

Plainfield Council on Aging

October 2026 Newsletter



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

Polly Ryan, Coordinator
413-212-1581
pryan@town.plainfield.ma.us

You can now register for COA events on our town website by [following this link!](#)

Directions are on the website. It is extremely helpful when preparing for any occasion to know how many people plan to attend so the amount of supplies needed can be determined ahead of the event. It is also mandated by the state that attendance for all COA activities be documented and submitted in an annual report to AGE (aka, The States Executive Office of Elder Affairs) who grant funds to COA's statewide. If you cannot access the registration form you can always call or email Polly at 413-212-1581 or pryan@town.plainfield.ma.us to sign up for activities.



Please know that our COA board members welcome guests and grandchildren to attend the COA luncheons!

The October Luncheon will be on Wednesday the 14th at noon in Town Hall.
On the menu is ham, mac & cheese, carrots, and coleslaw.
Desserts and donations are welcome.

Kelly Hughes from the Northampton Department of Health and Human Services will present on "Health Advocacy & Healthcare Proxies" as well as providing the blood pressure clinic.

Everyone is invited to this program in Goshen

Sharing and Caring: A Memory Cafe

A group led by two speech-language pathologists for adults with memory loss and their care partners.



Every 1st Thursday, 1pm-2:30pm, Oct 2026-Jun 2027
John James Memorial Town Hall, 42 Main St. in Goshen, MA
Contact Kerry at COA@goshen-ma.us or (413) 268-8236, ext. 118

Join us for a workshop on finding "Peace and Joy" Saturday October 24th in Town Hall from 10 am to noon.

Roslyn Maklin will lead us in discovering new ways of using writing, drawing, humor, and self-compassion to bring greater peace and joy into our lives and relationships.

Coffee, tea and & treats will be provided.
Please RSVP

On Halloween! October 31 at 10 am in Town Hall, please join us for a presentation by Alex Tenari, from the Funeral Consumers Alliance of Western Massachusetts, whose moto is "Don't Get Caught Dead Without Us!"

She will present on the many burial options available today. This organization does not provide burial services, rather they are a non-profit organization dedicated to helping us understand all the possibilities for choosing an end-of-life service that's meaningful, dignified, affordable and suits our individual preferences.

Coffee, tea, cider and donuts will be available.

And on Halloween! at noon in Town Hall, and only if you RSVP a pumpkin will be reserved for you to carve.

All ages are welcome!
Popcorn, cider and donuts will be served.

Holyoke Community College has some courses for seniors on Technology, click here to see them.

If you are interested in any of them, the COA will subsidize the cost by \$20 for any individual who is interested in enrolling.

Please contact Polly at 413-212-1581 or pryan@town.plainfield.ma.us to sign up.

Healthy Bones and Balance classes with Polly are held every Tuesdays at 3:50 in the Cummington Community House. Anyone is welcome to join anytime.



Classes with Jill also continue at the Cummington Community House on Mondays and Thursday at 9:30 and all are welcome to participate in her class as well.

A New and Valuable Medicare Benefit!

Would you like help coordinating your medical care and receiving support from a trained patient advocate? Medicare now covers this type of service through organizations like **Medicare Rights Center and Umbra Health Advocacy.**

Patient Advocacy & Healthcare Navigation Services

Your Medicare benefit covers an Umbra advocate to:

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <p>Coordinate care with all your doctors and communicate your needs</p> | <p>Find specialists and help you navigate chronic illnesses or complex diagnoses</p> | <p>Manage medications and cost</p> |
| <p>Review medical bills, identify errors and negotiate reduced fees</p> | <p>Explain Medicare benefits, fight claim denials and secure pre-authorizations</p> | <p>Research and provide long term care options such as assisted living, nursing homes, or home care services</p> |

The best part? Your Original Medicare benefit pays for it.

