

THE DISPATCH

DELAWARE COUNTY OFFICE FOR THE AGING

97 MAIN ST., SUITE 2 • DELHI, NY 13753



VOLUME 50 • NUMBER 5 Website: www.delcony.us/departments/ofo/ofo.htm • Email: ofo@co.delaware.ny.us NOVEMBER • 2025

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Change
Service
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Connected To Help With Connect America's Personal Emergency Response Systems (PERS)

By: Terri Tweedie, Coordinator of Aging Services

Beginning in January 2026, all current and future members of lifeline service will be asked to contribute \$20.00 per month for this life saving program.

Connect America's goal is to enable older adults and those with long-term health and care needs to remain in their homes and communities, enjoying a better quality of life while providing support and peace of mind for their loved ones and caregivers. Delaware County Office for the Aging contracts with this company to help

deliver critical home safety assistance to our Delaware County residents who meet the criteria of 60 years and older and/or experiencing disability.

Current members, PLEASE, watch for mail from OFA. There will be a contract that will require your name, phone number and signature acknowledging the equipment is the property of Connect America. A self-addressed, stamped envelope will be provided to return the form to our office. It is VERY important that we receive this form. Thank you in advance for returning the signed contract to us ASAP. If you have any questions, please call 607-832-5750.

OFA Bus Schedule Changes/Additions For November 2025-January 2026

Here is a list of bus schedule changes or additions for our Senior Transportation Bus System. If you have any questions, or wish to reserve a seat on any of these trips, please contact Office for the Aging at 607-832-5750.

MOVED TRIPS

- Thursday, November 27th trip to Kingston **Moved to** Tuesday, November 25th
- Thursday, December 25th trip to Norwich **Moved to** Tuesday, December 23rd
- Thursday, January 1st trip to Oneonta **Moved to** Tuesday, December 30th

ADDED TRIPS

Rules for using our bus service still apply for all added trips. Bag limit, pick-up times, and shopping time remain the same as they are for the reg-

ular bus runs. (Note: these trips will occur on a Monday or Tuesday)

BUS PICKUP ROUTE (Thursdays Route): Bovina (8:15), Andes (8:20), Margaretville (8:40), Arkville (8:45), (Fleischmanns), Roxbury (9:05), GG (9:15), Stamford (9:30), Harpersfield (9:40), Davenport (9:50).

- Destination:** Cobleskill/Carrot Barn; **Dates:** Nov. 17, Dec. 8
- Destination:** Albany; **Date:** Dec. 22
- BUS PICKUP ROUTE (Wednesday/Friday combined route):** Delhi (8:05), Walton (8:30), Downsville (8:55), East Branch (9:10), Fishs Eddy (9:15), Hancock (9:20), Deposit (9:40), Masonville (10:05), Sidney (10:10).

- Destination:** Bainbridge - Frog Pond/Pine Ridge Store; **Dates:** Nov. 10, Dec. 15
- Destination:** Albany; **Date:** Nov. 18

Social Security Announces 2.8 Benefit Increase For 2026

Taken from "<https://blog.ssa.gov/social-security-announces-benefit-increase-for-2026>"

Social Security benefits and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) payments for 75 million Americans will increase 2.8 percent in 2026. On average, Social Security retirement benefits will increase by about \$56 per month starting in January.

Over the last decade the cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) increase has averaged about 3.1 percent. The COLA was 2.5 percent in 2025.

Nearly 71 million Social Security beneficiaries will see a 2.8 percent COLA beginning in January 2026. Increased payments to nearly 7.5 mil-

lion people receiving SSI will begin on December 31, 2025. (Note: Some recipients receive both Social Security benefits and SSI).

"Social Security is a promise kept, and the annual cost-of-living adjustment is one way we are working to make sure benefits reflect today's economic realities and continue to provide a foundation of security," said Social Security Administration Commissioner Frank J. Bisignano. "The cost-of-living adjustment is a vital part of how Social Security delivers on its mission."

Some other adjustments that take effect in January of each year are based

See "Social Security Announces" page 5

2025 Senior Council Quilt Raffle



The winner of the 2025 Senior Council raffle quilt is Mary Jane Buel from Delhi, pictured with her husband Bill. She bought her ticket at the senior fun day held at the Delhi 4H camp.



Quilt maker Polly DellaCrosse (right) and Ellen Weaver (left), senior council member, who selected the winner ticket.

Third Annual OFA Ball "The Royal Regency Ball"



Royal Regency Ball King and Queen: Scott Fox (left) and Janet Brienza (right)

This year's "Royal Regency Ball" was held at the Delaware County Fairgrounds in Walton, NY. The event took place on Sunday, September 14th from 2-6pm, and hosted 125 guests. This year's ball was the largest to date, with 125 attendees! Sponsored by the Delaware County Senior Council, CD-

PHP, and WellCare, guests enjoyed entertainment by KPD Events; a delicious beef brisket by Sloan's New York Grill; desserts by Bakers Grimm, Bagels & Cream, and OFA's own Amy Bowie; and photography by Stella B. Studio & Happy Camper!!

New this year, guests had the opportunity to participate in a trivia contest. The winning table received a fun, little gift! In addition to the trivia, guests also had the opportunity to participate in a basket raffle. The baskets, created by OFA staff member Amy Bowie, each had a unique theme. Guests were provided with a ticket during check-in and were able to place the ticket in the basket of choice. Tickets were pulled randomly, and winners were announced after dinner.

Every guest also had the choice to enter in the drawing for His Royal Majesty or Her Royal Majesty. Last year's Harvest King, Robert Abbate and Enchanted Queen, Loretta Laing, turned over their crown to the 2025 His Royal Majesty, Scott Fox and Her Royal Majesty, Janet Brienza! Guests enjoyed a sparkling cider toast to the newly crowned royalty!

Defensive Driving

Booty Security's Defensive Driving Insurance and Points Reduction Classroom Program

One Day Classes:

- November 2nd, Hamden Town Hall, 9am-3pm
- December 14th, Southside Mall, Oneonta, 9am-3pm

To register call 607-538-9632 Sherry.

Cost of class is \$35. The certificate is good for 3 years.

Presented by Booty Security LLC Delivery Agent #760 of Defensive Drivers Discount. Instructors: Tim and Sherry Stewart.

OFA Annual Plan For 2025

By: Lyndsay Komosinski, Director

Highlights From the Annual Public Hearing

Each year Delaware County Office for the Aging (DCOFA) holds a Public Hearing. On Monday, October 20, the Public Hearing was held at the Hamden Town Hall. Below is a summary of what was presented at the Public Hearing:

Vision Statement for the Delaware County Office for the Aging

Proposed by the Delaware County Office for the Aging Advisory Board, Approved at the April 19, 2012 meeting

"We see an environment in Delaware County that encourages and enables older adults to make educated life choices. We see an era of sensitivity toward our environment, diminishing natural resources and changing economy, and its impact on future generations. We see barrier-free access to comprehensive health care and supportive services. We see the implementation of a transportation and communication network that supports the needs of older adults. We see Delaware County with safe, affordable and comfortable housing for older adults."

"We see an environment that nurtures cross generational engagement through both human contact and technology. We see a caring support system that promotes dignity and independence for older adults. We see an environment that supports persons in care giving and other family obligations. We see older adults playing an integral part in the life of the community where they are an accepted and respected part of society."

"Since older adults impact the entire Delaware County community in all its complexity and since the entire community affects all older adults, we see this vision statement as one compo-

nent of a comprehensive vision for the future of Delaware County."

Dispatch: "The Dispatch," which will be entering into its 49th year in publication, continues to be the most effective method of providing information and educating Delaware County's older adult population. The paper continues to be published bi-monthly and reaches 9,600 readers. Currently, the readers can receive the Dispatch electronically. There are 67 readers who are receiving the Dispatch electronically. This number is gradually increasing.

DCOFA will continue to publish articles pertinent to the senior population such as articles on health insurance, financial assistance programs, legal needs, caregiver services, veteran services, and retirement planning.

There is a request for contributions that is published two times each year, as well as the opportunity to submit a paid ad. The targeted amount for contribution between August 2024-July 2025 was \$6,500. The agency met its goal. The actual amount received was close to \$7,500. The targeted amount for 2024-2025 will be increased to \$7,500.

Expanded In-Home Services for the Elderly Program (EISEP): The EISEP program helps eligible older adults stay in their homes by providing crucial in-home services. Specifically designed for those who do not qualify for Medicaid but need assistance with daily tasks, EISEP offers support with activities like bathing, dressing, meal preparation, and light housekeeping. The program uses a cost-sharing model based on income, making services affordable for a range of financial situations. Some older adults may even receive little to no cost services, while others contribute on a sliding scale.

