

SENIOR UPDATE

Issue

47

Jul-Aug-Sep
2023

THE EYES AND EARS OF ALAMEDA COUNTY SENIORS

Page 3

September is Healthy Aging Month. Protect your eye health and vision by getting a full eye exam this month

Page 4

What is Healthy Aging? Incorporate these four key components of health into your lifestyle as you age.

Page 8

September 9th is National Fall Prevention Day. A fall for seniors can have serious consequences. Enrolling in a fall prevention program will help maintain balance and a strong gait.

Page 11

Elder Financial Abuse. Financial elder abuse can cross all social, education and economic boundaries. Here's how to identify and report abuses.

Page 12

Is it time to stop driving? Aging adults experience many changes in vision, strength, and cognition which may make driving risky.



About Senior Update

The Senior Update is a newsletter which provides information, education and support to Alameda County adults aged 50 and over. The Senior Update is published quarterly by the Alameda County Advisory Commission on Aging

(ACA) in collaboration with the Area Agency on Aging (AAA), and The County of Alameda Social Services Agency, Department of Adult & Aging Services.

Spotlight

In this issue...

Spotlight.....	2
Featured Content	3
September is Healthy Aging Month	3
Protect Your Vision	3
See Me. Hear Me™ Initiative	4
Healthy Aging Tips	5
Caregiver's Corner	6-7
Healthy Living	8
Fall Prevention Awareness Day	8
Safe Driving for Older Adults	12
Legislative Updates	10
Smart Money!	11
Preventing Elder Financial Abuse	11
Programs & Services	14
Alzheimer's Services of the East Bay	14
Helpful Resources	15
Announcements	16
Upcoming Meetings	16



The Advisory Commission on Aging

MEET COMMISSIONER RASKIN

"I am Florence Raskin. I am retired, am a caregiver for my elderly father, and have worked in services for seniors for most of my career. I am part of the Advisory Commission on Aging to work towards more accessible and equitable services that can help seniors successfully age in their homes and communities."



We Need Your Voice - Join The Advisory Commission on Aging!

The County of Alameda Advisory Commission on Aging (ACA) is a federally mandated advisory council. Our mission is to promote the dignity, independence and quality of life of older persons and the disabled through programs, services, advocacy and information.

Qualifications:

Per the Older Americans Act, membership in ACA shall be composed of: (a) a majority of persons 60 years or older; (b) service providers; (c) members who reflect the geographic, racial, economic, and social complexion of the area they represent; and (d) at least one member who represents the interests of the disabled.

Term (Seats) Four (4) years; maximum of two (2) terms.

Maximum Number of Members: 21

Meeting Dates/Time:

Scheduled for the 2nd Monday of each month from 9:15-11:45 a.m.

How to Apply:

Log onto <https://www.acgov.org/bnc/#/vacant-seats>, then click "Apply For a Seat on This Board" to complete application. We strongly suggest you follow up with an email to Ms. Stephens-Pierre (see below) to help us track your paperwork.

To learn more information about meetings, agenda items, etc., please contact Jennifer Stephens-Pierre, Director, Area Agency on Aging, 510-577-1966 or email jspierre@acgov.org.

Featured Content

September is Healthy Aging Month

Get Your Eyes Checked to Protect Your Vision



Some common eye diseases can cause vision loss. And they may not have any warning signs — so you could have a problem and not know it. Even if you think your eyes are healthy, getting a dilated eye exam is the only way to know for sure.

Black/African American adults have some of the highest rates of vision loss caused by eye diseases. There are many factors outside your control that can affect your health — like access to high-quality health care.



The best thing you can do to prevent vision loss from eye diseases is to get a dilated eye exam.

What is a dilated eye exam?

A dilated eye exam is the only way to check for eye diseases early, when they're easier to treat — and **before** they cause vision loss. The exam is simple and painless. Your eye doctor will give you some eye drops to dilate (widen) your pupil and check for eye diseases.



Talk with your eye doctor to learn how often you need to get an exam. Learn more about dilated eye exams at: nei.nih.gov/dilated-eye-exam

Need help getting an eye exam?

