



**Benzie County
Council on Aging, Inc.**

The Senior Scoop

**Supporting Seniors Today,
Tomorrow & the
Future**

JANUARY 2015

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Directory/Subscription Form	2
From the Executive Director	3
Health News	4
Menu	5
Calendar of Events	6
Dawn's Dish	7
Medication Disposal	8
Birthdays & Fun	9
Winter Dangers for Elders	10
Medicare News	11
Don't Forget	12
Donations	13
Happy New Year	14

January Is National.....

Blood Donor Month
Braille Literacy Month
Hobby Month
Soup Month
Staying Healthy Month
Glaucoma Awareness Month



DID YOU KNOW THAT?.....

On January 1, 1863 the Emancipation Proclamation was issued by Abraham Lincoln.

On January 6, 1912 New Mexico became the 47th state..

On January 7, 1789 the first presidential election was held.

On January 10, 1920 the League of Nations was established.

On January, 11, 1973 Major League Baseball (American League) adopted the designated-hitter rule.

On January 31, 1865 the 13th Amendment to the United States Constitution, abolishing slavery was submitted.

DIRECTORY**Phone:** 231-525-0600 or**Toll Free:** 888-893-1102**Fax:** 231-325-4855**Email:**

Schopierayd@Benziecoa.org

Website: www.benziecoa.org**OFFICE HOURS****Monday – Friday:**

8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

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**THE SENIOR SCOOP IS A
MONTHLY PUBLICATION
BROUGHT TO YOU BY**

Benzie County

Council on Aging, Inc.

10542 Main Street

Honor, MI 49640

Douglas Durand,

Executive DirectorDawn Schopieray, **Editor**

Benzie County Council on Aging is funded by Benzie County residents through a property tax millage, federal and state funds through the Michigan Office of Services to the Aging, Area Agency on Aging of Northwest Michigan and private donations and grants.

The Council on Aging will not discriminate against any individual or group because of race, sex, religion, age, national origin, marital status, disability, or political beliefs.

MISSION STATEMENT

To provide programs for Senior Citizens of Benzie County that promote and encourage opportunities for socialization, education, health, safety, welfare and independent living with dignity.

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If you would like a copy of this newsletter mailed to your home OR emailed to you each month, please mail this form to the COA office, 10542 Main St, Honor, MI 49640. For annual mailing the subscription fee is \$10.00 which helps to cover printing and mailing costs. Subscription expiration dates are listed on the bottom of the mailing label.

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Happy New Year Everyone!

While driving into work this morning, old man winter has returned and everyone on the road this morning, including me, had to relearn our winter driving habits. But I must say, coming down the big hill on US 31 into Honor was breathtaking with the snow coated on the branches, shrubs, pine trees and just about everything else!

As the New Year begins, I would like to share with you our “Year In Review” from 2014.

One word comes to mind in summarizing 2014 and that is “GROWTH.” In September we provided our highest total of Home Delivered Meals in the history of our agency. We added a 4th route to our program to help ease the increase in clients and the number of hours our volunteer drivers were driving daily. Derek Watson from Watson Benzie Chrysler graciously donated a used 2006 Chrysler Town & Country Minivan to help us get the 4th route started and we are very appreciative to Derek and his staff for thinking of the clients we serve!

We also had a record year serving congregate meals at The Gathering Place Senior Center and to our friends out at Thompsonville on the first Friday of each month. In total we served 57,149 meals in our Nutrition Programs. The highest total in our history!

We received several grants in 2014 which helped fund a new program initiative called, “Benzie County COA Senior Dental Care.” This was a collaborative partnership with Dental Clinics North & Michigan Community Dental Clinics. We were able to provide up to \$300 each to 26 individuals. The program was so successful that the BCCOA Board of Directors has added it to our existing list of services and we will continue to partner with the two Dental Clinics.

