



SENIOR UPDATE  
 AREA AGENCY ON AGING  
 ADVISORY COMMISSION ON AGING  
 6955 FOOTHILL BLVD., SUITE 300  
 OAKLAND, CA 94605-1907

April/May/June 2009

# Senior Update

...The Eyes and Ears of Alameda County Seniors

Commission on Aging

## Baby Boomers Impact Transportation Changes in Alameda County

Sylvia Stadmire, Commissioner and Robert Washington, ACTIA

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### Baby Boomers Impact Transportation Changes in Alameda County

If you were born between 1946 and 1964, you are considered part of the baby boomer generation. Today, boomers represent about 28 percent of the population nationwide, and because of their vast numbers, they drive change. In fact, the large onslaught of boomers is starting to strain social programs such as Social Security and Medicare. Another significant impact of the aging boomers is on our transportation systems.

#### Aging and Mobility Trends in the Bay Area

Over the next thirty years, California will experience an unprecedented demographic shift caused by aging baby boomers. The growth in Alameda County's aging population alone will have significant implications for the region, in terms of health-care, housing, social services and mobility. Alameda County is the sec-

ond largest populated county in the Bay Area, and with Contra Costa County, has the highest population of baby boomers in the region. In 2002 the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) conducted an analysis entitled "The San Francisco Older Adults Transportation Study (OATS)." The study estimated that in Alameda County, population growth for boomers between ages 65 and 74 will increase by an estimated 85,800 or 113% by 2020. Because of these growing numbers, providing mobility options for seniors is critical. Based on data compiled by the California Transit Association, common barriers that impact mobility for seniors include:

- Heightened safety risks:** Seniors are now driving later in life and risking safety due to age-related impairments, such as frailty, loss of vision, and slower response times.

- Limited options and lost mobility:** One in five seniors over age 65 do not drive and have limited options for transportation and mobility.

- Isolation and reduced independence:** More than 50% of non-drivers age 65 and older stay home on any given day, partially because they lack transportation options.

- Diminished quality of life and health for non-drivers:** Compared with older drivers, non-drivers make:

- 15% fewer trips to the doctor
- 59% fewer shopping trips and restaurant visits
- 65% fewer trips for social, family and religious activities.

Further, in the Alameda County Area Agency on Aging 2005 Needs Assessment, it was found that transportation ranked among the top three greatest barriers for seniors in getting nutrition, health and socialization needs met.

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## Baby Boomers Impact Transportation Changes in Alameda County Continued from Cover

In addition, the assessment found that homebound and linguistically isolated seniors were at the greatest risk. Given the diverse communities and aging populations in Alameda County, addressing these needs are critical.

### **Actions to Increase Senior Transportation Funding at Federal and State Levels**

Enhancing mobility options for older adults will depend on the availability of funding. ACTIA and many of its partners seek to increase federal funding through legislation and expanded coordination.

### **ACTIA is an Important Funder of Senior Transportation**

Over \$148 million Measure B funds are designated for special transportation for seniors and people with disabilities. Of this amount, over \$80 million is specifically designated for Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) mandated services and senior services. In addition, ACTIA has funded over 50 grants for senior and disabled transportation services and programs.

The services and programs are as varied as the mobility needs of seniors.

### **Measure B and PAPCO Keep Seniors Moving in Alameda County**

It is estimated that the size of the senior population will more than double in Alameda County by 2020. The rapid growth is creating greater demands on our transportation systems by identifying a need for a variety of services that meet the transportation requirements of an aging population. Alameda County voted ahead of the curve when they increased Measure B allocations for Special Transportation from 1.5% in 1986 to 10.5% in 2002. ACTIA's Paratransit Advisory and Planning Committee (PAPCO) is Alameda County's official Paratransit Coordinating Council.

They advocate for improvements, make direct recommendations to the ACTIA Board, and conduct service reviews. The 28-member committee is made up of Alameda County residents who use the

services available to seniors and people with disabilities. PAPCO members understand the special transportation needs of this growing population. They advocate for improvements, make direct recommendations to the ACTIA Board, and conduct service reviews of special transportation providers that receive Measure B funds.

