

Senior Wave

Maryland Department of Aging Newsletter

Volume 3, No. 1 ♦ Spring 2007



Dear Friends:

The O'Malley-Brown Administration has pledged to build a state where seniors are treated with fairness when it comes to taxes, retirement security and healthcare. We are firm in our

resolve to make Maryland the most senior-friendly state in the nation. It is in this spirit that I am proud to appoint former Senator Gloria Lawlah to be Secretary of the Department of Aging. To fulfill the promise of every Marylander, we need to recruit the best and brightest to lead our State Agencies. Secretary Lawlah will be a tremendous advocate; and together, we will address our shared concerns and shared goals. We have a lot of work ahead; but together, we will expand opportunity, dignity and independence.

That's why, in the years ahead, we will expand Baltimore's "Experience Corps" throughout Maryland. This is an innovative program to help expand opportunity for our retirees to apply their great experience and wisdom in our public schools. This program not only helps the students and teachers, but also improves the health of the seniors who participate.

It is critically important that we preserve the financial independence of our seniors, as well. The O'Malley-Brown Administration supports expanding individual and employers' credits for long-term care insurance, developing caregiver tax credits and special assistance for custodial grandparents.

Many older Marylanders find it difficult to avoid the basic needs of life, including life-giving medicines and quality care. In our comprehensive Healthcare Act, we have provided dollars to ease the prescription burden and the cost of long-term care in nursing and assisted living facilities and in the community.

Our seniors have a long-standing and heartfelt stake in our communities. Their dreams are tied to their homes and neighborhoods, and it is there they would like to remain for as long as possible. It is for this reason that we are working so hard to expand the availability of affordable housing opportunities and to enhance the vibrancy and quality of life in Maryland's communities through neighborhood revitalization. The Neighborhood Revitalization Program manages and administers financial assistance programs that expand housing, commercial activities and social services.

Ultimately, our senior citizens are the heart of our "One Maryland." You have built our State and you have made our communities a source of pride. Together, we will live up to our responsibility to secure the quality of life you so richly deserve.

President John F. Kennedy once said, "*It is not enough to a great nation merely to have added new years to life – our objective must also be to add new life to those years.*" The challenges we face today are not new, but part of a worthy fight to ensure that those who made the American Dream possible for all of us are not left behind.

Thank you for all you have done for our great State of Maryland. I truly look forward to working with you to expand opportunity, dignity and independence to all of our neighbors.

Sincerely,



Martin O'Malley
Governor



Greetings To My Fellow Maryland Seniors

On February 7, 2007, Governor Martin O'Malley appointed me as Secretary of the Maryland Department of Aging. The O'Malley-Brown Administration is keenly aware of the vast number of baby boomers on the horizon, and they have challenged me to lead this department at this most pivotal time.

Together, with the Area Agencies on Aging, we must prepare for the monumental task ahead, providing services and programs for the ever-increasing number of older Marylanders.

As a former State Legislator from Prince George's County for the last 20 years, I represented one of the largest senior populations in our State. I, too, subscribe to the Department of Aging's vision that Maryland is a State where all people should be able to age with dignity, opportunity, choice and independence. To achieve this vision, we are assisting our seniors to better prepare for their own health care needs in their golden years. Our focus is on long-term care in the community-based setting – not just in the institutions. Survey after survey of older citizens tells us that most seniors want to remain in their homes and communities for as long as possible. We can make this a reality by expanding the availability of support services, accessible transportation and health care.

This issue of the *Senior Wave* is designed to help you stay informed about topics that are important to the senior population. We want to present you with options and opportunities that will keep you active and engaged and help you have longer, healthier and happier senior years. Be sure to note the information about volunteering, as **April is "National Volunteer Month."** May is national **"Older Americans' Month,"** and Governor O'Malley has proclaimed May as **"Older Marylanders' Month."** We have planned an exciting kick-off for this observance and we will honor Maryland's most-advanced seniors at the 15th Annual Maryland Centenarians Recognition Luncheon.