Another grant was applied to conduct a “Benzie County Senior Needs Assessment” and 366 individuals took part in the survey. The top 6 needs identified were: 1. Affordable Dental Care; 2. Legal Assistance Workgroups; 3. Health Screenings; 4. Access to Computers, Internet, and Computer Trainings; 5. Nutrition Classes, and 6. Affordable Senior Housing. We will be forming task force groups to determine the best way to focus on these needs.

We also received a one-time grant from the Benzie County Department of Veterans Affairs. The funds were used to help provide services to Veterans and/or Spouses of Veterans. We served a total of 193 Veterans and/or Spouses of Veterans with a value of services provided of \$200,879.

Other programs that set new milestones were the Homemaking Services and Snow Removal Program. In total 311 clients participated in the Homemaker, Lawn Chore and Snow Removal Programs in 2014. We provided 1,658 Benzie Bus punch cards in 2014, this is an increase of 42% over 2013. The Dining Out Program had its best year with 4,416 vouchers purchased, a 23% increase from 2013. The Gathering Place Senior Center and Thompsonville Meal Site had 4,686 visitors in 2014.

But all of this growth wouldn't have happened without the support from the community through the Senior Millage, contributions, state and federal dollars, volunteers, board members and staff! Sixty-two dedicated volunteers gave 8,600 hours to the Council on Aging with a cost savings of \$85,420.

As 2015 is upon us, we look forward to doing what we do best, and that is to provide programs for Senior Citizens, 60 years of age and older, of Benzie County that promote and encourage opportunities for socialization, education, health, safety, welfare and independent living with dignity while enabling seniors to remain in their own home. As we accomplish this, it's supporters like you that will make the greatest difference in the lives of others.

I am wishing everyone a Happy and Healthy New Year!

P.S. If you are looking for a New Year resolution, consider volunteering at Benzie County Council on Aging!

Take care,

Douglas

HEALTH NEWS

Japanese Pan Fried Salmon

Beautifully cooked wild salmon marinated in a Japanese style sauce.

Ingredients

Marinate for up to 4, allow 1 fillet of salmon per person

Marinade

2 teaspoons Fresh Ginger

2 teaspoons Sherry

1 teaspoon Soy Sauce

3 teaspoons Horseradish Sauce

Salmon

1 fillet of salmon per person, approximately 150g per fillet.



1. Mix all the ingredients for the marinade in a bowl. Cover the outside of each fillet with a thin coating of the marinade and then place inside a small plastic sandwich bag. Pour any remaining marinade in to the bag with the salmon, seal the bag and leave the fish for 30 minutes to take on the flavor.
2. Spray a frying pan with a little extra virgin olive oil and cook the salmon on a medium heat, 5 minutes on each side.
3. Serve with brown rice and spinach topped with a few chopped almonds.



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SOYMILK




OATMEAL

JANUARY


MENU

Lunch is served Monday Thru Friday from 11:30 to 1:00

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
			1 Closed	2 Sloppy Joe Tater Tots Carrots Bun Apple
5 Creamy Chicken Peas Carrots Rice Bread Pineapple	6 Spaghetti Meat sauce Italian Beans Pesto Cauliflower Garlic Toast Orange	7 Meatloaf Mashed Potato Malibu Blend Bread Banana	8 Pork Fritters Normandy Blend Brussel Sprouts Bread Peaches	9 Baked Potato Bar Potato Broccoli Bread Pear
12 Jessica's Gumbo Spinach Black Eyed Peas Corn Bread Plums	13 Chicken Alfredo Carrots Italian Beans Garlic Toast Apple	14 Hamburgers Tater Tots Lettuce/Tomato Bun Baked Peaches	15 BBQ Chicken Sweet Potato Green Beans Roll Banana	16 Nacho Bar Refried Beans Salsa Chips Orange
19 BBQ Meatballs Collard Greens Lima Beans Roll Peaches	20 Baked Chicken Sweet Potato Broccoli Bread Nectar	21 Shepard's Pie Mixed Vegetables Spinach Bread Apple	22 Chicken ala King Peas Carrots Biscuits Pear	23 Roast Beef Mashed Potato Corn Bread Pineapple
26 Salisbury Steak Mashed Potato Green Beans Bread Apple	27 Manicotti Italian Blend Pesto Cauliflower Garlic Toast Banana	28 Sesame Chicken Far East Blend Broccoli Wonton Rice Pear	29 Chili Corn Carrots Crackers Orange	30 Roast Pork Mashed Potato California Blend Roll Melon

