Each year, more older adults are choosing Florida as their home. We are proud to have more than five and a half million older residents, as well as the highest population percentage of 65+ in the nation. These numbers may not sound that high to you, but they really are impressive. In fact, our senior population outnumbers the senior population of 20 other states combined, as well as the TOTAL POPULATION of Alaska, Delaware, North Dakota, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Vermont, and Wyoming.

All projections tell us that our population of older Floridians will continue to grow – by more than 38% in fact – over the next decade. Our seniors drive what we do every day at the Florida Department of Elder Affairs as we work to help them age with dignity, respect, and independence. We are striving to make Florida an Age-Friendly state full of Livable Communities where we all can live and live well, and we take the opportunity this month to celebrate and recognize those residents who make our state so great.

As volunteers, employees, employers, educators, mentors, advocates, parents, and grandparents, older Floridians offer insight and experience that benefit the entire community. That’s why Older Americans Month (OAM) has been recognizing the contributions of this growing population for more than 50 years.

Led by the U.S. Administration for Community Living (ACL) each May, OAM provides resources to help older Americans stay healthy and independent, and resources to help communities support and celebrate their diversity.

This year’s theme, Connect, Create, Contribute, encourages older adults and their communities to:

- **Connect** with friends, family, and local services and resources.
- **Create** through activities that promote learning, health, and personal enrichment.
- **Contribute** time, talent, and life experience to benefit others.

The Florida Department of Elder Affairs will celebrate OAM by promoting ways that Floridians of all ages can take part in helping our communities thrive. We encourage you to connect with us and your local Area Agencies on Aging or Councils on Aging to learn more about the resources available to help you and your family live and live well. Follow us on Facebook and Twitter for more updates on our programs, projects, and goals. We want to inspire you to create through art, social media, or even an oral history project with your family, and we hope that you will continue to contribute to your communities and our great state.

Communities that support and recognize older adults are stronger. I invite you to join DOEA in strengthening our communities this May and throughout the year.

Visit our Department website at elderaffairs.org, as well as the official OAM website at acl.gov/oam/2019/older-americans-month-2019, for ideas and inspiration and to learn more about how we are working to make Florida an Age-Friendly State.
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**LETTER FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF**

*Allison Burtoft, Editor-in-Chief*

2019 is shaping up to be a busy year at the Florida Department of Elder Affairs (DOEA). This year began with focuses on Alzheimers’ initiatives and creating Livable Communities. Through these efforts, we are developing ways to better serve our 5.5 million seniors in Florida. In addition to these key initiatives, the Department participated in many events and continued to provide resources to elders throughout the state.

At the end of February, DOEA kicked off March for Meals month by participating in Elder Care Services’ Big Wheels Deliver Meals Program. Several leaders represented the Department, including Secretary Richard Prudom. Big Wheels Deliver Meals supports Elder Care Services’ mission to promote community-based, compassionate care. The event brought together more than 50 volunteers, who delivered hot meals and snacks while visiting with Tallahassee seniors.

On March 27, over 1,000 seniors celebrated Florida Senior Day in the State Capitol Courtyard. Guests enjoyed entertainment from senior groups and local performing groups throughout the day. The day also included free breakfast, lunch, and a special noon program with speakers and leaders from across the country.

Following Senior Day, we celebrated our many volunteers during Florida Volunteer Month in April. The Department had the opportunity to thank our many volunteers including those from our SHINE program and the Long-term Care Ombudsman Program. We are so thankful for our volunteers, as they allow us to continue to provide services to seniors throughout the state.

This May, we celebrate Older Americans Month with our partners at the Administration for Community Living. This is our opportunity to thank older Americans for their contributions. We encourage seniors to stay engaged, as older adults play an important role in keeping our communities diverse. The 2019 theme encourages seniors to stay involved in their communities by keeping in mind these three concepts: Connect, Create, and Contribute.

We are lucky to serve such an incredible senior population, and we are thankful to celebrate these moments with you.

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**SUDOKU**

There is only one valid solution to each Sudoku puzzle. When you start a game of Sudoku, some blocks will be pre-filled for you. You cannot change these numbers in the course of the game. Each column must contain all of the numbers 1 through 9, and no two numbers in the same column of a Sudoku puzzle can be the same. Each row must contain all of the numbers 1 through 9, and no two numbers in the same row of a Sudoku puzzle can be the same. Each block must contain all of the numbers 1 through 9, and no two numbers in the same block of a Sudoku puzzle can be the same. Good luck!

Solution found on page 22.

www.brainbashers.com

Sudoku Puzzle © Kevin Stone
SPECIAL THANKS
Elder Update staff is deeply gratified by the many generous donations given recently by our readers. Your generosity and kindness are truly appreciated, and your donations will be used to ensure the continued production of Elder Update.

- Mrs. Rose Webberly
- Ms. Julia DeCicco
- Ms. Juanita Prinz
- Ms. Elizabeth Helms

THIS JULY:
Elder Update’s Special Edition Disaster Preparedness Guide

Our annual Disaster Preparedness Guide is coming to Elder Update subscribers in July 2019. Stay tuned for facts and information on how best to prepare for disasters that affect our home state. Our Disaster Preparedness Guide includes safety tips for hurricanes and other natural disasters. The Florida Department of Elder Affairs works with the Florida Department of Emergency Management and FEMA to best prepare Florida citizens for all circumstances. We encourage you to take every opportunity to get ready for hurricane season, which begins on June 1, and read our Disaster Preparedness Guide upon its release to ensure you have the resources you need for natural disasters.

PSA 3
News From Our Local Planning and Service Areas

Kathy Dorminey
Elder Options

Abuse Later in Life Grant
Elder Options was awarded the Abuse Later in Life grant by the Office on Women’s Health. The grant provides funds to employ a full time Elder Abuse Prevention Coordinator who will work with the Senior Advocacy Network of North Central Florida to address elder abuse as part of a community-wide effort partnering with legal professionals, first-responders, health professionals, and other concerned community members.