The Maryland Department of Aging, the Area Agencies on Aging and the aging network organizations are working to reach all seniors, whether in an urban high rise or down a country lane, to make sure they receive the services they need and deserve. I am committed to making a difference in the lives of all seniors in our great State.

Hopefully, the progress we are able to realize will make a difference today and for many years to come.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gloria Lawlah". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Gloria Lawlah
Secretary

April Is National Volunteer Month

Volunteers are the only human beings on the face of the earth who reflect this nation's compassion, unselfish caring, patience and just plain love for one another. -- Erma Bombeck

Maryland Volunteers!

Maryland has a long history of volunteerism. As far back as 1633, the Maryland Chapter established its first militia. The first Maryland volunteer fire company, the Independent Hose Company of Frederick, was established in 1818. Maryland also has the distinction as the only state with an official State Volunteer flag.

Marylanders are motivated to volunteer by a number of reasons, but the strongest are civic responsibility and patriotism. Other factors relate to duty and social responsibility. According to the Maryland Association of Nonprofit Organization's September 2001 study entitled "Protecting the Trust: Revisiting Public Attitudes about Charities in Maryland,"

- 96% of Marylanders feel that the work of volunteers is important to improving quality of life in the State.
- 99% of Marylanders say that volunteering is a positive experience.

Volunteers contribute far more than their time. According to "Maryland: The State of Volunteerism," approximately two million Marylanders volunteer each year. Independent Sector, a resource organization that supports the work of nonprofit and charitable organizations, estimates the value of a volunteer hour is \$16.54. With two million Marylanders volunteering an average of 6.27 hours per month at \$16.54, the value added to the State of Maryland economy is **\$2.3 Billion!**

There are countless ways to fulfill your desire to volunteer. Religious organizations attract 52 percent of Maryland volunteers. Many people donate time at their place of worship and don't even consider the opportunity as volunteering! Forty-four percent of active volunteers give of their time to educational service organizations.

Experience Corp Baltimore is one such organization whose core component is the retired volunteer. Experience Corp – one of the key points in Governor O'Malley's campaign platform, began in 1998 in three Baltimore City schools and has expanded to 16 of the City's public elementary schools. Experience Corp trains older adults and places them in elementary schools (K-3), where they assist principals and teachers in day-to-day activities. Johns Hopkins Center on Aging and Health is tracking the impact of the program on the children, schools and older adult volunteers. Preliminary results show improved performance on the part of the students with higher reading and math scores, as well as improved health status for the volunteers. Governor O'Malley is committed to taking the Experience Corp Baltimore model statewide.

Hospitals and other health service organizations depend on volunteers for a myriad of duties. There are programs for those who would like direct patient involvement such as patient admissions and discharge or behind-the-scenes jobs like administrative and clerical responsibilities. Whatever your skills and talents, there is an opportunity just waiting for you!

For more information on volunteering in Maryland, visit the Governor's Office of Service and Volunteerism:

www.gosv.state.md.us or
www.marylandvolunteercenter.org.

For information about Experience Corp, please call Susan Brooks at the Greater Homewood Community Corporation: 410-261-0021 or visit their website:

www.experiencecorps.org/baltimore.

Health Care Issues.Focus on Nutrition and Safety

Healthy Eating Tips for the Older Adult

By: Joseph V. Gennusa III, Ph.D., RD, LDN

Healthy eating across the lifespan starts with a few core concepts. These basics translate to vital importance as we all age. First, let us define what an overall daily consumption should appear to look like. This will, of course, vary upon the individual, their weight, and activity level.