The Office for the Aging holds two contracts with two separate licensed aide agencies, who provide the aides.

Currently, there are 17 older adults actively receiving services, while 11 are on a waiting list due to a shortage of homecare aides. To address the waitlist, DCOFA will be implementing a Consumer-Directed Model of home care through EISEP funding, allowing the individuals in need of services the ability to hire someone of their choice. This model will offer the individual more flexibility and control over their care. In addition, DCOFA has one client who is receiving case management services, assisting with applications for programs such as SNAP, HEAP and section 8 housing.

The overall goal of EISEP is to improve access to, and the availability of, appropriate and cost-effective non-medical support services for older adults, enabling them to age in place with dignity and independence.

SNAP-ED: A Nutrition education program for those 60 and over that includes both nutrition workshops and activities to promote policy, system and environmental changes. (PSEs) This is the fifth year Delaware County Office for the Aging is participating in this New York State Office for the Aging (NYSOFA) program funded by a grant from the United States Department of Agriculture.

The SNAP-Ed Delaware County Region includes Delaware, Sullivan, and Greene counties. Susan Hammerslag is the Coordinator of the SNAP-Ed program and is contracted through Delaware Support & Services. Andrea Martell is OFA's Registered Dietician and is also contracted. NYSOFA provides fantastic support and supervision while allowing individual counties the flexibility to best meet the needs of their region.

The OFA Dietician presents (10 Tips for Adults) workshops consisting of four classes, throughout the region. Workshops are presented at Senior Dining Centers or in conjunction with other programs offered by OFA such as Tai-Chi for Arthritis and Bingocize. These attract the greatest number of participants. During the 2024-2025 grant cycle, in addition to nutrition workshops presented by Andrea, SNAP-Ed events included:

• "Local Roots" - a PSE to increase access to fresh produce: SNAP-Ed NY funds may be used for expenses related to this project such as promotion and the actual distribution of fresh produce. A partnership with O'Connor Hospital Board of Directors/Bassett Healthcare Network provided \$36,000 for produce. A grant from the Rural Healthcare Alliance provided \$7,400 for expenses associated with this PSE. Beginning June 4, 2025, 200 participants received a series of 10 bi-weekly produce boxes either delivered to their homes or picked up at their neighborhood Dining Center. Partnerships for this project also included Delaware Opportunities and Schoharie Valley Farms.

• Support of and participation in "Senior Health and Fun Day": Located at 4-H Camp Shankitunk, over 200 participants enjoyed a choice of activities, meeting vendors and service providers, and a BBQ chicken picnic lunch. The Registered Dietician promoted educational workshops with handouts, citrus water, and fruit spread tastings. The SNAP-Ed Coordinator and three volunteers helped 82 participants plant windowsill herb gardens. An-

other 109 gardens were distributed throughout the county. Herb gardens are an educational component to encourage reduced consumption of salt and increasing flavor by using fresh herbs when preparing meals.

• The Delaware County Fair: A SNAP-Ed booth located in the Cornell Cooperative Extension Human Ecology Building showcased a variety of container gardens including basil, chives and eggplant. Also available were tastings of USDA approved recipes, citrus infused ice water and information about workshops. Recipes and other educational components were provided. The booth was a great success, reaching over 900 individuals with information about nutrition and nutrition services in Delaware County.

Other activities included posting fliers and brochures in public places throughout the region, visiting dining centers and senior clubs to promote the program and a presence at the Hamden Bicentennial Celebration.

The Registered Dietician presented 34 nutrition education classes to a total of 235 participants during the 2025 grant year.

Health & Fitness

Delaware County's commitment to community well-being shines through its evidence-based falls prevention programs; Tai Chi for Arthritis (TCA) and Bingocize. These initiatives are not just about physical activity, but also about fostering social connection and mental sharpness to participants age 50+.

• Tai Chi for Arthritis is a program that invites participants to learn steps 1-12 of Sun Style Tai Chi, developed by Dr. Paul Lam. This 10-week program meets twice a week for one-hour sessions.

Since January 2025, 140 participants have benefited from TCA classes. These classes were held in numerous locations throughout the county, including Hancock, Margaretville, Downsville, Trout Creek, Deposit, Harpersfield, Grand Gorge and Delhi. Additional classes will begin in Walton, Franklin and Sidney this year. Four certified instructors, with two delivering classes as a team, guide participants through this gentle yet effective form of exercise.

• Bingocize: A fresh addition to Delaware County Office for the Aging's offerings, Bingocize cleverly merges the fun of bingo, health education, and exercise. This 10-week, twice-weekly program provides one hour of non-stop activity. Bingocize goes beyond typical workouts, incorporating balance-enhancing exercises like oblique crunches and resistance-band chest presses. Bingocize is not just about the body; it challenges seniors with trivia questions focused on reducing falls risk and engaging rounds of bingo.

Participant Janet Povlock praises its "multidimensional" nature, calling it, "a great way to socialize and have fun." Pat Park, a self-described regular, finds Bingocize "good for the soul" and values the connection it offers, especially after her husband's passing.

Over 46 participants have joined Bingocize classes in the locations of Grand Gorge, Walton, Delhi and Bovina. Classes are scheduled to

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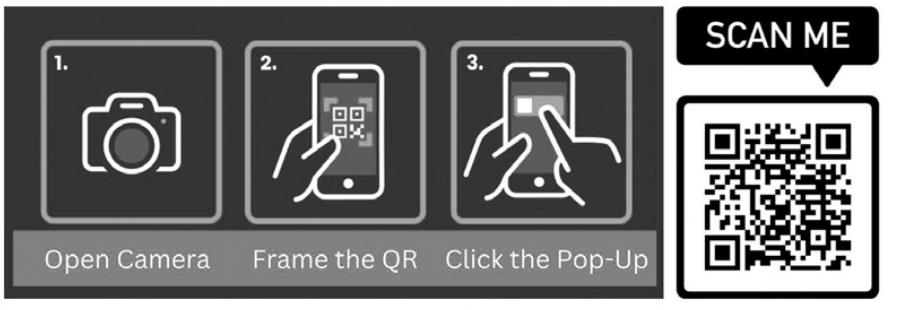
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start in Sidney, Hobart, Andes and Downsville. The program anticipates reaching an additional 40-50 participants by the end of 2025. Five certified instructors deliver this engaging program throughout the county.

*Both Tai Chi and Bingocize are evidence-based falls prevention programs.

Health Insurance Information Counseling and Assistance Program (HIICAP)

HIICAP is Health Insurance Information Counseling and Assistance Program. Primarily, the program assists with Medicare, Medicaid and Medicare Savings Plans. It is one of the most sought-out programs offered at OFA. From September 1, 2024, to August 31, 2025, HIICAP staff assisted close to 610 individuals. Of the individuals served, 314 of them were MIPPA clients and 98 were assisted with new Medicaid and/or MSP applications. Currently, OFA has three staff who have taken and passed the annual HIICAP exam. In addition, the HIICAP Coordinator, Victoria Ladlee attended the Annual HIICAP Coordinator Conference in Latham on September 16th and 17th, 2025. Victoria, Bette, Lyndsay and other staff interested in learning HIICAP attended a virtual regional training on October 7th and 8th, with a goal of adding additional counselors to the 2026 Medicare Open Enrollment season.

During the 2024 Open Enrollment period, which began October 15, 2024, and ended on December 7, 2024, HIICAP Counselor's assisted close to 360 individuals.

National Family Caregiver Support Program

The National Family Caregiver Support Program (NFCSP) is a respite program offered by OFA to provide a much-needed break to caregivers in need. Jonathan Moore is the Caregiver Coordinator/Case Manager for this program. New this year, the NFCSP program offers a caregiver-directed model which allows caregivers to hire a family member, friend, neighbor, or anyone else they know and trust, excluding a spouse. OFA implemented a voucher payment system and offers qualified respite providers up to \$600 per program year to provide respite. This program is available to any caregiver who meet the following criteria:

- a. A resident of Delaware County.
- b. Aged 18 years or older and providing care to individuals aged 60 years or older
- c. Aged 18 years or older and pro-

viding care to individuals of ANY age with Alzheimer's disease or related disorder. (Related disorder includes Dementia, traumatic brain injury, mild cognitive impairment, and chronic traumatic encephalopathy)

- d. Older relatives (not parents) aged 55 years or older who are living with and providing care to children under the age of 18.
- e. Older relatives (including the parents) who are living with and providing care to an adult aged 18-59 years with a disability
- f. Caregiver must be assisting the care-receiver with at least two ADLs/IADLs
- g. Care Receiver can reside in Delaware County and receive respite services, even if the caregiver resides in another county, as long as the eligibility criteria listed above is met.

