Senior Update

...The Eyes and Ears of Alameda County Seniors

Older Americans Month 2014
“Safe Today. Healthy Tomorrow.”

Administration for Community Living

Older adults have made countless contributions and sacrifices to ensure a better life for future generations. Since 1963, communities across the country have shown their gratitude by celebrating Older Americans Month each May. This celebration recognizes older Americans for their contributions and demonstrates our nation’s commitment to helping them stay healthy and active.

This year’s theme for Older Americans Month is “Safe Today. Healthy Tomorrow.” The theme focuses on injury prevention and safety to encourage older adults to protect themselves and remain active and independent for as long as possible. Unintentional injuries to this population result in at least 6 million medically treated injuries and more than 30,000 deaths every year. With an emphasis on safety during Older Americans Month, we encourage older adults to learn about the variety of ways they can avoid the leading causes of injury, like falls.

While Alameda County provides services, support, and resources to older adults year-round, Older Americans Month offers an opportunity for us to provide specialized information and services around the important topic of injury prevention. This information will help older adults take control of their safety and live longer, healthier lives. Throughout the month, Alameda County will be conducting activities and providing tips on how to avoid the leading causes of injury. To learn more about Older Americans Month and how you can participate, contact Alameda County Area Agency on Aging by calling 1-800-510-2020 or 510-577-3530 to find ongoing opportunities to celebrate and support older Americans.
Hana, Maui
Bernie Nillo, Commissioner

The Road to Hana in Hawaii is world famous for the natural beauty of its unblemished landscapes and towering waterfalls. The views are stunning, more so in person than even in pictures. It is raw and lush and beautiful, and at every turn there are waterfalls, black sand beaches, iconic surf spots, and locals selling all sorts of fruit breads. It feels like real Hawaii, with its blissful lack of big resorts and its low key, barefoot vibe. Please note that it can be a tough road to drive, though, without doing a little homework and listening to some sound advice. That said, you will find that every waterfall is beautiful and there is literally not enough time in the day to make all the stops unless you plan to spend the night in Hana.

Travel Tips
1. Having an air-conditioned vehicle with a driver/guide is really the best way to see Hana.

There's no stress involved when a knowledgeable driver points out and stops at the most beautiful spots. Leave the driving to someone else and enjoy the ride with your family.

2. Best way to enjoy Hana is by staying for at least a few days. With an overnight stay, you'll miss the masses and have plenty of time to appreciate the beauty around you.

3. Bring or rent a camera with plenty of memory card space (or film). You'll get some incredible pictures along the way.

4. One thing I often see tourist do is rush from one site to the next by conquering all the sights possible! Get on island-time and choose a few things to see ahead of time, or just wing it, and stay where you like. You'll have a much more pleasant time by soaking in a couple falls and doing some swimming with a picnic lunch than you will by rushing to every waterfall.

And finally, if you stay at one place for long enough, you may find yourself completely alone with your own piece of heaven. Besides all of this, getting to Hana should not be your main objective. There's a reason they call this incredible experience “The Road to Hana.” I recommend you drive and see things until you feel you've had half of what you want, and then turn back. It's all about the journey, not so much about the destination. Shake off the mainland, and learn how to relax. Your friends back home will notice that you've gained more than just a tan while in Maui. Enjoy, Aloha!
Should Seniors Take Supplements?
Mary Louise Zernicke, MS, MPH, RD

While most experts agree that getting our essential vitamins and minerals from food is better than from a pill, there are exceptions. Older adults are at risk of deficiency from two vitamins, Vitamin D Vitamin B12, even if they eat a well balanced diet. While low levels of nutrients such as calcium or Omega 3 fats are usually related to inadequate intake by diet, as a senior you are at risk of deficiency of these two vitamins simply because you are lucky enough to be an older adult! You might remember Vitamin D as the "sunshine vitamin". Most of the Vitamin D we receive is from exposure to the sun. There is just not enough Vitamin D in foods even though more and more food is fortified with Vitamin D for older adults to get enough by diet. As we age, our skin loses its elasticity and the dermis (outer layer) thins. As a result, an older adult absorbs less than 1/2 of the Vitamin D that same person absorbed when they were younger. Other factors can add to the risk of deficiency. First, if your skin is dark you have absorbed less throughout your life, so you are at particular risk when you get older. And, if your skin is light, you are usually told to stay out of the sun. For these reasons, all older adults are advised to take supplemental Vitamin D, usually about 800-1000 International Units (IU)s daily.

