

84 Progress Lane Waterbury, CT 06705 | [www.wcaaa.org](http://www.wcaaa.org) | 203-757-5449



**WCAAA**

# INSIDER

*Western Connecticut Area Agency on Aging*

**JUNE-JULY 2024**



© Greta Hoffman



Take Control  
.....  
Feel Better  
.....  
Energize  
.....  
Live  
.....  
Enjoy  
.....

## **FREE! Chronic Pain Telephone Workshops**

Choose a morning or evening program!

Join a **FREE** 6-week workshop and learn how to better manage your ongoing health condition!

Participants only need a phone, no other technology! Once a week, you just call our toll-free number to connect to the group call.



### **You will learn:**

- Techniques to deal with frustration, fatigue, isolation & poor sleep
- Gentle exercises to help with pain
- Ways to improve your nutrition
- Appropriate use of medications
- Other helpful information for managing your pain day-to-day

Materials will be sent directly to participants at no cost and include *Living a Healthy Life with Chronic Pain*, a booklet of tips, and a relaxation CD.

**Tuesdays, June 11—July 16 from 10–11am**

**OR**

**Tuesdays, June 11—July 16 from 6–7pm**

To register, call 203-757-5449 x 125 or email Debby at [dhorowitz@wcaaa.org](mailto:dhorowitz@wcaaa.org)



Sponsored by the Western Connecticut Area Agency on Aging and the Connecticut Department of Aging and Disability Services ~ State Unit on Aging. Generous support is also provided by the Connecticut Community Foundation.

## **The Connecticut Statewide Respite Care Program**

**A short-term relief program for family caregivers that are caring for someone with a diagnosis of Alzheimer's Disease or form of Dementia.**

**If you or someone you know is interested, please give the Western CT Area Agency on Aging a call at 203-757-5449 and select option 6.**

**You can also visit our website at [www.WCAAA.org](http://www.WCAAA.org)**



Western Connecticut Area Agency on Aging  
AN AGING AND DISABILITY RESOURCE CENTER



## **BECOME AN RSVP VOLUNTEER**

**Are you 55 & older? Do you want to enrich the life of others through volunteering?**

Call Natlee Griffiths (203-575-4245) or Joan Karmuza (203-575-4236) at New Opportunities Inc. and ask us how to become an AmeriCorps Senior RSVP volunteer in Greater Waterbury and Northwestern CT.

**Flexibility and choice to serve in:**

**America Reads  
Money Management Program  
Meals on Wheels  
Community food Pantry  
Etc.**

Located at:  
**232 North Elm St, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
Waterbury, CT 06702**



**NEW OPPORTUNITIES, INC.**  
*Building Relationships to End Poverty*



**AmeriCorps  
Seniors**

Take Control

Feel Better

Energize

Live

Enjoy



## **FREE Live Well with Chronic Conditions Phone Workshop!**

"It's Your Life...Live It Well"

Are you an adult with an ongoing health condition such as arthritis, high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes or depression? Or do you care for someone who does? This workshop can help you be in control and feel better!



### **You will learn:**

- Practical ways to deal with pain and fatigue
- Better nutrition and exercise choices
- Better ways to talk to your doctor about your health
- Communication techniques to make your needs known
- How to make a step-by-step plan to improve your life!

**Dates: Mondays, June 17–July 22, 2024**

**Time: 10am–11am**

**To Register: Call 203-757-5449 x 125 or email Debby at [dhorowitz@wcaaa.org](mailto:dhorowitz@wcaaa.org)**

**Participants only need a telephone and connect from home! Books and CD's will be mailed out and are yours to keep! Space is limited, so sign up today!**



Sponsored by the Department of Aging and Disability Services ~ State Unit on Aging and the Western Connecticut Area Agency on Aging. Generous support is also provided by the Connecticut Community Foundation.



## Western CT Area Agency on Aging Receives Nonprofit Support Program Grant for Necessary Technology Improvements.

We are thrilled to announce that the Western CT Area Agency on Aging has been awarded a Nonprofit Support Program grant to bolster our technological infrastructure. We extend our sincerest gratitude to Governor Lamont and The Office of Policy and Management, Health and Human Services Policy and Planning Division for their unwavering support in our mission to better serve the 41 towns within our community and the wider state of Connecticut.