Ready to get started?
Three easy ways to connect:

CALL US
Speak with our friendly team
857-349-2716

EMAIL US
Tell us how we can help
seniorhelp@UmbraHealthAdvocacy.com

VISIT US ONLINE
Learn more and get started today
UmbraHealthAdvocacy.com/senior_advisor

FALL VACCINE CLINIC

**PLAINFIELD, MA
PUBLIC SAFETY**

38 N. Central Street, Plainfield, MA



**Tuesday
October 20, 2026
3:00pm – 5:00pm**



**SCAN THE QR CODE
OR REGISTER ONLINE:**
northamptonma.gov/2219/vax



FLU VACCINE
Regular (6mos +)
High Dose (65+)



COVID Vaccine
Pfizer (65+)
18+ & considered high risk.

*If you are 18 + and unsure about getting a COVID vaccine, talk with your primary care provider. If they recommend vaccination, we can provide it at our clinic after you complete a vaccine eligibility screening questionnaire.



NEED HELP REGISTERING?
Call: 413-587- 4903
nurses@northamptonma.gov

- Please bring your insurance card, vaccines are free to you
- Limited Walk-ins, pre-registering is recommended



HOMEBOUND VACCINE PROGRAM

Amherst, Chester, Chesterfield, Cummington, Easthampton, Granby, Hadley, Hatfield, Huntington, Middlefield, Northampton, Plainfield, Southampton, Worthington



SCAN THE QR CODE



OR REGISTER ONLINE

northamptonma.gov/2219/vax



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Call: 413-587- 4903



COVID VACCINE
Pfizer



FLU VACCINE
Regular and High Dose
(available during flu season)

- Homebound visit available for Covid, Flu vaccine for ADULTS only
- Homebound includes persons with limited mobility and/or difficulty getting out of the home and their caretakers.

- Please have your insurance card available



Hampshire Elder Law Program (HELP)
is a program of the Hampshire County Bar Association which provides civil legal services at no cost to low-income seniors, 60 years of age and older.



Services provided include bankruptcy, consumer protection, guardianship, health care proxies, powers of attorney, probate of estates, and wills.

For more information, contact the Hampshire County Bar Association by phone at (413) 586-8729 or Email: hcba@crocker.com

The next Foot Care Clinic at the Cummington Community House is scheduled for Friday November 6th.

An additional Foot Care Clinic is available at the Chesterfield Community Center on Monday November 16th from 9 am-12 pm.

Please call Piper Sagan at 413-522-8432 to schedule an appointment (\$50) or a home visit (\$80/session).



Got Food?

There are several programs for receiving food and/or prepared meals delivered to your home regardless of your income. Check in with Polly to find one that fits your needs.

Or go to www.plainfield-ma.us/council-aging/page/food-meal-programs

And, if you wish to help a neighbor by volunteering to pick up food for them, please let Polly know.

Grab and go hot meals are available for Plainfield's 60 and over residents at the Cummington Community House.

They can be picked up every Tuesday between noon and 12:30. To register or order for the first time, call Chrisoula at 413-634-2262 or email her at croumeliotis@cummington-ma.gov.

A suggested donation of \$4 per meal supports Highland Valley Elder Services who prepare them.

Durable Medical Equipment is available for loan. Please call Shirley to borrow anything at 413-446-9608

Ongoing Programs, Activities & Resources on the Plainfield Town Website

The Plainfield Mutual Support Network (PMSN) has a list of volunteers willing to provide rides to local vendors and medical appointments.

Please call 413-634-0170 a few days ahead to schedule something. Leave a message with your contact information and details of your transportation needs.

Tech Connect provides training at drop-in centers and has a few PC laptops to give away for free.

Email Nancy Brown at coatechtrainer@gmail.com or call 413-296-5080 to get more details. Or go to <https://northernhilltownscoas.org/>

Caroline Solan is our new SHINE Coordinator and can answer all your Medicare/Advantage plan health insurance questions.

Medicare open enrollment is from October 15 to December 7

She is available in person on Wednesdays at Highland Valley Elder Services (HVES, 320 Riverside Drive in Florence). You can also call HVES at 413-586-2000 and leave her a message or book an appointment. The most expedited way to reach her would be to send her an email at csolan@lifepathma.org.



If you have questions about MassHealth

call Buliah Mae Thomas at the Hilltown Community Health Center 413-238-5511 or email her at bthomas@hchcweb.org

Need a friend or support?

Join Polly and/or a nurse for a coffee hour. Schedule a time convenient for you by calling 413-212-1581 or email pryan@town.plainfield.ma.us.