### **Measure B and PAPCO have made the following gap grant projects possible:**

- Access Alameda - Paratransit resource brochure
- East Bay Paratransit Rider Care Specialist
- Ashby BART Station -Ed Roberts Campus
- Hayward Ride Today!
- North Alameda County Group Trip Program
- Dimond-Fruitvale Senior Shuttle
- Medical Return Trip Improvement Program
- Special Transportation Services for Individuals with Dementia (Albany to Fremont)
- Senior Travel Training
- Wheelchair Breakdown Service

Visit Access Alameda for paratransit information in Alameda County. To learn more about PAPCO or other ACTIA community advisory committees, visit the ACTIA website.

## Transportation Needs for Seniors an Emerging Issue

Frank Howell, Commissioner

As we age, especially past the age of 60, seniors become aware of a gradual decline in our driving ability. We begin to place restrictions on ourselves without any input from the Department of Motor Vehicles. Many seniors stop driving at night, limit free-way driving, or decide not to drive during the rush hours. The California Department of Transportation suggests using taxi cabs, shuttle buses, public transportation, or carpooling with friends. I live just three blocks from a shopping center and I often decide to walk. Recently the Lucky store, that we in my housing development en-

joyed using, moved away. Now for major shopping we are forced to drive to the downtown areas.

There is some apprehension about visiting Department of Motor Vehicles because we may be confronted with new restrictions imposed as a result of driving tests. The examiner has the authority to tell seniors when and where they are allowed to drive, require special mechanical devices be installed on the car, or insist the senior obtain corrective lens or prosthetics. Eventually, friends or relatives may take your car keys for your safety.

The American Automobile Association (AAA) recently produced a computer program called the *"Roadwise Review: A Tool To Help Seniors Drive Safely Longer."* You install the disc on your computer. You need a partner and ten feet of space. The program puts you through a series of tests designed to determine how well you can drive. You can use the disc on computers running Windows 2000, XP or Vista. The time to make decisions about your driving may be closer than you think. Now, is a good time to think about the automobile and your future.

## Stagebridge Theatre Company, 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Performing Arts Camp for Adults 50+

Maryann Maslan

Let your creative self out of the box for five days of acting, clowning, drumming, puppetry, singing, storytelling and much more. The Third Annual Performing Arts Camp for the over 50 crowd is offered by Stagebridge Theatre Company. Internationally acclaimed guest artists include Masankho Banda, Joan Mankin, Julian Lopez-Morillas, Kirk Waller and Roni Alperin. Enjoy a variety of classes, entertainment, special events and a final celebration that will showcase the week's

performing arts adventure. The first two years sold out early. Don't be wait-listed!

**WHEN:** July 20-24, daily 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

**WHERE:** Arts First Oakland, 2501 Harrison St. (at 27<sup>th</sup> St., near Lake Merritt, near BART, onsite parking), Oakland.

**FEE:** Early registration \$195 by June 1 – after June 1 fee is \$250.

**CONTACT:** To register or for more information, call (510) 444-4755 .

Stagebridge, the oldest senior theatre company in the nation based in Oakland since 1978, is a non-profit organization.



## Transporting Aging Adults with Disabilities

As we consider transportation needs of older adults, we also need to recognize the growing population of elders with disabilities. While we know that the aging process affects each of us in different ways, we also know that people are living longer with better medical care than in years past.

Among the many physical disabilities that exist, in this short article let's address persons with physically challenging conditions such as kidney dialysis.

Usually adults have learned how to adapt and master their physical surroundings to meet their needs at home. However, support systems that allow aging adults to maintain their independence and self-reliance require transportation. Most older adult residences and housing for persons with disabilities are built near public transit.

Nonetheless, there are aging adults who reside in their family homes or group residences that may not be near public transportation. There is a need for organized transportation for persons receiving regular dialysis treatment, who may not have a relative or friend available to transport them home immediately following their treatment.