This grant, totaling \$707,000, represents a transformative opportunity for WCAAA. With these funds, we will be able to implement an Integrated Client Management System, address crucial Information Technology (IT) needs, and introduce technologies aimed at fostering greater client independence. It marks a significant milestone for us, being the first time, we have received such generous support, and we are deeply thankful for the opportunity it presents to enhance our technological capabilities and ultimately improve our services to the community.

We are excited about the prospects this grant affords us and are committed to maximizing its impact in our ongoing efforts to serve and support our community. We look forward to the positive changes ahead as we embark on this journey of technological advancement.

Also in Waterbury, the Western CT Area Agency on Aging, which serves adults over 60 and individuals with disabilities and their caregivers, is receiving \$707,000 for upgrades to its client management system.

"We are using very dated software and equipment," said Spring Raymond, executive director of the Western CT Agency on Aging. "This will give us the opportunity to implement an integrated client management system so we can better serve our clients. The technology will help us serve our seniors and those we help, and get things processed faster."

*WCAAA coverage in the Republican American*

Submitted by Spring Raymond, Executive Director

## Connecticut's Area Agencies on Aging receive No-Profit Support Program Grant from the Lamont Administration, through the Office of Policy and Management (OPM)

AgingCT, the association of the five Area Agencies on Aging, is proud to announce that we have been awarded funds from the CT Nonprofit Support Program, overseen by the state's Office of Policy and Management (OPM). The grant funds will enable AgingCT to convert all association members to one single data collection platform thereby increasing operational efficiency and improving data quality.

"We are so grateful to the Governor and to OPM for supporting us in this effort" said Marie Allen, President, and CEO of SWCAA. "[AAAs] spend an extraordinary amount of time entering data and generating reports; time that would be better spent supporting vulnerable adults in the community and enhancing the capacity of the elder network".

This investment in infrastructure comes at a pivotal moment, with CT facing the reality of an increasingly aging population and commensurate need for quality, cost-effective services. In the [Great AAAsk](#), a survey sponsored by AgingCT in 2023, the majority of older adults who responded reported that they anticipate needing more care in the future, they expect that it will be more difficult to remain in the community, and they were unsure where to go for information. The award described in today's announcement will enable AgingCT to maximize the allocation of state and federal dollars, enhance the statewide implementation of [Aging Answers](#), and improve our ability to measure, report on, and invest in the improvement of consumer-level outcomes toward successful aging in place.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Connecticut's five Area Agencies on Aging collaborate under the name, AgingCT. We are independent, nonprofit organizations, with federal designation, dedicated to helping older adults and persons with disabilities thrive in the community with dignity and support throughout their lives. We advocate and educate legislators, policy makers and Connecticut residents on the issues of importance to older constituents and those who support them. Visit [www.agingct.org](http://www.agingct.org) to learn more.

### Buy Fresh & Local!

Our mobile market makes stops throughout the year. All farmers markets sell quality Connecticut-grown produce, and each market accepts **cash, credit cards, SNAP, and Farmers Market Nutrition Program** debit cards.

Below you will find the schedule for June and July.

### 2024 Farmers Market Schedule

JUNE		
Date	Location	Time
Wednesday, June 5	Crosby/ Wallace	11:30 am-12:30pm
Thursday, June 6	Bergin Apartments	12:00 pm-1:00pm
Wednesday, June 12	StayWell	11:30 am -12:30 pm
Wednesday, June 12	Prospect Towers	1:00 pm-2:00 pm
Thursday, June 13	The Green	9:00 am-1:00 pm
Friday, June 14	East Gate	11:30 am-12:30 pm
Thursday, June 20	The Green	9:00 am-1:00 pm
Thursday, June 27	The Green	9:00 am-1:00pm

JULY		
Date	Location	Time
Monday, July 8	Willow Plaza	12:00 pm-1:00 pm
Tuesday, July 9	Waterbury Senior Center	10:00 am-12:30 pm
Tuesday, July 9th	East Gate	1:00 pm-2:00 pm
Wednesday, July 10	Stay well	11:30 am -12:30 pm
Thursday, July 11	The Green	9:00 am-1:00 pm
Tuesday, July 16	Waterbury Senior Center	10am -12:30pm
Thursday, July 18	The Green	9:00 am-1:00pm
Wednesday, July 19	Wolcott Senior Center	11:00 am-12:00 pm
Tuesday, July 23rd	Waterbury Senior Center	10:000am-12:30pm
Wednesday, July 24	Bergin Apartments	12pm-1pm
Thursday, July 25	The Green	9am -1pm
Tuesday, July 30	Waterbury Senior Center	10am -12:30pm

Information provided by Brass City Harvest. Visit [brasscityharvestwaterbury.com/farmers-markets](http://brasscityharvestwaterbury.com/farmers-markets) for more details.



