CALLS!!! Note 1

More frustration - right next to spam text messages, phone calls from who knows who for you know what. You know I would love to give you a single source or option or program or Something, to stop phone calls you don't want. Sadly, it is complicated so I can't do that.

What I can do is ask you to read a very complete and mostly straight-forward website from the Federal Trade Commission. It starts with making sure you have done what you can with the national Do No Call list. Just a reminder, if you have added a phone or changed numbers, make sure you sign up the new phone. You can also call their number to check your status. **"You can register your numbers on the national Do Not Call list at no cost by calling 1-888-382-1222 (voice) or 1-866-290-4236 (TTY). You must call from the phone number you wish to register. You can also register at donotcall.gov."**

The Federal Trade Commission site goes over landlines and cell phones and some options. Go to [consumer.ftc.gov](http://consumer.ftc.gov), then click on "Privacy, Identity & Online Security" and read under "How To Block Unwanted Calls."

Actions –

Check your Do No Call status.

If you want me to print the FTC pages and get them to you, just holler.

If you need help with interpretation of those pages, just holler.

If you need a grandchild or other young person to help you with this, good luck. I don't have one.

Your town's Senior Center or COA may also have someone to help you with this.

Keep Smiling,

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

## November's Good News

By Deborah Hollingworth

What is Open Enrollment...and why do we go through this every year? Good question, so let's see if I can shed a little light on the subject.

Open Enrollment is this time of year (October 15th through December 7th) when we can change our health insurance coverage. We get inundated with a lot of advertising from insurance carriers like AARP, BlueCross, Health NewEngland, who want us to enroll in their plans. Their insurance plans sound great. But are they better than what we already have? And why do plans change...why can't they stay the same every year? Some of you do not have to change plans. So you can ignore all this advertising.



1. If you have MassHealth as well as Medicare, you do not have to consider changing plans.
2. If you get your health services through the VA, you don't have to change or pay attention to any of this advertising.
3. If your health insurance is part of your retirement/pension, you don't have to change.
4. If you are still working and have health insurance through your employer, or your spouse's employer, you don't have to change.
5. And finally, if you are satisfied with your current health insurance coverage, you don't have to change.

That leaves the rest of us. Here's when it makes sense to check out other insurance options.

- ⇒ This year my Rx plan decided to almost double the monthly premium. This happens. And when it does, there might be a better option.
- ⇒ This year my doctor prescribes a new medication that my current plan doesn't cover...or it's covered, but the co-pay is expensive.
- ⇒ This year we're going to spend the winter in Florida and I'm not sure my Medicare Advantage plan works there?
- ⇒ This year I'd like to get a knee replacement and anticipate needing PT after. My plan has some pretty high co-pays, maybe there's a better plan for me?

I heard that some Rx plans are offering much lower co-pays on the type of insulin I have to use. Which plans might work better for me?

Each year the Federal government allows insur-

ance carriers to make changes to their plans so they can maintain their profit margins. The cost of Rx increases, new medications are always coming on the market, hospital costs increase, and insurance providers are allowed to modify their plans accordingly. As consumers, we get to stay with our plans...or opt out and change. It can be confusing and overwhelming. So call your senior center and book your SHINE appointment early!



### HMLP: Home Modification Loan Program

Home Modification Loan Program (HMLP) is a state-funded loan program, providing loans to homeowners and small landlords to fund necessary changes to keep disabled or elderly family members in their own homes and communities. This is not a home repair program and is not a resource to repair roofs, windows, or heating and septic systems. Work must be completed by contractors who are licensed and insured.

#### Loan Information:

- \$1,000 to \$50,000 loans to property owners
- 0% interest
- No monthly payments or interest
- Repayment is required when property is sold or transferred
- \$1,000 to \$30,000 loans to owners of manufactured or mobile homes
- Landlords with fewer than 10 units may be eligible for a 3% loan for a tenant

#### Possible Home Modifications:

- Bathroom & kitchen modifications
- Ramps
- Stair-lifts, and/or platform lifts
- Sensory or therapy spaces
- Hard-wired alarm systems
- Fences
- Accessory dwelling units

#### Eligibility is based on:

- Income
- Documentation of need from professional
- Proposed home modifications

*(Continued on next page)*

## 2021 Income Guidelines

Household Size Eligible with Gross Income up to:

1	\$188,000
2	\$214,800
3	\$241,600
4	\$268,400
5	\$290,400
6	\$311,400
7	\$333,000
8	\$354,400



For more information call Susan Gillam at  
1-866-500-5599 or visit [cedac.org/hmlp](http://cedac.org/hmlp)

## From Alzheimers Society: It's Time to Open the Cognitive Impairment Door Wider

Reprinted below are excerpts from the Alzheimer Society's website ([www.alzheimers.org.uk](http://www.alzheimers.org.uk)) that offers information as you cross the threshold to the topic of dementia.