- Find an eye doctor at: nei.nih.gov/find-a-doctor
- Find free or low-cost eye care at: nei.nih.gov/low-cost-eye-care

Featured Content



See Me. Hear Me.™ - Advocacy for Dependent and Older Adults

Empowered Aging (formerly Ombudsman Services of Contra Costa, Solano, and Alameda Counties) takes on “the most critical issues surrounding disabled and older adults who need our support, and we never stop fighting to raise awareness, to protect against abuse or neglect, to work with our partners in the community to provide person-centered resources, and to advocate for policy change that will make a difference now and in the future.”

Inspired by World Elder Abuse Awareness Month in June, Empowered Aging is launching an awareness campaign - See Me. Hear Me.™ to give a voice to those older adults and adults with disabilities that turn to us for help when they are at their most vulnerable, at their most unseen and unheard. The campaign will collect and share stories of the people behind the cases the agency takes on, while protecting everyone’s identities and preserving their privacy.

The See Me. Hear Me.™ campaign is designed to help the community at large to understand that aging, living in care facilities, and needing the help of others to survive, should never require that you lose your dignity, your humanity, or your right to be seen and heard.

Beginning in May, See Me. Hear Me.™ paddles will be available at community events throughout Alameda County, so if you see Empowered Aging staff out and about, feel free to ask for one! Then you will write what the words SEE ME. HEAR ME.™ and the protection of older and dependent adults in need, mean to you on your paddle.



Susannah Meyer (Executive Director), and Charmaine Brent (Director of Programs and Services) with their See Me. Hear Me.™ paddles.

For more information on the See Me. Hear Me.™ initiative, or the work Empowered Aging does for Alameda County seniors and dependent adults, log onto their website at www.empoweredaging.org, or call 510-638-6878. To participate in the campaign just mail TiffanyHeard@EmpoweredAging.org to request a paddle.

Featured Content



September is Healthy Aging Month® and the time to get started on better health practices. Each day is a new beginning, and a great time to reinvent your physical, social, mental and/or financial wellness. Here are some tips to help you celebrate.

Physical Health

Stay active. Start walking around the neighborhood. Not only are you promoting physical health, but stopping to chat with neighbors can promote your social health as well.

Make this month the time to set up your annual physical, health screenings and flu shot while you are at it. Crossing this off your yearly to-do list can also help ease the worry about your health.

Mental Health

Say or do at least one positive thing each day. Whether you compliment a stranger or help a neighbor, you are promoting positive change in the world.

Stay conscious of complaints or negative thoughts. For example, if you find yourself complaining or feeling down while watching the local news, change the channel to something more inspirational.

Lifestyle

Get your creative juices flowing. Take music lessons, visit a local painting studio or pick up an adult coloring book to activate your brain.

Make sure you get enough sleep at night or take a cat nap. Sleep can help us to feel refreshed and ready to tackle the day ahead.

(continued on next page)

Featured Content

Financial Management Advice

Create a budget and spend your money wisely. Not being able to afford the things you want to do can add stress to your life. Look at ways you can lower regular bills and allocate it to other things like traveling, hobbies or sports.

Set up an appointment with your financial advisor. Whether this communication takes the form of a telephone call, an email or in-person meeting, it is important to check in periodically to discuss your current financial situation and any changes in your goals and needs.

Don't have a financial advisor? If you want to take charge of your investments, estate planning, budgeting, retirement planning, tax prep and/or other money topics, consider setting up a consultation. It is important to dedicate time towards taking care of ourselves as we age to ensure that we can enjoy a long and healthy life.

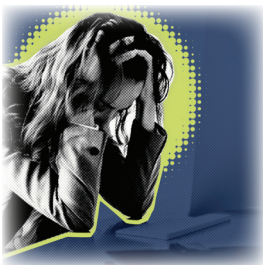
Resources:

Free Tax Advice for the Elderly - <https://www.irs.gov/individuals/tax-counseling-for-the-elderly>

Financial Planning Association (some pro bono) - <https://www.financialplanningassociation>

Association of Personal Financial Planners (some pro bono) - <https://www.napfa.org/>

CAREGIVER STRESS: Take Care of Yourself Too!