## SPRING CLEAN YOUR MEDICINE CABINET

EASY OPTIONS FOR GETTING RID OF UNUSED MEDICATION

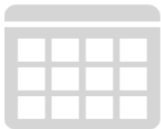
### OPTION 1



**Return unused medication to your pharmacy.**

Pharmacies are allowed to voluntarily take back your medications so they are destroyed properly.

### OPTION 2



**Drop off meds during National Prescription Drug Take Back Days.**

Twice a year, the Drug Enforcement Agency holds an event where you can drop off all your leftover medications.

### OPTION 3



**Use a self-service disposal kiosk.**

Remove your personal information and drop your unwanted or expired medication in a free, anonymous, and secure kiosk located in most chain pharmacies.

### OPTION 4



**Put pills in the trash but be responsible!**

Make sure to mix them with a substance that makes them less recognizable. It's too easy for kids to fish these out of the trash and ingest them.

### OPTION 5



**If you must, flush.**

Trace amounts of drugs can end up in the water supply, so flush if there is absolutely no other choice.

SUPPORTED BY GRANT # 90MPRC0002 FROM ACL

<https://www.consumerreports.org/drugs/getting-rid-of-expired-medication/>

**Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) provides information needed to *PROTECT* you from Medicare fraud, errors, or abuse; *DETECT* potential fraud, errors, or abuse; and *REPORT* your concerns. Call your local CT Area Agency on Aging at 1-800-994-9422**

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## Celebrating Our Exceptional Team: A Recap of the Team Member Recognition Event

On May 2nd, 2024, the Western CT Area Agency on Aging had the honor of organizing a heartwarming Team Member Recognition Event. This special occasion was dedicated to conveying our deep gratitude to our CHOICES/MIPPA and SMP Team members, including in-kind professionals and volunteers. It served as a reminder of the invaluable contributions each individual makes to our programs and the community we serve.

During the event, we had the pleasure of welcoming distinguished speakers from Access Health CT. Their insightful presentations shed light on the intricate relationship between Medicare and Medicaid, offering valuable insights into the diverse options available in the AHCT Market. The engaging Q&A session that followed allowed for discussions and further exploration of the topics.

Our team also had the opportunity to receive brief overviews and updates from the SHIP/MIPPA and SMP programs, further enriching our collective knowledge and understanding of the vital work we do. To recognize and celebrate our team's efforts, we showcased a summary of statistical data from the SHIP/MIPPA program, illustrated in **Figure 1.1**.

WCAAA-REGIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS JULY 01, 2023 - MARCH 31, 2024	
Topics	Number of Beneficiaries Reached
Total of Beneficiary Contacts Reached	4,018
Total number of MIPPA Contacts	1,832
Participated/hosted outreach events	58
Group Outreach Contacts	5,016
Medicare Beneficiaries Under 65	388
Hard to Reach Contacts	2,091
Enrollment Contacts	1,757

**Figure 1.1** SHIP/MIPPA Regional Accomplishments

As a part of the celebration, we had the privilege of capturing a snapshot of the event's success through the commemorative picture seen above.

In closing, we extend our sincerest thanks to all our team members, volunteers, and in-kind professionals for their invaluable contributions to the SHIP/MIPPA and SMP Programs. Your dedication, passion, and hard work are truly appreciated and cherished. Together, we will continue to make a meaningful difference in the lives of those we serve.

**Submitted by** Kiara Carchi, Choices Regional Coordinator



*Several team members also participated virtually and were integral to the success of this event.*

As a gesture of gratitude, small tokens of appreciation were distributed to all team members. To wrap up the event we arranged an engaging BINGO game, promoting team support and facilitating networking among members. It proved to be a delightful occasion brimming with laughter, and sincere appreciation for the exceptional individuals comprising our team.