Legal Services

DCOFA continues to contract with the Legal Aid Society of Mid-New York to provide legal services to those Delaware County residents who are 60 years of age and older. The Legal Aid Society of Mid-New York is a not-for-profit law firm that serves residents of Delaware County. The purpose of the legal services program is to assist those people 60 years of age or older who do not have access to an attorney and who require legal advice, counseling, or representation and are not income eligible for regular legal aid services. Qualified attorneys and paralegals are available to provide legal assistance with wills and simple estate planning; drafting power of attorney, health care proxy, and living will document; defense against creditors, assistance with foreclosure and divorce; assistance with landlord and tenant rights; and answers to legal questions.

Personal Emergency Response System

The Office for the Aging's (OFA) Emergency Response System (ERS), established in 1983, continues to be a vital service for Delaware County residents, ensuring help is available in times of distress. Currently, the ERS program services 550 subscribers, with an additional 8 awaiting installation. These numbers consistently fluctuate, reflecting the ongoing need for this essential service. OFA partners with Connect America to deliver life-line services to county residents. This collaboration has been instrumental in eliminating inventory shortages and installation delays. OFA staff are no longer solely responsible for installing every unit across the county.

Both landline and mobile ERS units are available, although rural living can pose challenges for mobile units in connecting to cell towers. In such cases, a landline unit connected to a house phone provides a reliable solution, though it limits emergency support when individuals are away from home.

This year, Connect America introduced a smart watch ERS. Initially, a \$150 fee plus monthly charges were associated with it. While Connect America offered a reduced rate of \$100 plus monthly charges, OFA was unable to cover this expense. However, Connect America has since waived the one-time fee, making the smart watch ERS an accessible option.

OFA continues its agreement with the Delaware County Office of Long-Term Care (OLTC) to provide Medicaid-authorized clients with PERS service paid through Medicaid. OFA also holds contracts for PERS with Fidelis, Nascentia Health Options, and iCircle. In an added benefit, Connect America provides fall detection to clients free of charge, representing a monthly savings of \$6 for those who opt for this feature. Additionally, the county incurs no expenses for on-call staff services as Connect America manages all concerns 24/7.

NY Connects

NY Connects is a program that was created as part of a No Wrong Door System. NY Connects staff can work with anyone who may need information on long-term services and support, including children or adults with disabilities, older adults, family members and caregivers, friends or neighbors, veterans and helping professionals. Any individual that calls, emails or stops in the office, can get assistance with all their needs at one time. Staff can help individuals find care and support, remain independent, understand care options, find transportation, learn about support in caregiving, find supported employment programs, get answers and be counseled about Medicare, as well as apply for Medicaid and other public benefits.

From September 1, 2024, to September 1, 2025, NY Connects Staff have assisted close to 1,360 individuals with services including application assistance for SNAP, HEAP, MSP, Medicaid, providing referrals to OFA programs and services, as well as outside agencies, and other long-term services and supports.

A very large part of the NY Connects program is public outreach and education. This can include in-

person or virtual presentations and brochure distribution. NY Connects staff have hosted information booths at local farmer's markets, fairs, and other events. Since January 1st, 2025, through September 30th, NY Connects staff have hosted 37 in-person events and brochure distribution, meeting with close to 2,500 individuals. NY Connects staff have also distributed close to 2,300 brochures. These outreach events are crucial for educating the public on assistance that may be available to them and are free events that allow individuals to ask questions, set up appointments and learn about programs and services. All events are hosted throughout the county, providing an opportunity for individuals to meet with staff locally, limiting their amount of travel time.

In addition to NY Connects Outreach events and daily job duties, NY Connects staff also head the Long-Term Care Council, a No Wrong Door Team and sit on committees that assist with a Veterans Resource Fair, Senior Health & Fun Day, the Senior Ball, and the Big Wheels Golf Tournament.

Senior Council

The Delaware County Senior Council, an organization that has been in existence since 1973 and is responsible for the creation of DCOFA, continues to meet the second Monday of each month. Since that time, both organizations have worked together to develop and enhance programs that have an impact on Delaware County seniors. The Senior Council consistently works towards raising funds to purchase equipment and enrich under-funded programs for seniors. 2025 fundraising began with a pancake breakfast in March.

The key fundraiser for 2025 was the Big Wheels Golf Tournament. It continues to be their most lucrative event. The committee, comprised of local citizens, several of whom are seniors, have worked hard to make this activity a success. Despite the weather and cancellation of the event this year, the Big Wheels committee was able to raise \$7,000.

The Delaware County Senior Council's motto is "Seniors Helping Seniors." They once again lived up to this motto through their different fundraising efforts such as the annual Pork Roast and Pie Auction in June at the American Legion; the September Harvest Fest where apples, cider, and any dessert that is made with apples are sold; and lastly, the annual quilt raffle running from May through September.

See "OFA Annual Plan for 2025" page 4

Delaware County Office for The Aging is now accepting Credit/Debit Card Payments!



If you would like to make a payment or contribution to Delaware County Office for the Aging by credit/debit card here is how you can do that.

- Visit our website at <https://www.delcony.us/departments/ofa/ofa.htm>, scroll about halfway down and you will see a flier. Click where it says ALL PAID.
- You can also pay over the phone by calling our office at 607-832-5750.
- You can scan the QR code here with your cell phone. →



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For more information of our in home Personal Care Services, please call us:

At Home Care Partners, Inc.

1-866-927-0366 or 607-432-1005

"Assisted Living...in Your Own Home"

"OFA Annual Plan for 2025" ...continued from page 3

The Delaware County Senior Council co-sponsored the tenth Annual Delaware County "Senior Fun Day" with OFA. The Council donated to support this event.

Senior Health and Fun Day

Delaware County Office for the Aging hosted its tenth Annual Senior Health and Fun Day. The event was held on August 20th at Camp Shanktunk in Delhi. Although it rained for most of the day, the total attendance was close to 400 participants, vendors, staff and volunteers. The event is a day that provides food, dancing, activities, socialization and information about programs, services and resources available to Delaware County older adults. Among the vendors present were homecare agencies, skilled nursing facilities, assisted living and local hospitals in both Delaware and Otsego County, Managed Medicare/Medicaid Insurance plans, Senior Council, OFA, Legacy, and more. Despite the weather, the seniors had a wonderful time and enjoyed themselves very much. There were two buses that ran continuously shuttling seniors from the SUNY Delhi parking lot to registration at Rice Hall.

At mid-morning each participant received a container of Chobani yogurt. Chobani is manufactured locally in New Berlin. They donated several containers of a variety of yo-

gurt flavors.

Throughout the morning, seniors had the opportunity to play bingo, try Tai Chi for Arthritis, line dance, and participate in a snack and craft!

The planning for next year's event started the following week. In 2026, the event will be bigger, take place in July and will be held at new, larger location.

Transportation

The Delaware County Senior Transportation System provides transportation to residents of Delaware County who are 60 years of age or older and are under 60 and disabled. During the program year 2024-2025, over 200 riders utilized the bus to get to the stores for needed purchases such as groceries and other day to day necessities, as well as to medical services and supplies. The number has added on 30 additional riders compared to 2023-2024 program. The bus provided 194 trips and was used 13 additional times to transport riders to their medical appointments as there was not a volunteer driver available to transport. This service operates three days per week using a 14-passenger bus with wheelchair accessibility and three part-time drivers.

The bus is equipped with an operating wheelchair lift to accommodate riders who cannot board by the steps.

The bus operates Wednesday through Friday each week leaving Delhi at 8:05 am and traveling to various sites such as Albany, Sidney, Oneonta, Binghamton, and Kingston. Passengers are picked up at designated pickup points or in route at their homes.

During the months of July, August, and September, additional bus routes included: Frog Pond and Pine Ridge grocery store in Bainbridge; and the Carrot Barn in Schoharie. DCOFA has added additional trips to include Middle Town, Cooperstown and Fly Creek, Woodstock and Lake George. In July of 2025, the bus was utilized to transport riders to Kingston so that they could enjoy the Hudson Boat Tour. DCOFA will be offering this trip again in October.

The MAS system continues to provide medical transportation service for those on Medicaid. The DCOFA senior transportation system is also able to drop off seniors to medical providers in Oneonta.

In 2024 a transportation survey was handed out to each of the riders. Of the surveys that were returned, some of them included comments such as: "The bus driver was very courteous and polite. Excellent bus driver." "I think the bus service is great!" "I use the bus to pick up my meds and shop." "The driver is amazing, patient and helpful." The person doing the scheduling for the bus is the sweetest, kindest person." I love my bus trips. I go to Albany Price Chopper. I'm a double amputee. The drivers are always very helpful. Thank-you for the service.