January

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
 <p><i>Happy New Year</i> 2015</p> <p><small>© Photo.elsear.com</small></p>			<p>1 Closed</p>	<p>2 9:30 BUNCO 10:30 Thompsonville Lunch & Bingo 11:30 Lunch 1:00 Wii Bowling</p>
<p>5 10:00 Yoga 11:30 Lunch 12:00 CARDS 12:00 Knitting 1:15 Music Appreciation with Jeff & Janine</p>	<p>6 10:30 Music by The Melody Makers 11:30 Lunch 3:30 Chair Yoga</p>	<p>7 10:00 Floor Exercise 11:30 Lunch 12:30 BINGO 3:00 Tai Chi</p>	<p>8 9:00 Hearing Clinic 10:00 Bible Study 11:15 Dining Out Day—Hungry Tummy 11:30 Lunch 1:00 BUNCO</p>	<p>9 9:30 BUNCO 11:30 Lunch 1:00 Wii Bowling</p>
<p>12 10:00 Yoga 11:30 Lunch 12:00 CARDS 12:00 Knitting 1:15 Movie—To Kill A Mockingbird</p>	<p>13 10:30 Music by The Melody Makers 11:15 11:30 Lunch 3:30 Chair Yoga</p>	<p>14 10:00 Floor Exercise 11:30 Lunch—Eyeglass repair with Dr. Pace 12:30 BINGO 3:00 Tai Chi 4:30 Board Meeting</p>	<p>15 9:00 Little River Casino 9:00 Foot Clinic 10:00 Bible Study 11:30 Lunch—The Maples Blood Pressure Clinic 1:00 BUNCO</p>	<p>16 9:30 BUNCO 11:30 Lunch—January Birthday Party 1:00 Wii Bowling</p>
<p>19 10:00 Yoga Martin Luther King Jr. Day 11:30 Lunch—National Popcorn Day 12:00 CARDS 12:00 Knitting 1:00 Laughter Workshop with Kate</p>	<p>20 10:30 Music by The Melody Makers 11:30 Lunch 3:30 Chair Yoga</p>	<p>21 10:00 Floor Exercise 11:30 Lunch 12:30 BINGO 3:00 Tai Chi</p>	<p>22 10:00 Bible Study 11:30 Lunch—Wills & Trusts 1:00 BUNCO</p>	<p>23 9:30 BUNCO 11:30 Lunch 1:00 Wii Bowling</p>
<p>26 10:00 Yoga 11:30 Lunch 12:00 CARDS 12:00 Knitting</p>	<p>27 10:30 Music by The Melody Makers 11:30 Lunch—National Chocolate Cake Day!! 3:30 Chair Yoga</p>	<p>28 10:00 Floor Exercise 11:30 Lunch 12:30 BINGO 3:00 Tai Chi</p>	<p>29 9:00 Little River Casino 10:00 Bible Study 11:30 Lunch 1:00 BUNCO</p>	<p>30 9:30 BUNCO 11:30 Lunch 1:00 Wii Bowling 6:00 Ol' Time Gathering</p>

Dawn's Dish

Happy New Year! Did you make a New Year's Resolution? How about trying a new activity at The Gathering Place? We tend to have a good time and I promise it won't hurt.

Our Zumba instructor is off to sunny Florida for the winter leaving us with a few open activity slots. I'm searching for a line dancing instructor. If you happen to know someone who might be interested in teaching line dancing, please give them my number! 231-525-0601

The Gathering Place needs volunteers to run our front desk during lunch and also call Bingo (an hour every Wednesday).