While Paratransit is available to older adults going to the doctor, store, church, etc., it is not readily available for persons receiving dialysis treatment three times a week at a minimum cost.

In today's economic climate of tight budgets with a growing aging population and increasing needs of older adults, we need to consider creative solutions to problems and collaborative partnerships with community business and non-profit organizations.

The Commission is comprised of members who represent constituencies from all five districts. Commissioner Robert Smith, from District 5, is an advocate for aging adults with disabilities. The Commission is interested in your ideas as a reader, so consider contacting Commissioner Smith at the Area Agency on Aging at [robertsmith2870@yahoo.com](mailto:robertsmith2870@yahoo.com) and share your thoughts and possible suggestions regarding this concern. Persons receiving kidney dialysis would appreciate your support to secure transportation following their treatments. Remember, everyone strives to maintain his/her autonomy and independence as he or she ages.



## Getting Ready for Tax Season

Sarah Kim-Lee, Social Security S.F. Regional Affairs Specialist



The holidays have passed us by, the new year has begun, and tax season is right around the corner. The earlier you prepare for the looming April 15 tax deadline, the easier it will be to file your taxes. Here are some helpful hints as you begin getting ready for tax season.

### **Make sure your information matches ours**

Soon you will be receiving your W-2s from your employers and tax information from the IRS. Carefully check your name, Social Security number and all of the data on your W-2s and on your *Social Security Statement* or card to make sure they match up. If you can't find your card or *Statement* but know your Social Security number, make sure the number and information is correct on your W-2s. A mismatch could delay your tax refund and cause problems with your Social Security benefits in the future. Such errors are easy to fix now.

### **A name change is the main change**

If you've legally changed your name due to mar-

riage, divorce, court order or for any other reason, make sure you change your name with Social Security by applying for a new Social Security card. Make sure you change your name with your employer as well. If you change with one source but not the other, it could cause your earnings to be improperly recorded. A minor detail could cause a major mix-up. You can learn more about Social Security numbers and cards at [www.socialsecurity.gov/ssnumber](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/ssnumber).

### **Don't forget the kids**

If you are the parent of a newborn, you want to make sure that the newest family member has a Social Security number too. Most people apply for their baby's Social Security card while they're still in the hospital at the same time they apply for the birth certificate. But if you didn't, you'll need to apply for your child's Social Security number in order to claim the child as a dependent on your tax return. You'll also need it if you ever apply for government benefits on behalf

of the child or your family.

### **Go online if you can't find your 1099**

Social Security Benefit Statements (Form SSA-1099) for tax year 2008 are automatically mailed to beneficiaries and should be received by January 31, 2009. If you receive Social Security and haven't received your 1099 in the mail by the end of January, but need it to file a tax return, just go online. Beginning in February, you can request a replacement 1099 online at <https://secure.ssa.gov/apps6z/i1099/main.html>. For more information about Social Security, visit [www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov).

## Osteoporosis Treatment Can Prevent Brittle Bones

Moshe Lewis, MD, MBA, MPH

As children, most of us learned the self-defensive retort, “Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words can never harm me.” Yet there is one word for a serious health condition that can result in broken bones: osteoporosis.

Osteoporosis is a disease in which the bones become weak and are more likely to break. If not treated, it can progress without pain until a bone breaks. The main areas for bone fractures include hip, wrist and vertebral (spine) fractures.

How many of these steps have you taken to treat or prevent brittle bones ?

**NUTRITION:** Nutrition should include a balanced diet with adequate protein, calcium and Vitamin D intake. Excessive amounts of salt and protein should be avoided. A diet high in caffeine containing foods, such as coffee, appears to increase bone loss.

