

**COMMISSION ON AGING  
REGULAR MEETING**

**APRIL 16, 2018 5:00 pm**

**THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO THE APPROVAL BY THE COMMISSION ON AGING.**

The Commission on Aging held a regular meeting on Monday, April 16, 2018 at 5:00 pm at the Newtown Municipal Center, Council Chambers, 3 Primrose Street, Newtown, CT.

**Call to order:** Ms. Wiedemann called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm.

**PRESENT:** Anna Wiedemann, George Guidera, Barbara Bloom, John Boccuzzi, Anne Rothstein, Curt Symes, Larry Passaro, Maureen Will.

**ABSENT:** LeReine Frampton, Ruby Ryles, Mae Schmidle, Claire Theune.

**ALSO PRESENT:** First Selectman Dan Rosenthal, Marilyn Place, Ann LoBosco, Officer Maryhelen McCarthy, 12 members of the public.

**VOTER COMMENTS:** *Officer Maryhelen McCarthy, Newtown Police Department* - Officer McCarthy spoke to a case of elder care abuse coming up April 23 for sentencing, the University of New Haven has asked Newtown Police Department to participate in a symposium on May 15, based on the work done on this case, especially the coordination between all involved.  
*Mary Maday, 107 Haley Lane* - Ms. Maday asked when will the key fob system be activated. Ms. Place replied it will be in shortly, there were a few delays. Ms. Maday also inquired about an evaluation of current programs. This will be brought up in subcommittee meeting.  
*Rose West, 50 Elizabeth Circle* - Ms. West suggested to improve planning for class schedules in order to be effective and maintain/improve membership at the Senior Center, giving an example of an exercise class, members were rushed at the end to make room for tables and chairs for lunch.

**MINUTES: MS. BLOOM MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MARCH 18, 2018 COMMISSION ON AGING MEETING. SECOND BY MR. GUIDERA. ALL IN FAVOR. MOTION PASSES. (8-0)**

**REPORTS:**

**CHAIR REPORT:** Ms. Wiedemann distributed the monthly report. (ATTACHMENT) Ms. Wiedemann highlighted upcoming programs - Donna Fedus events, Livable Community event, Friday, May 4 in the afternoon is the opioid crisis program with a guest speaker, Senior Prom, Mother's Day Tea.

**VICE CHAIR REPORT: Programming Update** – Mr. Guidera attended a recent public Building and Site Commission meeting regarding the new Community Center/Senior Center, moving along financially pretty well, bids coming in about right. Mr. Rosenthal said that all is going well from a budget standpoint, \$250,000 of contingency built into the project for community, BOS are meeting tonight, Public Building and Site Commission voted to accept value engineering provided by Caldwell Walsh, BOS expect to ratify tonight with established project price. As contingency becomes available, advisory commissions/committees will have a change to weigh

## COMMISSION ON AGING

in. Mr. Symes said in 2014-15 the original plan came in at approx. \$2.5 million, value engineering is within plan. Mr. Boccuzzi asked for clarification about a combined contingency fund. Mr. Rosenthal said the number is in aggregate. 21% of costs to the Senior Center, cumulatively on the whole project is approx. \$250,000 in contingency.

**DIRECTOR OF SENIOR SERVICES:** Ms. Place distributed the monthly report, reviewed updates of events. (ATTACHMENT) Ms. Place highlighted the Transportation Forum Lunch and Learn at the Senior Center on June 22, encouraged everyone to attend and ask questions and another Lunch and Learn on June 15 entitled Laugh for the Health of It! Mr. Symes pointed out the need to provide seniors with referrals for services in the community, various methods like the handbook, bulletin board posts, local newspapers, Facebook, are helpful, but more needs to be done. Ms. Will suggested publicizing in other places like doctor's offices. In the new Senior Center there can be a space dedicated for available resources. Ms. Wiedemann agreed and added there is a need to do a better job publicizing.

**DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES:** Ms. LoBosco distributed the Director of Social Services report. (ATTACHMENT) Ms. LoBosco started renters rebate, state will handle the program this year, for the food pantry there is a Postal Food Drive May 12, and highway department is going to be doing a food drive, they will be busy and will need volunteers. Ms. LoBosco attended Medicare Choices Training. Mr. Symes asked about improvements about Medicare Part D, Ms. LoBosco said it will be phased out possibly by 2020.