I am excited to officially announce the grand opening of our "Computer Lab". Okay, so it's two computers on the far wall of our Activity Room but humor me; I like the idea of having a computer lab! Both computers are up and running and connected to the internet. Please feel free to take a seat and surf the net. Get a Facebook account and see what your children and grandchildren are up to! Check your email, research your genealogy or do some online shopping! There is no cost to use our computers. They were generously donated by David Loll whose mom happens to lead our stretching class on Wednesdays. The kiosks for the computers were donated by Roxane Miner, President of the Benzonia Public Library.

Do you have a craft project to share? Winter tends to feel long and I'm looking for ways to fight the winter blues. Please stop by or call if you'd like to lead a craft project here.

Healthy Weight Week begins January 19th but we're going to acknowledge this one all month long. I've ordered pedometers for anyone who is interested. I have an app on my phone that logs the number of steps I take each day. My goal is 10,000 steps per day. If you have a smart phone you can download a free app to log your steps. Or see me and I'll give you a pedometer. And to mix things up a bit I'm starting a weekly step challenge for January. Keep track of your steps each day and at the end of the week, whoever has the most steps will win a prize!

January is Glaucoma Awareness Month. We'll have some helpful information to share with you.

Please remember that The Gathering Place Senior Center is closed when Benzie Central Schools are closed.

Monday, January 5—1:15 p.m. Sing-a-long with Janine and Jeff Winkler. Stick around after lunch for a little music appreciation, singing and smiles.

Monday, January 12—1:15 p.m. Movie and popcorn at The Gathering Place. We'll watch the classic "To Kill A Mockingbird". The movie is free and the popcorn is only 25 cents!

Monday, January 19—National Popcorn Day! FREE popcorn with fun seasonings during lunch for everyone!

Monday, January 19—Laughter Workshop. Kate's back! 1:00 p.m. Kate Withington-Edwards, Activity Director at Paul Oliver Living and Rehabilitation Center will be here for another laughter workshop. Come and enjoy the many positive benefits of laughter. FREE!

Wednesday, January 14—Eye glass repair by Dr. Pace. Come during lunch 11:30 a.m.—1:00 p.m. and Dr. Pace will tune up your frames! FREE

Thursday, January 8—Dining Out Day! 11:15 a.m. We're heading to The Hungry Tummy. Dining Out vouchers are available at the Administration Office for \$3. They are worth \$6 at participating restaurants.

Thursday, January 8—9:00 a.m. Hearing Clinic, sponsored by *Miracle Ear*. Free hearing tests, check and service hearing aids. Call 800-459-5992 for appointment.

Thursday, January 22—12:30 p.m. **Wills & Trusts Seminar with Heather Bruce, Attorney & Counselor.** Heather will be presenting information regarding Wills, Trusts, beneficiary designation and avoiding probate court. Don't miss this opportunity to receive free legal advice from a trusted professional.

Thursday, January 15 & 29—9:00 a.m. Little River Casino Trip. Trip fee \$10. Receive \$20 River Credits & \$5 food voucher. Return by 3pm. Call now to reserve your spot on the bus! 231-525-0601 or toll free at 877-277-1306.

Friday, January 2—Thompsonville lunch and Bingo beginning at 10:30 a.m. Please call 231-525-0601 to sign up.

Friday, January 30—Ol' Time Gathering! Enjoy food, music and fun. Music starts at 6:00 p.m. with a potluck dinner at 7 p.m. Donations accepted. All ages invited!

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MEDICATION DISPOSAL

Medication Disposal Safety Tips

Dispose of expired or unwanted prescription and over-the-counter drugs safely. Never dispose by flushing down the toilet or other drain. Doing this can cause harm to the planet, animals, you and your family. If you flush drugs down drains they can contaminate the water supply that we drink. Disposing of drugs the right way also helps to prevent someone from taking them by accident, or through an illegal sale.

Where can you Properly dispose of unused medications?

Hometown Pharmacy—WILL accept all over the counter medications and all prescription medications; EXCEPT for liquids and narcotics.