Extra fiber sprinkled on food might interfere with calcium absorption. Some calcium rich foods include: milk, yogurt, cheese, ice cream, fish and shellfish (such as oysters, sardines, salmon, and shrimp), vegetables (such as broccoli, soybeans, almonds, and tofu). Your physician may recommend calcium supplements. Some Vitamin D rich foods include fortified milk, some fortified cereals, and cold saltwater fish (such as salmon,

halibut, herring, tuna, oysters and shrimp). Vitamin D can be manufactured in the skin following direct exposure to sunlight.

**EXERCISE:** Women and men older than age 35 can slow bone loss with regular weight bearing exercise. Walking, hiking, stair climbing, tennis and dancing are good exercises to prevent osteoporosis. Low impact exercises are better if you have osteoporosis. If you have heart problems, high blood pressure, diabetes, obesity, or are over 40 years old, check with you family physician before starting an exercise routine. If you have any chest pain or discomfort, stop exercising and contact your family physician.

**SMOKING CESSATION:** Smoking can increase the risk for osteoporosis. Smokers are encouraged to stop smoking as soon as possible.

**REDUCING ALCOHOL INTAKE:** Alcohol can increase the risk for osteoporosis. Alcohol can increase the risk for falls.

**MEDICATION:** Although there is no cure for osteoporosis, there are several medications that are approved by the FDA to prevent and/or treat osteoporosis. It is important to take your medications as ordered by your physician.

**BLOOD TESTS AND DIAGNOSTIC TESTING:** Specialized tests called bone mineral density (BMD) tests can measure bone density in various parts of the body. Bone density is important to determine risks of fractures. It is important to complete any blood work that your physician recommends.

**REDUCE RISKS FOR FALLS:** Keep all rooms free from clutter, especially on the floors. Keep surfaces smooth, but not slippery. Wear supportive, low-heeled shoes. Do not walk around in socks. Make sure that all carpets have skid proof backings or are tacked to the floor, especially on the stairs. Use a rubber bath mat in the shower. Install grab bars in the bathroom. If unstable on your feet, use a shower chair. Keep a flashlight with fresh batteries beside the bed. Have light switches located when you enter the rooms (or use voice activated lights). Have a portable phone or cell phone that you can carry with you. Reorganize items to minimize difficult reaching. If unstable on your feet, use a walker or cane. Have vision and hearing checked. Alcohol can slow reflexes and increase chance of falls. Have your family physician review medications that may cause dizziness.

## Older Americans Month 2009

### Living Today for a Better Tomorrow

#### The Administration on Aging

May is Older Americans Month, a great time to bring attention to the issues that affect older adults and create community-wide opportunities to help older Americans improve their quality of life. This year's theme is "Living Today For a Better Tomorrow," and we, as a nation, must work together to give older adults the tools they need to make healthy decisions. By 2030, one in every five Americans will be age 65 or older. Although the risk of disease increases with advancing age, poor health is not an inevitable consequence of aging. Many illnesses, disabilities and even death associated with chronic disease are preventable.

Nearly 40% of deaths in America can be attributed to poor health habits such as lack of physical exercise, poor eating habits and smoking. Older Americans can prevent or control chronic disease by adopting healthy habits such as exercising regularly, maintaining a healthy diet and ceasing tobacco use.

The benefits of regular physical activity include weight control; healthy bones, muscles and joints; arthritis relief; reduced symptoms of anxiety and depression; and more. Exercise does not have to be strenuous and is safe for people of all age groups. In fact, it's healthier to exercise than eliminate it altogether. Older Americans can greatly benefit from a

regular exercise routine that includes strength, balance, stretching and endurance exercises.

In addition to a regular exercise routine, good nutrition is vital in maintaining good health. Improving older Americans' diets can reduce the occurrence of chronic diseases, but most older adults over age 65 do not maintain a healthy diet. Reducing saturated fats and eating a balanced diet of fruits, vegetables, and grains can help keep older Americans on the right track to staying healthy.

Tobacco use increases the risk of heart disease and cancer and is the single most preventable cause of death in the United States. Older adults who stop smoking will gain immediate and long-term health benefits.