Dementia Care & Cure Initiative/Aging Friendly Communities
Elder Options is working with a community coalition to focus on developing the greater Gainesville area as an aging and dementia friendly community. We are inviting businesses to participate in dementia training and to become designated “dementia friendly” businesses. The Alachua County Fire Rescue is currently providing dementia training to all their first responders.

38 Years of Service to Area Agency on Aging
Mr. Charles Miller, Board President, was recognized at the March 6, 2019, Board of Directors meeting for 38 years of service to seniors, caregivers, and persons living with disabilities through the Area Agency on Aging, Elder Options, serving PSA 3. Elder Options is honored by his caring and commitment.

Pictured Right: Kristin Griffis presenting an award to Charles Miller for his 38 years of service.

Florida is divided into 11 Planning and Service Areas (PSAs). Each PSA is made up of several counties that receive services through an Area Agency on Aging (AAA) centrally located in the PSA. AAAs contract with the Department of Elder Affairs to provide services locally that best meet the needs of elders.

PSA 3 includes Alachua, Bradford, Citrus, Columbia, Dixie, Gilchrist, Hamilton, Hernando, Lafayette, Lake, Levy, Marion, Putnam, Sumter, Suwanee, and Union counties and is served by Elder Options.

Caregiver Lunch and Learn Series
In response to expressed needs from community members, Elder Options has launched a series focusing on providing family caregivers with opportunities for socialization while gaining information and skills to better address the needs of the persons to whom they give care and to care for themselves.

T-Care Assessment Tool (Pilot)
Caregivers experience a great deal of stress. This impacts their health and general sense of well-being. The right tools can go a long way in reducing that stress and improving their quality of life. We are excited to partner with TCARE® to provide comprehensive assessments that will identify the needed resources to help caregivers take care of their loved ones and themselves as well.
Applications for Reverse Mortgage Relief Close at the End of June

Taylore Maxey
Florida Housing Finance Corporation

The Florida Housing Finance Corporation is announcing that the Elderly Mortgage Assistance Program (ELMORE) will close the program to new applications on June 30, 2019.

Do you owe your reverse mortgage lender/services money for taxes, insurance, and/or association dues? Are you facing the threat of foreclosure? There is a program that could help! ELMORE is designed to provide up to $50,000 to eligible seniors with reverse mortgages or assistance with property taxes, insurance policies, and association dues and other property charges. If you qualify for assistance, you could also receive help with up to 12 months of future property charges.

The ELMORE program is open and accepting applications until June 30, 2019. Now is the time to apply. To assist seniors in applying for the ELMORE Program, Florida Housing Finance Corporation has established a partnership with the Florida Department of Elder Affairs (DOEA) and National Foundation of Debt Management (NFDM), a certified reverse mortgage counselor.

The NFDM counselors are available to assist seniors in completing the Florida ELMORE application. They will be happy to answer questions about the program and explain the requirements. This service is FREE-OF-CHARGE and seniors will not be asked to pay for any services.

Please call 1-800-601-3534 to talk with an ELMORE counselor who can answer any questions and let you know the steps that need to be taken to get you qualified. The line is open Monday-Friday, 9:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.

There will be ELMORE events throughout the state where you can meet with a counselor to assist you with the application. Call our toll-free line to find out if an event will be in your area to set up an appointment for a face-to-face meeting.

For a complete description, terms of assistance, and eligibility criteria for the ELMORE program, visit floridaelmore.org.

Senior Homeowner Alert: What You Should Know About P.A.C.E. Financing

Ellen Cheek, Esq.
Florida Senior Legal Helpline

What Is P.A.C.E. Financing?
P.A.C.E. stands for “Property Assessed Clean Energy.” It is a program authorized by Florida statute which provides an option for financing an energy-saving home improvement like a high efficiency air conditioner or ENERGY STAR windows and doors, for example. P.A.C.E. is actually a fairly complicated program, but there are a few simple points that can help a homeowner understand what a P.A.C.E. home improvement involves and what a homeowner should know before committing to a P.A.C.E. financing agreement.

These improvements are NOT FREE. The cost of the improvement is added to your property tax bill, even if you do not usually have to pay property taxes. There is no exemption, like the homestead exemption, for this obligation. This is the “Property Assessed” part of “Property Assessed Clean Energy.” Payments must be made to the Tax Collector each year until the debt is paid, sometimes for as many as 20 years.

Eligibility for P.A.C.E. financing depends upon several factors that focus on the property. For example, the property taxes and mortgage, if any, must be current. The property cannot be in foreclosure, nor be the subject of a recorded involuntary lien such as a construction lien.

But, unlike with a conventional loan/financing, there is no consideration of your income or assets. That means that if your property meets the above requirements (no liens or unpaid taxes or mortgage arrears, etc.), your financing will likely be approved without consideration of your ability to pay the new property tax assessments. If you have a mortgage, you must consider whether you have the ability to pay an increased monthly payment because your escrow will go up to accommodate the increased property taxes. YOU must decide whether you can afford to make these payments.

Home improvement contractors who participate in P.A.C.E. programs often come door-to-door, and they can make P.A.C.E. sound very appealing. For example, they may say that the government wants you to exchange your old appliance for a more efficient model. They may also say that you don’t have to pay anything now. But remember: these improvements are NOT FREE and the cost to you will be on your property tax bill.

Participating contractors may also say that you will be entitled to an income tax refund or credit. But that is only the case for a “qualified improvement” AND only if you pay income taxes. If you do not pay income taxes, you will not get a credit or refund. Even those who do should talk to a tax professional for additional information.

Finally, a contractor may tell you that the new appliance/improvement will pay for itself in utility bill savings. That is not always the case and is certainly not guaranteed. Furthermore, having a P.A.C.E. lien on your property may impact your ability to refinance or sell your property.

As with any home improvement, protect yourself! It’s important to be very wary of home improvement contractors who come door-to-door. You should always ask for their Home Solicitation Permit and their Contractor’s License Number. You may call the Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation (1-850-487-1395) for licensing information. Do not sign a document on a tablet or other device if you cannot see the whole document or you haven’t read/understood it, and never sign your name on a tablet or other device or a piece of paper that is blank.