You might know Vitamin B12 as the supplement that vegans need, since it is found only in animal productions. The reason for recommending a supplement of Vitamin B12 for seniors is related to stomach secretions. Up to 30% of older adults do not make as much acid in their stomach as they did when they were younger, a fairly benign condition called atrophic gastritis. However, without that acid, the Vitamin B12 cannot be separated from food and absorbed by the body. This condition makes Vitamin B12, needed in only very small amounts, unavailable to the body. Therefore the FDA recommends a daily supplement of Vitamin B12. When choosing a supplement, you as the consumer need to be alert. It is a "buyers beware", unregulated market. Generally, manufacturers do not need to register their products with FDA or get FDA approval before producing or selling dietary supplements. Manufacturers must make sure that product label information is truthful and not misleading and the government does not provide oversight. When buying supplements, keep this in mind:

1. Buy a supplement intended for older adults.
2. Buy your supplements from a store you know and trust. Generally, online supplements are expensive and may not contain what they say they do.
3. Know which supplements you are taking, how much, and why you are taking them.
4. Make sure the label has a USP (U.S. Pharmacopeial Convention) mark. USP is a scientific nonprofit organization that establishes federally recognized standards for the quality of dietary drugs, dietary supplements, and foods.
It Takes a Village to Age: Expanding Continuity of Care in Our Community!
Miriam Rabinovitz, MPH
Alameda County Senior Injury Prevention Coordinator

This is not the title of a new book by Hillary Rodham Clinton! No, this is the theme of our upcoming 14th Annual Senior Injury Prevention Conference taking place on May 28th, 2014 in San Francisco.

As in the past, our conference goals are to expand the network of senior healthcare and service providers working together to reduce older adult injuries; and to provide attendees with valuable information and health updates to share with older adults to assist them in successful aging.

The annual California Senior Injury Prevention (SIPP) Conference provides a unique forum for senior service providers and injury prevention advocates to learn from and interact with other professionals around the state working in the field of safe and healthy aging. The SIPP Conference has been taking place annually since 2001 and remains the conduit for providing senior service providers with up to date information on research findings, evidence based model programs, and effective implementation strategies in the area of senior injury prevention. Conference attendees represent a multitude of community-based organizations and agencies that work with older adults on a daily basis. Conference attendees are often (but not limited to): nurses, case managers, physical and occupational therapists, community outreach workers, fitness professionals, first responders, senior advocates, program managers, and other health care and senior service providers.

The conference rotates between Southern California, Sacramento and the Bay Area in order to strengthen the senior injury prevention/healthy aging network, and to offer educational opportunities to service providers throughout the state. This year we are very excited about holding the conference for the first time in the beautiful city of San Francisco at the Event Center at St. Mary’s Cathedral on 1111 Gough Street (on the corner of Geary and Gough). We will be able to take advantage of St. Mary’s large St. Francis conference room, and in addition, we will be able to have some breakout sessions in smaller rooms that are available. There is limited free parking for those who drive, and we, of course, urge you to consider public transportation (via BART and short walk or bus ride) which is quite accessible.

Our conference focus this year is in three important areas:
1. Exploring the connection between mental health and senior injury;
2. Presenting innovative outreach programs aimed at reducing unnecessary/preventable 911 Calls, emergency room usage,

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It Takes a Village to Age: Expanding Continuity of Care in Our Community!
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and readmission to hospitals; 3. Reviewing the role of medication management, nutrition, physical exercise, and home safety in successful fall prevention programs and models. We are delighted to announce that our Keynote Speaker will be Dr. Walter M. Bortz, Professor of Medicine at Stanford University School of Medicine. Dr. Bortz is recognized as one of America’s most distinguished scientific experts on aging and longevity. He is also the noted author of numerous books on healthy aging, including Dare to be 100, We Live Too Short and Die Too Long, Next Medicine, Living Longer for Dummies, among others. Other noted presenters/panelists are getting lined up shortly. Please consider joining us at this year’s conference. For more information or to be sent conference registration information, please contact Miriam Rabinovitz, Alameda County Senior Injury Prevention Coordinator at Miriam.rabinovitz@acgov.org, 510-481-4190. We’re expecting over 100 participants, so don’t miss out on registering for this year’s SIPP Conference! CE Units for nurses (w/license #), paramedics, and possibly PTs will be provided. Registration Fee is $75 ($35 for students with student ID).

