

ELDER NEWS

GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF ELDERLY AFFAIRS



what you can look forward to in this issue:

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MEDICARE DONUT HOLE CLOSED

Richland Voluntary Council on Aging Spreads Christmas Cheer

Caroling at the Colonial Manor Nursing Home

The RVCoA Choir went to the Colonial Manor Nursing Home to spread a little Christmas cheer. The choir sang traditional Christmas carols for the residents. Everyone enjoyed the event with some of the nursing home residents singing along.

Cold Weather Shelter

With temperatures across the area dropping, Baton Rouge Salvation Army Command Officer, Major Donald Tekautz invites men without shelter to The Salvation Army's Center of Hope at 7361 Airline Highway in Baton Rouge.

The shelter opens at 4 p.m. and will be open until temperatures rise above 40 degrees. Men will need a photo ID to check in.

LETTER FROM OUR DIRECTOR

KAREN J. RYDER, GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF ELDERLY AFFAIRS



As you probably already know, I am retiring from the Governor's Office of Elderly Affairs. I wanted to use this newsletter to thank everyone for the help and support you all provided me through the years. I am proud of the things that we, as an aging network, have accomplished.

But outside of what we have achieved, I will never forget the wonderful times we have shared together.

This decision has been very difficult because I am doing what I love, working alongside such wonderful people, both in-house, and in the Aging Network. I could not have asked for a better group of people to work with all of these years. I want to thank each of you, and the Governor, for the opportunities I have been afforded working at the Office of Elderly Affairs, and for the trust afforded to me to lead this organization.

Please know I will always be here to help in any way I can to move this great agency forward, and to honor our senior citizens. Thanks for all the wonderful memories!



Karen Ryder

Capital AAA and Buda Task Force Team Up For Chronic Disease Self- Management Program

FREE PROGRAM - REGISTER NOW!

The Area Agency on Aging of the Capital Area and the Buda Task Force on Aging have teamed up for a Chronic Disease Self-Management Program. There is no cost, but class size is limited.



“Become your own best advocate to understand your condition and the treatments that work best for you. Learn to make lifestyle changes to improve your quality of life.”

Who could benefit?

Anyone 60 years or older who:

- is living with a chronic condition
- is interested in symptom and medication management
- wants to learn proper exercise and nutrition
- wants to know what questions to ask

You will learn to:

- Manage Symptoms
- Incorporate Exercise
- Monitor Nutrition
- Talk with Your Doctor
- Make Informed Treatment Decisions
- Deal with Emotions
- Control Stress



SOCIAL SECURITY EXPANDS PUBLIC HOURS AT OFFICES NATIONWIDE

Wednesdays to Return to Full Public Service Hours; Agency to Hire over 2,000 Direct Service Employees

Starting on January 8, 2020, Social Security offices nationwide will be open to the public on Wednesday afternoons, Andrew Saul, Commissioner of Social Security, announced. This change restores Wednesday public service hours that were last in place in late 2012. "I don't want someone to come to our office at 2:30 on a Wednesday only to find our doors closed," Commissioner Saul said.

In another move to improve service to the public, Commissioner Saul announced that the agency is hiring 1,100 front line employees to provide service on the agency's National 800 Number and in its processing centers.

The agency is currently bringing onboard 100 new processing center employees and approximately 500 new teleservice representatives for the 800 Number. An additional 500 hires for the 800 Number will occur later in 2020.

Currently, a field office is generally open to the public from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 pm on Wednesdays. Beginning on January 8, 2020, offices will remain open until 4:00 p.m. on Wednesdays, with typical field office hours from 9:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

While the agency continues to improve both the access to and the experience with its services, it is important to note that most Social Security services do not require the public to take time to visit an office.

People may create a my Social Security account, a personalized online service, at

[www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount.](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount)

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Improving service is my top priority. Increasing full public service hours at our nationwide network is the right thing to do and will provide additional access.

The hiring of over 1,000 new employees to man our National 800 Number and over 2,000 new employees for our processing centers are steps in the right direction in our mission to greatly improve the service we provide.”