Remember that the business wants YOUR business; take your time in making a decision on any improvement to your home. In addition to checking up on the contractor’s licensing information, tell them you need time to consider whether you can afford an increased property tax assessment or an increased escrow amount.

For advice or more information about P.A.C.E. financing, you may call The Florida Senior Legal Helpline (1-888-895-7873) which provides free legal advice for eligible Florida seniors.
WHEN YOU SHOULD CHOOSE A PROFESSIONAL GUARDIAN

Al Rothstein
Florida State Guardianship Association

If you become involved in helping a loved one during the guardianship process, it is important to know the difference between the types of guardians. Guardianship is a legal proceeding in the circuit courts in which someone is appointed to exercise the legal rights of an incapacitated person.

There are family members who sometimes take the role, as well as professional guardians.

While many family members can be excellent guardians with proper training, sometimes they are not the best choice. A neutral, experienced properly-trained professional guardian has many advantages.

TYPES OF GUARDIANS
Some of the differences in professional and family guardians are as follows:

Non-professional/Family
- Any guardian who has rendered services to less than three persons

- Training:
  » Satisfactorily complete eight hours of training
  » May not have been convicted of felony, judicially determined to have committed abuse, abandonment, neglect, or certain other offenses
  » May not be in employ of person, agency, government, or corporation giving service to proposed person
  » Be represented by attorney

Professional
- Any guardian who has received compensation for services to two or more non-related individuals under guardianship

- Training:
  » Complete 40 hours of training and successfully pass competency exam
  » Complete 16 hours of continuing education every two years
  » Obtain a blanket bond of at least $50,000
  » Register with the Office of Public and Professional Guardians
  » Undergo credit and criminal background checks

The following top 10 situations, compiled by members of the Florida State Guardianship Association (FSGA), show when it is not a good idea to have a family member as the guardian of a loved one:

1. If the adult children cannot agree on who should be the guardian. This can cause disruption and ongoing controversy, which results in inconsistent care for the ward, the person under guardianship.

2. A family member may be disruptive in a negative way to health care providers and staff at the nursing facility where the ward is staying, if they don’t agree with the facility’s care.

3. A family member may be financially exploiting the ward and isn’t complying with reporting requirements.

4. A ward’s mental illness may be so severe his behavior so offensive that:
  » His older siblings can’t handle him or his affairs. He is verbally abusive to them and they cannot maintain a relationship.
  » It becomes a situation in which family members are no longer trained enough to assist.

5. If the ward’s children were abandoned by the ward during a divorce. Their relationship may be so tarnished that they don’t want the responsibility of managing the ward’s affairs.

6. If the ward’s siblings are out of state and have seldom visited, and their parents are deceased, or if the ward is estranged from family members who later come out of the woodwork because they see a financial benefit.

7. If the ward lost money to scammers and has no family member capable of making sure he doesn’t fall victim again.

8. A guardian’s responsibilities, including the accounting and reporting to the court, can simply be too intimidating for a family member.

9. The family member may have filed for bankruptcy in the past seven years, so they cannot get bonded.

10. If a family member has committed a federal crime, they would be disqualified to serve as a guardian.

There are many devoted family member guardians, and sometimes that is what the ward prefers. But we must all recognize that sometimes it’s just not in the ward’s best interest.

If you have questions about the guardianship process, please don’t hesitate to contact us at floridaguardians.com. We are here to uphold the highest standards of guardianship in Florida so that our most vulnerable citizens get the proper care they deserve.
Angelique Witmer
Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program

“Family members will tell you a lot. Always figure that what a resident or their loved one tells you is right. Don’t dismiss them because they’re older or may have dementia,” says Frank.

For Frank, his most important contribution to residents is in making sure they know he is there for them and working to earn their trust and confidence. His primary way of doing this is by attending resident council meetings. Resident councils are created by and for residents to be an instrument of self-advocacy. Frank makes a point to attend any meeting he is invited to.

“The resident council meeting is one of the most important tools to gather information on how to help,” says Frank.

Frank gauges the level of respect facility staff show residents by whether resident councils receive support. He has seen examples of unsupportive facility staff at meetings he has attended. Once, uninvited staff members continuously interrupted a closed meeting. On another occasion, staff insisted upon taking the meeting minutes. Once, Frank helped residents reset a meeting room strewn with chairs, tables, and items from previous activities.

“Many residents are in wheelchairs and have limited mobility. They should not have to move tables and chairs and clean up a room,” Frank says. “Staff need more education on residents’ rights concerning resident councils.”

Frank often provides education to residents and staff about residents’ rights. He diplomatically negotiates on behalf of residents using skills and techniques he developed over the years as a sales director. He teaches new volunteers to approach every situation with the same gentle kindness he uses to obtain positive results for residents.

“‘It doesn’t help to go into conversation with a puffed up chest like you just scored a touchdown. Kindness opens possibilities. There’s not many directions you can go with confrontation except for more confrontation,’” says Frank.
Recently, he put gentle kindness into action by facilitating a way for residents at multiple facilities to obtain a state issued I.D. without having to withstand long lines or worry about transportation. Frank learned from one resident about difficulties using banking services without a state I.D. He researched to determine whether other residents were experiencing similar trouble, as elders in long-term care may have turned in their driver’s licenses.

Frank discovered many residents had experienced similar problems. He began contacting local county resources and arranging for groups of residents to receive identification cards without having to wait in lines. He negotiated with facility staff to arrange for groups of residents to be transported by bus and also distributed necessary forms to facilities for residents to fill out ahead of time with staff assistance.

“As an ombudsman, I have to be thinking all the time, outside of the box – not just what’s on paper,” says Frank.

“No specific training, instruction, or experience prepared Frank for such a great advocacy,” said State Ombudsman Michael Milliken. “He single-handedly worked out a solution for many residents at multiple facilities that can be applied in other areas of the state for the benefit of all residents.”