Celebrate Cinco de Mayo with Spanish Online Services
Sarah Kim-Lee, Social Security Regional Public Affairs Specialist

Cinco de Mayo is May 5th, a time to celebrate Mexican heritage and pride. Why not join the celebration by visiting Social Security’s Spanish website, where you will find a number of useful services and a wealth of information in Spanish. Visit www.segur-social.gov. Perhaps the most impressive thing you can accomplish on our website, in Spanish, is to apply for Social Security retirement benefits! You can apply quickly and easily on your personal computer. The online application takes as little as 15 minutes. Once you complete the online application and sign it with the click of a mouse, your application is complete. In most cases, there are no documents to submit or additional paperwork to fill out. Online is the easiest way to apply, and you can do it in English or Spanish. In addition to applying for Social Security retirement benefits, you can also apply for Medicare in Spanish, in as little as 10 minutes from start to finish. Even if you are not ready to apply for benefits now, you can find a lot of information and a number of online services in English or Spanish.
Nate Miley was elected to the Alameda County Board of Supervisors in November of 2000 and was sworn in on January 8, 2001. He was re-elected for a fourth term in 2012. He serves as chair of the Board of Supervisor’s Unincorporated Services, Social Services, and Procurement and Contracting Committees, and as co-chair of the Transportation and Planning Committee. Regionally, he currently serves as chair of the Oakland Alameda County Coliseum Authority and the Bay Area Air Quality Management District. He is a member of the Alameda County Transportation Commission, the Local Area Formation Commission, and the Joint Policy Council as well as its Executive Committee.

Nate has been involved in the community and public service his entire adult life. After finishing Law School at the University of Maryland in 1976, he moved to Oakland to work as a Jesuit Volunteer. Nate began his community involvement by taking a position with the Oakland Community Organizations and has worked with many community organizations as well as trained community organizers through the National Center for Urban Ethnic Affairs.

In 1986, Nate created the United Seniors of Oakland and Alameda County to empower older adults to improve their quality of life. Nate served as the Executive Director of the United Seniors for over a decade and was elected to the President of the Board in November 2010. The organization trains and develops leadership skills to enable seniors to address specific issues that promote healthy living and successful aging (such as transportation, safety, physical activity, substance abuse, housing and resource development). He and the seniors have built a viable organization over the last 23 years by consistent and tenacious efforts.

Nate is also a single father of two children and has lived in Oakland for more than 30 years. He brings with him a commitment and platform to improve transportation, Health-care, public safety, and social services to his diverse constituents of Oakland, Pleasanton, and the Unincorporated communities of Fairview, Ashland, Castro Valley and Cherryland.

As a County Supervisor, Nate has sponsored legislation and programs such as the following:
- Eden Area Livability Initiative
- Alcohol Fee Ordinance and Responsible Beverage Training
- Board of Zoning Adjustments
- Countywide Violence Prevention Plan
- Walk to School Week
- Castro Valley Farmers’ Market
- Senior Injury Prevention Partnership
- Measure A-Healthcare for All Initiative of Nearly $100 Million
- Safe Medication Disposal Conference – Fall of 2011
Join us at the Oakland Zoo for the 11th Annual Healthy Living Festival

"Promoting Health and Wellness for Sixty+ Adults"

Thursday, July 17th, 2014
8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Fun, Friends, Health Screenings/Resources, Great Music, Physical Activity, Lunch, Medication Take Back, The Zoo, & More!