October's Happy Birthdays

Edward Morann, Neal Wecker, Theresa Orlandi, Russell Powers, Kare Marshall, Gloria Potter, Harry Fisher, Terence O'Sullivan, Barbara Burrell, Sheila Barry, Carolann Skaling, Thomas Patti, Douglas Premo, Cheryl Sharpe, Diane Phelps, Robyn Obrien, Lawrence Young, Kim Vieira, Melissa Rustemeyer, Donna Hudson, David Dowling, Elizabeth Lambert, L Stockwell, Norman Beckwith, Conrad Liebenow, Linda Alvord, Robert Rodriguez.





October Regional News

Seniors Aware of Fire Education



October is Fire Safety Month, making it a good time to take a few minutes to review your family's home escape plan. Fires can spread quickly, and having a plan ahead of time can make a big difference.

- Know two ways out of every room.
- Keep hallways, doorways, and stairs clear.
- Practice your escape plan with everyone in your household.
- Keep glasses, keys, medications, and a phone where they can be easily reached.
- Choose a meeting place a safe distance from your home.
- When a smoke alarm sounds, get out and stay out. Call 911 from a safe location.

A few minutes of planning today can help protect you and your loved ones when every second counts.

Stay SAFE this Fire Safety Month!

Capt. Steve Estelle,
SAFE Educator
Goshen Fire Department

In case of a FIRE ---- CALL 911

If you have questions about fire related issues, see below.

FIRE DEPARTMENT Chief Contact Number

- Chesterfield **David Hewes** 413-296-4049
- Cummington **Adam Dragon** 413-634-0333
- Goshen **Cameron Lacey** 413-268-7161
- Plainfield **Dennis Thatcher** 413-634-5566
- Westhampton **Dave Antosz** 413-529-7181
- Williamsburg **Jason Connell** 413-268-7233
- Worthington **Michael Dondiego**
413-238-4445



TECH HELP FOR OCTOBER

TechConnect will be offering **Q&A style classes this fall on the second Tuesday of each month** at the Chesterfield COA Community Center. Bring your questions and contributions to our roundtable discussion. Hosted by Lizzy Canady from 1-2pm on the following dates:

10/13/2026: Putting your digital house in order
11/10/2026: Medical Portals, taught by Peg Whalen
12/8/2026: Artificial Intelligence: Trends & Topics

No registration necessary.

Tech Support home visit is available by appt. 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 received a device from us and are not using it, please call us 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 Every Tuesday from 11:00 to 2:00

Goshen Library, Drop-In tech support from

12:00 to 2:00, 3rd Thursday, 10/15

Westhampton Library Drop-In tech support, from

2:00 to 4:00, 4th Thursday 10/22

Williamsburg

Meekins Library Drop-In tech support (call library for latest information) 413-268-7472

Nash Hill Place Resident Drop-In tech support from 10:00 to Noon, 2nd Tuesday, 10/13

Worthington tech support - contact

Eileen Daneri eadaneri@gmail.com





Take a **RIDE!**



**Western
Mass
Wheelers**

Everyone deserves
the joy of biking.

with the **WESTERN MASS WHEELERS!**

Come experience the joy of cycling!

FREE
to take a ride!

**NO BIKING
EXPERIENCE**
is necessary!

The Western Mass Wheelers are highly trained volunteer riders dedicated to sharing the joy of cycling with everyone.

Their adaptive bicycles make it possible for people of many ages and abilities to experience the freedom and fun of a bike ride!



**WEDNESDAY,
OCTOBER 14**



2:30 PM



**GOSHEN TOWN CENTER
PARKING LOT**



RAIN DATE: The event will be rescheduled in the event of inclement weather.



Questions?



Joan Griswold



joan@bybhealth.com



413-537-8337



Thanks to the Western Mass Wheelers for making the joy of biking possible for all!

GOOD NEWS FOR OCTOBER 2026

By Deb Hollingworth

Open Enrollment is here again...October 15th - December 7th where we have an opportunity to switch our health insurance. For those of us with Medicare Advantage plans (HMOs or PPOs) and those of us who have a Medicare D plan for our Rx coverage, this is the time each year when we can review our coverage, check out any changes ...and see if what we have, is what we want to keep for next year. If we don't do anything...our coverage will automatically renew January 1st for next year.

