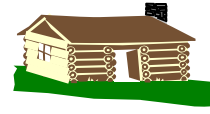


Chester County Department of Aging Services



No place like home?



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Director's Corner

Wanda Stonebraker

Director, Chester County Department of Aging Services

I have always believed that working in the Human Service field made me a better person. I sometimes wonder if perhaps my career has mirrored my life experiences for a reason.

When I had young children I worked in Child Protection for 14 years. I know without question that made me a better parent. After earning a Master's degree in counseling I went into the Mental Health field, again making me better equipped to deal with 'crazy teenagers'. Now here I am, working with and for seniors. Having a mother who is 85 has helped me understand some of the needs of this unique population. My own recent experience has given me a bird's eye view of the world of older adults who are ill and hospitalized.

Early in June I was admitted to the hospital through the emergency room, without a definitive diagnosis. I am no 'shrinking violet' when it comes to asking questions and making sure I get answers that make sense. I was completely out of my element in this situation for two

(See Directors Corner, page 2)

Program Spotlight!



System of Care (SOC) Comes to Chester County

Stacy Barno

Supervisor, PDA Waiver Program

A new philosophy of providing care to all members of the community has been instituted by the Chester County Department of Human Services. This new initiative is called System of Care and involves not only county human service agencies including Mental Health/Mental Retardation, Children Youth and Families, Drug and Alcohol, but also includes those community and provider agencies that provide services to individuals and families in the county. The following mission statement has been developed regarding the System of Care (or SOC as it is referred to):

Vision Statement: Chester County visualizes a unified system of care that maximizes all resources around an individual or family. This system of care includes child and adult serving agencies and community partners that join with an individual or family to meet their goals.

The Chester County Department of Aging fully supports this philosophy of care and is working internally to implement SOC within the daily workings of the department. Initially all staff will be educated about this philosophy and practical applications including networking with other agencies and increasing knowledge of community services available. Recently the supervisory staff of the department began attending learning circles with other county human services departments to increase knowledge of SOC philosophies and how to implement this approach within the department.

Continue to look for updates as the SOC Philosophy is further implemented in Chester County and within the Chester County Department of Aging Services. If you have any feedback or would like additional information regarding this new initiative, please contact the department's SOC Work Group Members, Stacy Barno or Carol Harkins at 610-344-6350. ■

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The Department of Aging Services is funded by the Chester County Board of Commissioners, Pennsylvania Department of Aging, and private contributions.



Chester County Commissioners
Terence Farrell
Carol Aichele
Kathi Cozzone

Key Facts About Seasonal Influenza (Flu)

Jacquelyne Hanes

Registered Nurse

It may be another beautiful Fall here in Chester County, but take caution, the flu season is on its way. It is time to be prepared against the virus that plagues many of us each year.

What is Influenza (Also Called Flu)?

The flu is a contagious respiratory illness caused by viruses. It can cause mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to death. The best way to prevent seasonal flu is by getting a seasonal flu vaccination each year.

Every year in the United States, on average:

- five to 20% of the population gets the flu;
- more than 200,000 people are hospitalized from flu-related complications; and
- about 36,000 people die from flu-related causes.

Some people, such as older adults, young children, pregnant women and people with certain health conditions (such as asthma, diabetes, or heart disease), are at increased risk for serious complications from seasonal flu illness.

This year, scientists believe that a new and very different flu virus (called novel 2009 H1N1) may cause a lot more people to become ill than during a regular flu season.

How Flu Spreads

Flu viruses are thought to spread mainly from person to person through coughing or sneezing. Sometimes people may become infected by touching something with flu viruses on it and then touching their mouth or nose.

Most healthy adults may be able to infect others beginning 1 day before symptoms develop and up to 5-7 days after becoming sick. That means that you may be able to pass on the flu to someone else before you know you are sick, as well as while you are sick!

Symptoms of Flu

Symptoms of seasonal flu include:

- fever (often high)
- extreme tiredness
- sore throat
- muscle aches
- headache
- dry cough
- runny or stuffy nose
- stomach symptoms

Stomach symptoms such as nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea, also can occur but are more common in children than adults.