Frank hopes for more volunteers like himself who are willing to spend time with residents and advocate for their rights.

“As a salesperson, I had to make calls and show up to get results. I apply this strategy to advocating for residents. I show up to get results. I’m 88. If I can do it, others can, too,” says Frank, who also hopes for increased protections for long-term care residents through legislative change.

“Existing policies need to be weighted more in the interest of residents,” warns Frank. “Facility staff sometimes don’t thoroughly review documents with residents and their families who may not know what they’re signing.”

Frank gives an example of residents at one facility who each were billed a fee of several hundred dollars from the facility, following the state’s requirement for long-term care facilities to have back-up generators. Frank advocated for all residents and was able to negotiate an agreement with the facility to provide refunds to any residents who had paid a fee.

“Frank is the nicest guy,” says North Central Ombudsman Lori Berndt. “He daily inspires me with his hard work and persistence to help residents. He is an amazing role model and gladly takes on any challenge.”

As for Frank, age is just a number and no excuse for inactivity. When he’s not visiting with residents or working with other volunteers, he is likely playing bridge or gin rummy at weekly matches.

“I think I’m alright; however, some of the guys I play with think they are fantastic!” Frank exclaims.

Recently, Frank walked out in the middle of rummy playoffs to attend a resident council meeting.

“I had an opportunity to win some money in the playoffs, but I needed to know what was going on with some residents who weren’t able to have private meetings or hold votes,” explains Frank.

Frank doesn’t anticipate retiring from ombudsman duties any time soon.

“I share a car, but if I had my own, I’d be volunteering even more. Money couldn’t pay me enough for what I get out of helping long-term care residents. This program is great for long-term care residents and it’s great for me. It gives me exercise and keeps me mentally alert and sharp. I hope I never have to retire from this work. Because I’m 88, I know I will – I can’t go on forever. But, I’ll do it as long as I can, the best I can,” he said.

Each May, the nation observes Older Americans Month to recognize the key role older adults play in the vitality of our neighborhoods, networks, and lives. Most volunteers with the Florida Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program are older adults. Volunteer ombudsmen are passionate about improving the quality of care and quality of life for people currently living in long-term care settings and those who will need long-term care in the future. According to the Department of Health and Human Services, today’s 65 year olds have an estimated 70 percent chance of needing long-term care at some point. Of all current 65 year olds, about 20 percent will need long-term care for more than five years.1

“It is our honor to highlight Frank,” says State Ombudsman Michael Milliken. “There are only so many special people, and Frank is one of them.”

The dedicated volunteers of the Florida Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program were asked to share local stories highlighting how a resident was helped by their work. The stories, submitted from all over the state, are bound together by residents who have a better quality of life and increased quality of care due, in part, to the dedicated efforts of volunteer ombudsmen.

WITHLACOOCHEE
A facility prohibited two romantically involved residents from spending time together, sharing a room, or even touching without staff supervision. The administrator did not think one of the residents possessed the ability to consent. The local ombudsman attended a care plan meeting with facility staff, both residents, and the residents’ families to advocate for the residents’ rights to be in a consensual adult relationship. The ombudsman suggested a physician evaluate the ability of the resident to consent. Later, a physician determined the resident was capable of giving consent. Staff then agreed to respect the residents’ privacy, intimate relationship, and need for physical contact.


SOUTH CENTRAL
An elder involved in a car accident during a hurricane was placed in the first available facility far from their home due to the emergency situation. After the storm, the resident received no assistance from staff to transfer to a facility closer to their home. The resident also had difficulty traveling to search for a new facility. The local ombudsman advocated on behalf of the resident, which led to the resident soon being able to move into a facility closer to their family and friends.


SOUTH DADE & THE KEYS
A resident received a discharge notice after making complaints. The resident did not want to leave their home and was concerned the facility was evicting them in retaliation for making complaints. The facility owner told the local ombudsman that the discharge notice was given to the resident before the resident made any complaint. The ombudsman discovered dated records showing the discharge was issued after a complaint investigation began. The ombudsman notified the licensing agency, which resulted in the facility having to rescind the discharge notice and allow the resident to continue living at the facility.


PALM BEACH
Residents who wanted to form a resident council asked the local ombudsman for assistance. The ombudsman informed the administrator that a “resident committee” organized and operated by the facility for administrative purposes was not a true council for residents. The ombudsman arranged a meeting between the facility owner and residents after learning the administrator did not believe residents wanted a resident council. At the meeting, residents voiced their concerns to the owner. Afterwards, a staff member was designated to assist residents in forming their new resident council. Many residents attended the first meeting and voted for officers to lead the council.


EDITOR’S NOTE
We will continue to highlight the successes of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program throughout upcoming issues in the series titled Local Council Success Stories.
LONG-TERM CARE OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED IN THE PANHANDLE

Nancy King
Panhandle District Ombudsman Manager
Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program

Volunteers are a unique and dedicated group of people who come from all walks of life to work together for the greater good. In the aftermath of Hurricane Michael, volunteers have spent countless hours helping with ongoing recovery and cleanup efforts. Despite these efforts, one vulnerable group of Floridians is at risk of being overlooked and underrepresented.

People living in long-term care facilities such as nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and adult family care homes rely upon volunteers with the Florida Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program to advocate for their health, safety, welfare, and rights. They may feel alone, isolated, and without a say in their daily care. Unfortunately, many of them do not have anyone to look out for their best interests. Nearly 60 percent of long-term care residents do not receive visits from family and friends. Additionally, many frail elders in long-term care may be unwilling or unable to speak up for themselves. Even though retaliation against a resident is prohibited by Florida law and subject to penalty, some long-term care residents and their families are afraid of what will happen to them if they make a complaint.

Volunteers with the program, called ombudsmen, become state-certified to handle complex long-term care issues and stand up for residents’ rights. Ombudsmen identify, investigate, and resolve complaints made by or on behalf of long-term care residents and assess living conditions at each long-term care facility. They advocate on behalf of residents and make recommendations to facility administrators for changes that will improve residents’ quality of life.