As the population ages, more caregiving is being provided by people who aren't health care professionals ("informal" caregivers). A caregiver is anyone who provides help to another person in need, such as an ill spouse or partner, a disabled child, or an aging relative. However, family members who are actively caring for an older adult often don't self-identify as a "caregiver." Recognizing this role can help caregivers receive the support they need.

For most caregivers, being there when a loved one needs you is a core value and something you wish to provide and find rewarding. However, it is natural to feel angry, frustrated, exhausted, alone or sad. Caregiver stress — the emotional and physical stress of caregiving — is common.

Caregiver's Corner

Prolonged stress can harm your health. As a caregiver, you're more likely to experience symptoms of depression or anxiety. In addition, you may not get enough sleep or physical activity, or eat a balanced diet — which increases your risk of medical problems, such as heart disease and diabetes. Remember, if you don't take care of yourself, you won't be able to care for anyone else. To help manage caregiver stress:



1. **Accept help.** Be prepared with a list of ways that others can help you, and let the helper choose what chore or errand they would like to do.
2. **Focus on what you are able to provide.** Believe that you are doing the best you can and making the best decisions you can at any given time. No one is perfect!
3. **Set realistic goals.** Break large tasks into smaller steps that you can do one at a time. Prioritize and establish routines. Begin to say no to requests that are energy draining.
4. **Get connected.** Find out about caregiving resources in your community. Caregiving classes or services such as transportation, meal delivery or housekeeping may be available.
5. **Join a support group.** A support group can provide encouragement and problem-solving strategies. Participants understand what you are going through.
6. **Seek social support.** Try to stay connected with family/friends who can offer nonjudgmental emotional support. Just taking a walk with a friend can be uplifting.
7. **Set personal health goals.** Set goals to establish a good sleep routine, find time to exercise several days per week, eat a healthy diet and drink your water.
8. **Can't sleep?** Not getting quality sleep can cause health issues over time. If you struggle with sleep, talk to your doctor.
9. **See your doctor.** Get recommended screenings. Tell your doctor that you're a caregiver. Don't hesitate to mention any concerns or symptoms you have.
10. **Set up respite care.** Taking a break can be one of the best things you do for yourself — as well as the person you're caring for.

For more information contact the Family Caregiver Alliance at 1-800-445-8106 (toll free) or log onto their website at www.caregiver.org.

Healthy Living

September 9 is Fall Prevention Awareness Day

Alameda County has several excellent Fall Prevention groups held at senior centers and across the community. Ideally, we, as older adults will attend these as they all come with a good dose of social connection and exercise. However, some older adults have difficulty leaving their house for any extended period of time. That is where LIFE ElderCare can step in. We bring Fall Prevention to you!

Health Forward/LIFE ElderCare's Fall Prevention Program

LIFE has found that a lot of harmful falls happen due to a confluence of factors, and truly effective prevention must be multi-pronged. Here's an example: Ms. Chang is 82 years old and one morning, she trips on a little throw rug in her kitchen. Does that mean she should get rid of that rug and all will be well? Not necessarily. Chances are that other things are going on. Her vision may have worsened and she is unaware of that fact because she doesn't drive anymore.

Often our gait changes as we age and we tend not to lift our feet up as high from the ground as we used to, meaning her toes could have caught that rug and tangled on her feet. To take it a 'step' further, if we aren't feeling well, our shuffle can be even more pronounced. Depression or sadness, eating unhealthily, or just not having enough food or daily sunshine can take a toll on our well-being and increase our risk of falls.

A fall might not be serious the first or the second time, but if ignored, one of those days, it will likely have serious consequences; broken bones, head injury, or worse. Here's the good news: all these factors can be addressed! LIFE ElderCare looks at the whole person – we'll assess your support system, observe your gait, ask about your access to good food, and test

your balance. We will work with you to tackle each issue. We teach several types of exercise, allowing you to choose what works best for your unique situation. We will review all your medications and vitamins together to make sure there aren't any combinations that might be causing dizziness. We'll make sure you have transportation to appointments and give you tips about slip-free footwear and standing up properly to avoid lightheadedness. We can look at different parts of your home together to tackle any hazard zones and see if minor modifications, like grab bars or raised toilet seats, might also help decrease the possibility of injury. We even come ready with motion-sensor nightlights and double-sided tape to stick down the corners of those rugs.