The symptoms of 2009 H1N1 flu virus in people include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. A significant number of people who have been infected with this virus also have reported diarrhea and vomiting.

(Director's Corner continued from page 1)

reasons. One, I was in severe pain and two, I didn't understand most of what was said to me and was in too much pain to ask for clarification. Fortunately, I didn't have to ask. My family did all of the asking for me.

Shortly after I returned to PA, my mother had several hospitalizations because of her heart. She was frightened, medicated and had a difficult time hearing what was being said to her by the doctors and the nursing staff. Her meal trays would be left with her without anyone checking to see if she could manage on her own. Don't get me wrong, my mother was and remains alert and oriented but she was in way over her head. Fortunately, she has children who live close to her and one or more of us saw her daily while she was in the hospital. We were able to ask the questions she didn't know to ask.

This is not meant to be an indictment of hospitals, nurses or doctors. They do a wonderful job taking care of our medical problems. What we need to remember is to step up to the plate for the older adults in our lives and make sure they understand what is happening to them during a very vulnerable time. We need to support them and help them remember they are not alone. We can do this for our parents, grandparents, other older relatives and neighbors, if needed. With our mobile society, many parents do not live close to their children. We all need someone we can depend on and trust to help us through the hard times. If there is an older adult in your life, regardless of the relationship, be dependable for them and advocate for them.

Have a good fall season. ■

Comments or feedback about our newsletter are welcome. You can reach me via email at wstonebraker@chesco.org.

To protect your health:

- Cough or sneeze into the bend of your elbow
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective. If using gel, rub your hands until the gel is dry. The Center for Disease Control recommends that when you wash your hands with soap and warm water that you wash for 15 to 20 seconds.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- If you are sick with flu-like illness, stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone

If you become ill and experience any of the warning signs, seek emergency medical care. ■

Heating Assistance/LIHEAP

The Pennsylvania Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) helps low income people pay their heating bills through home heating energy assistance grants and crisis grants. You need not have an unpaid bill to receive home heating energy assistance. A family of four with an annual income of up to \$33,075 can qualify for assistance. No lien is placed on your property if you receive this help

Energy Grants are intended to assist in paying heating bills. Crisis grants are for broken heating equipment, lack of fuel or termination of service.

The fastest way to apply for a grant is through COMPASS, the online access to health and human services.

For more information, contact the Chester County Department of Aging Services (610-344-6350), the County Assistance Office (610-466-1000) or the LIHEAP hotline at 1-866-857-7095.

The opening dates for the LIHEAP program are:
Energy Grants: November 2, 2009 - March 15, 2010
Crisis Grants: January 4, 2010 - March 15, 2010 ■



FREE Weatherization for Energy Savings

The Housing Development Corporation, a non-profit company from Lancaster County, is offering a FREE Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) service to qualifying families in Lancaster, Lebanon and Chester Counties.

To be eligible:

- You must live in one of these counties
- Your residence was not weatherized in 1994 or later
- Your gross annual income can't be above:

1 person \$21,660	5 persons: \$51,580
2 persons: \$29,140	6 persons: \$59,060
3 persons: \$36,620	7 persons: \$66,540
4 persons: \$44,100	8 persons: \$74,020

Typical services include:

- Air sealing to reduce drafts
- Attic insulation
- Floor insulation
- Pipe and/or duct insulation
- Evaluation/service of your heating system!

Call today to get on the WAP list 800-732-3554 or 717-509-8034 OR get more info at www.hdcweb.com/weatherization.com ■



Your Guide to Health and Human Service Benefits

COMPASS is a PA Department of Human Services Web site that allows individuals and community based organizations access to screen for, apply for, and renew a broad range of social programs.