Sheriff's Office—WILL accept ALL prescription and over-the-counter medications, including samples, and vitamins. They will also accept syrups, ointments, creams and inhalers.

Sheriff's Office—WON'T accept any sharps, such as needles, or mercury or cadmium such as in thermometers. No medical waste, such as tubing, iv bags, colostomy bags etc. No aerosol cans, or disinfectants such as hydrogen peroxide. They also won't accept any person care items, such as shampoos.

How can you stay safe when disposing of unused medications?

Before disposing, mark out your name and prescription number on the label for safety. You wouldn't want your information to fall into the wrong hands.

If you choose to dispose of medications at home add some water or soda to pills to start dissolving them. Mix pills or liquid drugs with something that you cannot eat, like cat litter or dirt. Close the lid and secure with duct or packing tape. Place the bottles inside a non-see through container like a coffee can or detergent bottle and hide the container in the trash. DO NOT put in the recycle bin.



BIRTHDAYS & FUN

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Ken Haas
- 2 Charles Holtrey
- 2 Max Kracht
- 6 Maris Ziemelis
- 8 Colin Bohash
- 8 Shirley Henning
- 9 Kathy Engelbertson
- 9 Lee Howard
- 9 Kenny Rodgers
- 10 Leona Rodgers
- 11 Beverly Poynor
- 12 Judy Fast
- 12 Mary Roeters
- 12 Gail Sampier
- 12 Vickie Vanderlinde
- 13 Donna Holmes
- 13 Sue Ellen Westcott
- 15 Esther VanHammen
- 18 Rick St. Pierre
- 20 Phil Gagliano
- 21 Sandra Bailey
- 21 Diane LaRocque
- 22 Al Hyams
- 22 Priscilla Tretyak
- 23 Tom Bishop
- 25 David Sorensen
- 27 Richard Lutz
- 27 Dorothy Witzke
- 28 Janet Pettigrove
- 31 Betty Robotham