Services Include:

- fall risk assessment
- medication review
- home safety assessment
- minor home modifications
- gentle exercise
- care coordination / referrals
- education, resources & more

Basic Eligibility:

- Live in Alameda County
- Age 60 or older



For more information about LIFE ElderCare, log onto our website at <https://lifeeldercare.org/>. For questions about the fall prevention program or to enroll, please call (510) 894-0370, email info@LifeElderCare.org, or sign up online at <https://lifeeldercare.org/services-sign-up-form/>

Legislative Updates

In this edition of the Legislative Corner, we're highlighting three bills that the Advisory Commission on Aging is planning to support. We will be following the progress of these bills, and many others, and will continue to report back in subsequent issues of Senior Update.



Assembly Bill AB-21

This bill would require the Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training, (POST), to revise their current training to include instruction on how to effectively interact with persons with Alzheimer's disease or dementia.

Assembly Bill AB 1313

This bill would require the California Department of Aging to establish a case management and visiting services pilot program. Under the bill, the purpose of the program would be to expand statewide, the local capacity of supportive services programs by providing case management and visiting services to older individuals who need assistance to maintain health and economic stability. Alameda County would be one of the counties chosen for the pilot program.

Assembly Bill AB-540

The Social Service Transportation Improvement Act would require transportation planning agencies and county transportation commissions, to prepare and adopt plans detailing required steps to consolidate social service transportation services, including the designation of consolidated transportation service agencies. This bill will address inequities to seniors and people with disabilities by improving accessible transportation as quickly as possible, and by ensuring that, in the future, seniors and persons with disabilities will no longer be segregated from the benefits of any state transportation funding program.

Smart Money!

Preventing Elder Financial Abuse

Elder financial abuse is when an older adult is financially exploited by a stranger, or someone they know. Financial elder abuse can cross all social, education and economic boundaries. Abusers can be family members, caregivers, friends, neighbors or acquaintances, persons with Power of Attorney, financial advisors, or persons known or unknown to the senior.



Examples of Financial Exploitation

- Unauthorized use of credit cards, debit cards or checkbooks
- Forging a senior's signature or coercing/tricking a senior into signing any legal and/or financial documents, especially when the senior seems unable to understand what's happening
- Diverting money meant to pay the senior's rent or mortgage, utilities, taxes or other expenses
- Significant transfers of assets, substantial loans or gifts to others
- Revising a senior's will or other documents, especially when the new beneficiary is a caregiver or a previously uninvolved person now claiming a right to the senior's property
- Promises of 'lifelong care' in exchange for deeding property to caregiver
- Wrongful use of financial Power of Attorney or fiduciary relationship
- Being ill advised and purchasing unnecessary financial services or products
- Selling fraudulent financial services or products

Signs of Elder Financial Abuse Include:

- Disappearing valuables or assets
- Decline of physical and/or emotional well-being
- Suspicious activities or people in senior's residence
- Substandard care despite adequate finances
- Unusual bank account activity -- large withdrawals (especially when senior is accompanied by another person), or unexplained changes of bank account, like moving from one branch or bank to another.

If you experience, witness or suspect abusive activities, immediately contact Adult Protective Services in Alameda County by calling 866-CALL-APS. The APS hotline is available 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.

Healthy Living

Safe Driving Guide for Older Adults

Excerpted with permission from <https://www.autoinsurance.com/articles/driving-guide-for-older-adults/>

Although drivers of all ages can get into accidents, driving often gets riskier with age. As people get older, changes in vision, physical strength, mobility, and cognition can make it dangerous to get behind the wheel. As a result, the risk of being killed or injured in an automobile accident increases with age.

However, older drivers can take several steps to ensure they're in great driving shape. There are also new car technologies that could help some seniors continue to drive long into their golden years.