While it's important for older Americans to have good physical health, it's equally important that they maintain good mental health. Nearly 20 percent of Americans age 55 and older experience depression and anxiety disorders. Studies have shown that engaging in social activities within the community can greatly improve mental health. In fact, research has demonstrated a strong relationship between volunteering and mental health and that volunteering provides older adults with greater benefits than younger volunteers. Benefits include improved mental and physical health, greater life satisfaction,

lower rates of depression and lower mortality rates.

The U.S. Administration on Aging and its National Aging Services Network support a number of successful programs throughout the country that are helping older adults live better today and in the future. These programs keep people independent and out of nursing homes through streamlined access to health and long term care information and options and provide home and community-based systems of services that include the support for family caregivers.

These programs also encourage older people to remain active and make behavioral changes through the increased use of evidence-based disease prevention programs under the Older Americans Act as well as the use of preventive benefits available under Medicare. Americans of all ages and backgrounds can celebrate Older Americans Month. Contact your local Agency on Aging and volunteer for activities in your area; promote community, state, and national efforts to serve older adults; and find ways to enrich the lives of older adults who touch your life. Additionally, actively search out ways you can involve your community's older adults in volunteer efforts, allowing them to share their wisdom and energy. By working together, we can improve the health and well being of our Nation's older adults and pave the way for better health as we age.

# Senior Information

Alameda County Senior Information Program



## Transportation Resource and Advocacy

Do you have questions or concerns about your transportation options? You can call Senior Information for referrals to transportation programs at 1-800-510-2020. ACTIA, Alameda County Transportation Improvement Authority, publishes a key guide to accessible transit, *Access Alameda: Transportation Services for Seniors and People with Disabilities in Alameda County*. To obtain a copy and for more information,

call 1-866-901-7272 or visit [www.accessalameda.org](http://www.accessalameda.org). Community members participate year-round to advocate for transportation concerns. There are opportunities to advocate through direct contact with transportation agencies and legislators, as well as, through community group meetings and forums. For information about board meetings and opportunities to voice your concerns contact your local transportation

program or regional agencies such as: AC Transit Board of Directors, 510-891-7200 or 510-891-4851; BART Board of Directors, 510-464-6095; Livermore Amador Valley Transit Authority Administration, 925-455-7555; East Bay Paratransit Rider Advisory Committee, 510-893-5949; ACTIA's Paratransit Advisory Planning Committee (PAPCO), 510-893-3347; Metropolitan Transportation Committee (MTC), 510-817-5700.

## Adult School Classes

Pleasant Valley Adult School, a division of Oakland Adult & Career Education, offers tuition free classes for adults 50+, frail older adults, and adults with disabilities. Classes for adults 50+ include arts and crafts, singing, culture courses, exercise, nutrition, computers, and brain fitness. There are also 7 adult activity

centers in Oakland run by Oakland Adult and Career Education. Each Center meets one day a week. The Centers are friendly places where older adults come together for creativity and camaraderie. The activities offered at each center vary. A sampling of some of the activities may include: group

exercise, community singing, group discussions, community resource speakers, leather craft, watercolor, ceramics, stained glass, needle crafts, woodworking, hot lunches and entertainment. The Centers are non-sectarian. For more information, contact Pleasant Valley Adult School, 510-879-4090.

### Adult Schools in other cities include:

- Alameda Adult School (Active Adults 50+ Program), 510-522-3858
- Albany Adult School (Classes for Older Adults 55+), 510-559-6580
- U.C. Berkeley (Osher Lifelong Learning Institute - OLLI), 510-642-9934
- Castro Valley Adult School (Active Adults 50+ Program), 510-886-1000
- Dublin Adult Education, 925-829-4322, ext. 7921
- Fremont Adult School (Older Adult Courses), 510-793-6465
- Hayward Adult School (55+ Education), 510-293-8595
- Livermore Adult Education, 925-606-4722
- Newark Adult Education (Older Adult Classes 55+), 510-818-3700
- Piedmont Adult School (Creative Retirement Center), 510-594-2716
- Pleasant Valley Adult School, Oakland, 510-879-4090
- Amador Valley Adult & Community Education, Pleasanton, 925-426-4280
- New Haven Adult School, Union City (Active Adults 50+ / Older Wiser Learners 55+), 510-489-2185 ext. 200
- San Leandro Adult School, 510-618-4420
- San Lorenzo Adult School, 510-317-4200