Winter

Find and circle all of the Winter related words that are hidden in the grid.
The remaining letters spell a Japanese proverb.

```

L S O S E K A L F W O N S E L C I C I N
L E Y C E K R A I M N D D R A Z Z I L B
A S C A W V K A I O E C I K C A L B R D
B W A R D R O T E S N O W S H O V E L C
W E R F A I T L C W A F I R E P L A C E
O A N P I E L I G E R N H E A D B A N D
N T I S N C P O L S Y E S E T A K S S W
S S V S N M E T H K E A D N D F R N E M
T H A M Y O S F S C K T N N O L O H A R
Y I L L R A W E I O C W O E U W O G S W
E R O S C O R S W S O I I B B G M C O I
S T E W A I T S H L H V T O O S N A N N
N K O P T M O S P O G I A S T G O O N D
D N I W P L T W T O E R N C O E G U L C
S E O I S I O S N W D S R G A R E A P H
E N L T N N L G I F R E E Z E T F L N I
S R I S S G G S M R O N B O O D I K S L
T C F I R E W O O D H A I L S T O O B L
F H S S T N A P I K S C H P A C T I N K
  
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BLACK ICE	HAIL	SEASON	SNOWBOARD
BLIZZARD	HEADBAND	SKATES	SNOWFLAKE
BOOTS	HIBERNATION	SKI DOO	SNOWMAN
CARNIVAL	HOCKEY	SKI PANTS	SNOWSHOES
CHRISTMAS	HOLIDAYS	SKIING	SOLSTICE
COLD	ICE FISHING	SLED	SOUP
EGG NOG	ICICLES	SLEET	STEW
FIREPLACE	KNIT CAP	SLIPPERY	STORM
FIREWOOD	LONG UNDERWEAR	SNOW CASTLE	SWEATSHIRT
FOG	MITTENS	SNOW PLOW	TOBOGGAN
FREEZE	OLYMPICS	SNOW SHOVEL	VACATION
FROST	PARKA	SNOW TIRES	WIND CHILL
GLOVES	SCARF	SNOWBALL	WOOL SOCKS

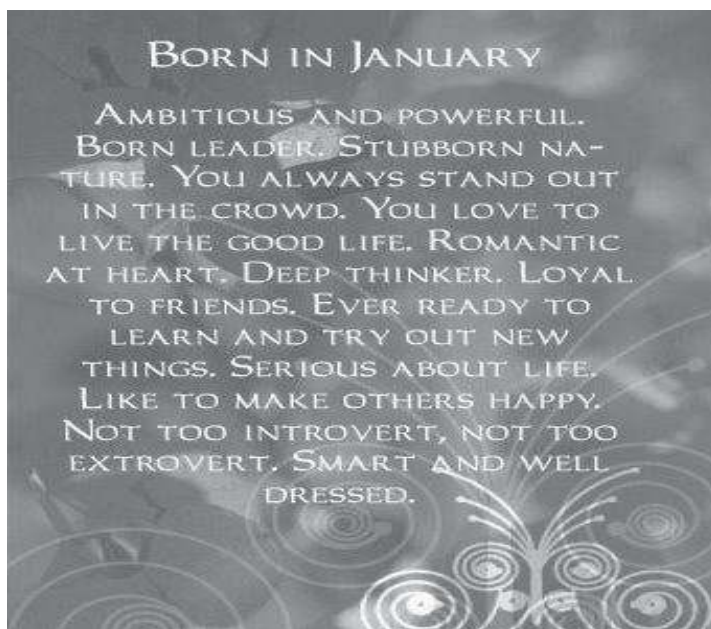
Just To Keep You Smiling

An elderly man was having hearing problems and went to see a specialist. The doctor fitted him with some hearing aids that brought his hearing back to full strength.

After a few weeks the man came back to make sure the new equipment was working properly, which it was.

The hearing specialist said, "It all seems perfect. Your family should be delighted you can hear everything now."

"Oh no," the man responded. "I haven't told any of them. I just sit quietly, listening carefully. I've changed my will four times."



Known Winter Dangers For Elders

Falls, and hypothermia are likely to top the list of caregiver concerns during the icy winter months. But, elderly loved ones are also at risk for some lesser known, but still impactful, hazards brought on by frigid weather.

Seasonal affective disorder and vitamin D deficiency can be hazardous to a senior's health. The good news is, they are both easily treatable if identified and dealt with properly

Winter SADness

Feeling a bit glum may seem like an ordinary reaction to the fading glow of the holidays. But, when that feeling of sadness persists for more than a week or two, it might not be just the lack of festive lights and carols getting your elderly loved one down.

Seasonal Affective Disorder, also known by the acronym, SAD, is a form of depression that cycles with the seasons. It can occur during any time of the year, but it typically hits most people in the winter.

As the weather gradually gets colder and the days shorter, people affected by the winter-induced form of SAD will generally begin to feel the symptoms of depression, including; a loss of energy, an increased appetite and an enhanced feeling of lethargy and tiredness. According to the National Institutes of Health, SAD is more likely to strike women and people who live in northern areas where the sun is not as strong or constant.

The main difference between SAD and general depression is that SAD only strikes during certain times of the year. The hormonal changes that lead to depressive symptoms in people with SAD are usually caused by a decline in the amount of daylight during the winter and fall.

These effects can be compounded if a person primarily stays indoors and doesn't have the opportunity to venture out into the sun often.

Turning their Frown Upside Down

Like other forms of depression, SAD can be treated with antidepressant medications, which are most effective if started prior to the onset of symptoms each year.

Another form of treatment designed to alleviate the symptoms of SAD is light therapy.

Light therapy utilizes a piece of equipment called a 'light box'—essentially a fluorescent lamp that gives off light similar to natural sunlight.

A good quality light box generally costs about \$200 and most come with a filter that blocks UV rays so that the light does not damage a person's eyes or skin.

Research has shown that, when used properly, a light box can help decrease the amount of melatonin (a hormone that causes drowsiness and lethargy) circulating in a person's body, and regulate the neurotransmitters serotonin and epinephrine. Having an imbalance of these chemicals can heighten the symptoms of depression.