Hurricane Michael displaced most volunteer ombudsmen in Bay and the surrounding counties, creating a shortage of long-term care advocates in the area. Last year, volunteers addressed over 170 complaints in the area with 105 of those in Bay County alone. With over 3,300 long-term care beds in close to 50 long-term care facilities throughout the area, the volunteer shortage is already affecting residents.

The Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program has immediate openings for volunteer positions in Bay and surrounding counties. An ideal candidate is patient, compassionate, has good listening skills, and possesses a genuine concern for long-term care residents’ well-being. Advocating for long-term care residents requires professional training, provided by the state. Meal and mileage reimbursements are available for training and volunteer hours. Long-term care advocacy is well-suited to those who can make a commitment of at least one year and are able to devote at least a few hours a week to checking on residents’ well-being. The work is often challenging but the rewards are immense.

As one volunteer ombudsman puts it, “I enjoy the smiles, handshakes, and interaction with residents. Our long-term care residents need someone who is genuinely concerned about them…my father once told me that if you don’t do something to help other human beings, you might as well not be here. I enjoy making people happy and staying productive in my retirement. My reward is in helping people.”

To become an advocate for long-term care residents in Bay and surrounding counties, call the Panhandle District Office at 1-850-921-4703. For more information and to view training materials, visit ombudsman.myflorida.com. Ombudsmen are also available to give presentations to civic and religious organizations and at community events about long-term care resident advocacy and residents’ rights.

Anyone concerned about the quality of life and care in a Florida long-term care facility may contact the district office number listed above or the state hotline at 1-888-831-0404. All calls are confidential, and callers may remain anonymous. All services are free.

The Florida Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program, administratively housed at the Florida Department of Elder Affairs, seeks to improve the quality of life and care for all Florida long-term care residents.

Like us on Facebook or visit us at ombudsman.myflorida.com.

The Department of Elder Affairs supports the authority of the Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program to independently advocate for the health, safety, welfare, and rights of long-term care residents. Consequently, the views and opinions expressed by the Office may not represent the official policy or position of the Department of Elder Affairs or its employees.
When Am I Required to Provide My Social Security Number?

SHINE
Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP)

Who has the right to request your Social Security number? Federal law mandates that state Departments of Motor Vehicles, tax authorities, welfare offices, and other governmental agencies request your Social Security number (SSN) as proof that you are who you claim to be. However, the Privacy Act of 1974 requires that government agencies at the local, state, and federal level disclose to each person whether submitting your Social Security number is required, details on the use of this information, and what law or authority requires its use.

Please note that this Act stipulates that no one can deny you a government service or benefit for failing to provide your SSN unless federal law specifically requires it. You aren’t legally required to provide your SSN to businesses unless one of the following is true:

- You’ll be engaging in a transaction that requires notification to the Internal Revenue Service, or
- You’re initiating a financial transaction subject to federal Customer Identification Program rules.

If you refuse to provide your SSN, companies may choose not to do business with you, but there’s no law that prevents them from asking for it. These are some examples of businesses that require a Social Security number for legitimate purposes:

- Credit card companies, lenders, and any other companies receiving a credit application from you;
- Insurance companies;
- The three main credit reporting agencies: TransUnion, Equifax, and Experian; and
- Any company that sells products or provides services that require notification to the IRS, including investment advisors; banks; real estate purchases; financial transactions over $10,000 (such as automobile purchases) and other financial transactions.

It’s important to remember that once a company has your Social Security number, there are few restrictions on what they can do with it. Therefore, you will want to share this information only when necessary or required by law. Being very careful about sharing your SSN or any other personal information is a recommended way to help deter identity theft.

Essentially, if providers are requiring your SSN, the only real reason they would need it is for collections purposes. Personally, I always refuse. If they do not provide services without your SSN, I go to another provider. That is my personal choice. If this is a provider who is requiring your SSN and you want to use them, I would ask them multiple questions like: How will they use this information? How is the information safeguarded (both electronically and physically)? Where is the information stored (both electronically and physically)? How long will they retain this information? Are staff trained on how to protect this information? How do they ensure this information is protected from misuse by employees, etc.?

Unless I am applying for a loan, credit card, or other transaction that requires my Social Security number BY LAW, I refuse to provide it (unless they can answer the questions above to my satisfaction). And as the article says above, the business may choose not to do business with me.

Source: identityhawk.com/Who-Can-Lawfully-Request-My-Social-Security-Number
Dear Judy,
I am retiring and looking for a volunteer organization that helps people. A friend mentioned the SHINE Program. Can you tell me about SHINE and who to contact? Can my wife volunteer with me?

Thank you,
Mr. Peters

Dear Mr. Peters,
Thank you so much for inquiring about the SHINE Program. It is a program that I have proudly volunteered for during the past 10 years. Yes, your wife can volunteer with you.

Each state has a SHIP (State Health Insurance Assistance Program) which is an independent program funded by federal agencies and is not affiliated with the insurance industry. In Florida, the SHIP Program is called SHINE (Serving Health Insurance Needs of Elders). The SHINE Program provides Medicare and health insurance counseling and information from an unbiased source. It also participates in the SMP (Senior Medicare Patrol) Program which empowers seniors to prevent Medicare fraud.

SHINE’s services are available to Medicare beneficiaries, their families, and caregivers. The mission of the Florida SHINE Program is to support the Florida Department of Elder Affairs by providing free and unbiased health insurance counseling through a dedicated network of volunteers, empowering Florida seniors to make informed health care choices.

SHINE volunteer counselors can do the following:

- Help you understand your Medicare benefits;
- Help you choose the Medicare Prescription Drug plan that best fits your needs;
- Help you choose a Medicare Advantage Plan if you choose to receive your Medicare benefits this way;
- Answer your questions about Medigap, long-term care insurance policies, and other health insurance programs for seniors and individuals with disabilities;
- Assist you with your Medicare claims and appeals and other Medicare issues; and
- Assist you with applying for the MIPPA (Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act) Program if you qualify. Benefits are available for qualified Medicare beneficiaries to help save money on the following:
  - Monthly Part D Drug Plan premiums
  - Co-pays for prescriptions
  - Monthly Part B premiums
  - Co-pays for Medicare services and visits
  - Medicare deductibles.