**TREASURER'S REPORT:** Ms. Rothstein shared the Treasurer's Report. (ATTACHMENT) MR. BOCCUZZI MOVED TO FILE THE FINANCIAL REPORT FOR AUDIT. SECOND BY MR. SYMES. ALL IN FAVOR. MOTION PASSES. (8-0)

**Sub-committee's: Grants Committee** – Mr. Boccuzzi said there is an opportunity to apply for a transportation grant, he reviewed the grant with Christal Preszler, Newtown Deputy Director of Economic and Community Development, the grant will fund a model, using the van at the Senior Center to augment local transportation. Mr. Boccuzzi looked for support to go ahead with the grant application. Ms. Wiedemann questioned the need for a financial impact statement, citing the Town charter, and necessary procedures. Mr. Guidera said before applying for the grant the Town needs to be involved. Ms. Will suggested to review with Bob Tait at this juncture before proceeding. Mr. Rosenthal suggested that the COA should see the grant details and be reviewed by Bob Tait. Ms. Wiedemann suggested to make a motion to bring to Bob Tait. Mr. Boccuzzi added that the motion could include to move forward based on his approval. Ms. Will would like more information and would like to see a link to the grant, information, implications and impact can be reviewed. Mr. Boccuzzi to share the link. There is a sense of urgency to move forward, there is a May deadline. Mr. Guidera asked for information in writing with as much notice as possible. Ms. Rothstein suggested to systematize the grant process, include a checklist and schedule to keep track of grants and be proactive, Ms. Wiedemann would like to see a better process going forward. MS. ROTHSTEIN MOVED TO APPROVE SUBMISSION OF THE GRANT CONTINGENT WITH REVIEW WITH MR. TAIT IF NO NEGATIVE IMPACT IS FORESEEN BY MR. TAIT MOVE AHEAD WITH TRANSPORTATION GRANT SUBMISSION. SECOND BY MR. BOCCUZZI. ALL IN FAVOR. MOTION PASSES. (8-0)

### **OLD BUSINESS:**

**Nunnawauk Meadows petition** – Ms. Wiedemann said that this is out of COA purview and needs to be brought before the Nunnawauk board.

**Senior Center/Community Center update** – covered in the Vice Chair report.

## COMMISSION ON AGING

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

**Approve invoice for payment for speaker, Donna Fedus, Gerontologist (motion made at 3.19 COA meeting by Mr. Boccuzzi approving amount)**

**Mural for new Senior Center** – Mr. Boccuzzi looked to move ahead with the mural for the new Senior Center, process already under way, materials ordered. Ms. Will received inquiry from the Newtown Bee regarding the response from the senior community. Time frame and outreach reviewed. MS. BLOOM MOVED TO ACCEPT THE GRANT AND MOVE FORWARD WITH THE MURAL FOR THE SENIOR CENTER. SECOND BY MR. GUIDERA. ALL IN FAVOR. MOTION PASSES. (8-0)

**VOTER COMMENT:** *Officer Maryhelen McCarthy, Newtown Police Department* - Officer McCarthy sat on a panel at the Agency on Aging of South Central Connecticut Stop Ageism Campaign, on the panel Officer McCarthy expressed the need to protect seniors from elder care abuse, transportation was discussed a study found seniors concern was not about the lack of transportation but how seniors were treated related to transportation. Officer McCarthy referred to making community resources available to seniors and provided the examples of how the police department provides assistance and knows where to direct seniors appropriately to community resources in order to resolve issues.

*Mary McClenathan, Nunnawauk Meadows* – Ms. McClenathan advised the benefits of attending the Triad presentation and knowledge gained of community happenings; take the time to look and refer to the rack of pamphlets at the Senior Center for a wealth of information about resources in the community, reach out and ask questions. Regarding transportation, the van needs to be worked on, driver considerations.

*Rose West, 50 Elizabeth Circle* – Ms. Rose asked what kind of phone/communication system to announce events, Ms. West provided an example of “flash call” to promote an event, and recommends this type of effective method to promote an event or activity.