Senior Dining (Congregate and Home Delivered Meals)

Delaware Opportunities subcontracts with the Delaware County Office for the Aging for the provision of congregate and home delivered meals. The program is designed to provide a nutritious meal for the home bound as well as seniors who come to dining centers for the meal, recreation, and socialization. Studies show that seniors who get out of the house and enjoy the company of others live longer and do so independently. For home-bound seniors, the program provides a nutritious meal, offers a service that keeps them in their own homes and the visit from the person who delivers the meal provides someone to talk to and some interaction with the outside world. Services are provided for those over the age of 60 and spouse regard-

less of his or her age.

The program will continue to operate six dining centers in 2026. Meals will be served beginning at 11:30 each day at group settings in Walton, Sidney, Hancock, Margaretville, Grand Gorge and Delhi. Although the dining centers are in only 6 of the 19 Delaware County towns, participants come from every municipality. Meals will be prepared at each of these sites for distribution to homebound elderly. The delivery of meals will be assisted by volunteers who provide meals to more outlying areas.

Between April and October, evening meals will be offered in lieu of the lunch meal once per month. The evening meals provide an enhanced menu and entertainment. Locally grown produce will be purchased to help support the local agricultural market while providing tasty and nutritious fresh vegetables.

The cost of the program is supported by Federal and State grant funds, contributions from senior citizen participants, and the Delaware County Board of Supervisors. A confidential contribution is solicited at \$5 per meal, although no one is turned away due to the inability to pay. The suggested contribution for evening or special meals rises to \$6 or \$7 due to a more specialized menu. Entertainment is provided on occasion, and seniors are encouraged to play Bingo or cards or engage in other activities at the dining centers.

Based on past trends, we expect to serve over 85,000 meals, essentially the same as we projected and served in previous years. Current numbers for 2025 indicate that this year's total will reach 87,000 meals. Of these meals served, approximately 30% are served at the dining centers and 70% are provided as home delivered meals. These figures include contracts that Delaware Opportunities has with other organizations or agencies.

In addition to funds provided through the Office for the Aging, Delaware Opportunities contracts with Fidelis, Nascentia Health Options, iCircle, Visiting Nurse Services of New York, and Greene County for the delivery of meals to the home bound. Their numbers are included above.

The budget projections for 2026 accurately reflect the increased cost of employee wages and benefits, food, fuel, maintenance, repair and the upkeep of vehicles and equipment.

If you were unable to attend the Public Hearing, you can submit comments for the Public Hearing by mailing or drop-off to:

Delaware County Office for the Aging and NY Connects
97 Main Street, Suite #2
Delhi, NY 13753

Thank You To Our Generous Contributors

Thank you to all the generous "Help Us Help Others" contributors for supporting programs and services that help seniors in Delaware County. Donations made by those for "In Honor/Memory" of someone special are acknowledged below unless anonymity was requested.

- **Dean & Bettye Darling:** *In Memory of Charlie Reinshagen*
- **Richard Damgaard:** *In Memory of Charlie Reinshagen*
- **Eileen Reinshagen:** *In Memory of Charlie Reinshagen*

TO MAKE A CONTRIBUTION FOR "THE DISPATCH" OR FOR A CHANGE OF ADDRESS

TAPE THE CURRENT DISPATCH LABEL HERE

CONTRIBUTION – Wish to make a contribution to "The Dispatch" but can't remember when you last made one? Here's a suggestion – contribute on your birthday, the first of the year or any holiday you choose. Planning tasks and yearly appointments on or around a specific day during the year that you already know and can easily remember, makes it much easier to plan for those things which only occur once a year.

SUGGESTED CONTRIBUTION: \$7 PER YEAR

Most services provided have no fee, but you are welcome to contribute toward their cost. No one is ever denied service due to inability or unwillingness to contribute. Those with a self-declared income at or above 185% of the Federal Poverty line are encouraged to contribute at levels based on the actual cost. All contributions are used to expand services to all who need them in Delaware County. We are grateful for your support.

SEND YOUR CONTRIBUTION,

(Cash OR, If You Prefer, A Check Made Payable To Office For The Aging),

TO: OFFICE FOR THE AGING, 97 MAIN STREET, SUITE #2; DELHI, NY 13753

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LEGACY CORNER

By: Jonathan J. Moore, Caregiver Coordinator

Hello all, as we head into the cold and snowy time of the year, I think it's the perfect time to share suggestions on how to navigate the cold season and be your best self. I know everyone has experienced the snow and cold of upstate NY in previous years but taking the time to refresh the thinking process and adjust is always a good thing. Now, let's review *Winter Safety Preparedness, Preventing the Winter Blues, and Staying Fit* when you are stuck indoors.

Winter Safety Preparedness

Winter presents unique safety challenges, especially for older adults. Seniors and caregivers can manage by preparing ahead for potential emergencies. Here are a few to be aware of and plan for.

- Consider Car Safety:** For those who are still driving, taking time to make sure your car is ready in winter is important. Make sure to check the tires, brakes, heater, defrosters, and fluid levels. Do you have an ice scraper (long handled preferred) in the vehicle? Put together an emergency kit. This could include a flashlight, a battery-powered cell phone charger, blanket, flares, matches or lighter, protein bars, and bottled water should be considered while creating the kit.
- Winterize the Home Front:** If it has not been done already, have the furnace serviced and inspected to optimize operating efficiency and identify any potential problems. Check your smoke detectors (time to replace those batteries!) and the carbon monoxide detector. If you need assistance with checking your detectors or replacing the batteries contact your local fire department. Plan for snow removal on sidewalks and driveways. Stock up on salt for steps and driveway.
- Stockpile Food:** As everyone knows winter weather can change plans and make it difficult sometimes to travel even to the store. One suggestion is to make sure that the pantry and cupboards are filled with nonperishable food items that don't require cooking. Peanut butter, crackers, dried fruit, nuts, and canned foods are great suggestions. How about a handheld can opener that doesn't require electricity. Also, enough bottled water to last at least a week.

- Refill Medications and planning doctors' appointments:** While it's important to stay on top of prescription and over-the-counter medications all year round, winter is no time to let supplies run low. Be sure to refill the medications on time just in case you can't leave home for a few days. Doctors' appointments are inevitable during winter months. Communication with the doctor's office and getting appoint-

ments done before and/or after storms is important. DO NOT RISK DRIVING IN BAD WEATHER OR BAD ROAD CONDITIONS.

- Remember the Pets:** When you are stocking up for a possible winter weather emergency, remember to plan for pets too. Put together a box of food and medications for the furry family members. And don't forget the treats! While no one likes to think the worst will happen, planning and being prepared can bring peace of mind.

Preventing the Winter Blues

Another necessity for enjoying a healthy winter is to find ways to nurture the mind and the spirit. When the snow flies, older adults are often forced to spend more time indoors. Consider these tips to keep yourself sharp.

- Consume Healthy Foods:** When the winter winds blow, it can be tempting to load up on comfort foods. Sugar treats and carbs seem to make you feel better. Some people overindulge in alcohol for the same reason. While these behaviors might make you feel better for a few hours, they can contribute to weight gain and lethargy over time. Instead, try to devise healthy menus and snacks a week or so at a time.
- Stay Connected with Loved Ones:** Isolation is another common issue for older adults in the winter. That's why it's important to stay connected whether a loved one lives across town or across the country. Phone calls, video chats, and even handwritten notes can all allow family members to stay in touch when the snow flies. Social media, especially Facebook, can be another avenue to explore. Set up a private family group to make staying in touch easier.
- Enjoy Nature in Your Own Backyard:** The health benefits of connecting with nature are numerous. They range from reduced anxiety and depression to increased feelings of joy. Enjoy the great outdoors in the winter, even if it's only from the warmth of the living room. Purchasing a window-mounted bird feeder is one way to do this. Watch your feathered visitors from inside all winter long. If you are a real outdoors person and enjoy being outside no matter the weather perhaps shoveling a circle in the yard that you can safely walk and remain close to home.

Staying Fit Indoors

Winter can present unique challenges to seniors and their caregivers when it comes to working out. Snow and ice might make sidewalks in the neighborhood slippery and walking for exercise too risky. The same is true for roads and parking lots. While it might be fun to head to the local fitness club for a swim in an indoor pool on a snowy day, not everyone is comfortable driving in the winter. These

ideas can help to find and stick with an indoor fitness routine.

- Agree to Be Workout Buddies:** Whether it's in person or by using a platform like Zoom or

facetime, one way to increase the odds of sticking with an exercise program during the winter is using the buddy system. Having someone to keep you accountable improves the likelihood you'll both stay on track.