SHINE volunteer counselors also deliver educational presentations in the community and distribute promotional materials.

SHINE volunteers receive professional training from the Department of Elder Affairs and the local Aging and Disability Resource Center. Volunteering with SHINE provides an opportunity to learn new skills, meet new people, and gain knowledge about Medicare. Volunteers experience the pride of being part of an award-winning team and the personal fulfillment of helping others.

To begin volunteering with SHINE, you will need to complete an online application, participate in SHINE training, and agree to uphold the integrity of the SHINE Program. You can complete an online volunteer application at [floridashine.org](http://floridashine.org) by clicking the “Join Our Team” link at the top of the page. You will also need to complete the Online Orientation located on the website. Call SHINE at 1-800-96-ELDER (1-800-963-5337) if you would like to apply in person or if you have additional questions regarding the onboarding process.

Judy Archey is the Area Coordinator for Putnam, Alachua, Bradford, and Union counties. She also serves as a statewide trainer for the Department of Elder Affairs’ SHINE Program.

If you have a question you would like answered in our new Dear Judy column, please send an email to information@elderaffairs.org. You may also send a question by regular mail to:

Elder Update: Dear Judy
Florida Department of Elder Affairs
4040 Esplanade Way
Tallahassee, FL 32399-7000
State Leaders Engage in Discussion at Florida Senior Day Events

Allison Burtoft
Editor-in-Chief, Elder Update

The Florida Department of Elder Affairs and United Way hosted a Senior Day Forum and Dinner on Tuesday, March 26. The forum included a meeting of professionals in the elder care service industry and allowed for leaders to engage in discussions on new goals and share ideas on opportunities to move forward.

Industry professionals were seated around the Champions Club at Florida State University to ask questions and listen to the panelists' answers. The panel of speakers included Department of Elder Affairs Secretary Richard Prudom, Statewide Prosecutor and leader of the Senior Protection Team in the Office of the Attorney General Nick Cox, Executive Director of Florida Department of Veterans’ Affairs Danny Burgess, Statewide President of AARP Jeff Johnson, and Area Agency on Aging President Kristen Griffis. The forum was moderated by Ann Barrett, the Director of the Claude Pepper Center.

The speakers discussed current challenges in the elder care industry and what their organizations and departments are doing to overcome these challenges. Subjects ranged from questions about the Senior Protection Team to how Area Agencies on Aging are meeting the needs of their local elders. Secretary Prudom discussed the Department of Elder Affairs’ goals for Florida to become an age-friendly state.

Jeff Johnson of AARP explained how Florida is preparing for future increases in our aging population, and Danny Burgess of FDVA discussed how we can better meet the needs of the 800,000 veterans in Florida.

The forum was followed by a seated dinner, which welcomed over 50 seniors to join leaders from throughout the state. Secretary Richard Prudom served as the Master of Ceremonies and welcomed guests joining the dinner. Following Secretary Prudom’s introduction, U.S. Assistant Secretary on Aging Lance Robertson shared his goals for the aging population with the audience and discussed specific challenges and opportunities for growth.

PICTURED ABOVE: U.S. ASSISTANT SECRETARY ON AGING LANCE ROBERTSON AND DOEA SECRETARY RICHARD PRUDOM

The Senior Day forum and dinner was a great opportunity for discussion and allowed leaders from across the state to kick-start goals, share ideas, and look for ways to best serve the citizens of Florida.
Another Successful Florida Senior Day

Allison Burtoft
Editor-in-Chief, Elder Update

On March 27, the Florida Department of Elder Affairs and United Way of Florida hosted the annual Senior Day event. More than one thousand seniors gathered from throughout the state to enjoy a day in the Florida Capitol Courtyard and to let their voices be heard. Seniors arrived at the event beginning at 10 a.m. and were welcomed with bags and other items from the Department of Elder Affairs. The day was kicked off with a complimentary breakfast, free health screenings, and exhibitors distributing information on resources available to people throughout the state. Visitors also enjoyed a free lunch, entertainment from performers throughout the state, and a noon program with guest speakers.

Throughout the event, guests were welcomed by exhibitors sharing information on their organizations and causes. Exhibitors included multiple state agencies, sponsors such as Humana and Feeding Florida, and other educational resources to elders including Scent Evidence K9, which uses scent-tracking K9s to find missing persons. Visitors were invited to ask questions, request more information, and take the opportunity to speak with exhibitors at each booth before and during performances.

Guests were entertained as performers showed their skills with dance and music sets. Sharon Fox kicked off the show with a saxophone serenade, easing the audience into the morning. Later, the Alachua Cha Chas showed their moves to the audience. The Miami Gardens Super Soul Steppers kept the crowd entertained with an Aretha Franklin tribute. Just before noon, Harmony, Jake Gaither Mature Adults Dance Group, Dazzling Diamonds, and the Sophisticated Gents kept the energy levels high with fun step-dance routines to upbeat music.

As guests enjoyed their complimentary lunch, performances broke for the mid-day special program. Ted Granger from United Way began the program by thanking partners and sponsors for their involvement in Senior Day. He introduced Department of Elder Affairs Secretary Richard Prudom, who spoke to the audience about the importance of Senior Day and his goals for advocacy for the needs of elders. Secretary Prudom welcomed U.S. Assistant Secretary for Aging Lance Robert-

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Why We All Should Care About Alzheimer’s Disease

Clinical Trial Research

Dr. Jean Fils, MD
Dr. Thea Moore, Pharm D
USF Memory Disorders Clinic

Progressive forgetfulness, confusion, difficulty keeping up with daily functions, and the most likely diagnosis is? You’ve got it. Alzheimer’s disease (AD) dementia.