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2020 SENIOR OLYMPICS ANNOUNCED

MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR FEBRUARY 28 TO APRIL 26, 2020

Since the inception of the event in 2001, the Louisiana Senior Olympic Games organization has expanded to include more games and has increased in participation by area seniors each year. LSOG estimates more than 2,000 athletes statewide, and 400 volunteers will participate in the Louisiana Senior Olympics this year.

The 2020 Louisiana Senior Olympic Games are coming! The multi-sport event is open to anyone aged fifty years or over, as of December 31, 2019.

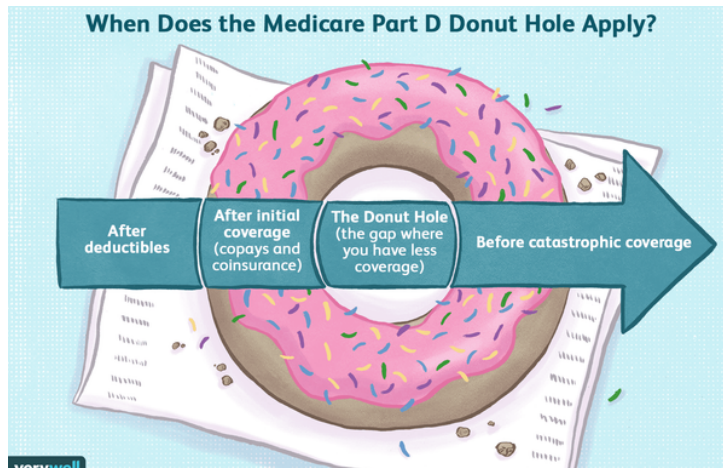
Events will be held from February 28, 2020 to April 26, 2020.

The Olympic Games are possible through the mission of the Louisiana Senior Olympic Games (LSOG), a non-profit sporting organization, which plans and conducts a statewide program with competitions on both local and district levels, culminating in the annual State event that qualifies winners for participation in the biennial National Games.

There are a variety of events to choose from such as swimming, traditional races and race-walks, golf, archery, tennis, table tennis, volleyball, basketball, bowling, weightlifting, shuffleboard, horseshoes, shooting, badminton, track and field, and more.

Louisiana Senior Olympic Games Inc. strongly urges that all participants consult their physician regarding their practice for and participation in the Senior Olympic Programs.

To find out more, visit the Louisiana Senior Olympic Games Website at: www.lso1.net.



WHAT IS THE MEDICARE DONUT HOLE?

Closing the Medicare Donut Hole

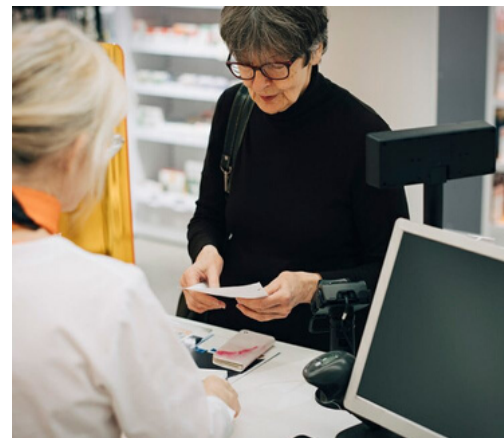
What does this mean for seniors?

So, the donut hole has closed for all medications. Many think that means they won't have to pay for medications once they get to this drug payment stage. But that is not the case. Going forward, drug plan members will pay 25% of the cost for any prescribed medication from the time they meet the deductible until reaching the out-of-pocket spending limit (\$6,350 in 2020) that leads to Catastrophic Coverage.

Even with these changes, some beneficiaries will experience sticker shock. That's because their drug plans charge a copayment or coinsurance in Initial Coverage, instead of 25%.

When first implemented in 2006, the Part D drug plan had a gap in coverage. Drug plans did not pay anything toward the cost of drugs in the donut hole so beneficiaries were stuck with the tab for the entire cost. Beginning in 2011, the Affordable Care Act (ACA) took measures to close the donut hole, known as the Coverage Gap. Over the last few years, beneficiaries have paid less for drugs.

Here's what happened. In 2012, the ACA implemented discounts for the Coverage Gap. In 2019, discounts meant that beneficiaries paid 25% of the cost for any brand-name medication, officially closing the donut hole, and 37% for generics. Now, now the donut hole for generic drugs is also closed.



