

The Senior Advocate

Senior Services of Southeastern Virginia

Late Summer 2006

Cooling Programs Underway

Amid last summer's sizzling heat wave, Senior Services saw a huge demand for fans and air conditioning units to help keep seniors cool. With temperatures soaring again this year, Senior Services recommends seniors apply for assistance through its annual Fan Care and Cooling Assistance programs.

Through Sept. 30, eligible seniors can apply for a free fan. Until Aug. 15, seniors who have a health problem that is seriously affected by the heat can apply for assistance with air conditioning repairs and payment of electricity bills.

The Virginia Department for the Aging and Dominion Virginia Power are partners in the Fan Care program. The Department of Social Services helps to fund the Cooling Assistance program.

To find out more about eligibility requirements, call (757) 461-9481 and ask for an Intake Specialist, who will help callers complete a short assessment form over the phone. Proof of income is needed.

For tips on keeping cool this summer, see page 3.



More than 8,500 Served During Medicare Part D Enrollment

More than 8,500 local seniors and individuals with disabilities can now benefit from the federal government's landmark prescription drug plan, thanks to Senior Services and the Access to Benefits Hampton Roads Coalition.

In response to the launch of Medicare Part D, Senior Services and its regional aging industry partners worked diligently during the past six months to educate and sign up those who qualified before the May 15 deadline.

Senior Services' medication education staff enrolled more than 3,000 citizens in Part D coverage and over 2,000 for the "extra help," limited-income subsidy, according to Marti Wachtel, Senior Services' medication education supervisor.

An additional 3,000 individuals who are considered "dual eligible" for both Medicare and Medicaid received assistance, while 566 people received new and refill prescription orders through The Pharmacy Connection, a program that allows qualified people to receive free medicines from participating pharmaceutical companies.

To accommodate the rush of last-minute requests, Senior Services extended its hours during the final sign-up days. On May 15, the staff fielded 900 telephone calls, accommodated 150 walk-in requests and enrolled 50 individuals.

"Elves on Christmas Eve could not have been busier," said Marti. "We were just constantly in action, on the phone, helping people coming in."

Currently, Senior Services and its Access to Benefits partners are identifying seniors and people with disabilities who qualify for the "extra help" limited-income subsidy – but have not yet enrolled. These people, with an individual annual income at or below \$14,700 (or \$19,800 for a married couple) can enroll now through Oct. 31, 2006 without a penalty. Those who do not qualify for "extra help," and did not enroll before the May 15 deadline, must wait until November to enroll in a plan, with coverage beginning in January 2007.

If you know of someone who is having trouble paying for their medicines, call Senior Services today at (757) 461-9481.

Senior Services extends a heart felt "thank you" to its Medicare Education Team. During the past six months, these individuals worked tirelessly to enroll more than 8,500 individuals in Medicare Part D and other prescription drug savings benefits:

Joe Aquado

Joretha Barrett

Peggy Kowal

Millie Dickens

Jim Hutchinson

Bob Jarrell

Debi Johnston

Ann Marie Kopitzke

Bob Major

Joy Nimmo

Michelle Regacho

Barbara Rodriguez

Carole Schulz

Beverly Stanley

Lisa Stillman

Rhoda Stillman

Sue Summers

Andrea Villaneuva

Darius Villaneuva

Marti Wachtel

Wanda Williams

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From the Executive Director



The aging network is changing. Julie Christopher has been appointed Commissioner for Aging, bringing a dynamic and fresh perspective; state agencies are tasked with new long-term care policy and delivery models; and the Older Americans Act focuses on improving seniors' health through competitive grants in the "Choice and Independence" initiative.

Senior Services welcomes the opportunities these changes provide. It's clear that we need new and innovative thinking. In practical terms, we are absorbing a \$167,000 cut in federal and state nutrition funds by not taking the usual path of doing less of the same. Instead, we have a two-year plan to re-focus the congregate programs from "feeding" to personal success and wellness through greater choice, improved programs and new locations.

We are also conducting a pilot program in Western Tidewater for public transportation. Long-term Care is preparing to expand the Center for Aging. The Retired and Senior Volunteer Program is now recruiting baby boomers, bringing a new vitality to the region. And, our Employment department awaits the outcome of federal competition for a new sponsor.

A tremendous gap remains, however, between the need and available services. Our advocacy priority is increased funding for services. The seniors on our waiting list for meals and homecare need help today. Find your legislator on our Web site. Then call them today and ask what they are doing to help seniors in Southeastern Virginia.

