

senioraffairsdallas

A newsletter by the City of Dallas Office of Community Care, Senior Services



Letter from the Senior Services Staff

Fall is here! That means foliage and trees are showing off their wonderful shades of copper and brown, the weather has cooled down and the air is getting crisp. The Senior Services staff is excited to share with you all the resources and information we've put together this fall season.

This has been an interesting year of new "normals." Be it wearing masks, social distancing or the use of technology to stay in touch, each has affected our emotional and physical wellbeing. In this issue, you will find mental health and wellness resources and safety tips from Dallas Police department for the fall season.

Fall is also a great time to start weatherizing your home. The Housing and Neighborhood Revitalization Department provides a checklist of maintenance issues to protect your home all year long. This includes checking your carbon monoxide and smoke detector batteries, scheduling regular maintenance for heating systems and chimneys and other important tasks.

Open Enrollment has begun. Our partners at Community Council provide a wide array of services including enrollment assistance and understanding available benefits, chore and health maintenance, home delivered meals and more.

Remember, flu season is here. Discuss the flu shot with your doctor and continue practicing regular hand washing.

We hope you enjoy this edition of the Senior Affairs Dallas Newsletter,

Senior Services Team

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We all have Mental Health



Mental Health America of Greater Dallas is driven in our commitment to promote mental health as a critical piece to your overall wellness. As the Covid-19 pandemic continues, so does the associated anxiety, depression and mental illness. For those of us living in Dallas County, the mental health effects of Covid-19 are just as essential to address as the physical health effects. We may not all have mental illness, but we all have mental health!

1 IN 5 ADULTS HAVE A MENTAL HEALTH CONDITION

Depression is more than just feeling sad. It is a common concern in seniors and older adults, BUT it is important to know that it is not a normal part of getting older. It is a concern that we need to address as soon as we notice possible warning signs.

Warning Signs of Depression

- Change in mood (lasting longer than a couple of weeks)
- Feelings of guilt or worthlessness
- Fatigue and/or sleep changes
- Physical problems: stomach issues, pain that cannot be diagnosed
- Social withdrawal (Are you not wanting to check in with your loved ones?)

Risk Factors to Depression

- Genes: traits we inherit from our family
- Biology: balance of chemicals in the body
- Lifestyle: poor diet, lack of exercise, sleep patterns
- Environment: exposure to traumatic events, sudden loss, unsafe communities

Mental Health America of Greater Dallas
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www.mhadallas.org

If you or someone you love is experiencing any of the listed signs or identifies with these risk factors, it may be a great time for a depression screening. Mental Health America of Greater Dallas offers access to a free screening tool that can help you identify whether it is time to seek help or not.

Visit: MHADallas.org/help to take advantage of our free, confidential screening tools TODAY!



Resources

Free Online Screening Tools - Are you experiencing symptoms of mental illness or substance use? Do you have questions about what certain behaviors may mean in terms of diagnosis? Screening tools are one way to gauge what the underlying issue(s) may be, and they can be helpful when seeking resources and help. Visit mhadallas.org/help for more information.

Not sure of the next steps to reach a provider? Call MHA-Greater Dallas to speak with a team member who can help you find resources in our community at **214-871-2420, Monday – Friday from 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.**

DALLAS POLICE DEPARTMENT OFFICE OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS SAFETY TIPS FOR FALL

4 SAFETY TIPS FOR THE FALL SEASON

1

SAFETY AS IT GETS DARKER

Be Aware! Daylight Savings Time has ended. Before you leave a building or home especially at night, know your destination or route. Have your keys in hand to avoid fumbling for them. Avoid overloading yourself with bags, laptops and backpacks. Always have your hands free. When approached by anyone, always give eye contact.

2

DO A HOME SAFETY CHECK BEFORE IT GETS COLD

Be Prepared! Test your alarm system. Check batteries in smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. Check and replace expired fire extinguishers. Test your heating unit. Replace outdoor lighting. Repair broken windows, doors or fences to prevent criminals from having easy access to your home. Stop mail and deliveries when away for the holidays. Ask a neighbor to keep an eye on your home while away.

3

STAYING SAFE IS NOT AN ACCIDENT

Be Proactive! Take safeguards that can reduce your risk of becoming the victim of a crime. Keep your mobile phone charged. If you get stranded at night, secure your car and return to it the next day. Remove all valuables from your car. Ask your drivers their name when taking Lyft or Uber before getting in the car. Make sure their name matches what's on your app. Avoid meeting alone with strangers from dating sites and buying sites such as Offerup.

4

USE YOUR SENSES

Avoid Distractions. Talking on the phone or listening to loud music in your ear reduces awareness. Call 911 if you're the victim of a crime. Always trust your instincts, as it's your natural warning system. Take your eyes off your phone and be aware of your surroundings. If confronted by an assailant, do not fight back.

Community Council of Greater Dallas Resources available for Seniors in Dallas



[Community Council of Greater Dallas](#) is a local nonprofit that has been providing services in North Texas for 80 years. It has been the home of the Dallas Area Agency on Aging (DAAA) since 1973. Community Council is dedicated to serving seniors in Dallas County and does so by offering a myriad of services.