## Paxlovid and Medicare Coverage

Medicare is now covering prescriptions for Paxlovid, the oral antiviral COVID-19 treatment, until the end of 2024. This development brings relief to those in need of this crucial medication. You have several avenues to access Paxlovid. Firstly, if your Part D plan participates in the Paxlovid patient assistance program, you can obtain your prescription at no cost from your pharmacy. I encourage you to contact your plan to ascertain its participation in this program. Alternatively, if your plan



doesn't participate or if you lack drug coverage, you can still acquire Paxlovid at no charge by enrolling in the U.S. Government Patient Assistance Program (USG PAP) administered by Pfizer. Moreover, when selecting a Part D plan, you can proactively search for Paxlovid on Medicare's Plan Finder to identify a plan that automatically includes coverage for this medication. If your chosen plan doesn't cover Paxlovid, you can still avail yourself of the medication through the USG PAP. Your health and well-being are paramount, and I hope this information provides reassurance during these challenging times.

Submitted by Diane DiLeo Millas

Sources: <https://www.medicareinteractive.org/resources/dear-marci/will-medicare-cover-my-paxlovid-prescription>

## Balancing in the Senior Years

As we age, maintaining balance becomes increasingly important to prevent falls and maintain independence. Normal aging and various health conditions can affect a person's balance. Our balance can worsen due to several factors. Let's explore some of the reasons why this happens:

1. **Loss of Muscle Mass:** As we get older, we gradually lose muscle mass, a process known as **sarcopenia**. This decline in muscle mass occurs due to factors like increased inactivity and hormonal changes. Unfortunately, when muscle mass and strength decrease, our ability to maintain stable joints also diminishes.
2. **Decline in Joint Mobility and Flexibility:** Aging often leads to reduced joint mobility and flexibility. A sedentary lifestyle in our senior years contributes to this decline. When we spend extended periods sitting or lying down, our muscles and joints become tight. Consequently, our joints lose their ability to move well, affecting overall balance.
3. **Cognitive Changes:** Unconscious processes in the brain that help us balance may not integrate as effectively with age and inactivity.
4. **Visual, Positional, and Vestibular Systems:** The ability to stand or sit without falling involves a complex interplay of our visual, positional, and vestibular systems
5. **Reduced Bone Density:** Aging affects bone density, making bones more fragile. Weaker bones can contribute to balance problems and increase the risk of fractures from falls.

**Changes in Proprioception:** Proprioception refers to our sense of body position and movement. As we age, proprioceptive abilities may decline, affecting our ability to maintain balance.

While certain aspects of aging are beyond our control, there are steps we can take to maintain better balance. Aim for 5-10 minutes of balance work several times a week. **If you haven't been active or have some health concerns, it's recommended to talk to your primary doctor before starting a new fitness routine.**

- Engage in regular physical activity to preserve muscle strength and joint flexibility.
  - Practice balance exercises (e.g., standing on one leg, heel-to-toe walking) to improve stability.
  - Consider tai chi or yoga, which promote balance and body awareness.
  - Opt for a diet rich in nutrients that support bone health (e.g., calcium, vitamin D).
  - Address any vision or hearing impairments promptly.
- Keep your home environment safe by removing tripping hazards and using handrails where needed.

Here are some effective balance exercises that seniors can do locally and online:

Locally – Senior Centers and Community Classes, Physical Therapy Clinics, Local Gyms and Fitness Studios

Online - **YouTube:** YouTube has a wealth of balance exercise videos for seniors. Search for terms like “senior balance exercises,” “fall prevention exercises,” or “balance workouts for older adults.” You'll find routines that you can follow from the comfort of your home. **Online Fitness Platforms:** Websites and apps like SilverSneakers offer online balance classes and workouts. These platforms often provide a variety of exercise options, including bal-

# FYI: MEDICARE

ance-focused routines. **PDF Resources:** Lifeline offers a downloadable PDF with **14 strength and balance exercises for seniors**.

Remember that consistency is key. Incorporate these exercises into your daily routines to see long-term benefits. Start slowly, listen to your body and consult with your healthcare provider before beginning any new exercise program. Regular practice can lead to improved balance and reduced risk of falls. Celebrate small victories! Stay safe and enjoy staying active.

## TURNING 65: Oh Me, Oh Medicare!

By Carol Demelio, WCAAA Staff

**A**re you turning 65 this year? I sure am, and that means entering the world of Medicare. While I'm unsure who exactly would want to join this "club," it signifies a milestone of hard-earned benefits. If you are anything like me, you've likely been bombarded by countless emails, mail pamphlets, and calls from Medicare and Medicare Advantage Plans urging you to enroll. It's nerve wracking: one day you're confident in your choice, the next day a new pamphlet arrives in the mail, stirring bouts of uncertainty.