Why Driving Can Be Dangerous for Older Adults

Since everyone goes through unique changes as they age, guidelines for older drivers are not one-size-fits-all. Additionally, since health can change so gradually, seniors and their loved ones don't always notice right away when their ability to drive safely has diminished. Some people adjust to changes in their abilities by driving less frequently, or only during the daytime when visibility is good. However, there may come a time when a senior should hang up their car keys for good.

There are various reasons driving can become more dangerous with age.

- **Multiple medications and drug interactions:** For people of all ages, some medications have the potential to cause dizziness, lack of coordination, blurred vision, slow reaction time, and other issues. These side effects are even more likely to happen to older adults, especially if they are taking multiple prescription drugs or drinking alcohol during treatment. Unfortunately, research shows that doctors typically do not discuss the effects of medication on driving.
- **Reduced flexibility and strength:** Changes in mobility that occur naturally with age can be dangerous. Older adults may not be able to press their feet down on brakes with enough force or speed to stop a collision, or to rotate their heads enough to check their blind spots.
- **Declines in eyesight, cognition, and hearing:** As we age, our vision, cognition, and hearing often become weaker. However, these declines can occur so slowly that seniors and their loved ones may not realize how severe they are.

Healthy Living

- **Certain medical conditions:** According to the Centers for Disease Control Prevention, people age 65 or older are more than twice as likely as younger adults to report having a medical problem that makes it difficult to drive.

How to Stay Safe Behind the Wheel

Although many people notice significant changes in their physical and mental condition as they age, several risk-reduction strategies for older drivers can keep them behind the wheel for longer. Here are a few ways to improve mobility, visibility, and safety in the car:



1. **Meet with health professionals.** Make regular medical appointments to check your vision, hearing, pain issues, and medication dosages. Always wear corrective lenses if they're prescribed. Certain medications and combinations heighten the risk of unsafe driving, so go over all of your medications regularly with a physician to check for adverse reactions.
2. **Stay active.** Take yoga or other exercise classes that promote flexibility, which is essential for safe driving. Think about how many times you turn your head in the car!
3. **Take an educational program or refresher course.** A defensive driving course can keep your skills sharp (see listings throughout Alameda County below).
4. **Drive defensively.** If you struggle to see at night, you should limit your driving hours to the daytime and maintain extra distance behind other cars. Practice braking well in advance of intersections and stoplights.
5. **Get a vehicle with safe driving features.** When choosing a vehicle as an older driver, keep several unique needs in mind. For one thing, it's important to make sure the car is easy to get in and out of. Wide door openings and seats close to hip level can make it easier for those with limited mobility to enter and exit cars. In general, crossovers and midsize vehicles work well for seniors. Giant pickup trucks and tiny sports cars may not be the best choices.

Safe Driving Classes for Seniors

Hayward Senior Center
22325 N. 3rd St, Hayward
Phone: 510.881.6700
12:00-4:00 PM / English
July 25 | October 24

San Leandro Senior Center
13909 E. 14th, St, San Leandro
Phone: 510.577.3462
12:00-4:00 PM / English
Aug 10 & 17 } Oct 12 & 19 |
Dec 7

Online through DMV:
<https://ddt.dgs.ca.gov/>

Or online through AARP:
<https://www.aarpdriversafety.org/>

Programs/Services

Alzheimer's Services of the East Bay

Three of our commissioners recently visited Alzheimer's Services of the East Bay in Berkeley. This is an adult day program for people with Alzheimer's disease, and it is one of the programs that receives funding from the Alameda Area Agency on Aging. The director is Micheal Pope, who has been with the program for more than 25 years.



Micheal is a dynamo and incredibly committed to her clients. She has helped ASEB to weather COVID, staffing shortages and flooding, to name a few things. With the help of her dedicated staff, she managed to keep ASEB running after a one-week shutdown at the beginning of the pandemic. During that one week, and beyond, staff members helped clients at home with activity packets, wellness checks, and Zoom sessions.

When the building's basement recently flooded, Micheal and her daughter, Jade, pushed the water out themselves. Jade works for the program part-time (and is also a youth advocate). She exemplifies the kind of love and commitment that staff members bring to their time here, telling us that "We want our clients to be happy, everyone deserves happiness."