Here are the things we can do during Open Enrollment:

1. Enroll in a Medicare D plan, or switch your D plan.
2. Enroll in a Medicare Advantage plan, or switch Advantage plans.
3. Enroll for the first time in a Medicare Advantage plan.
4. Or drop your Medicare Advantage plan and switch back to original Medicare with a Medicare D plan.

If you need help figuring all this out...you can contact your SHINE counselor, Caroline Solan at Highland Valley 586-2000 and make an appointment to see her in person, or email her with your questions and she can help that way. csolan@lifepathma.org.

Caroline works Wednesdays, but will have Tuesday appointments as well during Open Enrollment.

Last year SHINE appointments across the State were booked up quickly. If this happens again (as expected) you can also get help through Medicare by calling 1-800-633-4327..... 24 hours x day, 7 days a week! I have heard good reports from folks using the Medicare help line. And all you night owls can catch them when phone lines are perhaps less busy.

When calling the Medicare help line, they will encourage you to make a Medicare.gov account, a tool that lets you see the activity on your Medicare coverage. The Medicare.gov web site has good step by step directions on how to do that.

BlueCross Blue Shield MA and Mass General Brigham Coverage Issues

Last month, there were news articles and letters about the BlueCross Blue Shield HMO/PPO Advantage plan changes regarding Mass General Brigham and Woman's primary care provider (PCP) coverage.

As of October 1st, Primary Care Providers are unable to bill the BlueCross Advantage plan, and consumers with BlueCross PPO's can expect to pay higher fees for their PCP visits.

Fortunately the October 1st deadline for coverage has been extended to December 31st. This extension allows for continuity of care, giving consumers time to make changes to their coverage.

If you have a BlueCross HMO Advantage plan, or a BlueCross PPO plan, you should call the customer service number on the back of your insurance card. And during Medicare Open Enrollment (October 15th - December 7th) you should consider switching to coverage that your PCP can bill.

Here are your options:

1. You can disenroll from your Advantage plan by enrolling in a Medicare D plan. (Enrolling in a D plan will automatically cancel your Advantage Plan)
2. You can enroll in another/different Medicare Advantage plan.
3. You can go back to "original Medicare" and enroll in a Medicare D plan so you have Rx coverage
(Any of these changes would take effect January 1st)

If you go back to original Medicare with a D plan,.....remember you can enroll in a Medex-type supplement any time during the year if you need more coverage than original Medicare provides.

Still have questions? BlueCross customer service can help, or your SHINE counselor, or the Medicare help line at 1-800-633-4327.

FALL VACCINE CLINIC

Cummington Community House

33 Main St, Cummington, MA 01026

Wednesday
October 21, 2026
10:00am – 1:00pm



OR REGISTER ONLINE:

northamptonma.gov/2219/vax



Hampshire Public Health
Shared Services Collaborative
Prevent. Promote. Protect.



FLU VACCINE

Regular (6mos +)
High Dose (65+)



COVID Vaccine

Pfizer (65+)
18+ & considered high risk.

*If you are 18+ and unsure about getting a COVID vaccine, talk with your primary care provider. If they recommend vaccination, we can provide it at our clinic after you complete a vaccine eligibility screening questionnaire.



NEED HELP REGISTERING?

Call: 413-587-4903
nurses@northamptonma.gov

- Please bring your insurance card, vaccines are free to you
- Limited Walk-ins, pre-registering is recommended



HOMEBOUND VACCINE PROGRAM

Amherst, Chester, Chesterfield, Cummington,
Easthampton, Granby, Hadley, Hatfield,
Huntington, Middlefield, Northampton,
Plainfield, Southampton, Worthington



SCAN THE QR CODE



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Hampshire Public Health
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Prevent. Promote. Protect.



NEED HELP REGISTERING?