Bottom line:

Closing the donut hole may or may not reduce costs in the Coverage Gap. Those who end up in that payment stage will still have to pay 25% of the cost of medications.

This Common Social Security Scam Could Potentially Ruin Your Retirement

You've worked hard to save for retirement and build a healthy nest egg, so the last thing you want is for a scammer to take advantage of you and steal your hard-earned cash.

There's a new type of scam going round, according to the Social Security Administration, and it involves imposters calling individuals and posing as Social Security officials. These fraudsters may tell you that you owe fines or fees, threatening to have you arrested if you don't pay immediately in the form of cash or prepaid debit cards.

To appear more legitimate, some scammers will also email fake documents that appear to be from the Social Security Administration. These documents will appear to use official letterhead with legitimate-sounding legal jargon to convince you that the threat is real. However, they sometimes contain spelling or grammar mistakes, which should serve as a tip-off that the documents are fake.

This type of scam has exploded in popularity over the past year, with the Social Security Administration receiving 450,000 imposter-related complaints in 2019. In addition, the Federal Trade Commission reported that imposter-related Social Security scams resulted in losses of around \$19 million between April 2018 and March 2019 -- and as the scam grows in popularity, that number may continue to rise.

How To Defend Against Scams

If you receive a phone call that sounds suspicious, hang up and call the Social Security Administration's official phone number (1-800-772-1213) and ask about the call you just received. Some scammers are able to "spoof" the caller ID so that it appears to be the Social Security Administration calling, so don't automatically assume that the phone call is legitimate based on what the caller ID says.

Finally, if you think you're the victim of a scam or receive a suspicious phone call or email, contact the Office of the Inspector General (<https://oig.ssa.gov/>) to report it. Even if you didn't lose any money, reporting the scam helps the Social Security Administration spread awareness about the problem.



The Social Security Administration rarely contacts people by phone; you'll never be asked for your Social Security number or any other personally identifiable information over the phone or in an email, and you'll also never be asked to provide payment in the form of gift cards, cash, prepaid debit cards, or wire transfers. The Social Security Administration will also never threaten you with arrest or legal action over the failure to pay a fine or fee.

East Baton Rouge COA Breaks Ground

LOTUS HEADQUARTERS WILL HOUSE NEW ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDING, KITCHEN, AND MORE FOR CAPITAL REGION SENIORS

The East Baton Rouge Council on Aging (EBRCOA) held a groundbreaking ceremony for the Lotus Headquarters, its new commercial kitchen and administrative building at 265 North 18th Street, on Tuesday, September 24, 2019, at 9:30 am.



The groundbreaking was held at the site of the new headquarters (965 N 18th St.) on Tuesday, Sept. 24 at 9:30 a.m.

EBRCOA says the new 25,000 square foot headquarters will allow the organization to meet the demand for programs, including congregate and home-delivered meals, at the agency's 22 senior centers and nutritional sites. EBRCOA is also proposing to surround the new headquarters with a senior housing development in the Gracie neighborhood on about 8.6 acres of land. The community will be dubbed Lotus Village. The goal will be to allow seniors to age in a place that's affordable, while still offering a good housing option.



Livingston Luau: Seniors Celebrate Hawaiian Style

Held at Livingston COA on August 21 at 8:30 am

Seniors wore leis and Hawaiian-themed clothes during the Livingston Parish Council on Aging's annual Senior Appreciation Day at the activities center. Around 250 attendees at the event enjoyed pulled pork sandwiches, pineapple and ice cream sodas, appetizers, performances including music from Elvis Presley tribute artist Jason Bagley and hula dancing featuring Anna Sanders, who told a story with her hands.



SENIORS VISIT WWII MUSEUM

ASCENSION COA BRINGS 100 SENIORS TO NATIONAL MUSEUM IN NEW ORLEANS

On Wednesday, September 18, Ascension Council on Aging traveled to New Orleans to the WWII Museum with over 100 Clients from the Gonzales and Donaldsonville Senior Centers.

Seniors enjoyed a luncheon and a show by the Victory Belles at the BB's Stage Door Canteen. All had a great time.

Ascension COA has daily activities at both Senior Centers including trips, games, dances, parties, exercise and health classes, and more.