John N. Skirven

John Skirven, Executive Director

EVMS – Proud to Help Seniors

When Eastern Virginia Medical School (EVMS) students Ben Marcum and Ryan Light learned that many of the region's seniors were daunted by the intricacies of Medicare Part D, they put their education – and EVMS facilities – to good use.

Twice monthly, from mid-February through early May, Ben, Ryan and more than 50 fellow medical students turned the campus library into a counseling center, where they conducted enrollment fairs for people seeking help. According to Ben, they aided approximately 100 individuals and signed up 25 seniors and people with disabilities for Medicare Part D.

"Our ability to sit down with each individual – one-on-one, for a hour and a half – allowed us the opportunity to erase their confusion and doubt," said Ben. "Virtually everyone who left our fairs, whether they enrolled or not, had been put at ease."

The project was organized and staffed by student volunteers, with support from The Glennan Center for Geriatrics and Gerontology; EVMS Office of Institutional Advancement; and the EVMS public information office.

For their collective efforts, the American Academy of Family Physicians will present EVMS with its "Community Outreach Award" at its National Conference for Students and Residents later this summer. During the conference, Ben will present the Medicare project to a group of residents and students.

"I can't wait to tell fellow students and residents about how we were able to partner with Senior Services in this project," said Ben. "When we can form a relationship with an organization so dedicated to serving our community, it only strengthens our bond to our benefactors – and we are proud to do it," said Ben.

"Our ability to sit down with each individual – one-on-one, for a hour and a half – allowed us the opportunity to erase their confusion and doubt..."

Are you receiving Medicare benefits and have limited income? Do you need help paying for your prescription drugs?

We Can Help!

You may qualify for Limited Income Assistance ("Extra Help"). Representatives from Senior Services of Southeastern Virginia are available to assist you. It's easy and confidential.



THE CENTER FOR AGING

(757) 461-9481 • www.ssseva.org

Are You Ready? Disaster Planning for Seniors

Seniors often have special needs that require extra planning for disasters and are particularly vulnerable to the effects of a hurricane. Some are less able to tolerate lack of air conditioning, they may need power for certain medical equipment or they may rely on others for transportation. To help seniors prepare now for future emergencies, it's best to plan ahead by following these tips:

- ❖ Keep a list of emergency contact telephone numbers handy and ready to pack. Include your family members, neighbors, doctors and other health-care professionals
- ❖ If you have to evacuate, be sure to take your medications with you and keep a meds list in your wallet as a backup. Also, have a meeting place arranged in advance for you and your family or caregiver to meet
- ❖ Have at least two escape routes mapped out: one to get out of your home quickly and another to leave the area if you are asked to evacuate
- ❖ Keep batteries on hand so you can tune in to a radio or small television set
- ❖ Fill your bathtub with water to use for flushing the commode
- ❖ Have plenty of bottled drinking water, at least eight 8-ounce glasses a day for drinking and more for reconstituting dry or condensed foods
- ❖ Stock up on enough shelf-stable foods to last at least a week
- ❖ Have paper products on hand and a manual can opener
- ❖ When the storm hits – and you find you need help – don't hesitate to call your local Police and Fire departments for assistance

The Federal Emergency Management Agency and American Red Cross publish a free booklet, "Preparing for Disaster for People with Disabilities and other Special Needs." To obtain a copy, call 1-800-480-2520, or write: FEMA, PO Box 2012, Jessup, MD, 20794-2012. Download a copy at www.fema.gov or www.redcross.org

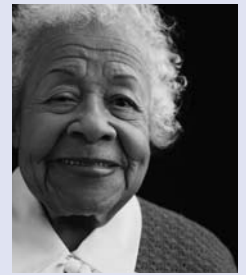


Did you know that...

...Senior Services benefits from the services of two VISTA volunteers?

As part of a National Council on Aging project, **Marcellus Heath** and **Paulette Miller** have joined Senior Services to help strengthen the group's regional partnerships in support of Medicare outreach. AmeriCorps VISTA, which stands for Volunteers In Service To America, is a federal program that places individuals with community-based agencies to help find long-term solutions to problems caused by urban and rural poverty.

Center for Aging Welcomes New Staff Members



Jessika Rodriquez, *Human Resources Assistant*
 Raymond Remond, *Driver*
 Mary Levy, *Program Evaluator*
 Herman Baldwin, *Driver*
 Donna Jean Addison, *Bookkeeper*
 Theresa Pope, *Driver*
 Patricia Knight, *Driver*

Tips on Keeping Cool this Summer

Health experts note that fans only move the air and add comfort; they do not cool it. Only air conditioning offers relief for heat stress, especially for those with a medical condition such as heart disease. With summer's dog days at hand, Senior Services offers these tips on keeping cool:

- ❖ Use air conditioning or go to an air conditioned location near you (libraries, shopping malls, movie theaters)
- ❖ Slow down
- ❖ Bathe and shower
- ❖ Wear lightweight, loose-fitting clothing
- ❖ Drink fluids often
- ❖ Avoid hot foods, heavy meals and alcohol
- ❖ Watch salt use

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Spend A Day With Your Grandkids!