But worry not – WCAAA is here to help. I have been blessed and fortunate enough to work alongside an exceptional team of CHOICES/SHIP Counselors ready to guide you through the Medicare Maze. (Shout out to Amanda, Kiara, Darylle, Diane, Bill and all our volunteers).

I'm sure you have many friends turning 65, too, who might be telling you about their great insurance plans and suggesting you sign up for it. Well, don't listen to your friends! While they might mean well, what may be a good plan for them might not work for you. Call WCAAA to receive quality answers for the best plans that will work for you.

Is Medicare the best option for you? Or is Medicare Advantage a better fit? CHOICES can help answer your questions. Be sure to inform them of your prescription medications. And if they ask about your race, income, assets, age, gender, or gender identity, they're not being nosy; they just want to help you find the best coverage and care. **Remember that you don't have to answer questions you're uncomfortable with.** Having good health care coverage matters. CHOICES is here for

you! Yes you! We have traveled far on this road called life, and we look marvelous doing it!

## Ice Cream Flavors

C	A	S	A	H	O	K	E	Y	P	O	K	E	Y
O	T	E	T	N	U	T	A	E	E	I	C	S	T
T	B	C	C	R	T	B	O	O	C	A	N	K	A
T	U	O	H	A	A	U	E	T	A	R	S	C	Y
O	N	O	O	E	T	W	A	A	N	U	L	A	C
N	E	K	C	T	U	O	B	T	C	I	N	R	V
C	O	I	O	N	E	O	T	E	A	T	L	T	A
A	P	E	L	E	A	R	O	T	R	Y	R	E	N
N	O	D	A	E	C	E	R	A	C	R	O	S	I
D	L	O	T	R	E	E	S	E	S	T	Y	O	L
Y	I	U	E	G	G	F	U	D	G	E	W	O	L
U	T	G	S	I	A	N	A	N	A	B	E	M	A
E	A	H	T	U	N	O	C	O	C	I	A	O	N
L	N	N	N	T	D	A	O	R	Y	K	C	O	R

Lastly, don't forget to let us know how you heard about us! Good luck, and Happy 65<sup>th</sup> Birthday!

COCONUT  
STRAWBERRY  
VANILLA  
FUDGE  
ROCKY ROAD  
COOKIE DOUGH  
NEOPOLITAN  
COTTON CANDY  
HOKEY POKEY  
CHOCOLATE  
MOOSE TRACKS  
GREEN TEA  
TIGER TAIL  
PECAN  
REESES  
BANANA



Navigating Medicare



**Western CT Area Agency on Aging**  
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Waterbury, CT 06705

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*We are Grateful to Our Veterans!*

## WCAAA INSIDER

The mission of the Western Connecticut Area Agency on Aging, Inc., (WCAAA) is to develop, manage, and provide comprehensive services for seniors, caregivers, and individuals with disabilities through person-centered planning in order to maintain their independence and quality of life.

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### CONTACT US

**Western Connecticut Area Agency  
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**203-757-5449  
or  
1-800-994-9422**

*Visit our website:*

*[www.wcaaa.org](http://www.wcaaa.org)*

### 41-Town Region

<u>Barkhamsted</u>	<u>Litchfield</u>	<u>Salisbury</u>
<u>Beacon Falls</u>	<u>Middlebury</u>	<u>Sharon</u>
<u>Bethel</u>	<u>Morris</u>	<u>Sherman</u>
<u>Bethlehem</u>	<u>Naugatuck</u>	<u>Southbury</u>
<u>Bridgewater</u>	<u>New Fairfield</u>	<u>Thomaston</u>
<u>Brookfield</u>	<u>New Hartford</u>	<u>Torrington</u>
<u>Canaan</u>	<u>New Milford</u>	<u>Warren</u>
<u>Cheshire</u>	<u>Newtown</u>	<u>Washington</u>
<u>Colebrook</u>	<u>Norfolk</u>	<u>Waterbury</u>
<u>Cornwall</u>	<u>North Canaan</u>	<u>Watertown</u>
<u>Danbury</u>	<u>Prospect</u>	<u>Winchester</u>
<u>Goshen</u>	<u>Redding</u>	<u>Wolcott</u>
<u>Harwinton</u>	<u>Ridgefield</u>	<u>Woodbury</u>
<u>Kent</u>	<u>Roxbury</u>	