

Care Connection broadens services

Care Connection is one of five Missouri area agencies on aging that have become Benefits Enrollment Centers.

As such, our agency will screen and enroll people of all ages in a wide range of benefits. We want to remind people to take advantage of cost savings programs provided by the government with the mantra: “You could be saving money.”

Here are the core benefits we will be able to help with:

- Medicaid, known in Missouri as MO HealthNet, provides medical services to low-income people.
- Low-Income Subsidy (also called “Extra Help”), provides financial assistance for prescriptions to those who meet income eligibility.
- SNAP, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, also known as food stamps, is for people of all ages who have trouble meeting their monthly food bills.
- Medicare Saving Programs allow people to get help from the

state paying Medicare premiums. In some cases, Medicare Savings Programs may pay Medicare Part A (Hospital Insurance) and Medicare Part B (Medical Insurance) deductibles, coinsurance, and copayments, if applicants meet certain requirements. The four kinds of Medicare Savings Programs include Qualified Medicare Beneficiary (QMB) Program; Specified Low-Income Medicare Beneficiary (SLMB) Program; Qualifying Individual (QI) Program and Qualified Disabled and Working Individuals (QDWI) Program.

- Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) assists families with energy costs by providing federally funded help in managing costs of energy and weatherization and energy-related minor home repairs.

Other benefits that we will be able to help people apply for include: Supplemental Security

Income; the Missouri State Pharmacy Assistance Program (MoRx); the Missouri Property Tax Credit also known as the Circuit Breaker; housing assistance, including USDA home repair, and the HUD Section 8 housing choice voucher program; and telephone access to programs such as the Telephone Assistance Program, Safelink Wireless, and Lifeline Discount Phone Service.

The Benefits Enrollment Center (BEC) is funded by a grant to the Missouri Association of Area Agencies on Aging. Call us at 1-800-748-7826 for more information.



OUR CENTERS

Butler Senior Center / **660-679-5830**
 Kern Senior Center (Rich Hill) / **417-395-2225**
 Cole Camp Senior Center / **660-668-2352**
 Warsaw Senior Center / **660-438-3300**
 Carroll County Senior Center / **660-542-0399**
 El Dorado Springs Senior Center / **417-876-5574**

Korth Senior Center (Stockton) / **417-276-5306**
 Brunswick Senior Center / **660-548-3010**
 Salisbury Senior Center / **660-388-5431**
 Clinton Senior Center / **660-885-3482**
 Windsor Senior Center / **660-647-3224**
 McCarty Senior Center (Wheatland) / **417-282-6100**
 Holden Senior Center / **816-732-5757**
 Warrensburg Senior Center / **660-747-2624**

Concordia Senior Center / **660-463-7393**
 Higginsville Senior Center / **660-584-7040**
 Margaret Gray Center / **660-259-2025**
 Odessa Senior Center / **816-633-4161**
 Sedalia Senior Center / **660-826-0713**
 Marshall Senior Center / **660-886-9888**
 St. Clair County Senior Center / **417-646-8292**
 Vernon County Senior Center / **417-667-5847**

Gardeners spring into action

It's beginning to look a lot like spring at the McCarty Senior Center in Wheatland. The center partners with the Master Gardeners Program at the University of Missouri Hickory County Extension to operate a greenhouse. Flowers

from the greenhouse will bloom all over the county, while produce from the garden will supply a ton of vegetables for the Senior Center consumption all year long.



Beti Pearson plants flowers.



From left, Karen Darby, Beti Pearson, Lora Driskill and Evelyn Brinlee welcome spring at the greenhouse on the McCarty Senior Center grounds.



David Stryker works the soil.

May is Older Americans Month

In May, the Administration for Community Living and our agency celebrate Older Americans Month to recognize older Americans for their contributions.

This year, in honor of the 50th anniversary of the Older Americans Act (OAA), we are focusing on how older adults are taking charge of

their health, getting engaged in their communities, and making a positive impact in the lives of others. The theme for Older Americans Month 2015 is "Get into the Act."

Older Americans Month provides an opportunity to raise awareness of the importance of community engagement to enhance

the wellbeing of older adults.

Our senior centers will mark the month with special events, so watch your calendars!