- Get creative and use what you got:** Mixing up your exercise routine will not only benefit your overall health, but it can also help prevent boredom. Seniors can get safe and effective exercise from the comfort of their own homes. Seated exercises, such as chair yoga or Chair Workout. A recumbent bike is another option for cold winter days. Light weight training and resistance bands help promote core strength and lower fall risk (ask doctors opinion). Don't forget to devote

some time to stretching, too. YouTube is a good resource for free videos on a variety of senior-friendly exercise programs and more.

In addition, winter brings the Holiday seasons as well. Enjoy the holidays, call family, friends, and if the weather is good make plans. Don't overspend on gifts or feel obligated to do more than

you can. Focus on living in the moment and enjoying those who enjoy you. On behalf of everyone here with Office for Aging, we wish you a happy, healthy holiday season.

If you or anyone you else wants additional information, Please; contact Delaware County Office for the Aging Caregiver Coordinator, Jonathan Moore, at (607) 832-5750 or by emailing jonathan.moore@co.delaware.ny.us.

Information and research adapted from www.presbyterian seniorliving.org



“Social Security Annouces” ...continued from page 1

on the increase in average wages. For example, the maximum amount of earnings subject to the Social Security tax (taxable maximum) is slated to increase to \$184,500 from \$176,100.

Social Security begins notifying recipients about their new benefit amount by mail starting in early December. Those who have a personal *my Social Security* account can view their COLA notice online, which is secure, easy, and faster than receiving a letter in the mail. You can set up text or email alerts when a new message—such as your COLA notice—is available in your *my Social Security* account.

You will need to have a personal *my Social Security* account by November 19 to see your COLA notice online. To get started, visit www.ssa.gov/myaccount.

Information about Medicare changes for 2026 will be available at www.medicare.gov. For Social Security beneficiaries enrolled in Medicare, the 2026 benefit amount will be available via *my Social Security*'s Message Center starting in late November. Those who do not have an online *my Social Security* account will receive their COLA notice by mail in December.

The Social Security Act provides for how the COLA is calculated. The Social Security Act ties the annual COLA to the change in the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W) as determined by the Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics. You can find more information about the 2026 COLA at: www.ssa.gov/cola.

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If you're a Snowbird please notify Delaware County Office for the Aging of your temporary address so that you will not miss out on any issues. If you do go away for the winter and do not notify Delaware County Office for the Aging there is a good possibility that your Dispatch will be discontinued as the Post Office will not forward the se-

nior newspaper to you temporary address without first notifying Office for the Aging of the address change.

Upon returning to Delaware County, if you would like to continue receiving a physical copy of “The Dispatch”, please notify Delaware County Office for the Aging at 607-832-5750 of your return address.

EMBRACING THE CHILL: Cozy Up to Colder Weather with Hearty Stews, Chilis, and Soups

By: Susan Hammerslag, Coordinator SNAP-Ed New York

As the days turn cool, warm up your kitchen (and spirits) with comforting recipes.

Fall has arrived! This change of season brings a wonderful opportunity to refresh your meals. Cooler weather practically begs for dishes that warm you from the inside out, making it the perfect time to revisit family favorites like hearty stews, chilis, and savory soups.

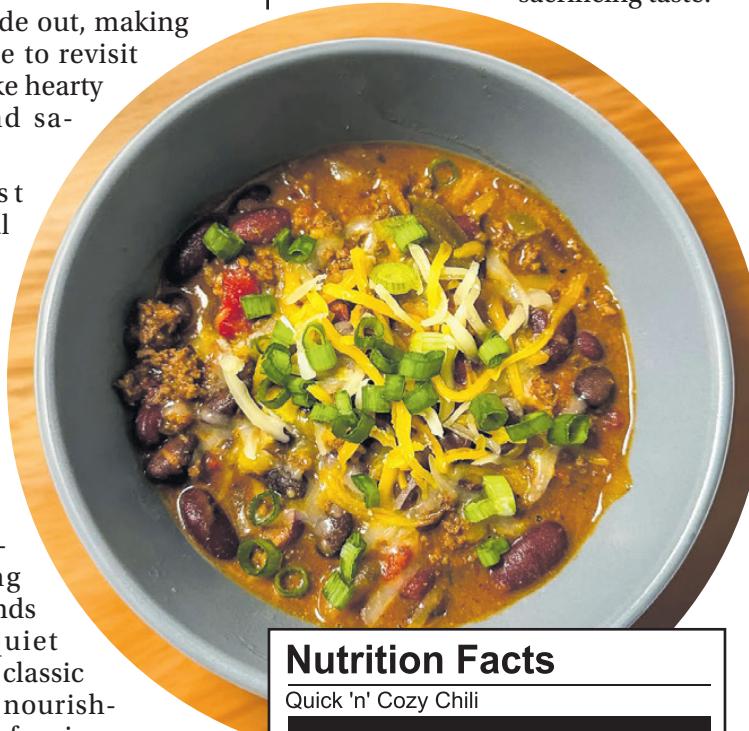
There's just something special about simmering a big pot on the stove, letting those inviting aromas drift through your home while you anticipate a comforting bowl of goodness. Whether you're getting together with friends or enjoying a quiet evening at home, classic foods offer both nourishment and a sense of coziness.

If you're looking for an easy way to dive into cool weather cooking, why not try making a classic chili recipe? Packed with flavor and customizable with your favorite ingredients, chili is a crowd-pleaser that's perfect for meal prepping or sharing. Add cornbread or a side salad, and you have a complete meal that celebrates the season.

Pull out your favorite pot, gather your ingredients, and let the magic of fall inspire you to create something delicious. Here's to cozy nights, hearty bowls, and all the warmth this season has to offer!

Chili recipe used with permission of Eat Smart Idaho and The University of Idaho.

This chili is a hearty, flavor-packed dish featuring ground beef, kidney and black beans, peppers, onions, and canned tomatoes. Ready in just 30 minutes, it's the perfect meal for a busy night without sacrificing taste!



Nutrition Facts

Quick 'n' Cozy Chili	
Amount per 1 Serving	Calories 568
Fat 15g	23%
Saturated Fat 5g	31%
Trans Fat 1g	
Polyunsaturated Fat 2g	
Monounsaturated Fat 6g	
Cholesterol 74mg	25%
Sodium 1035mg	45%
Carbohydrates 66g	22%
Fiber 22g	92%
Sugar 9g	10%
Protein 45g	90%
Vitamin D 0.1µg	1%
Calcium 169mg	17%
Iron 11mg	61%
Potassium 1805mg	52%

* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2000 calorie diet.

QUICK 'N' COZY CHILI

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cook Time: 20 minutes

Total Time: 30 minutes

Servings: 4 people

Calories: 568kcal

Equipment

- 1 Large Pot
- 1 Large spoon or ladle
- 1 Cutting board
- 1 Sharp knife

Ingredients

- ½ tbsp Oil of choice
- 1 lb Ground beef
- 1 cup Bell pepper
- 1 cup Onion
- 1 can Diced tomatoes
- 1 ½ cups Beef or chicken broth
- 1 tbsp Chili powder
- 1 tsp Onion powder
- 1 ½ tsp Paprika
- 1 tsp Ground black pepper
- ½ tsp Salt
- 1 tsp Cumin
- 15 oz Can of black beans
- 15 oz Can of kidney beans
- 14.5 oz Can of diced tomatoes

Optional toppings: low-fat shredded cheese, light sour cream, and sliced green onions.

Instructions

On a cutting board, dice the bell pepper and onion using a sharp knife.

Heat ½ tbsp of oil in a large pot over medium heat. Add the ground beef and cook until browned, breaking it apart with a large spoon, about 5-7 minutes. Drain excess fat if necessary.

Add the diced bell pepper and onion to the pot. Cook for 3-4 minutes until softened.

Stir in chili powder, onion powder, paprika, black pepper, salt, and cumin. Pour in the can of diced tomatoes and broth. Stir to combine.

Drain and rinse the black beans and kidney beans, then add them to the pot. Stir in the second can of diced tomatoes.

Bring the chili to a gentle simmer. Reduce heat to low and cook for 15-20 minutes, stirring occasionally to let the flavors meld.

Ladle the chili into bowls and top with optional shredded cheese, light sour cream, and sliced green onions, if desired.

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Senior Council Annual Meeting



Photos from the Sr Council Annual meeting and recognition luncheon. The Hamden group was delighted to help organize this event and to have their nominee honored. Congratulations to Alice Blackman and Lauren Monroe.

Hamden group meets for game day the last Monday of each month, beginning at 10:30. All are welcome.



Senior Fun Day



Delhi Senior Center residents waiting for the bus to take them to this year's chilly Delaware County Senior Fun Day.

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Consumer Education Guide:

Guide to Understanding Hearing Aid Options

This guide provides a comparison of consumers' options when purchasing hearing aids. If you're considering over-the-counter hearing aids, use this chart to evaluate your options and identify key differences when choosing between over-the-counter or traditional prescription hearing aids.