**ADJOURNMENT: THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS, MR. GUIDERA MADE A MOTION TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 6:00 PM. SECOND BY MR. BOCCUZZI. ALL IN FAVOR. MOTION TO ADJOURN PASSES. (8-0)**

Respectfully submitted,

June Sgobbo, Clerk

Attachments: Chair Report, Director of Senior Services Report, Elder Law Trusts and Probate Announcement, Laugh for the Health of It, Transportation Forum, Director of Social Services/Municipal Agent for the Elderly Report, Treasurer's Report.

## **APRIL 16, 2018 COMMISSION ON AGING CHAIR REPORT**

I was able to connect with Donna Fedus, the Gerontologist who is going to do the two programs ("If I See Something, Do I Have to Say Something...or Do Something?" and the other is Successful Communication Given "Alzheimer's Logic?") for us on Saturday, June 2<sup>nd</sup> and Saturday June 16<sup>th</sup>, 1-3pm at Nunnawauk Meadows. LeReine and I will provide refreshments. LeReine has already checked with the Health Department, so we are all set to go.

There was a meeting for Public Building and Site – I will let George Guidera report on this at our meeting on Monday since he was the one who was able to attend. I am looking at various sites regarding Grants through the program that Andy Forsyth was kind enough to share with me. I was under the impression that it is a program that spells out specific grants and that I could print them out and approach Christal Preszler for help. It is only a vehicle that will tell you what companies, organizations, etc. offer grants, type of grants and sometimes the amount. So this will be a lengthy process to research all the links. But it is something that is open to the public to go and see what type of grants they have. It is a very costly program but the library is already looking into purchasing it for more computers in the library. LeReine was there with me and there are grants that possibly, she as a Nunnawauk Meadows board member can find. So they're out there, you just have to know what to look for but the program provides various ways to "drill down" to meet your criteria. You just need to contact Andy at the CH Booth Library and she will be happy to schedule a time for you and review the process.

The Programming Sub-Committee will be meeting at 4:15 on Monday (prior to our regularly scheduled COA meeting) at the Municipal Center. Our COA meeting will then meet at **5PM ALSO AT THE MUNICIPAL CENTER**. All meetings, except May, will take place at the Municipal Center in the Council Chambers.

Upcoming events:

- Saturday, April 28, Livable Community at Newtown High School from 9am-2pm. All are welcome to attend. Let John Boccuzzi or Ned Simpson know if you'd like to attend.
- Friday May 4, 4-8pm, "Senior Prom" at NHS (call Park and Rec to sign up)
- Friday, May 11, 1:00pm Mother's Day Tea and Bingo (sign up at SC desk)
- Saturday June 2 and Saturday June 16, 1-3pm, Nunnawauk Meadows. Donna Fedus is the guest speaker.

Just a reminder that our May meeting will be in the Lower Meeting Room at Edmond Town Hall at 5pm.

Happy Weekend everyone, Anna

NEWTOWN SENIOR CENTER  
 Director of Senior Services  
 March 17, 2018 – April 13, 2018

PROGRAMS                      NUMBER OF ATTENDANTS ( MARCH )

Meditation	36
Exercise Tape	73
Flex and Fit	100
Fitness Fury	38
Floor Yoga (2 days)	105
Chair Yoga (2 day)	72
Cards	78
Mah Jong	4
Bingo/Keno	40
Lunch	81
Hot Dog/pizza Luncheon	
Knitting	28
Jewelry	6
Bible Study	6
Iris Fold cards	
Quilting/sewing	8
Walk-Ins	21
Billiards/ping pong	8
Crafts	
Trips	10
Newsletter	
Wii	4
Painting/Art	8
Special events/entertainment	172
Tai Chi	33
Qi Gong	24
AARP Safe Driving	17
Ballroom dance	6
Barn Dance	48
Women's Discussion	26
Spanish Lessons	46
Speakers	52
Chair Pilates	46
Strength & Balance	32
Inter-generational w/ CAC	80
Password	8
Blood Pressure	15
AARP Taxes	258

Attendance Daily:

Monday	Tuesday	Wed.	Thurs	Friday	Monthly Attendance
319	275	124	305	178	1201

**COMPLETED EVENTS:**

- Complimentary Massage March 20
- Scarf Painting March 22
- NSC Recognition Day April 13
- Brazilian Carnival/Mardi Gras April 4

**UPCOMING EVENTS:**

- Inspirational Speaker April 18
- Cake Decorating 101 April 19
- Maplewood Tour April 25
- Psychic Medium April 27
- Senior Prom May 4
- Mother's Day Tea May 11
- Lasagna & Sinatra May 25
- Summer Breeze entertainment w/ Bob Mel June 1
- Ice Cream Social June 8

**TRIPS:**

- Westchester Broadway Dinner Theatre April 19
- Historic South Savannah GA @ Charleston SC April 14-21
- Edward Twins @ Aqua Turf May 21
- Historic Saratoga Springs, NY May 15-16
- Sight & Sound Theatre "Jesus" & Lancaster, PA Aug 6-8

**CRUISES:**

- Bermuda w/ Norwegian Escape April 29 - May 6, 2018
- Ireland, Iceland and Scotland w/ Celebrity Eclipse May 10 - 20, 2018

**SPEAKERS:****Lunch and Learns:**

1. Living Without Pain May 4
2. Elder Law, Trusts & Probate Legal seminar June 6
3. Motivational speaker Trevor Smith Laugh for the Health of it June 15

**Health & Wellness Program:**

Matter of Balance 8 week course sponsored by BVNA & Newtown Health dept.

May 2- June 20

- Filled with wait list

Three new classes have been added to the already program schedule all facilitated by volunteers.

1. Jewelry class
2. Women's Discussion Group
3. Bible Study (starts Wednesday March 21)

**UPDATE:**

**All three have started w/ some new faces.**

**Also, Silk scarf painting once a month sponsored by River Glen. Very popular. Will continue through the summer.**

AARP income tax asst. is from Feb 5<sup>th</sup> to April 9<sup>th</sup>. (Mondays) By appt. only. Free of charge for low and middle-income taxpayers. Completely filled with waiting lists.

**UPDATE:**

**Season is done and 258 seniors utilized this great service.**

**Transportation Forum with HART.**

It is scheduled Friday June 22 @ noon. This is also a Lunch & Learn.

May 4 is a Lunch & Learn with Newtown Prevention Council, Newtown Parent Connection, and Newtown Center for Support and Wellness.

Topic: Living With (Out) Pain.....Safe Solutions to Pain Management

Stepanie R Paulmeno, MSRN from Communities 4 Action will discuss the opioid epidemic and its impact on the senior population.

Friday May 11 Annual Mother's Day Tea

Donna Fedus Aging and Caregiving from a New Perspective is scheduled @ Nunnawauk

Friday May 25 Lasagna and Frank Sinatra entertainment

Today's Senior Recognition Day event was well attended with 60 seniors in attendance to support and honor our senior volunteers. Follow by Senior Social. A great day.

More to report on Monday

Marilyn

# ELDER LAW, TRUSTS & PROBATE

## Legal Seminar

**Protect your assets, minimize taxes,  
And avoid loss of control.**

Come learn how to use Elder Law strategies, Trusts and Probate to protect assets from Medicaid and VA Aid & Attendance pension, reduce taxes (estate and capital gains taxes), preserve control over your affairs and avoid litigation, and provide for loved ones by protecting resources after your death.

**Come hear a discussion on the urgent questions facing every senior today:**

- **How can Irrevocable Trusts qualify me for VA Aid & Attendance and Medicaid?**
- **How do Revocable Living Trusts prevent loss of control?**
- **How does Probate protect my loved ones?**
- **Can a family member have me declared incompetent?**
- **How can a Trust in my Will preserve assets for my family?**

**Hon. Daniel W. O'Grady** is Northern Fairfield County District Probate Judge (including Newtown) and has practiced Estates and Probate law for close to 30 years.

Danbury attorneys **Thomas E. Murphy and Michele F. Murphy** have practiced Elder Law, Estate Planning and Probate law for over 50 years combined.