Together we can promote healthy aging, increase community involvement for older adults, and tackle important issues like the prevention of elder abuse.



Missouri SMP: Read your mail from Medicare



*Roary Hutt,
Missouri SMP Volunteer
Coordinator*

The Missouri SMP – the Senior Medicare Patrol – helps Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries avoid, detect, and prevent health care fraud.

Medicare fraud, waste and abuse cost billions of dollars annually. That's why it's important for beneficiaries to take an active role so that they do not become victims of the fraudsters.

One way to make sure you do not become the victim of Medicare fraud is to read your Medicare Summary Notices and Explanations of Benefits when they arrive in the mail. These are not junk mail. They are important documents that you can use to make sure that Medicare is being billed and paying for only

services that you have received at your doctor, hospital, clinic or other health care providers.

If you are enrolled in original Medicare, you should be getting a Medicare Summary Notice, or MSN. If you are enrolled in Medicare Advantage Part C plans or Part D drug plans, you will receive an Explanation of Benefits – or EOB.

Both documents tell you what services the health care provider billed for, the amount approved for payment, how much Medicare paid, and what you may be billed for.

Review your EOB or MSN as soon you receive it to make sure that you actually received all of the services listed. Keep a record of medical visits, tests, receipts for services, and equipment received. Compare your MSN or EOB statements to your receipts and records.

If you find a mistake, call your provider or plan with your questions. If you still have questions or need further help, call the Missouri SMP at 888-515-6565.

South Central Pension Rights Project offers free help with retirement plans

If you are one of the many Americans who have a pension or retirement plan and don't understand all the ins and outs, then consider using this free help to decipher your situation.

The South Central Pension Rights Project serves six states, including Missouri, to provide free assistance to anyone with a pension question or problem, regardless of age, income or the value of the claim. The district also includes Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas.

You may contact the South Central Pension Rights Project if you live or work in the region, if the company or pension plan is headquartered or has operations in the region, or if the company had operations in the district when you earned your pension.

The project was created because pension plans and laws are hard to understand; corporate mergers,



bankruptcies and volatile stock markets complicate matters; and very few other free and professional resources exist.

The SCPRP can help you by:

- Answering questions about complicated pension laws.
- Obtaining and explaining retirement plan publications, forms and other documents.
- Tracking down benefits from past employers.
- Referring you to other pension professionals as appropriate.

Pension counselors can assist with the retirement income plans offered by private and government employers; cash balance and other hybrid plans; and 401(k), 403(b) and 456 defined contribution plans.

Questions they field include whether you are entitled to a pension, what happens to your pension if you change jobs, whether you can get pension benefits from your ex-spouse, what happens to your pension upon your death, and what to do if you are denied all or part of your pension.

To get this help, call 1-800-443-2528 or visit the website at www.southcentralpension.org.

Norma celebrates 15 years



Norma Moldovan

Central Office Receptionist Norma Moldovan was honored for 15 years of service recently by Board of Directors Chairperson Mary Biesemeyer.

Norma also was chosen as the 2014 Older Worker of

the Year in our district.

She works 25 hours a week, answering the phones and receiving visitors.

She works with accounts payable to help process and mail payroll, files paper work, and assists program directors with projects. She staples, copies and collates, answers phones, shreds paper, runs the laminating machine and distributes mail.

We congratulate Norma on her service.

Schnell named Options Counselor



*Samantha Schnell,
Options Counselor*

Welcome to Samantha Schnell, who began work as Care Connection's new Options Counselor on Feb. 9.

Samantha completed training and became a licensed navigator for the Health Insurance Marketplace. She also completed Options Counseling training.

She has begun work with Special Projects Coordinator Stacey Gilkeson to provide "lunch-and-learn" education about the extra help available to Medicare recipients who meet certain guidelines.

She also is working on a "Savvy Senior" financial education program and on outreach to doctor's offices, hospitals, and pharmacies to let them know about agency services.

She is working on the training to become a counselor for CLAIM, "Community Leaders Assisting the Insured of Missouri," the official State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) for Missouri.

Before she began here, Samantha worked for 10 years in the business office at Central Family Medicine.

Samantha says she enjoys working at the agency.