School's out! And family get-togethers beckon. Grandparents who wish to spend quality time with their grandchildren – without breaking the bank – are in luck. Hampton Roads is rich in free and affordable fun. Here's a sampling:



- 1. Hit the beach!** Ocean View's shallow bay beach is great for younger kids, and Virginia Beach boasts all kinds of fun for any age.
- 2. Pack a picnic, and find a shady public park** where children can play to their heart's content.
- 3. Head indoors, and catch a family-friendly film** at your local cinema.
- 4. Board a passenger, paddlewheel ferry** for a cool ride from Norfolk to Portsmouth, or vice versa. Just 50 cents for seniors and \$1 for others.
- 5. Hike one of the trails** within the forested First Landing State Park in Virginia Beach.
- 6. Go to your neighborhood library.** Many have summer reading programs and story hours just for kids.
- 7. Check out the Seaboard Station Railroad Museum** in Suffolk.
- 8. Do the Virginia Zoo.** Just \$6 for seniors and \$5 for children, ages 2-11.
- 9. Encourage a child's appreciation of art.** Take them to the Chrysler Museum's "Summer Friday Films For Children." The weekly one-hour program features a film and follow-up activity starting at 10:30 a.m., through August.
- 10. Invite them for a visit.** Perhaps one of the most wonderful presents you can give your grandchildren is the gift of time.

Who's Caring for You While You're Caring for a Loved One?

One of the greatest challenges facing caregivers is finding the time to care for themselves. Senior Services manages two respite care programs that provide your parent or loved one with care, while you take a much-needed break.

In-Home Respite Care will provide you with a referral to a licensed Home Health Care Agency, which will address your needs for personal care or companion services for your loved one – so that you can take some time off.

Overnight Respite Care provides just that – overnight respite for up to one week for the senior in a nursing home or assisted living facility.

Taking a break from the stress of care giving is critical to a caregiver's well being. For information about these two programs – or to receive a copy of our free Respite Care Program brochure – please call Senior Services today at (757) 461-9481 and ask to speak to an intake specialist.

Use in-home respite care to:

- Attend a faith-based service
- Visit your grandchildren
- Exercise
- Go out to dinner
- See a movie
- Go to the library
- Take part in a support group with other caregivers



THE GREATER HAMPTON ROADS COALITION ON AGING TENTH ANNUAL LEGISLATIVE EVENT

Please Save the Date

Breakfast on Monday, October 30, 2006
Hilton Garden Inn – Suffolk Conference Center
Constance Wharf – Suffolk, Virginia

*Presented by the Task Forces on Aging of
Chesapeake, Franklin/Southampton, Norfolk, Peninsula,
Portsmouth, Suffolk, and Virginia Beach*

Board Spotlight: Herbert “Herb” W. DeGroft, First Vice President



For a retiree, Herbert “Herb” W. DeGroft keeps a busy schedule. There’s work to do with the Ruritan Club, meetings to attend with the Isle of Wight Citizens Association and School Board, involvement with the American Legion and Veterans of Foreign War Post in Smithfield. After serving 30 years in the U.S. Marine Corps and 22 years as director of human resources for Smithfield Packing Co., you’d think Herb would be content to kick back at his Smithfield home, with his wife Mary Ellen. Maybe do a little gardening. He does. But Herb very much enjoys staying active in his community, advocating for seniors’ rights.

When did you first become involved with Senior Services?

In 2004, Henry Badby, my representative on the Isle of Wight County Board of Supervisors, asked me to serve on Isle of Wight County’s Commission of Aging. Then in January 2005, I was appointed to the Senior Services board of directors.

You spend much of your time advocating for senior rights. Can you talk about your latest advocacy efforts?

This past May, I attended the Policy on Aging Conference in Washington, D.C., and discovered that most folks don’t know about the reauthorization of the Older Americans Act (OAA). As a result of attending the conference, I asked our Isle of Wight County board of supervisors to support the OAA re-enactment. In turn, they urged Rep. Randy Forbes and Senators George Allen and John Warner to support it and maintain funding at the current level. Our efforts weren’t for naught, because both the House and Senate committees reported favorable action.