With over half a million Floridians living with AD, we are becoming experts in this condition that is devastating for the individual suffering from it, as well as for the person’s family and friends. More devastating is the fact that there is no cure, and the current treatment options are not great. Medical research has always facilitated how the science of medicine advances the knowledge about diseases and finds treatment or a cure.

Different types of research studies vary according to their goals, yet each type is essential in the fight against AD. Clinical trial research, also referred to as clinical studies, is the type of research that aims at determining whether a proposed treatment or cure is safe or really works. The search for new treatments or a cure for AD needs to continue. For that purpose, volunteer participants are needed at different stages of such research. Healthy individuals, as well as individuals with AD, may participate in research. Volunteer participants work with researchers throughout a series of well-planned and monitored steps until completion of the clinical study. Potential risks versus benefits are taken into account in the planning and throughout the course of the clinical study by all parties involved, from pharmaceutical sponsor to site participant and volunteer.

Since so many are affected by AD in one way or another, the research to find better treatment options or a cure serves everyone’s interest. While some do not participate due to the potential risks a new treatment may pose, many want to be part of the solution, seeing the benefits from personal to global.

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Governor DeSantis Highlights Key Alzheimer’s Initiatives

On March 14, 2019, Governor Ron DeSantis highlighted key initiatives aimed at supporting Floridians living with Alzheimer’s and their caretakers. Speaking at the Evening of Hope fundraiser hosted by the Alzheimer’s Association in Palm Beach, the Governor outlined the measures taken by his administration.

“Floridians living with Alzheimer’s deserve our support and as long as I’m Governor, they can count on it,” said Governor Ron DeSantis. “I’m proud to announce our administration has taken important steps to ensure our state assists these individuals in getting the care they deserve and prioritizes the advancement of research needed for this disease.”

“Our administration is committed to working diligently to improve the lives of Floridians living with Alzheimer’s,” said Lieutenant Governor Jeanette Núñez, who has been a prominent leader on health care throughout her time in the Florida House of Representatives and now through her work in the administration. “As the number of Floridians with this disease continues to grow, our state must take bold steps to find innovative solutions aimed at assisting these residents.”

“I’m extremely grateful that Governor DeSantis is demonstrating strong leadership to take Alzheimer’s research and awareness to the next level,” said Richard Prudom, Secretary of the Florida Department of Elder Affairs. “This issue affects millions of Floridians, not just those living with dementia, but the caregivers and families affected as well. We look forward to working with the Governor and our sister agencies to make a difference in the lives of Florida families.”

Since taking office, Governor Ron DeSantis has:

1. Directed the Department of Health to add Alzheimer’s and related dementias as a priority in the State Health Improvement Plan. Alzheimer’s is the sixth leading cause of death in Florida, and yet it is not directly addressed by the SHIP.

2. Directed the Department of Health to apply to be a Center of Excellence pursuant to the Federal BOLD Act, in order to position Florida to pursue and receive federal grants for evidence-based approaches to treatment and prevention of Alzheimer’s, dementia and cognitive decline. The Federal BOLD Act, signed in 2018, authorizes $20 million annually over 5 years ($100 million total) that would establish Alzheimer’s Public Health Centers of Excellence to promote Alzheimer’s disease and caregiving interventions as well to educate the public about the disease.

3. Challenged institutions that house Florida Memory Disorder Clinics to provide matching funding to the clinics to allow for an increase in the number of individuals they serve with evaluation and diagnostic testing for dementia. Currently, the State of Florida has designated and funded 16 Memory Disorder Clinics (MDCs) which are established at medical schools, teaching hospitals and similar institutions. Each receives $222,801 in general revenue annually.

4. Challenged local communities, which have not already done so, to expand the Dementia Care and Cure Initiative in their areas. Currently all but three Areas Agencies for Aging (AAA) are engaged in the Dementia Care and Cure Initiative (DCCI). In August 2015, the Department of Elder Affairs announced the Dementia Care and Cure Initiative to engage communities across the state to be more dementia friendly, promote better care for Floridians affected by dementia, and support research efforts to find a cure.

5. Released the Bold Vision for a Brighter Future Budget which included funding to help those with this disease. The budget contained $3 million in funding to support the Alzheimer’s Disease Initiative. This funding also serves similar memory disorders as well as their families. The supportive services include counseling, consumable medical supplies and respite for caregiver relief.
This summer, the Florida Department of Transportation's Safe Mobility for Life Program and Coalition will release an updated guide to help meet your personal mobility needs to remain safe, independent, and active in your community.

Florida’s Guide to Safe Mobility for Life has necessary information we all need to know as we age, along with tips on how to drive safely longer, and how to remain active and independent after transitioning from driving. The guide has information to help drivers, walkers, bicyclists, motorcyclists, and transit riders be proactive about their mobility with safety tips and rules for sharing the road. It also includes self-assessments and worksheets to help everyone learn how to remain safe, mobile, and independent, even beyond the driver’s seat.

Florida’s Guide to Safe Mobility for Life is an updated version of Florida’s Guide for Aging Drivers, first released in 2012. In this version, Florida’s Safe Mobility for Life Coalition expanded the guide to include elements to help you maintain safety on the road, develop a plan for your transportation future, and learn how to get around using transportation options in your community, and your transportation future.

By reading this guide and planning for your transportation future, you can learn how to stay independent and connected to your community by maintaining a safe and mobile life. To pre-order your copy of Florida’s Guide to Safe Mobility for Life please write, call, or email us at:

FSU Pepper Institute on Aging and Public Policy, Safe Mobility for Life Resource Center
Post Office Box 3061121
Tallahassee, FL 32306
(850) 644-8426
Contact@SafeMobilityFL.com

The Keys to Achieve Safe Mobility for Life: Understand, Be Proactive, and Plan.
Nutrition Resources Available to Seniors Throughout Florida

Dori Landsberg
Nutrition Manager
Florida Department of Elder Affairs

Food insecurity among seniors in Florida is an issue that continues to grow as the population of seniors in the state increases. There are many reasons for food insecurity in the senior population, namely that people are living longer, which can mean that they are outliving their savings. Add the fact that the cost of living is increasing in many areas of the state, and it is clear to see why food insecurity may be an issue for many seniors. So, what resources are available to seniors who find themselves in need of additional food sources?