"I really like it. One of the main things that attracted me to the job is that it is a non-profit, and the focus is on the clients or the people that we help rather than the bottom line and making a profit," she said.

Governor's release of HDM money lauded

Care Connection for Aging Services joined with the Missouri Association of Area Agencies on Aging in applauding Gov. Jay Nixon's release of \$400,000 in funds that were appropriated last year for home-delivered meals.

Funding for home-delivered meals has declined for the past six years; at the same time, the demand and cost of the meals have increased.

The home-delivered meals program provides an essential service to seniors who want to stay in their own homes and avoid long-term care facilities.

Care Connection provided more than 297,000 meals to more than 1,900 homebound seniors in fiscal year '14. We have cut costs by relying more and more on volunteers to deliver the meals.

The cost of nursing home care

far exceeds the cost of providing in-home services – including home-delivered meals – to elderly individuals.

Restoring funding for home-delivered meals makes good economic sense and also serves our mission to "empower people to create healthy aging experiences." Tell your legislators how you feel about senior services.

El Dorado Springs gets Coover grant

The Community Foundation of the Ozarks, in partnership with Commerce Trust Co., awarded \$10,000 to the El Dorado Springs Senior Center at the 2015 Coover Regional Grants ceremony in Springfield.

The funding will be used to provide supplies and replace one of the center's three air-conditioning units. The center also will replace a 25-year-old mixer used in the center's daily operations and for its fundraisers.

Cedar County Services Director Leonard Burton explained that the center is able to support most of the cost of providing about 23,000 meals a year to seniors and the homebound, but does not have much reserved for other expenses.

"Things go along well until



Community Foundation of the Ozarks Board Treasurer Roger D. (Dusty) Shaw presents a Coover grant to Jerry Bobbett and Leonard Burton along with CFO board member Karen Miller and Commerce Trust Vice President Jill Reynolds.

equipment starts breaking down," he said.

The Louis L. and Julia Dorothy Coover Regional

Grantmaking Program awarded the grant at a ceremony Feb. 26 at the Commerce Trust Co. in Springfield.

Francy Marr marks 20 years with agency



Mary Biesemeyer, Chairperson of the Executive Board of Directors, (left) presents an award to Francy Marr to mark her 20 years of service.

Administrative Assistant Francy Marr recently celebrated 20 years of service to our agency.

She began work at the agency on Jan. 30, 1995, and processed accounts payable and payroll until about 2000, when she became an administrative assistant.

Francy answers and directs agency telephone calls, assists callers, takes care of some data entry, and helps with mail and correspondence. Her duties also include keeping personnel files, requesting background checks, tracking insurance records, drivers'

licenses and birthdays, and helping with new employee orientation. She also helps arrange agency training events. "I help with all programs within our agency," she said.

Over the years, Francy said, she "got comfortable" with the agency, her job and her co-workers.

"I know everybody, and it's an easy environment to work in," Francy said. "And, I like helping the people who call in."

Francy's dedication is a testament to the commitment that Care Connection team members have to the seniors we serve.

We are ready to stand against abuse

June 15 is World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, and Care Connection for Aging Services will be using its cadre of volunteer ombudsmen to help get the word out, according to Regional Ombudsmen Director Kathy Ray-Smith.

This year, the agency will distribute 1,000 lapel buttons for people to remind them that “We stand for dignity, and we will not stand for elder abuse.” Volunteer ombudsmen and senior centers also will have special programs highlighting the importance of preventing elder abuse and will deliver information to nearly 1,700 home-delivered meal recipients.

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day focuses global attention on physical, emotional, and financial abuse of elders. It also seeks to understand the challenges and opportunities presented by an aging population, and brings together seniors, caregivers, government, academics, and the private sector to exchange ideas about how best to reduce incidents of violence

towards elders, increase reporting of such abuse, and to develop elder friendly policies.

An estimated one of every 10 elders endures some sort of abuse, and 90 percent of those folks are victimized by a family member or close friend. The abuse can be emotional, physical or financial in nature.

If you or someone you know needs information about elder abuse, call Regional Ombudsman Director Kathy Ray-Smith at 1-800-748-7826.



Agency processes SNAP applications for 136 people



*Marilyn Gunter,
Director of Care
Management*

Our agency has helped 136 qualified seniors and disabled people to apply for the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), also known as food stamps.