1. 6-to-11 servings of bread, cereal, rice or pasta. One serving equals one slice of bread, 1 ounce of ready-to-eat cereal (about 1 cup of most cereals), or ½ cup cooked cereal, rice or pasta.
2. 3-to-5 servings of vegetables. One serving equals 1 cup of raw, leafy vegetables or ½ cup of chopped vegetables, cooked or raw.
3. 2-to-4 servings of fruit. One serving equals one medium piece of fruit like an apple, banana, or orange; ½ cup of chopped fresh, cooked, or canned fruit; ¼ cup of dried fruit; or ¾ cup of 100 percent fruit juice.
4. 3 servings of milk, yogurt, or cheese. One serving equals 1 cup of milk or yogurt, 1-1/2 ounces of natural cheese like cheddar or mozzarella, or 2 ounces of processed cheese like American.
5. 2-to-3 servings of meat, poultry, fish, dry beans, eggs, or nuts. One serving of cooked meat, poultry, or fish is 2-to-3 ounces; you should eat no more than 5-to-7 ounces a day. One cup of beans, 2 eggs, 4 tablespoons of peanut butter, or 2/3 cup of nuts also equal one serving.

(Serving and serving sizes are from the U.S. Department of Agriculture/Department of Health and Human Services Food Guide Pyramid)

Second, let us visit what are the “Life-lines” – most important areas of concentration of healthy eating as we age.

1. Eat breakfast everyday.
2. Select high-fiber foods like whole grain breads and cereals, beans, vegetables, and fruits.

They can help keep you regular and lower your risk for chronic diseases like heart disease and type 2 diabetes.

3. Choose lean beef, turkey breast, fish, or chicken with the skin removed to lower the amount of fat and calories in your meals. As you age, your body needs fewer calories, especially if you are not very active.
4. Have three servings of low-fat milk, yogurt, or cheese a day. Dairy products are high in calcium and vitamin D and help keep your bones strong as you age. If you have trouble digesting or do not like dairy products, try reduced-lactose milk products or calcium-fortified orange juice, soy-based beverages, or tofu. You can also talk to your healthcare provider about taking a calcium and vitamin D supplement.
5. Keep nutrient-rich snacks like dried apricots, whole wheat crackers, peanut butter, low-fat cheese, and low-sodium soups on hand. Eat only small amounts of dried apricots, peanut butter, and other high-calorie foods. Limit how often you have high-fat and high-sugar snacks like cake, candy, chips and soda.
6. Drink plenty of water. You may notice that you feel less thirsty as you get older, but your body still needs the same amount of water. Aim for 8-to-10, 8-ounce glasses of water, unless your healthcare provider tells you to drink less because you have heart or kidney problems. Water-based beverages like milk or juice count towards your daily amount of water.

In summary, remember a simple concept that I still teach to this day. Always remember to consume foods “from the ground up” for adequate nutrition and health!

Adapted from: National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Disease Young at Heart, Tips for Adults. 2006.



Health Care Issues.Focus on Nutrition and Safety

Emergencies: Prepare and Plan

By: Janice MacGregor and Fran Shellenberger, Maryland Department of Aging

Before Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, our understanding of emergency preparedness was that local governments would respond to rescue us and help restore our property to pre-emergency conditions. The government's ability to adequately respond to those horrendous storms in 2005 changed how we view our survival options. We must now add Personal Preparedness to the emergency equation: "Response and Recovery." Government has made it clear every household needs a personal emergency preparedness plan.

We are vulnerable to any number of emergency situations, so proper preparation can be a sizable task. Emergency management organizations agree that we must be ready for fire, flood, power outages and even a pandemic flue outbreak. So, how do we prepare for such a wide range of conditions and circumstances?

Prepare a Shelter-In-Place Kit. Gather essential supplies that will allow you to remain in your home during an emergency. The kit should contain three days of nutritious food in single-serving, easy-to-open containers, water (one gallon per person minimum in plastic containers), an AM/FM, battery-operated radio, flashlight, batteries, first aid supplies, a checklist and safety instructions. Your kit should include pencil, paper, toilet paper, a list of bank accounts, credit card numbers, contact information for neighbors and relatives, and several days' supply of medications accompanied by a list or card detailing pertinent health information should you become unable to communicate with EMS. Be sure to include a whistle you can use to notify any search and rescue teams, if necessary. Have available a backpack or portable crate to carry kit items in the event you need to evacuate your home.