We watched Jade, Micheal, and the rest of the staff interacting with the day program participants, and everyone felt like family. Staff and participants were joking, singing, dancing, doing crossword puzzles, and just, generally, enjoying each others' company in the small homey setting. The program and the building itself are carefully engineered to keep people with Alzheimer's Disease comfortable and engaged. There are even homemade lunches!

Check out ASEB, go on a virtual tour with Micheal, and find out about their weekly podcast (with over 100,000 viewers) at www.aseb.org.

Helpful Resources

Free Will

Offering free wills and Revocable Living Trusts for California residents. Easy to use guided platform allows you to create a will in 20 minutes. "Our mission is to enable you to do the most good for the people and causes you love, by providing free access to will-making services." No credit card required. Log onto <http://www.freewill.com>



Alzheimer's Services of the East Bay

ASEB (Alzheimer's Services of the East Bay) is a nonprofit organization that serves individuals with dementia and their families. Since 1989, ASEB has been providing Adult Day Care, Family Support, Education and Community Outreach Services in Alameda & Contra Costa Counties, enabling individuals to remain at home for as long as possible and to avoid premature or inappropriate institutionalization. Call 510-644-8292 for info.



Life is a journey we know by heart

Senior Information & Assistance

Alameda County has a dedicated Senior Information & Assistance team available to provide information about services for disabled and older adults. We help individuals navigate systems of care and programs for elders providing direct referrals to services. Senior I&A also publishes resource guides for older adults and family caregivers. Reach us at 510-577-3530.



California Senior Gateway

Site provides seniors, their families, and caregivers with the information they need to connect to helpful services and resources.



Log onto www.seniors.ca.gov for more information.

Senior Update
Area Agency On Aging
Advisory Commission on Aging
6955 Foothill Blvd, Suite 300
Oakland, CA 94605-1907

Senior Information & Assistance
Phone: 1-800-510-2020
<http://seniorinfo.org>

PRSRT STD
US POSTAGE
PAID
HAYWARD, CA
PERMIT # 45

Upcoming Meetings

Advisory Commission on Aging

- Monday July 11, 2023 - 9:15AM
- Monday, August 8, 2023 - 9:15AM
- Monday, September 2, 2023 - 9:15AM

Roundtable Meetings

- Friday, July 28, 2023 - 10:00AM
- Friday, August 25, 2023 - 10:00AM
- Friday, September 29, 2023 - 10:00AM

Email aaa@acgov.org for a Zoom link to meetings.

*****ECRWSSSEDDM*****

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Annual Healthy Living Festival for Seniors

The 20th Annual Healthy Living Festival for Seniors will be held on Thursday, September 28, 2023 at the Oakland Zoo. The Healthy Living Festival is a free event promoting health and wellness while aging for adults 55+ living in Alameda County. In previous years this event drew an average of more than 2,000 participants annually. Sponsored by the United Seniors of Oakland and Alameda County, the 2023 HLF is sure to be both fun and educational. Keep an eye out for pre-registration information so you can sign up online at <https://www.usoac.org/>.



National Employ Older workers Week: September 24-30, 2023



According to the U.S. Department of Labor, the week recognizes the vital role of older workers in the workforce. Older workers make important contributions to the workplace, bringing safer practices, more job experience, greater emotional intelligence, and high job performance in a broad range of industries. For more information call the U.S. Department of Labor at 1-877-US2-JOBS or visit www.dol.gov/neoww. In Alameda County contact the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP), a community service and work-based job training program for unemployed, low-income seniors 55+. Call SER-Jobs for Progress, Inc. at 510-265-8267.

Help Launch the 2024-2028 County Wide Area Plan for Older Adults

Every four years the Area Agency on Aging (AAA) collects data from County of Alameda residents which we use to determine current and future needs of older adults and those who support them. Your participation in the 2023 Senior Needs Assessment Survey will help us direct funding, create service programs, and better utilize technology to help Alameda County's older residents thrive. Your participation in the upcoming survey is vital! Email CWAP@acgov.org or call **510-268-CWAP** for more information.

CWAP

ADVISORY COMMISSION ON AGING



ACA

COUNTY OF ALAMEDA



Alameda County
Social Services
Agency