Many seniors who would qualify for food stamps do not apply, either because they think they have too much income

or because they feel a stigma attached to taking financial help. However, we want to remind seniors that they have paid into the governmental system all their lives, and there is nothing wrong with getting a benefit when they are older.

In addition, our counselors show people how to count their housing and medical expenses as deductions to their household incomes before they submit figures to be considered.

If you or someone you know could use help with a SNAP application, call us at 1-800-748-7826.

Program provides food for pets

Providing nutritious, hot meals in our 22 dining rooms and delivered to seniors in 13 counties is still at the core of what we do. Our staff and volunteers delivered nearly 300,000 meals to qualified homebound recipients last fiscal year.

Now the deliveries in Johnson County include a little something for Fido, or Tabby, or Pretty Boy the bird. Thanks to a grant from Banfield Charitable Trust, generous donations from individuals and the work of dedicated volunteers, the Warrensburg Senior Center is able to deliver pet food weekly along with hot meals to seniors who request it.

These pets “are the reasons we get up in the morning,” said Trisha Singer, one of the pet owners who benefits from the program. “We call them our babies.”

Among the recipients are Jack Patrick, 73, a disabled artist, of Warrensburg, and Andy, his 7-year-old schnauzer.

“They told me ‘We don’t want you to use the food we donate to you to feed to your dog. So, we are delivering you dog food, too.’ It’s a wonderful program,” said Patrick, whose glaucoma and arthritis keep him at home. “Andy is like a person. When I talk to him, he understands me. He’s a really good dog. I don’t know what I would do without him. I would be lost. He’s my best friend.”



Trisha Singer is one of more than two dozen home-delivered meal recipients who appreciate the donations of food for her pup.

Of nearly 100 meal recipients along six routes in Warrensburg, about 25 percent receive pet food for dogs, cats and one bird.

“For many, the pet’s face is the only face they see all day. Their mate is gone and the children gone,” Johnson County Services Director Melissa Gower said. “But that pet is still at their feet.”

Volunteer delivery driver Bill Turnage said he’s happy to deliver the pet food.

“Their pets are so important to them. And given a choice of them eating or the pets eating, some have a hard decision,” Turnage said.

Andy Poslusny, 76, an Air Force retiree, initiated the Warrensburg project when he heard that some home-delivered meal recipients were sharing their people food with their pets.

“Some have had to give their pets away,” he told The Kansas City Star for a news story. “That’s not right. So we’re helping them out. We even have a cockatiel we take food for.”

The story gained the attention of the Kansas City Star, Fox 4 News in Kansas City, and then nationally via the wire services. The national publicity resulted in additional donations, including a \$500 gift that came from Texas. In all, about \$3,500 has been received for pet food.



Sophie Collins, left, watches as volunteer Home-Delivered Meal Driver Mona Williams tries to feed her furry friend a few nibbles of kibble.

Direct III Area Agency on Aging
Care Connection for Aging Services
312 Washington Ave.
Sedalia, MO 65301-4550

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VISION: *The people we serve will live with maximum independence, respect and dignity.*

MISSION: *Care Connection will provide resources and services that empower people to create healthy aging experiences.*

Founded in October 1973, Care Connection is one of 10 Missouri area agencies on aging that resulted from the 1973 amendments to the federal Older Americans Act. As such, the agency is required to provide nutrition, in-home services, disease prevention and health promotion, transportation, information and assistance, advocacy and outreach, and legal services. Our agency also provides a Long-Term Care Ombudsman, Tax Counseling for the Elderly, and the Missouri Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP).

The agency operates with federal and state funds, county taxes, program fees, cash donations, and in-kind donations and volunteer services. About

one-third of its money comes from donations and in-kind contributions. This newsletter was funded through the Department of Health and Senior Services provision of the Older Americans Act. Its contents were edited by Public Information Coordinator Kaye Fair under the guidance of Rona McNally, Director of Special Projects, and Diana Hoemann, Agency Executive Director.

If you would like to make a contribution, please mail a check to Care Connection, P.O. Box 1078, Warrensburg, MO 64093 or visit us at www.goaging.org to make a donation via PayPal. You may designate a particular center and/or program to receive your donations.