A Kit for Everyone. Plan an individual, portable kit for everyone in the family, and don't forget service animals or pets. Include bowls for water and food, blankets, plastic bags and paper towels, leash and toys.

Community Resources

- Know the locations of the closest shelters in your area.
- Recognize that American Red Cross shelters cannot accommodate people with special needs due to liability and facilities issues. They are not equipped to accommodate many mobility and functional needs.
- Be aware that a suitable shelter for nursing home residents is another nursing home. Know the locations of nursing homes and the number of beds available near the one in which your family member resides.
- Know which facilities have vans with wheelchair lifts and contact information for their drivers.
- Know local evacuation routes—keeping in mind that the nearer you are to a major metropolitan area, the better off you are.

Utilities

- Know how to shut off gas, water and electricity.
- Have a fire extinguisher available and learn how to use it.

Tips for Seniors

- Choose food items in single-serving sizes that are easy to open, such as pull-tab closures.
- Stock multiple small (8 oz.) bottles of water instead of gallon jugs.
- Include hearing aid batteries and other communication devices.

Support Network.

Identify two or three trusted friends or neighbors who you can rely on and also who can rely on you. Share your schedules and travel arrangements. Exchange keys.

Your Emergency Contact list should include the names and phone numbers of those in your personal support network, as well as the phone and address for your doctor(s), employer, medical facilities, such as dialysis center, and household members.

Older Americans/Marylanders Month Activities May 2007

Join us May 6th!



Governor Martin O'Malley and Secretary of Aging Gloria Lawlah invite all Maryland seniors to participate in "Bay Bridge Walk 2007" as part of the kick-off celebration for Older Americans/Marylanders' Month.

This family-friendly event is a wonderful opportunity to do something you can't do any other time of the year—walk across the bridge. It features beautiful views of Maryland's most precious natural resource – the Chesapeake Bay – and is a great opportunity to exercise and spend time with family and friends.

**T-shirts given to the first
500 senior participants**

For more details about the Walk and how you can register, call the Maryland Department of Aging at:

Local: 410-767-1100
Toll Free: 1-800-243-3425
TTY users call via Maryland Relay

or you can visit our website at:
www.mdoa.state.md.us



Willard Scott

Host of the popular
Centenarians Birthday Salute
NBC "Today" Show

is the **Guest Speaker** for the

15th Annual Maryland Centenarians Recognition Luncheon

(In observance of Older Americans'/Marylanders' Month)

on

Thursday, May 10, 2007

11:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Martin's West

6821 Dogwood Road

Baltimore County, MD

Cost: \$23.00 per person

Centenarians - No Charge

For more information or to register for the luncheon, call:

410-664-0911 or

Toll Free: 1-800-243-3425

TTY users call via Maryland Relay

Make your reservations by April 20, 2007

Local Area Agencies on Aging and Senior Centers throughout the State will be holding "Older Americans'/Marylanders' Month" activities during the month of May. For information about activities in your area, call your local Area Agency on Aging or the Maryland Department of Aging.

Governor O'Malley Swears In Cabinet Secretary Lawlah



Governor Martin O'Malley swears in Gloria Lawlah (center) as Secretary of the Maryland Department of Aging at the swearing in ceremony on March 20th at the State House in Annapolis. Holding the Bible is Secretary Lawlah's daughter, Gloria Gene Lawlah-Walker, while Lt. Governor Anthony G. Brown looks on.

"I am proud to formally add Gloria Lawlah to Maryland's Cabinet. She will help lead our state forward as Maryland faces the real challenge of protecting our seniors," said Governor O'Malley.