**Wednesday June 6, 2018 12:00-1:30 PM**

**Newtown Senior Center, 14 Riverside Road, Sandy Hook, CT**

**RSVP (203) 270-4310**

**Lunch provided by Bethel Health Care and The Cascades Assisted Living.**







# LAUGH FOR THE HEALTH OF IT!

**Friday June 15 @ Noon**

**LUNCH & LEARN**

Join Trevor Smith B.A. M.A. M. ED, CLL Founder of Blue Sky Consulting, a training and development organization from Springfield, MA. w/ Fifteen years of experience as a Therapeutic Recreation Specialists mental health practitioner.

## **What is Laughter Therapy?**

- Laughter Therapy is a systematic, structured health promotion program that uses a combination of simple, empowering and tension releasing laughter exercises and actions combined with gentle breathing techniques in a supportive environment.
- Laughter is initially simulated as a physical exercise while maintaining eye contact with others in the group and promoting childlike playfulness. This leads to real and contagious laughter.
- Science has proved that we cannot differentiate between simulated and real laughter
- Laughter Therapy is the only method that allows adults to sustained hearty laughter without using cognitive thought.
- As a combination of physical and mental activities, Laughter Therapy is a powerful tool to reduce stress, promote group cohesion and trust, increase energy, burns calories, lower your blood pressure and heart rate and provide a superior cardiovascular workout.
- These exercises are appropriate and beneficial for all.
- A Laughter Therapy session begins with gentle warmup techniques which include stretching, chanting, clapping and body movement.
- Breathing exercises are used to prepare the lungs for laughter followed by a series of artificial forms of laughter exercises that combine the method of acting and visualization techniques with playfulness.

## **Learning Outcomes**

**At the conclusion of the program, participants will learn strategies to:**

- Reduce daily stress to allow for greater productivity and efficiency
- Develop a positive attitude towards self and others (reduce hardening of the attitudes and foster flexible, open, creative thinking)
- Minimize anxiety and feelings of isolation
- Discover a new sense of mental balance and perspective
- Fosters trust, team collaboration and leadership

## **Discuss six principles of Good hearted living with group discussion**

- The leader introduces the six principles
- The participants focus on one behavior at a time.
- The leader uses stories to illustrate meaning of each practice and to give the participants some idea of what kinds of behaviors/attitudes are included
- Introduce a few little tricks (exercises) that will help focus the mind on the mindfulness practices.

**Sign up at front desk for reservations or call 203-270-4310**

## **Lunch and Learn   Transportation Forum   Friday June 22 @ 12:00**

Richard Schreiner, Director of Service Development and John Gatto, Marketing and Graphic Design Coordinator for HARTransit along with April Chaplin, Regional Mobility Manager for the Kennedy Center will talk about the Newtown SweetHART bus and regional transportation. HARTransit is the public dial-a-ride transportation provider for greater Danbury.

In Newtown, HARTransit runs a door to door bus service with advanced reservations called SweetHART for seniors age 65 or older and persons of any age with mobility impairments (including temporary ones). SweetHART service is available in Newtown Monday-Friday from 7 am to 4:45pm and Saturday from 8:15am to 4:15pm. The bus runs to locations in Newtown, Danbury, Brookfield and Bethel.

The Kennedy Center is a non-profit community based rehabilitation organization offering innovative, comprehensive program services to persons with disabilities and special needs from birth to senior years.

Ms. Chaplin assists persons with disabilities, seniors and veterans with ADA Paratransit applications and referrals for free one-on-one travel training on public bus or train services. She is a resource and advocate for anyone who needs information about public/paratransit buses or any other transportation-related issue.

**This forum will provide information and answer questions.**

**Sign up at the front desk by June 15.**

**DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES/MUNICIPAL AGENT FOR**  
**THE ELDERLY**  
**April 2018**

**Program Statistics**

Energy Assistance Applications – 2017-2018 (168 applications – 104 Senior/Disabled = 62%)

Food Pantry (56 individuals/families visit weekly – 39 Senior/Disabled = 69%)

Operation Fuel (Winter/Spring program) – (14 applications – 6 Seniors = 43%)

Salvation Army – (22 applications to date - \$8,395.92 total – 11 Senior/Disabled = 50%)