Action—No Wrong Door for Senior Health & Supportive Services

Contact United Seniors for more information about the Festival or the Medication Education Disposal Safety Program at (510) 729-0852 or email Patricia at patricia@usoac.org or visit www.usoac.org

Organized by
USOAC
United Seniors of Oakland and Alameda County
Empowering Seniors • Enriching Youth • Enhancing Community
The Truth Must Dazzle Gradually; A Memoir
Helen R. Wheeler

Award-winning Bay Area author Dorothy Bryant has written "Helen Wheeler explodes the myth that old age brings placid acceptance and forgiveness. Instead, she courageously reveals wounds that do not heal, anger that does not cool. If her narrative insists on the old adage, 'the truth hurts,' it may also hint that 'the truth shall make you free.' "The truth must dazzle gradually," contended Emily Dickinson. Here is an account of the first 20 years of an unwanted "only" child entrusted by the legal system in 1920s and 1930s America to the divorcing female parent. It was evoked by the film Sybil, a study of a woman transformed by years of physical and emotional abuse by her parents. By considering the scant professional literature of the complex subject and her first twenty years, Dr. Wheeler critiques the genesis of making one's way out of a potentially crippling life. Part of this process is an attempt to account for her parents' behavior by examining their early lives. There is evidence that on the scale of childhood trauma, divorce is second only to parental death, a long-lasting and wrenching experience for many. The quality of the mother-child relationship is the single most critical factor in determining how children feel about themselves in the post-divorce decade and how well they function in the domains of their lives. Fictional kids of scripted media are typically armed with built-in insights referred to as self-esteem and courage. "Snapshot memories" employed by the author demonstrate great inequities associated with the one child one custodian arrangement. The mother's objective shifted from unloading, to controlling, to capturing the adult daughter. The author, who is not opposed to divorce, began to make her way out, in two senses: discernment and change.

Pete Seeger, A Life of Song and Activism Comes to an End
Maureen Shultz, Social Worker

Last night (February 3) I had the great privilege to be in the audience when a noted group of musicians helped us bid farewell to one of the most dedicated song leaders and songsmith this country has known. Pete Seeger died on January 27 at the age of 94, but his influence on folk music and his message of world peace and solidarity is felt across the globe. His performances encouraged people literally to "find their voice," and to put into words what moved them, to sing about their struggles, and to find the common ground and humanity we all share.

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Pete Seeger’s biography and music form a living history, and indeed as a young student just arrived from Europe, they helped me learn and appreciate the history of this country’s people: the great depression, the labor movement and its songs, the ongoing struggle for racial equality, symbolized by names like Woody Guthrie, or that of the unforgettable Paul Robeson. Pete at that time around 1942, was singing in a group called “the Almanac Singers” writing, with Lee Hays, songs like “If I had a Hammer” which became an anthem in the 60s civil rights movement.

Then in the late 40s and 50s, the McCarthy era and resulting blacklist led to the infiltration of many progressive organizations, which barred Pete, who was then with the group “the weavers” from mainstream media and concert halls but, as his friend Lee Hays so wonderfully put it, “if it wasn’t for the honor, we’d just as soon not have been blacklisted.”

So Pete continued singing in schools, churches and on college campuses instead of on television. Young people started singing his songs and writing their own. From the 60s into the 90s and beyond, he participated in every conceivable cause, one of the most noteworthy the clean-up of the Hudson river. He kept writing and updating his songs, such as his Vietnam-era “bring them home”, which he sang during the Iraq invasion. Pete’s work is done now, and it will stand as a monument to what can be accomplished when we keep the faith. It is up to us to build on it and keep it going.

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Senior Information

Change in Services at Social Security Offices
As of February 2014, the Social Security Administration will no longer offer Social Security number printouts and benefit verification information in their field offices. Beneficiaries needing a benefit verification letter can obtain one immediately by registering for a my Social Security account at www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount, or through the mail within five to seven working days by calling their national toll-free number, 1-800-772-1213.

Return of Medi-Cal Adult Dental Benefits as of May 2014
On June 27, 2013, Governor Jerry Brown signed Assembly Bill 82 (AB 82) which restores some adult dental benefits to the Denti-Cal program beginning May 1, 2014. These services include:

- Exams and x-rays
- Cleanings
- Fluoride treatments
- Fillings
- Anterior root canals (front teeth)
- Prefabricated crowns
- Full dentures
- Other medically necessary dental services

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

13th Annual Healthy Aging Fair

Wednesday, August 6, 2014
10:00 am to 2:30 pm

Chabot College Grand Court 25555 Hesperian Blvd., Hayward, CA

Health Screenings!
Information!
Holistic Health!

Free Lunch!
Raffle Prizes!
Entertainment!

And Much More...