Benefits Counseling

Medicare Open Enrollment is October 15, 2020 through December 7, 2020. Need help enrolling or understanding the benefits available to you, DAAA can help.

Our benefits counselors can help with the following:

- Counseling on all aspects of **Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)**, including premiums, prescription costs, help with coverage and benefits available.
- Texas benefits applications that can be mailed.

Direct Services:

- **Chore Maintenance:** heavy cleaning, minor tree trimming, yard work
- **Health Maintenance:** incontinent supplies, gloves, wipes, diapers, bed pads (toilet paper while under the disaster mandate)
- **Income Support:** limited assistance with rent, mortgage and utilities. Gift cards for groceries while under the disaster of COVID19
- **Personal Assistance:** assistance provided in the home
- **Respite Services:** assistance provided to the caregiver, to allow them to have a “break”
- **Residential Repair:** minor home repairs related to health and safety needs are provided
- **Transportation:** My Ride and pilot program with Lyft
- **Legal Assistance:** The DAAA contracts with two attorneys to help with the preparation of wills and consumer issues.

Home Delivered Meals

- [VNA Texas](#) continues its meal delivery programs with proper precautions.
- Congregate Meal sites are now providing a drive-through service to pick up frozen meals and delivering meals to people who cannot pick them up.

Wellness Services

Community Council of Greater Dallas is offering several virtual wellness programs during the pandemic. The organization also has toolkits for select programs that can be used to conduct the classes via phone:

- **Chronic Disease, Diabetes, & Chronic Pain Self-Management virtual zoom workshops or Toolkits in a Box** phone calls
- Aging Mastery virtual zoom workshops
- Program to Encourage Active Rewarding Lives (PEARLS)
- Medication review by Pharmacist

For more information:

- Visit ccadvance.org,
- Email impact@ccadvance.org
- Call 214-871-5065

Home Maintenance & Weatherization

Fall is the best time to weatherize your home before cold weather sets in. Preventative measures should be taken year-round – this saves you money in the long run and keeps you comfortable and safe when you need it most.

The Housing and Neighborhood Revitalization Department shares some preventative measures in this Home Maintenance Checklist, which can serve as a guide on things to keep an eye out for.

For more information on programs and services provided by the Housing and Neighborhood Revitalization Department, please call 214-670-3111 or visit their website:

www.dallashousingpolicy.com

MONTHLY ITEMS
Change the A/C filter
Run bleach down your condensation lines in your air conditioning
Clean sink disposal
Clean range hood filters
Check under sinks for leaks
Water slab in the summer months
QUARTERLY ITEMS
Test smoke detectors/ carbon dioxide detectors
Run water and flush toilets in unused spaces
Trim limbs and hedges away from the home
ANNUALLY
Check your shut off valves on your toilets, sinks, washer and water heater
Test your water heater's pressure relief valve
Clean out gutters
Check the exterior drainage (puddling, negative drainage towards the home)
Inspect home for paint chipping, siding damage, cracks around the foundation
Have air conditioning and heating units serviced
Inspect roof for damage or any repairs needed; trim away trees
Clean out dryer vent exiting from the wall

Senior Affairs Commission (SAC) Update



The Senior Affairs Commission (SAC) is a 15-member advisory board appointed by the Mayor and City Council to help ensure the provision of services to the elderly. They meet once a month, except in July. Their last meeting included discussions related to the following:

- The City of Dallas Department of Public Works presented an overview of the Sidewalk Master Plan to promote accessibility and comply with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Focus is on seniors age 65 and over and people with disabilities.
- Sharla Myers, Chief Executive Officer at Community Council of Greater Dallas, Dallas/Fort Worth Area, provided an update on programs and services due to COVID-19.
- Jessica Galleshaw, Office of Community Care (OCC) Director, provided an update on contract partners and changes in programs and services due to COVID-19.
- Ana Camacho, OCC Senior Services Manager, presented an update on the Senior Services Program.

For more information about the Senior Affairs Commission, the Sub-Committees, and meeting dates and times, please call 214-670-5227 or visit the City's website:

dallascityhall.com/government/meetings/Pages/senior-affairs-commission



COD Office of Community Care and Senior Services Update

The Senior Services staff continues working remotely.

Our services are **Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.** For information, resources and referral services, please call the **main line at 214-670-5227**. For a full list of Senior Services programs, please visit the [Senior Services site here](#). Senior Services has partnered with Adult Protective Services and The Senior Source to work on a “placemat” full of resources and tips on preventing abuse on older adults. Resources will be shared on the website.

- Staff continues to work with the Dallas Coalition for Hunger Solutions on their Eating Well is a Snap! (EWS!) virtual outreach program. The next scheduled event will be in November. Stay tuned on the website!
- AARP wrote a blog about the Facebook Live outreach event that the OCC Senior Services Program participated in: **A Resource To Remember: Senior Services in Dallas**. You can read it here: local.aarp.org/news/a-resource-to-remember-senior-services-in-dallas-tx-2020-10-07

Special Thanks

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Senior Affairs Commission (SAC)



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