Renter's Rebate for 2017 – 5 applications to date

- Received a large donation to our Food Pantry from St. Rose as well as Stop & Shop. The Postal Food Drive will be on Saturday, May 12<sup>th</sup>; we are beginning to get the word out and look for volunteers.
- Attended Medicare CHOICES training on March 28<sup>th</sup>. Planning a presentation at Nunnawauk Meadows with the WCAAA counselor to discuss changes to Medicare, new Medicare cards, etc.
- Update: Senior at Masonicare (elder abuse) is now home. She now has a home health aide and a homemaker/companion helping her with her daily activities.
- I have attached a couple of announcements from CMS regarding proposed policy changes to Medicare Advantage and Part D, including lower costs for prescription drugs for seniors.



Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services

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## CMS proposes Medicare Advantage and Part D payment and policy updates to provide new benefits for enrollees, new protections to combat opioid crisis

**Date** 2018-02-01

**Title** CMS proposes Medicare Advantage and Part D payment and policy updates to provide new benefits for enrollees, new protections to combat opioid crisis

**Contact** [press@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:press@cms.hhs.gov)

### CMS proposes Medicare Advantage and Part D payment and policy updates to provide new benefits for enrollees, new protections to combat opioid crisis

Today, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) released proposed changes for the Medicare health and drug programs in 2019 that increase flexibility in Medicare Advantage that will allow more options and new benefits to Medicare beneficiaries, meeting their unique health needs and improving their quality of life. Furthermore, the proposal includes important new steps to ensure new patient-doctor-plan communication in combatting the opioid crisis.

As a part of these changes, CMS is redefining health-related supplemental benefits to include services that increase health and improve quality of life, including coverage of non-skilled in-home supports, portable wheelchair ramps and other assistive devices and modifications when patients need them.

"Our priority is to ensure that our seniors have more choices and lower premiums in their Medicare health and drug plans," said CMS Administrator Seema Verma. "We are focused on addressing the specific needs of beneficiaries and providing new flexibilities for Medicare Advantage plans to offer new health-related benefits. This is a big win for patients."

CMS has previously not allowed an item or service to be eligible as a supplemental benefit if the primary purpose included daily maintenance. Under the new policy announced today, CMS would allow supplemental benefits if they compensate for physical impairments, diminish the impact of injuries or health conditions, and/or reduce avoidable emergency room utilization.

CMS also announced new action to combat the nation's opioid epidemic through its effective oversight of programs that have successfully reduced opioid overutilization by Part D enrollees. The agency is also designing the framework of several new policies that would give health plans additional tools to better manage chronic overuse among beneficiaries by ensuring patient-doctor-plan communication regarding opioid use.

Medicare Advantage remains a popular choice among beneficiaries and has high satisfaction ratings. In 2018, Medicare Advantage and Part D premiums decreased and the number of Medicare Advantage plans available to choose from across the country increased from about 2,700 to more than 3,100 – and enrollment in Medicare Advantage is at an all-time high as approximately one-third of all Medicare beneficiaries are enrolled in a plan.

The proposed updates will result in a payment increase that promotes stability and insures that resources will be available to support beneficiaries enrolled in private Medicare plans.

For a fact sheet on the 2019 Advance Notice, Part II, and the Draft Call Letter, please visit: <https://www.cms.gov/Newsroom/MediaReleaseDatabase/Fact-sheets/2018-Fact-sheets-items/2018-02-01.html>. CMS released Part I of the Advance Notice on December 27, 2017.

The 2019 Advance Notices (Part I and Part II) and Draft Call Letter may viewed by going to: <https://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Health-Plans/MedicareAdvtgSpecRateStats/Announcements-and-Documents.html> and selecting "2019 Advance Notices." Comments on the proposed Advance Notices and Draft Call Letter are invited from industry, seniors, consumer advocates, and the public and must be submitted by March 5, 2018. The 2019 Final Rate Announcement and Call Letter will be published on Monday, April 2, 2018.

###

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## CMS lowers the cost of prescription drugs for Medicare beneficiaries

**Date** 2018-04-02

**Title** CMS lowers the cost of prescription drugs for Medicare beneficiaries

**Contact** [press@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:press@cms.hhs.gov)

### CMS lowers the cost of prescription drugs for Medicare beneficiaries

Today, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) finalized policies for Medicare health and drug plans for 2019 that will save Medicare beneficiaries money on prescription drugs while offering additional plan choices.