### What is dementia and what are the symptoms?

Dementia is the term for a group of symptoms that occur when the brain is damaged by diseases. This includes Alzheimer's disease or diseases of the blood vessels that can cause a stroke. These diseases can cause a significant decline in a person's mental abilities or 'cognitive function' - our capacity for things like memory, thinking and reasoning.

For a doctor to diagnose dementia, a person's symptoms must have become bad enough to significantly affect their daily life, not just be an occasional minor irritation. This means having new problems with everyday activities about the house, in the community or at work. For example, starting to have problems paying household bills, using the phone, managing medicines, driving safely or meeting up with friends.

If a person has symptoms that are worse than would normally be expected for a healthy person their age, but are not severe enough to significantly affect their daily life, a doctor may diagnose mild cognitive impairment (MCI). This is not a type of dementia, though some people who have MCI will go on to develop dementia.

### The signs of normal aging and dementia

In the next column are some of the possible changes due to both normal aging and early dementia. However, it is important to remember that everyone is different and not everyone with dementia will have all of these changes.'

Other conditions may also account for some of them. For example, a person with depression can have problems making decisions, get confused easily and appear withdrawn or irritable.

Ability	Possible changes due to normal aging	Possible changes due to dementia
<b>'Short-term' memory and learning new info</b>	Sometimes forgetting people's names or appts, but remembering them later	Forgetting the names of close friends or family, or forgetting recent events - i.e. visitors you had that day
	Occasionally forgetting something you were told	Asking for the same info over and over - for example, 'where are my keys?'
	Misplacing things from time to time, i.e. your mobile phone, glasses, but retracing steps to find them	Putting objects in unusual places, i.e. putting your house keys in the bathroom cabinet
<b>Planning, problem-solving and decision-making</b>	Getting less able to juggle multiple tasks, esp. when distracted	Having a lot of difficulty concentrating
	Making a bad decision once in a while	Frequently poor judgement when dealing with money or when assessing risks
	Occasionally making a mistake when doing family finances	Having trouble keeping track of monthly bills
<b>Language</b>	Having a bit of trouble finding the right word sometimes	Having frequent problems finding the right word or frequently referring to objects as 'that thing'
	Needing to concentrate harder to keep up with a conversation	Having trouble following or joining a conversation
	Losing the thread if distracted or many people speaking at once	Regularly losing the thread of what someone is saying
<b>Orientation</b>	Getting confused about the day or the week but figuring it out later	Losing track of the date, season and the passage of time
	Going into a room and forgetting why you went there, but remembering again quite quickly	Getting lost or not knowing where you are in a familiar place
<b>Visual perceptual skills</b>	Vision changes related to cataracts or other changes in the eyes, such as misty or cloudy vision	Problems interpreting visual information. For example, having difficulty judging distances on stairs, or misinterpreting patterns, such as a carpet, or reflections

**Plainfield Council on Aging**  
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**Plainfield, MA 01070**

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### **Vaccine Booster Information**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the federal Food and Drug Administration (FDA), as well as the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) have authorized the Pfizer COVID-19 Booster for individuals 65 years of age and older, individuals 18-64 years of age at risk for severe COVID-19 due to underlying medical conditions, and individuals 18-64 years of age who are at increased risk for COVID-19 because of occupational or institutional settings who have previously received the Pfizer vaccine. These residents are eligible to receive their booster shot at least 6 months after their second dose of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine.

You can get help with making an appointment or finding a walk-in clinic through the Northampton Senior Center. Go to:

[northamptonma.gov/2219/Vaccine-Clinics#weeklyschedule](http://northamptonma.gov/2219/Vaccine-Clinics#weeklyschedule).

If you cannot find what you need on the website, you can call their vaccine line at 413-587-1219. Walgreens and CVS (as well as other locations) also have booster shots available—appointments are encouraged.

Daylight Savings Time ends  
this weekend and we're  
supposed to "fall back."



Fortunately that's my specialty!

Visit Jim Hunt at [facebook.com/huntcartoons](https://www.facebook.com/huntcartoons)