In Isle of Wight County, I’ve also been advocating that seniors be considered for increases in services and funding. Less than \$1,000 per senior is spent on senior needs in Isle of Wight, compared to almost \$11,000 per student in the school system. Seniors deserve a better cut of the pie, and the county needs to step up to the plate and provide a bigger share.

How would you recommend people go about improving the lives of seniors in their own neighborhoods and communities?

Know your neighbor and stay involved in your community. When I was growing up, neighbors knew neighbors – and were aware of the seniors in the areas in which they lived. Nowadays, it’s a reality that neighbors don’t know neighbors. I’d recommend that people reach out and get to know the residents of the neighborhoods and communities. Also, consider becoming or staying involved with your local service clubs.

If you could fulfill one need for seniors in South Hampton Roads, what would it be?

To properly provide for seniors affected by man-made or natural disasters, especially those with disabilities or health needs. In the event of an emergency, there are seniors who don’t have transportation or who need to be transported by handicapped conveyance. And, we should be able to provide adequate emergency shelter for seniors on life support.

Do you have advice for the region’s political leaders?

Yes. That is when you are fomenting programs and creating budgets, keep seniors in the top-five priority list rather than the bottom five.

Where We Are

Main Office, Norfolk

Serves Chesapeake, Norfolk, Portsmouth, Virginia Beach, Ombudsman Program
(757) 461-9481 phone
(757) 461-1068 fax

Ombudsman Program

1-800-766-8059

E- Mail: services@ssseva.org

Web: www.ssseva.org

Franklin

(757) 569-8206 phone
(757) 569-7646 fax

Isle of Wight

(757) 357-4050 phone
(757) 357-4050 fax

Southampton

(757) 653-2105 phone
(757) 653-2849 fax

Suffolk

(757) 934-1661 phone
(757) 539-3189 fax

Spread the News!

We hope you are enjoying your subscription to *The Senior Advocate*. If you know of someone who would like to receive this newsletter – or if you would like to receive it via e-mail – please drop a line to Cindy Creede at ccreede@ssseva.org, or call at (757) 963-9220.

O U R M I S S I O N

Senior Services of Southeastern Virginia is the regional organization in South Hampton Roads that supports and enriches the lives of older Virginians and their families through advocacy, education, information, products and comprehensive services.




Services: Advocacy • Aging Planning • Care Coordination • Employment • Financial Assistance, Food Stamps & Medicaid • Home-delivered Meals & Senior Dining • Companion, Homemaker & Personal Care • Insurance, Medicare & Drug Discount Card Counseling • Long Term Community-based Care • Nursing Home Screening • Ombudsman Office & Care Concern Investigation • Prescription Drug Assistance/ Pharmacy Connection • Transportation Services to Medical & Other Appointments • Volunteer Opportunities by Seniors and For Seniors.

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Just Around the Corner

In the Best Interest of the Child: A Closer Look, Sept 9. On Sept. 9, from 8:30 a.m. – 4 p.m., experts in the field of social welfare policy and practice will examine the challenges faced by kinship caregivers when raising a second family. Geared toward grandparents raising grandchildren and other relative caregivers, the free program convenes at I.C. Norcom High School in Portsmouth. Call (757) 393-0570 or (757) 823-2759.

National Employ Older Workers Week, Sept. 24-30
 This special week showcases the efforts of the Department of Labor’s Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP). For over 40 years, SCSEP has served the job training and placement needs of people with limited financial resources who are age 55 or older.

Residents’ Rights Week, Oct. 1-7
Residents’ Rights Week recognizes the 2.8 million people who live in long-term care facilities across the country. It’s also a time to thank the local long-term care ombudsmen

who provide information and assistance, promote residents’ rights and assist in the resolution of resident complaints. To learn more about the Hampton Roads Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program call 1-800-766-8059.



10th Annual Legislative Event, Oct. 30
The Greater Hampton Roads Coalition on Aging will present its 10th Annual Legislative Event, Oct. 30, at the Hilton Garden Inn – Suffolk Conference Center at Constance Wharf in Suffolk. Breakfast begins at 8 a.m., followed by the day’s events. For tickets, contact Mary Dean at (757) 393-9333 or mblack-dean@msn.com

Advocate Accolades
Thank you to **Charles F. Burr**, of Chesapeake, for his bequest dispersal from the estate of Peter S. Barna. Senior Services is also grateful to **Paul and Jennifer Genovese**, of Chesapeake; **Jeff and Lisa Brown**, of Virginia Beach; and **Teresa and Karl Black**, of Virginia Beach, for donations in the memory of their mother, Mrs. Pamela Genovese.