"The Trump Administration is taking steps for seniors with Medicare to save money on prescription drugs," said CMS Administrator Seema Verma. "The steps we are taking will drive more competition among plans and pharmacies to meet the needs of seniors and lower costs."

The final policies announced today further the Trump Administration's commitment to lowering drug prices. CMS is finalizing a reduction in the maximum amount that low-income beneficiaries pay for certain innovative medicines known as "biosimilars." Other actions that CMS is finalizing to lower the cost of prescription drugs include:

- Allowing for certain low-cost generic drugs to be substituted onto plan formularies at any point during the year, so beneficiaries immediately benefit and have lower cost sharing.
- Increasing competition among plans by removing the requirement that certain Part D plans have to "meaningfully differ" from each other, making more plan options available.
- Increasing competition among pharmacies by clarifying the "any willing provider" requirement, to increase the number of pharmacy options that beneficiaries have.

Today's announcement builds on the work of the Trump Administration to lower out-of-pocket drug prices. In Medicare, a rule implemented for 2018 will help beneficiaries save on coinsurance on Part B drugs administered at hospitals that participate in the 340B program by reducing the amount Medicare pays for those drugs. The 340B program allows hospitals to buy drugs at a lower cost. Due to CMS's policy change last year, Medicare beneficiaries are currently benefiting from the discounts that 340B hospitals receive. Beneficiaries are saving an estimated \$320 million on out-of-pocket payments for these drugs in 2018 alone. CMS is also providing new information today to help hospitals implement this change, including how this change applies for Medicare Advantage plans that provide Medicare benefits through private insurance.

CMS is also finalizing policies that respond to the President's call to end the scourge of the opioid epidemic. These policies provide Medicare with additional tools to combat opioid overprescribing and abuse, and to protect families and communities across the nation. For example, CMS is finalizing a new authority that permits Part D sponsors to require beneficiaries at risk of addiction or overuse to use only selected prescribers or pharmacies for opioid prescriptions.

As part of today's announcement and guidance, the agency is reinterpreting the standards for health-related supplemental benefits in the Medicare Advantage program to include additional services that increase health and improve quality of life, including coverage of non-skilled in-home supports and other assistive devices. CMS is expanding the definition of "primarily health related." Under the new definition, the agency will allow supplemental benefits if they compensate for physical impairments, diminish the impact of injuries or health conditions, and/or reduce avoidable emergency room utilization.

The final policies also advance the "Patients Over Paperwork" initiative – an effort aimed at removing regulatory obstacles and empowering patients to make informed healthcare decisions; developing innovative approaches to improving quality, accessibility, and affordability; and improving beneficiaries' customer experience. Specifically, the final policies will:

- Authorize CMS to permit plans to use notice of electronic posting (and provision of copies upon request) to satisfy disclosure requirements for certain bulky documents to Medicare beneficiaries.
- Improve transparency of the Star Ratings that give beneficiaries information about each Medicare Advantage and Part D plan's quality rating. The changes put patients first by increasing the weight given to patient experience and access measures.
- Streamline government review and approval of marketing materials Medicare health and drug plan use.

For a fact sheet on the 2019 Rate Announcement and Final Call Letter, please visit:  
<https://www.cms.gov/Newsroom/MediaReleaseDatabase/Fact-sheets/2018-Fact-sheets-items/2018-04-02-2.html>. For a

## COA/SENIOR SERVICES GIFT FUND

Monday, April 16, 2018

				FRANK KNOTTS	NEW		
DATE	RECEIPTS/DISBURSEMENTS	C/D	C/R	TRUST FUND	SENIOR CENTER	GRANT	BALANCE
1/16/2018	Nov P-Card-Big Y	(71.34)					51,576.08
1/18/2018	Ck # 30740 - Xavus Solutions LLC	(7,500.00)					44,076.08
1/18/2018	Trust Distribution T-35678			562.15			44,638.23
3/14/2018	Senior Center shirts T-47021		40.00				44,678.23
		(7,571.34)	40.00	562.15			44,678.23