**Call Information and Assistance at (800) 510-2020 or (510) 577-3530**

## Calendar Of Events



### April - June, 2009

#### Programs for Older Adults at Alameda County Library Branches

Programs include speakers, films, refreshments, and a chance to talk with old and new friends. Contact your local Alameda County Library branch or call 510-745-1491 or visit [www.aclibrary.org](http://www.aclibrary.org) for a schedule.

#### April 25, Saturday, 8:30 a.m.-1 p.m.

North Oakland Senior Center, 5714 Martin Luther King Jr. Way

#### African American Caregiver Forum

Alzheimer's Association will present the 8th Annual African American Caregiver Forum, Saturday. To register and for more information call Cynthia Taylor at 800-272-3900 or 925-284-7942, [www.alz.org/norcal](http://www.alz.org/norcal).

#### May 1, Friday, 9:30 a.m.-12 p.m.

Pacific Renaissance Plaza, 388 9th St., Oakland

#### 6th annual Health & Information Fair

Presented by Family Bridges, Inc. For more information, call 510-763-9017.

#### May 7, Thursday, 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

Kenneth C. Aitken Senior Center, 17800 Redwood Road, Castro Valley

#### Senior Health & Resource Fair

For more information call 510-881-6738.

#### May 9, Saturday

Ruggieri Senior Center, 33997 Alvarado-Niles Road, Union City

#### 11th Annual Step Out Walk & Health Fair

For schedule details and more information call 510-675-5495.

#### May 14, Thursday

St. Mary's Gardens, 801- 10th St., Oakland

#### 2009 Health Fair

For more information call 510-832-0235.

#### May 22, Friday, 12:00 noon - 2:00 p.m.

EMS, 1000 San Leandro Blvd, San Leandro

#### Senior Service Provider Recognition Day

For more information call 510-577-3535.

#### May 28, Thursday, 7:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

Handlery Hotel and Resort, 950 Hotel Circle North, San Diego

#### 9th Annual Senior Injury Prevention Conference

For conference information contact Colleen Campbell, 510-577-3535. For registration questions call Ronda Tangren 510-729-0853. Register by May 1 in order to be added to the participants list (limited registration available at the door).

#### May 29, Friday, 11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Frank H. Ogawa Plaza, 14th & Broadway, Oakland

#### 7th Annual National Older Americans Month Celebration

For more information call 510-238-2377.

**Senior Update**  
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*Senior Update* Editorial Board: F. Rose, C. Steiner, Q. Campbell, N. Hartschen, F. Howell, J. Hunt, S. Stadmire, G. Tucker, K. Bridges, A. Holloway, and M. Schulz

## Calendar Of Events



**June 11, Thursday**

North Oakland Senior Center, 5714 Martin Luther King Jr. Way

**4th Annual Sojourner Truth Manor Health Fair**

Presented by Sojourner Truth Manor and North Oakland Senior Center. For schedule details and more information call Donna Murphy, 510-655-8823.

**June 26, Friday, 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.**

Lake Merritt Garden Center, 666 Bellevue, Oakland

**6th Annual Healthy Living Festival**

Presented by United Seniors of Oakland and Alameda County. For information call 510-729-0852.

**July 20-24 (early registration by June 1)**

**3rd Annual Performing Arts Camp for Adults 50+**

Presented by Stagebridge Theatre Company. To register and for information call 510-444-4755.

**September 16, Wednesday**

**8th Annual Healthy Aging Fair**

Presented by the Alameda County Advisory Commission on Aging. For information call 510-577-3532.