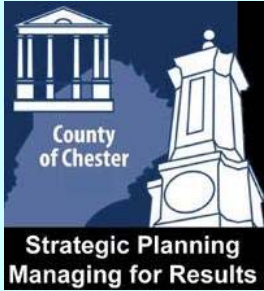
COMPASS serves as a single access point for application and renewal of:

- Health Care Coverage
 - Medical Assistance
 - Medical Assistance for Worker's with Disabilities
 - Medical Savings Program for Payment of Medical Assistance Premiums
 - Children's Health Insurance Program
 - adultBasic
- Food Stamp (SNAP) Benefits
- Cash Assistance
- Long Term Care
- Home and Community Based Services for individuals with mental retardation
 - Consolidated Waiver for Individuals with Mental Retardation
 - Person/Family-Directed Support Waiver for Individuals with Mental Retardation
 - Mental Retardation Services (non-MA)
- Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (Seasonal availability)
- Free or Reduced Price School Meals
- SelectPlan for Women (Family Planning Services)
- Child Care Works

COMPASS also provides screening for the programs mentioned above, all home and community-based services, and the school lunch and breakfast program. Screening allows a user to provide basic information to determine if they are potentially eligible for a health and human service.

If you go to the State webpage, www.pa.gov, click on 'ONLINE SERVICES' at the top of the page, and on COMPASS – Access to Health and Human Services' in the drop-down menu. ■

Source: www.humanservices.state.pa.us/compass/CMHOM.aspx



**Commissioners
Champion
Strategic Plan for
Chester County
Government!**

It began in 2008 when the Chester County Commissioners met with County department heads and deputies to announce the launch of a comprehensive new initiative to strengthen the county's strategic planning and performance management systems. The commissioners stated that the purpose is to increase accountability, transparency, and performance in Chester County government.

Such a plan ensures that all county employees are working towards the same goals and that resources are managed effectively.

The Commissioners have established six priority areas to guide all county departments in developing their own strategic and performance-related goals. These areas include:

- Health and Environment
- Public Safety
- Economy
- Transportation
- Smart Financial Management and
- Growth

All County departments and agencies are now working to establish individual goals that are in line with these priorities. In this way, all departments have a common focus and direction for their short and long-term planning.

To read more about the County plan, go to the County website at www.chesco.org and click on the Strategic Planning icon in the left column. ■



**Nutrition
Assistance**

The **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)** is the new name for the Food Stamp program. SNAP benefits are used to buy food and help low-income households in Pennsylvania obtain more nutritious diets by increasing the food purchasing power at grocery stores and supermarkets for all eligible participants. If you do not have enough money to buy food for yourself and your family, you can receive a Pennsylvania [Electronic Benefits Transfer \(EBT\)](#) ACCESS Card. This card works like a bank debit card and allows you to make food purchases at grocery stores and supermarkets.

Pennsylvania has recently raised the income limits for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. For households with seniors (or people receiving disability benefits), the income limit has increased even more. This means that a single senior with a monthly income of up to \$1,734 (and up to \$2,334 for a couple) can now receive nutrition assistance. It does not matter how much you have in assets, resources or savings. If you are eligible, you can receive a monthly grant of anywhere from \$16 to \$200 to help you buy food. The exact amount depends on your household's income, size and certain expenses.

How to Apply:

You can file an application at the County Assistance Office. The application can be downloaded from the PA Department of Public Welfare SNAP webpage (<http://www.dpw.state.pa.us/ServicesPrograms/FoodStamp/s/>), completed and returned to the county assistance office. You can also apply for and renew your benefits using [COMPASS](#), the online resource for cash assistance described above.

There is also an EBT Recipient Hotline at 1-888-EBT-PENN (1-888-328-7366). The Recipient Hotline is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. ■

Source: PA Department of Public Welfare

Senior Centers

Senior Centers offer a variety of programs that serve many needs of older adults including health programs, meals, and recreation and socialization activities. Meals are an essential service because they offer health and nutrition benefits, as well as opportunities to socialize. In Chester County there are six Senior Centers:

Coatesville Area Sr. Center

22 N. Fifth Street 610-383-6900

Downingtown Area Sr. Center

983 Lancaster Avenue 610-269-3939

Kennett Area Sr. Center

427 S. Walnut Street 610-444-4819

Oxford Area Senior Center

12 E. Locust Street 610-932-5244

Phoenixville Sr. Adult Activity Center

153 Church Street 610-935-1515

West Chester Area Sr. Center

530 E. Union Street 610-431-4242

Call one today or just stop in!!