Professionally Fitted Hearing Aids • VS • Over-the-Counter (OTC) Hearing Aids

HEARING TEST



- A Registered Professional Will:
 - Test your hearing and you will receive a copy of the audiogram test. The results will be used to help you pick a product that meets your needs.
 - Check your ears for wax build up that could be blocking your hearing.
 - Refer you to a specialist if your hearing tests reveal a condition that is medically treatable.



- You will not receive a hearing test when you buy over-the-counter hearing aids.

CHOOSING A HEARING AID



- A Registered Professional will:
 - Discuss your specific hearing needs to help you pick a hearing aid that is most appropriate for you and your budget.
 - A registered professional can help you find the right hearing aid for any level of hearing loss, including severe or profound hearing loss.
- Generally prescription hearing aids cost more than over-the-counter hearing aids. However, the hearing aid provider may verify your insurance to see if coverage is available.



- You will need to pick the product yourself. Different brands and models of over-the-counter hearing aids have different features, customer service availability, return policies, and set-up processes. You will need to do your research to make sure the device you pick can meet your needs.
- Over-the counter hearing aids are generally the least expensive option available.
- Over-the-counter hearing aids must comply with regulations limiting how much sound they can amplify, meaning they are not suitable to treat severe hearing loss. These hearing aids are intended for people with mild to moderate hearing loss.



- A registered professional will program the device to your unique hearing needs. They will also make sure the device is comfortable and properly fits. The provider will work with you to make sure you are able to correctly use the device on your own.



- You are responsible for ensuring a proper fit and professional assistance is not provided.

HEARING AID FITTINGS



- A registered dispenser must allow you to return the device within 45 days and is required to issue you a refund.



- Check the product return and refund policies before you buy. You may not be able to return or get a refund on an over-the-counter hearing aid purchase.
- Over-the-counter hearing aids are also required to include a short, accurate statement of the manufacturer's return policy on the product's package (if they allow for returns at all). Over-the-counter hearing aids are not required to provide a warranty.

RETURNS & WARRANTIES



- A registered professional will schedule follow-up visits as necessary to address any difficulties you may have with the device. They are also required to be available to provide adjustments and servicing for any hearing aids they have dispensed.



- If you run into any issues with the hearing aids, you will need to contact the device manufacturer. There are no industry standards or laws requiring assistance be provided after you purchase the over-the-counter hearing aid.



- If you purchase a hearing aid from a registered dispenser, you can take your device back to the dispenser for routine cleaning and maintenance for the best performance.



- You will not receive routine cleaning and sound quality check services when you purchase over-the-counter hearing aids.

Scan the QR Code to Learn More about Product Recalls, Safety Warnings and Consumer News:



dos.ny.gov/consumer-education



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For more information, visit the Food and Drug Administration's website: fda.gov/medical-devices/consumer-products/hearing-aids

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Creative Ways To Eat More Vegetables

Revised by Andrea Martell RDN, CDN

Including vegetables in your meals is extremely important. Veggies are rich in nutrients and antioxidants which boost your health and help fight off disease. Additionally, they're beneficial for weight management due to their low-calorie content. Health authorities around the world recommend that adults consume several servings (approx. 3 cups) of vegetables each day, but this may seem difficult to achieve. Some find it inconvenient, while others are simply unsure how to prepare vegetables in an appetizing way. Here are just a few ways you



can incorporate vegetables into common foods so that you never get tired of eating them.

Make veggie-based soups. Soups are an excellent way to consume multiple servings of vegetables in one sitting. You can make veggies the 'base' by pureeing them and adding spices, such as in broccoli spinach quinoa soup. Furthermore, it's simple to cook veggies into broth or cream-based soups. Adding even a small number of extra veggies, such as broccoli and spinach to soups, is a great way to increase your fiber, vitamins, and minerals.

Try a veggie burger. Veggie burgers are an easy swap for heavier meat

burgers and can be topped with even more vegetables. Veggie burger patties can be made by combining vegetables with eggs, flour, and seasonings. Sweet potatoes and black beans are also commonly used to make veggie burgers. Note that not all meat-free burgers are full of veggies. Check the labels to find some that have veggies as their main ingredients.

Blend veggies with meatloaf.

Meatloaf can also be a vehicle for more vegetables. In addition to ground meat, eggs, breadcrumbs and sauce, you can add just about any type of chopped vegetable to meatloaf, including onions, bell peppers, carrots, zucchini and greens. Additionally, you can make



'meatloaf' that is completely veggie-based by including chickpeas, carrots, onions, and celery. The chickpeas will replace the meat and still feel hearty.

There are many ways to add vegetables to everyday food items. By making vegetables a regular part of your eating habits, you'll significantly increase your intake of fiber, nutrients, and antioxidants.

Keeping Older Loved Ones Warm In Winter

Taken from <https://www.rightathome.net/st-charles-md/blog/keeping-elderly-loved-ones-warm-in-the-winter>

As Mother Nature's thermometer begins to dip in late fall and throughout winter, so does body temperature for many seniors. While older loved ones characteristically complain of being cold and crank up the thermostat, there is scientific data to support their feeling chilly.

Aging skin is thinner and less likely to tolerate fluctuating temperatures. When a person is cold, the heart pumps less blood to the skin, and tiny blood vessels in the skin constrict to conserve heat. Age reduces the elasticity of blood vessel walls and thins the fat layer under the skin that helps preserve body heat. An older individual's skin is limited in the precise control of changes in both cold and heat.

Penn State physiologist W. Larry Kenney, who has studied the effects of age on temperature regulation for 35 years, notes, "With aging, multiple redundant changes occur in the skin, and they're all conspiring against the ability to dilate and constrict skin blood vessels." Kenney's extensive work with body temperature also finds that the circulation of blood in the skin can cause changes in the body's coronary arteries and overall vascular health. Being too cold or too hot can stress the heart.

Dangers of Cold Weather for Seniors

Older adults lose body heat faster and are less able to tolerate cold than younger adults. If a person's body temperature drops much below the common base of 98.6 F, dangerous health problems can arise, including increased heart rate and blood pressure, liver damage, and heart attack. **Hypothermia** sets in when a person's body temperature goes below 95 F. Left untreated, hypothermia can shut down the body's heart and respiratory systems and lead to death.

Older people are at greatest risk for cold-related death — the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) consistently reports that more people die from excessive cold than excessive heat. Living inside in intense air conditioning or with inadequate heat can invite hypothermia. Also, older adults with confused thinking may not be self-aware of their drop-

ping body temperature, so caregivers need to be extra vigilant to check for **signs of hypothermia** including shivering, slurred speech, shallow breathing and a weak pulse.

Causes of Low Body Temperature

Besides exposure to cold temperatures and moisture, seniors can face a drop in body temperature because of a number of other medical conditions and health factors, including:

- Medications such as beta blockers, sedatives, antipsychotics and anti-depressants
- Stroke
- Parkinson's disease
- Hypothyroidism (underactive thyroid)
- Sepsis (widespread infection)
- Malnutrition and anorexia
- Nerve damage
- Alcohol or drug use
- Anesthesia

Susceptibility to cold can be a symptom of medical issues like diabetes or high blood pressure. Because of poor circulation, diabetics run the risk of decreased body temperature in their extremities. They also may not accurately sense temperature changes in their hands and feet, which can cause injury they may not feel. For people with high blood pressure, certain medications such as beta blockers can reduce blood circulation to the hands and feet, and calcium channel blockers relax the blood vessels, which may accelerate heat loss. Having high cholesterol can also restrict blood flow and lower body temperature.

How to Keep Seniors Warm

Prevention of cold exposure to seniors takes precautionary measures before winter sets in and ongoing observation by family members, caregivers and those familiar with the older loved one's health and living environment.

These tips can help caregivers keep seniors warm this winter:

- Keep the home properly heated at a temperature of 68 F to 70 F.
- Winterize windows and doors with weather stripping and caulk.
- Close heat vents and shut doors in rooms that are seldom used.
- Dress the senior in warm layers that can be removed if he or she gets too hot.
- Put socks and slippers on the senior

and use a blanket over legs.

- Make sure the senior wears a hat, scarf and gloves when going outside.
- Check weather reports and know that snow, rain and wind can increase heat loss.
- Have the senior change out of damp or wet clothes right away.
- Help the senior practice sound nutrition to fuel the body's heat and energy sources.
- Ensure the senior stays fully hydrated — dry air temperatures inside and outside can cause dehydration.
- Support the senior in eating regular meals to stimulate the body's own

thermostat.