If your loved one is diagnosed with SAD, their doctor may instruct them to sit in front of the box for 30 to 45 minutes a day, usually in the morning, in order to make up for the lack of sunlight most people experience during the winter.

Though it is not always the go-to treatment for SAD, some studies have shown that light therapy has the potential to be as effective as antidepressant medication when it comes to treating the disorder.

Of course, a more natural alternative to light therapy is daily exposure to sunlight. If time and weather conditions permit, it would be helpful for a person with SAD to go outside for a few minutes during daylight hours.

Vitamin D Deficiency

Vitamin D is a vital nutrient that has been linked to bone health, cancer prevention, incontinence prevention, and diabetes prevention. A person can obtain vitamin D by eating certain foods (Salmon, beef, egg yolks, fortified cereals and juices), brief sun exposure, and by taking dietary supplements.

While frigid weather is likely to have little effect on that availability of the right foods and supplements, the sun is weaker and out for shorter periods of time in the winter, making it difficult for people to get enough exposure to produce vitamin D.

Lacking vitamin D is bad for a person's health at any age, but can be particularly dangerous for the elderly. Older people who don't get enough vitamin D have an increased risk for developing osteoporosis—a dangerous decrease in bone density that can contribute to broken bones.

Unfortunately for seniors, the National Institutes for Health has identified elderly people as an at-risk group for vitamin D deficiency. Older people are less efficient at using sunlight to produce vitamin D, and are more likely to be housebound and unable to be exposed to enough sunlight to be beneficial. Also, certain medications taken by older people, such as the anti-inflammatory, prednisone, can inhibit their natural ability to produce and metabolize vitamin D.

Fortify Your Senior Against a D Deficit

Combating vitamin D deficiency in the elderly can be tricky.

Experts are loath to prescribe extra time in the sun to a group of people more prone to developing skin cancer and it can be tricky to determine how much supplementation to suggest.

Making sure a senior is eating foods fortified with vitamin D is the safest way to help reduce or prevent a deficit. Certain varieties of milk, yogurt and juice all contain extra doses of the vitamin, but not so much as to pose a hazard to an elderly person's health.

If you are considering supplementation or extra time in the sun for your elderly loved one, consult with their doctor to come up with a proper plan of attack.

Medicare News

What Beneficiaries Need to Know Before Purchasing Durable Medical Equipment

Let's say you are eligible for Medicare and your physician just wrote a prescription for you to purchase a Durable Medical Equipment (DME) item. Medicare has a lot of rules about buying DME, so how do you proceed? First, let's describe what DME is. These are items covered by Medicare Part B and include examples such as wheel chairs and powered mobility devices, diabetic glucose meters and test strips, CPAP breathing machines, oxygen and associated equipment, commode chairs, crutches, hospital beds, chair lift mechanisms, and infusion pumps.

After the annual Part B deductible of \$147 is met, Medicare will generally pay for 80% of their approved amount for the equipment. Unless the patient has supplemental coverage, they will be responsible for the remaining 20% of the cost, or more if they don't follow a few procedures.

Beneficiaries will need to be diligent to make sure the purchase cost of their DME item is covered properly. The first requirement is to have a prescription for the item from a physician who participates with Medicare. Next, the prescription needs to be filled by a provider that is a Medicare approved DME supplier. Most of these suppliers will also accept Medicare assignment. If they do not accept assignment, then they often will bill Medicare for the item, but you may be charged more than what you would otherwise pay to a provider who accepts assignment. Also, the provider who does not accept assignment can require that the full purchase price be paid up front. The beneficiary must then wait to be reimbursed directly from Medicare.

To greatly simplify matters, always ask the provider "are you an approved Medicare supplier of DME items" and "do you accept Medicare assignment" before committing to the purchase. If the response is no, then you may want to find another provider who does both.

One of the more common issues that beneficiaries run into is in the purchase of lift mechanisms for chairs. Medicare only covers the lift portion of the unit and NOT the chair. Also diabetic testing supplies can be purchased by mail order, but the company must have a contract with Medicare. If diabetic supplies are purchased through a local pharmacy then you need to verify that the provider accepts Medicare assignment and they will bill Medicare for you.