Call: 413-587-4903



COVID VACCINE

Pfizer



FLU VACCINE

Regular and High Dose
(available during flu season)

- Homebound visit available for Covid, Flu vaccine for ADULTS only
- Homebound includes persons with limited mobility and/or difficulty getting out of the home and their caretakers.
- Please have your insurance card available



Sharing and Caring: A Memory Cafe

*A group led by two speech-language pathologists
for adults with memory loss and their care partners.*



Every 1st Thursday, 1pm-2:30pm, Oct 2026-Jun 2027

John James Memorial Town Hall, 42 Main St. in Goshen, MA

Contact Kerry at COA@goshen-ma.us or (413) 268-8236, ext. 118

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

Mail: 11 Stage Rd. Williamsburg, MA 01096

NEW Day Trip Monday October 12th

Worthington COA Fall Foliage Bus Trip.

Hudson River Narrated Cruise aboard the Rip Van Winkle II, choice of gourmet boxed lunch on board, and Market stop. Room still available.

Discounted price for Worthington seniors over 60 and \$140 for other seniors.

Call Phyllis at 413-238-5962 or email coa@worthington-ma.us for details & to reserve a seat.

Trips in 2027

Multi Day Trip April 25- May 1 Savannah, Jekyll Island & Beaufort, SC. Seven days, six nights.

Visit Savannah, "The Belle of Georgia," Magnificent Beaufort, SC "The queen of the Carolina Sea Islands," and the Port Royal Sound Maritime Museum

and more. Includes hotels, breakfasts and 4 dinners. Price \$987 per person, double occupancy. A \$25 discount is given if paid in full by January 25, 2027. Sign up NOW and pay later. Make the check payable to Diamond Tours and mail to the address above *after the first of the year.*

Multi-day trip Chicago, 7 days, 6 nights,

The partial itinerary includes a tour of Chicago, a skyline cruise on Lake Michigan, a visit to historic Navy Pier and museums. Includes hotels, breakfasts and 4 dinners. Price \$946 per person, double occupancy. A \$25 discount is given if paid in full by July 17, 2027. Sign up NOW and pay later. Make the check payable to Diamond Tours and mail to the address above.

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Please email Francine NOW so she can see if there is enough interest to make these trips a go:

**\*\* 3-day/2 night trip to Baltimore to see the Red Sox play a game against the Baltimore Orioles along with some sightseeing and visit to the National Aquarium. Waiting for the 2027 MLB schedule to come out in December to determine dates.**

**\*\* Day trip for shopping and lunch.**

#### **TechConnect TECH TIP from Peg Whalen**

Blue light is just one of the ways tech devices can interfere with sleep. It's The blue light from a phone, laptop, or other device confuses the brain into thinking it's time to wake up instead of fall asleep. Electronic screen light comes in all colors, but the blues are the worst. Blue light fools the brain into thinking it's daytime. When that happens, the body stops releasing a sleep hormone called melatonin. Melatonin is nature's way of helping us wind down and prepare for bed. The body starts releasing it a couple of hours before bedtime. Darkness helps trigger the release of melatonin; blue light delays it. It is best to shut off alerts when you go to sleep and keep screens that emit light out of your bedroom, dimmed or off.

**PLAINFIELD COUNCIL ON AGING**  
**304 MAIN ST.**  
**PLAINFIELD, MA 01070**

**PLAINFIELD COA**

**Polly Ryan**, Coordinator  
pryan@town.plainfield.ma.us  
413-212-1581

**Shirley Todd**, Chair  
ginger237ma@yahoo.com  
413-446-9608

**Mary Potter**, Secretary  
mary@potterhomebuilders.com  
413-734-5430

**Susan Honneus**  
stormpetrel22@gmail.com  
413-570-5544

**Bonnie Phillips**  
bfillups21@icloud.com  
413-634-2290

# SCAM ALERT!

Look out for possible scams on social media!

- Shopping scams offering high-priced items for cheap. Sometimes orders never arrive or are not what was ordered.
- Investment scams using ads and testimonials offering fool-proof investments.
- Romance scams where they build a love connection then invent problems and ask for money.

**To avoid scams on social media:**

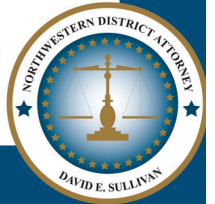
- Limit who can see your posts and contacts on social media.
- Never let someone you met on social media direct investment decisions.
- Before you buy, check out the company. Search online for its name plus "scam" or "complaint."

**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



***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**