- Encourage the senior to avoid alcohol consumption, which can trigger heat loss.
- Learn the temperature-lowering effect of specific medications and over-the-counter drugs.
- Be aware that some space heaters and fireplaces are fire hazards and can cause carbon monoxide poisoning.
- Devise an evacuation plan in case of a power outage or the furnace/heat source breaks down.
- Create a plan for family and friends to check on the senior regularly, especially during colder weather.

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Falls Prevention For Senior Citizens: Staying Safe And Independent

By: Terri Tweedie, Coordinator of Aging Services

As we age, maintaining mobility and independence becomes a priority, but one of the most significant challenges faced by senior citizens is the risk of falls. Falls are not only a leading cause of injury among older adults but can also impact confidence and quality of life. The good news is that falls are preventable with proactive measures and lifestyle adjustments. Here's a guide to understanding and reducing fall risks for seniors.

Why Falls Happen

Several factors contribute to an increased risk of falls in older adults:

- Physical Changes:** Reduced muscle strength, balance issues, and slower reflexes can make it harder to recover from a stumble.
- Health Conditions:** Chronic illnesses like arthritis, diabetes, or Parkinson's disease, as well as vision or hearing impairments, can increase fall risks.
- Medications:** Certain medications may cause dizziness or drowsiness, affecting balance.
- Environmental Hazards:** Cluttered spaces, poor lighting, and slippery floors are common culprits in the home.

Practical Tips for Fall Prevention

1. Create a Safer Home Environment

- Declutter:** Remove loose rugs, cords, and unnecessary furniture from walkways.
- Improve Lighting:** Ensure all areas, especially staircases and hallways, are well-lit.
- Install Safety Features:** Add grab bars in bathrooms, non-slip mats in tubs, and handrails on stairs.
- Keep Essentials Accessible:** Store frequently used items within easy reach to avoid climbing or bending.

2. Stay Physically Active

- Exercise Regularly:** Engage in activities like walking, yoga, or tai chi to improve strength, balance, and coordination.
- Focus on Balance Training:** Simple exercises, such as standing on one foot or heel-to-toe walking, can enhance stability.
- Consult a Professional:** A physical therapist can design a personalized exercise plan tailored to individual needs.

3. Manage Health Conditions

- Regular Checkups:** Visit your doctor to monitor chronic conditions and review medications for side effects.
- Vision and Hearing:** Schedule

annual eye and hearing exams to ensure sensory impairments don't contribute to falls.

- Foot Care:** Wear well-fitting, non-slip shoes and address foot pain or deformities promptly.

4. Use Assistive Devices

- Mobility Aids:** Canes, walkers, or other devices can provide extra support.
- Alert Systems:** Consider wearing a medical alert device to call for help in case of a fall.

The Role of Family and Caregivers

Family members and caregivers play a crucial role in prevention of falls. They can:

- Conduct regular home safety checks.
- Encourage and assist with exercise routines.
- Monitor for changes in mobility or health that may increase fall risks.
- Provide emotional support to

boost confidence and reduce fear of falling.

Empowering Seniors to Stay Independent

Preventing falls is not just about avoiding injuries; it's about empowering seniors to live active, fulfilling lives. By taking simple yet effective steps, seniors can reduce their risk of falling and maintain their independence for years to come.

Remember, fall prevention is a shared responsibility. Whether you're a senior, a caregiver, or a family member, working together can make all the difference in creating a safer and more secure environment. Stay active, stay safe, and keep thriving!

You've Got This!

For information on fall prevention programs offered by Delaware County OFA (Tai Chi for Arthritis and Bingo-ize) and to discuss classes for 2026 please call 607-832-5750.

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MILK IS SERVED WITH EVERY MEAL. NUTRITIONAL ANALYSIS AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST TO CONSULTANT DIETITIAN. MENU SUBJECT TO CHANGE.

DATES	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
12-1 Thru 12-5	Chicken Parmesan Spaghetti Noodles Sautéed String Beans Snow on the Mountain Fruit Cocktail	Potato Crusted Pollock Sweet Potato Fries Steamed Broccoli Three Bean Salad Ice Cream	Vegetarian Lasagna Butternut Squash Grape Juice Whole Wheat Bread Cinnamon Coffee Cake	Salisbury Steak Rice Pilaf Mixed Veggies Tossed Salad Chocolate Pudding	CLOSED CHRISTMAS PARTY
12-8 Thru 12-12	Beef Cabbage Bake Fresh Carrots Cran-Apple Juice Whole Wheat Bread Ice Cream Sundae	Italian Baked Tilapia Parmesan Bow Ties Diced Beets Apple-Grape Juice Jello w/Topping	Ham w/Raisin Sauce Sweet Potatoes Buttered Peas Quick Fruit Salad Sugar Cookies	Macaroni & Cheese Stewed Tomatoes Tossed Salad Mandarin Oranges Vanilla Pudding	Tuna Noodle Casserole Harvard Beets Fresh Fruit Salad Whole Wheat Bread Lemon Pudding
12-15 Thru 12-19	Broccoli Quiche Capri Blend Veggies Whole Wheat Bread Orange Juice Cinnamon Applesauce	2 Soft Tacos Vegetable Medley Tossed Salad Pineapple Juice Tapioca Pudding	Cran-Orange Chicken Buttered Egg Noodles Italian Green Beans Caesar Salad Peaches	Spaghetti/Meatballs Green Beans Cran-Apple Juice Italian Bread Fruit Cocktail	Roast Turkey w/Gravy Mashed Potatoes Butternut Squash Cranberry Sauce Apple Pie
12-22 Thru 12/26	Baked Tilapia Mixed Veggies Mashed Sweet Potatoes Rosey Apple Relish Peanut Butter Cookies	BBQ Chicken Baked Potato Corn/Zucchini Medley Cole Slaw Sherbet	CLOSED CHRISTMAS- EVE DAY	CLOSED CHRISTMAS DAY	Stuffed Shells Sautéed String Beans Italian Bread Vanilla Pudding
12-29 Thru 1-2	Beef Pepper Steak Oven Baked Potatoes Seasoned Spinach Whole Wheat Bread Diced Pears	Chicken Risotto Sliced Carrots Apple Juice Whole Wheat Bread Fruit Salad	BBQ Pork Sweet Potato Fries Steamed Peas Cole Slaw Chocolate Sundae	CLOSED NEW YEARS DAY	Homestyle Meatloaf Mashed Potatoes Brussels Sprouts Marinated Carrot Salad Iced Yellow Cake
1-5 Thru 1-9	Swedish Meatballs Egg Noodles Winter Blend Veggies Mandarin Oranges Hot Apple Crisp	Ham w/Louisiana Sauce Scalloped Potatoes Vegetable Medley Grape Juice Ice Cream	Spanish Rice Steamed Broccoli Cottage Cheese/Peaches Whole Wheat Bread Chocolate Cake	Chicken & Biscuit Succotash Cranberry Juice Lemon Pudding	Turkey Penne Bake Carrots Snow on the Mountain Whole Wheat Bread Molasses Cookies
1-12 Thru 1-16	California Baked Chicken Parmesan Penne Pasta Mixed Veggies Fruit Salad Jello w/Topping	Tomato, Spinach & Mozzarella Quiche Italian Blend Veggies Orange Juice Cinnamon Applesauce	Country Captain Chicken Buttered Egg Noodles Steamed Broccoli Carrot Raisin Salad Spiced Peaches	Beef Stew Brussels Sprouts Apple Juice Whole Wheat Bread Sugar Cookies	Eggplant Parmesan Spaghetti w/Sauce String Beans Tossed Salad Oatmeal Raisin Cookies
1-19 Thru 1-23	CLOSED MARTIN LUTHER KING JR DAY	Stuffed Shells Sautéed String Beans Tossed Caesar Salad Italian Bread Butterscotch Pudding	Sweet & Sour Pork Steamed Brown Rice Cauliflower Cucumber Salad Fruit Cocktail	Tilapia Baked Sweet Potato Steamed Broccoli Cran-Orange Juice Ice Cream	Roast Turkey w/Gravy Mashed Potatoes Peas & Carrots Cranberry Sauce Chocolate Mousse
1-26 Thru 1-30	Baked Ziti Casserole Italian Blend Veggies Creamy Cucumber Salad Italian Bread Chocolate Pudding	Spicy Cranberry Pork Roasted Sweet Potatoes Steamed Peas Apple Sauce Rice Pudding	Chicken Alfredo Buttered Carrots Apple Juice Whole Wheat Bread Upside Down Cake	Homestyle Meatloaf Mashed Potatoes Red Cabbage Fruit Salad Oatmeal Raisin Cookies	Salisbury Steak Rice Pilaf Mixed Veggies Cabbage Bowl Lime Jello

FOR RESERVATIONS, PLEASE CALL BY 10 AM
ON THE SERVING DAY. SERVING 11:30 AM - 12:30 PM

DELHI 607-746-2250

HANCOCK 607-637-2219

SIDNEY 607-563-2212

GRAND GORGE 607-588-6166

MIDDLETON 845-586-4764

WALTON 607-865-6739

Medicare Changes For 2026

By: Victoria Ladlee, ASR/HIICAP Coordinator

Medicare's Annual Open Enrollment is October 15th through December 7th. With the drastic changes to the plans in our area, there are many beneficiaries who will need to check their coverage.