The requirements set up by Medicare for the supply and purchase of DME are quite extensive, but they have a credible purpose. The new process helps to keep the Supplementary Medical Insurance Trust Fund solvent for the future, while reducing the cost of DME for beneficiaries. Also, the new DME rules are having a significant effect on lowering the costs of fraud and abuse, which of course, helps to keep the same trust fund viable for current and future beneficiaries.

You can find out much more about DME by going to Medicare.gov and typing "DME" in the search window. Medicare beneficiaries can also receive help by contacting the Medicare/Medicaid Assistance Program (MMAP) at 800-803-7174 or by calling 800-Medicare (800-633-4227).

By: Jim Verville, Region 10 Coordinator
Michigan Medicare/Medicaid Assistance Program
Area Agency on Aging, Traverse City, Michigan

DON'T FORGET



If Benzie Central Schools are closed The Gathering Place will be closed as well. Sorry for any inconvenience this may cause, however, our main concern is safety!



We are closed on December 31st and January 1st. We do have a New Year's Eve Party from 6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. on December 31.

WE are in search of: volunteers to run our front desk during lunch and also call Bingo (an hour every Wednesday), a line dancing instructor and people wanting to share craft ideas with us!



We are happy to announce that TrueNorth Community Services will be providing heat and energy assistance again this year. If you are in need please call the main office at 231-525-0600 and we will be happy to assist you in the application process.

We now have a computer lab! And it's online!



Thursday, January 22 at 12:30 p.m. Wills & Trusts Seminar with Heather Bruce, Attorney & Counselor.

DONATIONS

When You Donate. . . You Make a Difference

The Benzie County Council on Aging is an independent 501c3 not-for-profit organization that depends upon donations to sustain our programs. We need your support to continue to provide caring and professional services to the seniors of Benzie County and the need is greater than ever as the population over the age of 60 rises and our traditional funding sources diminish. Your support, either large or small, helps us continue this important work!

When you make a donation to the Benzie County Council on Aging, you will be helping provide important services and programs to seniors in our county. Some of these services include Home Delivered Meals Program, Homemaking Services, Senior Center Operations, Educational Programs, Chore Service, Snow Removal and more.

There are many other ways to contribute to the Benzie Council on Aging, now and in the future, that may fit your interests.

Tribute Donations:

Tribute gifts of any amount can also be made in memory of a loved one or in honor of an individual to commemorate a birthday, anniversary, end-of-year holiday or special occasion. The Council will send a card acknowledging your gift to the one you have honored, or to surviving family members of the one you have remembered.

Planned Giving:

As you prepare your legacy for your family and your community, please consider including the Benzie County Council on Aging as part of your plans. Please remember us in your estate planning or simply have your attorney add an addendum to your will. Your bequest to the Benzie County Council on Aging will benefit many seniors and help us to continue vitally needed services for years to come.

Your tax-deductible donation can and will make a world of difference in the life of an area senior citizen or disabled individual.

You can be assured we will continue to be good stewards of your gifts. If you would like to designate your gift to a specific program or in memory of or honor of an individual, please tell us and we will do our best to meet your wishes.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call us at (231)525-0600 or toll free 888-893-1102.

DONOR INFORMATION:

Name: _____
Check here if you wish to remain ANONYMOUS

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone Number: _____ Amount Enclosed: _____

Make Checks Payable To: "Benzie County Council on Aging"

Benzie County Council on Aging is an independent 501c3 not for profit organization. Gifts to the Benzie County Council on Aging are tax deductible under appropriate I.R.S. regulations. Consult your tax or legal advisor for details.

Benzie County Council on Aging, Inc.

10542 Main Street
Honor, MI 49640

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