FREE Consumer Resources from the Federal Trade Commission

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC), the nation’s consumer protection agency, considers education as a consumer’s first line of defense against fraud and deception in the marketplace.

From sweepstakes scams to online safety and security, telemarketing fraud to travel scams, mortgage foreclosure rescue scams to miracle health claims, or credit reports to bogus cancer cures, the FTC has free articles, brochures, bookmarks, and outreach kits that you can use. A full list of resources is at ftc.gov/consumer.

In addition to extensive print information, the FTC gathers its consumer information into one-stop websites. The sites have buttons, videos and other features that are “up for grabs” for your own online resources. Some key topics include:

Healthcare products and services: Who Cares? (ftc.gov/whocares) helps you find reliable sources of information on a variety of health topics, including Medicare fraud, medical ID theft, generic drugs, and assisted living.

Telemarketing fraud: Who’s Calling? (ftc.gov/phonefraud) provides information about common telemarketing scams and how to avoid them, including credit and loan offers, identity theft, sweepstakes and lotteries, and work-at-home and business opportunities.

Identity theft: Deter, Detect, Defend: Avoid ID Theft (ftc.gov/idtheft) offers detailed information about avoiding identity theft and what to do if personal information is stolen or abused.

Online safety: OnGuard Online (www.OnGuardOnline.gov) provides practical tips to help guard against Internet fraud, secure your computer, and protect personal information. The articles, games, and videos on the site cover 19 topics, including spam scams and online shopping.

All FTC materials are in the public domain: Reprint them, use them as the basis for a presentation, or even co-brand them with your organization’s name and logo. All consumer information from the FTC tells readers to report scams and fraud to the FTC at www.ftccomplaintassistant.gov or by calling 1-877-FTC-HELP (1-877-382-4357); TTY: 1-866-653-4261. The FTC enters all complaints it receives into Consumer Sentinel, a secure online database that’s used by thousands of civil and criminal law enforcement authorities to pursue legal action. ■

Source: Administration on Aging (www.AoA.gov)



Read all about it! FREE Cell Phone!

Kelly Miehle,
Supervisor, Information and Assistance

Safelink Wireless now provides a FREE cell phone service and 42 FREE phone minutes per month to qualifying individuals and you may already be eligible!

SafeLink Wireless is a government supported program that provides a free cell phone and airtime each month for income-eligible customers. You may be eligible if you already participate in one of the following:

- * Section 8 Housing assistance
- * Food Stamp program
- * LIHEAP
- * SSI
- * Medicaid
- * Blind Pension

If you are not in one of the aforementioned programs, you may still qualify. Financial eligibility is based on household income:

- * Household of one - gross monthly income under \$1218
- * Household of two - gross monthly income under \$1639

To find out if you qualify, or to apply for the free Safelink Wireless phone, contact Safelink at 1-800-977-3768 or apply online at www.safelinkwireless.com. ■

Got Questions?? Contact us!!!

Information and Assistance services are always free of charge and available to all interested persons.

Call: 610-344-6350

Toll-free: 1-800-692-1100 extension 6350

TTY #: 610-344-5233 (Text Telephone for the Hearing Impaired)

601 Westtown Road, Suite 130

P.O. Box 2747

West Chester, PA 19380-0990

Send us an e-mail inquiry:

ccaging@chesco.org

If you haven’t done so, please check out our website

<http://www.chesco.org/aging/>

It is a great resource for finding out what services are available, answer questions you may already have or learn how to apply for programs or services!

We have a new page, ‘You Can Help’ (a shortcut is in the left navigation pane). Here you can learn about opportunities to donate both time and money for some important services that are not fully funded by traditional funding streams.

The **30th Annual Senior Picnic** was held at the **Brandywine Picnic Park** on Thursday September 17th. In spite of overcast conditions, the picnic went off without a hitch! Everyone in attendance had a great time.



Wanda Stonebraker (center), Director, Chester County Department of Aging Services was pleased to have the Secretary of the PA Department of Aging, John Michael Hall (right), and County Commissioner Terence Farrell (left) in attendance to show their support!