Available plans for 2026:

Medicare Advantage Plans with Drug Coverage

- Aetna Medicare Signature (HMO)
- EmblemHealth VIP Value (HMO-POS)
- Excellus Medicare BluePlus (PPO)
- MVP Medicare Complete Wellness with Part D (PPO)
- MVP Medicare Secure Plus with Part D (HMO-POS)
- Wellcare Fidelis Assist (HMO-POS)
- Wellcare Fidelis Simple (HMO-POS)

Medicare Advantage Dual Special Needs Plans with Drug Coverage

- Aetna Medicare Full Dual (HMO D-SNP)
- Aetna Medicare Longevity (PPO I-SNP)
- Aetna Medicare Partial Dual (HMO D-SNP)
- EmblemHealth VIP Dual (HMO D-SNP)
- Humana Gold Plus SNP-DE H3533-002 (HMO D-SNP)
- HumanaChoice SNP-DE H5970-020 (PPO D-SNP)
- Nascentia Dual Advantage (HMO D-SNP)
- Nascentia Medicaid Advantage Plus (HMO D-SNP)
- Nascentia Skilled Nursing Facility (HMO I-SNP)
- UHC Dual Complete NY-Q001 (HMO-POS D-SNP)
- UHC Dual Complete NY-S001 (PPO D-SNP)

- UHC Dual Complete NY-S4 (HMO-POS D-SNP)
- Wellcare Fidelis Dual Align (HMO D-SNP)
- Wellcare Fidelis Dual Liberty Sync (HMO D-SNP)

Prescription Drug Plans

- AARP Medicare Rx Saver from UHC
- AARP Medicare Rx Preferred from UHC
- HealthSpring Assurance Rx
- HealthSpring Extra Rx
- Humana Basic Rx Plan
- Humana Premier Rx Plan
- Humana Value Rx Plan
- SilverScript Choice
- Wellcare Classic
- Wellcare Value Script

If your 2025 plan is not listed above, you will not have coverage after 12/31/2025. Due to the Federal regulation attached to these plan consolidations, you will have additional time to make a plan decision. If you can enroll into a new plan by 12/31/2025 your new plan will begin on 1/1/2026. If you cannot enroll until January or February 2026, your coverage will begin the first day of the following month of enrollment. You will not be charged any penalties, and you will not be denied coverage, even if you have a small coverage gap.

If your plan will continue to be offered for 2026 but you are wanting to review your coverage and you choose to make changes, your enrollment is required to be completed during the Open Enrollment Period.

Due to the high volume of calls to the Office for the Aging, we are not able to make any more appointments at this time. You can either call us at 607-832-5750 to be placed on a waitlist or you can call Medicare directly at 1-800-633-4227. We appreciate your patience during this very busy season.

Non-Emergency Medical Transportation

By: Lyndsay Komosinski, Director

For several years, Delaware County Office for the Aging has offered a Non-Emergency Medical Transportation program (NEMT). This program operates through the use of volunteer drivers who dedicate their time providing rides for older adults in need of transportation to and from their medical appointments. The program runs from April 1st through March 31st and is one of OFA's most utilized programs. For the program year of April 1, 2024, through March 31, 2025, our volunteer drivers provided 665 round trips, totaling approximately 73,000 miles.

The need for transportation in Delaware County continues to be an ongoing issue, and a growing concern as the aging population continues to increase. The lack of public transportation creates a serious health inequity for the older adults who reside in the county, leaving some without access to important, ongoing medical care. In an attempt to mitigate this health inequity, OFA staff knew they had to think outside the box. Staff had to figure out how to help as many people as possible with transportation, with what means are available. That is where the Rural Health Network of South-Central New York (RHNSCN) comes into play.

RHNSCN runs a successful transportation program called Get There. In addition, RHNSCN will incorporate their new Volunteer Transportation Service (VTS) into their programming. VTS operates very similar to OFA's NEMT. Using volunteer drivers, and funding of their own, RHNSCN is

able to offer non-emergency medical transportation to individuals in need. VTS is funded through various grants, including a grant from Delaware County's Senior Council, as well as the O'Connor Foundation. This funding is used to support older adults in need of transportation, specifically in Delaware County.

Due to the popularity of OFA's NEMT program, limited funding and limited staffing, Delaware County Office for the Aging and the Rural Health Network of South-Central New York have created a partnership. With combined funding, volunteers and additional resources, RHNSCN's Volunteer Transportation Services will be able to serve a greater number of individuals in need of a ride to and from their medical appointments. Similar to OFA's NEMT, VTS requires at least five business days' notice, prior to appointment, to ensure they have time to coordinate and schedule the trip.

To schedule a ride through VTS, contact Get There at 1-855-373-4040**.

****IMPORTANT UPDATE:**
Get There recently realized they are having issues with people trying to reach them at their "855" phone number. They have provided us with an alternate phone number for clients to reach them at: 1-607-296-2509. If you are unable to connect using the "855" number, then please use the alternate number.

For more information, or if you have questions, please contact the Delaware County Office for the Aging directly at (607) 832-5750.

SENIOR ACTIVITIES FOR DECEMBER 2025 AND JANUARY 2026

DELAWARE OPPORTUNITIES WILL BE CLOSED ON FRIDAY DECEMBER 5, 2025 FOR THE AGENCY CHRISTMAS PARTY.

HOLIDAY CLOSINGS: Wednesday 12/24/25 and Thursday 12/25/25 for Christmas, Thursday 1/1/26 for New Year's Day, Monday 1/19/26 for Martin Luther King Day.

CHRISTMAS DINNER WILL BE SERVED AT ALL MEALSITES ON FRIDAY 12/19/25 at 11:30 am.

NEW YEAR'S DINNER WILL BE SERVED AT ALL MEALSITES ON WEDNESDAY 12/31/25 at 11:30 am.

Delhi Senior Dining Center (97 Main Street, Delhi, NY 13753

– side entrance) (607) 746-2250. CENTER MANAGER: CHRISTINE WINNER.

Grand Gorge Senior Dining Center (Old School, Civic Center, Rte. 30)

(607) 588-6166. CENTER MANAGER: JOY JOHNSON.

Hancock Senior Dining Center (Baptist Church, Messenger Hall, Wheeler Street) (607) 637-2219. CENTER MANAGER ANDREA MIKULA.

Margaretville Senior Dining Center (Margaretville Methodist Church, Church St.) (845) 586-4764. CENTER MANAGER: STEFANIE BLANCHARD.

Sidney Senior Dining Center (Civic Center, Liberty Street)

(607) 563-2212. CENTER MANAGER: JENNIFER ANDERSON.

Walton Senior Dining Center (St. John's Catholic Church, Benton Ave.)

(607) 865-6739. CENTER MANAGER: JIMMY JACKSON.

DINING CENTER PRESENTATION SCHEDULE

The following presentations will be held at the dining centers during the regular lunchtime meal on the dates listed below.

OFA Outreach Dining Center Presentations Schedule

November 2025 topic will be "HEAP"

- Delhi Dining Center on 11/11/25
- Deposit Dining Center on 11/20/25
- Grand Gorge Dining Center on 11/12/25
- Hancock Dining Center on 11/18/25
- Margaretville Dining Center on 11/19/25
- Sidney Dining Center on 11/25/25
- Walton Dining Center on 11/18/25

December 2025 topic will be "OFA Services"

- Delhi Dining Center on 12/9/25
- Deposit Dining Center on 12/18/25
- Grand Gorge Dining Center on 12/10/25
- Hancock Dining Center on 12/9/25
- Margaretville Dining Center on 12/17/25
- Sidney Dining Center on 12/11/25
- Walton Dining Center on 12/16/25

NOTE: Suggested contribution for all regular meals: \$5.00 seniors. \$10.00 fee required for non-seniors. Suggested contribution for all Holiday meals: \$6.00 seniors and \$11.00 fee required for non-seniors. The Delaware County Senior Dining Program is operated by Delaware Opportunities Inc. under contract with the Delaware County Office for the Aging with funding from the Delaware County Board of Supervisors, New York State Office for the Aging and the Department of Health, federal and other state funds and contributions provided by program participants.

The Joy of Giving, All Year Long.