House Hunting Made Easy

This spring, MDHousingSearch.org will offer Maryland residents a free way to list and search for housing. People seeking housing online can utilize an easy-to-use search tool to look for specific amenities, whether pets are allowed, whether a property is furnished, where it's located on a map and much more. Listings will include private, affordable, subsidized, tax credit, single family and Section 8 housing, as well as senior housing and assisted living properties.



This service will be free to all users and is funded and supported by the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development.

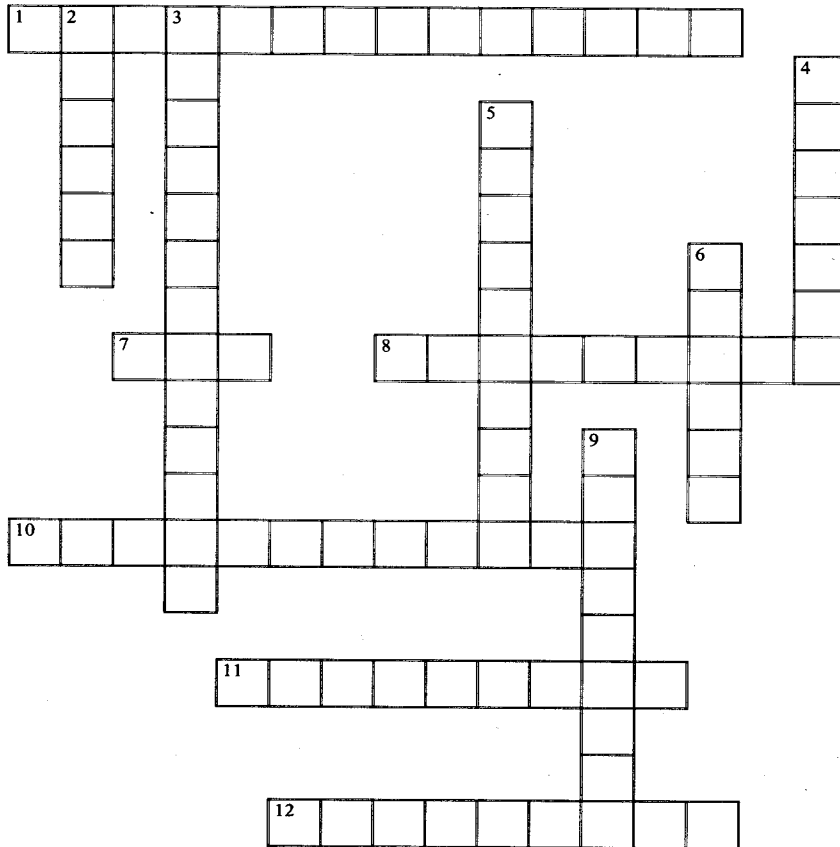
The site will include up-to-date housing information and resource links and is fully supported by a toll-free call center. The call center is available to assist all users that do not have access to or feel comfortable using the Internet.

The service is available now for property providers to list housing at:

www.MDHousingSearch.org.

The housing search tool is expected to be operational by the end of March.

Maryland My Maryland



ACROSS

- (1) Maryland State Flower.
- (7) This month is designated to honor seniors.
- (8) What Maryland resort is known as the "White Marlin Capital of the World"?
- (10) Undergraduate military college located in Annapolis.
- (11) The Capital of Maryland.
- (12) Maryland's largest man-made body of water.

DOWN

- (2) Secretary of the Maryland Department of Aging.
- (3) Largest body of water in Maryland.
- (4) The defense of what fort inspired "The Star Spangled Banner"?
- (5) On what island in Maryland do the wild ponies roam?
- (6) Maryland State Bird.
- (9) What Maryland structure is a memorial to William Preston Lane, Jr.?

For answers to the puzzle, go to the Maryland Department of Aging website at: www.mdoa.state.md.us, or look for the answers in the next issue of "Senior Wave."



Senior Wave is a quarterly publication of the Maryland Department of Aging.

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