There are federally funded food programs throughout the state that can assist seniors. There are also other programs that are available to help. If you need food assistance, here is a list of resources you can use to help:

**HOME DELIVERED MEALS**

Also known as Meals-On-Wheels, this program provides nutritious meals delivered to the door of a homebound older Floridian. Priority for these meals is given to frail, homebound, or isolated older adults. To find out more about Home Delivered Meals in your area, contact your local Area Agency on Aging at 1-800-96-ELDER (1-800-963-5337), or visit mealcall.org.

**CONGREGATE MEALS**

Congregate meal sites provide nutritionally balanced meals, nutrition education, and nutrition-risk screening for Floridians age 60 and older and their spouses. Common sites for congregating meals include senior centers, churches, and senior housing communities. Please contact your local Area Agency on Aging at 1-800-96-ELDER (1-800-963-5337), or visit elderaffairs.org, and look in the nutrition section to find out about Congregate Meal sites near you.

**SENIOR FARMERS’ MARKET NUTRITION PROGRAM**

This program is funded by the United States Department of Agriculture and provides vouchers that qualified Floridians, age 60 and older, can use for the purchase of fresh produce from a certified local farmer. This program is offered in the spring/summer in the following counties: Leon, Alachua, Bay, Columbia, Escambia, Santa Rosa, Gadsden, Holmes, Jackson, Liberty, Okaloosa, Walton, Suwannee, Lafayette, Dixie, Gilchrist, Union, Washington, and Hernando.

**FEEDING FLORIDA**

As Florida’s food bank network, Feeding Florida works with over 2,300 partner agencies to distribute over 234 million pounds of food to those in need. Food pantries and food banks are places where essentials and non-perishable food items are supplied free of charge to people in need. Some food banks have a separate elder program, such as the Commodity Supplemental Food Program. Feeding Florida also oversees the Fresh Access Bucks Program. Visit feedingflorida.org to find out information about food banks and other programs they support.

**SNAP - THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

Formerly known as the Food Stamp Program, SNAP offers nutrition assistance to eligible low-income individuals and families. Assistance is provided on an EBT (Electronic Benefit Transfer) card which works much like a debit card. There are three options to apply:

- Online at myflorida.com/accessflorida,
- By phone at 1-866-762-2237, or
- In person at a local ACCESS Customer Service Center.

Access (Automated Community Connection to Economic Self Sufficiency) Customer Service Center locations are listed online at myflorida.com/accessflorida. You can also find a nearby ACCESS center by calling 1-866-762-2237.
CACFP WEEK 2019 | MARCH 18-22

Dori Landsberg
Nutrition Manager
Florida Department of Elder Affairs

During the third week of March, Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Week is celebrated. The week is sponsored by the National CACFP Sponsors Association. It is designed to raise awareness about how the Child and Adult Care Food Program works to combat hunger. The CACFP helps to bring healthy foods to tables across the country for children and adults who attend child or adult care facilities.

The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) is a federally funded program through the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) that assists child and adult care institutions with the provision of foods that contribute to the health and wellness of children, older adults, and chronically impaired disabled persons. In most states, CACFP is administered by one agency; however, in Florida, the Department of Elder Affairs administers the adult portion of the program, while the Department of Health administers the child portion. Having the Adult Care Food Program (ACFP) administered by DOEA allows for the focus solely on the needs of elders.

As a kick-off for the celebration of CACFP Week in Florida, representatives from the Southeast Regional USDA office visited Años Dorados Adult Day Care in Miami. Rebecca Rodriguez, an Adult Care Food Program Contract Manager from DOEA, was at the center as well. The owner of the day care, Lisbet Vargas, welcomed Rebecca and the USDA representatives to her center. She had music, games, and nutrition education materials for participants to help celebrate the week. The elders who come to Años Dorados Adult Day Care enjoy healthy, delicious meals every day, and this day was no exception. The lunch served was enjoyed by all participants. Adult Care Food Program providers work tirelessly to provide healthy meals for their elder clients, and CACFP Week gives us an opportunity to celebrate their hard work.

The Department of Elder Affairs sincerely thanks everyone who attended this year’s event. Senior Day would not be possible if it were not for the groups who travel to celebrate the particular needs of their community. TFAH will be sharing the results of this initiative with public health stakeholders and policymakers across the country. This collaborative effort will help Florida meet the unique public health needs of older adults.

The Florida Department of Health is pleased to announce that 37 counties are participating in the Florida Age-Friendly Public Health Learning and Action Network, facilitated by Trust for America’s Health (TFAH) with generous funding from The John A. Hartford Foundation. The Department and TFAH aim to identify and enhance the role of public health in improving the health and well-being of the older adults in Florida.

In October 2017, TFAH brought together 30 experts in public health, aging, research, and policy in Florida to explore how public health could contribute to the health and well-being of older adults. Convening participants developed a Framework for Creating an Age-Friendly Public Health System to advance public health’s role in addressing the challenges and opportunities of an aging society at the local, state, and national levels.

Through the Florida Age-Friendly Public Health Learning and Action Network, the Department of Health has been working with the Florida Department of Elder Affairs and community partners to identify priority health issues among our older adults. Each county health department will receive tools, training resources, and technical assistance based on the particular needs of their community. TFAH will be sharing the results of this initiative with public health stakeholders and policymakers across the country. This collaborative effort will help Florida meet the unique public health needs of older adults.

ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL SENIOR DAY...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13

son who discussed nationwide initiatives for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ Division on Aging. Secretary Prudom later highlighted Department of Elder Affairs’ initiatives to fight dementia and presented Representative Scott Plakon with the Dementia Advocacy Award.

Following the noon program, the audience welcomed the Senior Tiger Steppers and The Sassy Seniors and Steppers, whose interactive performances kept the crowd involved. Two guest solo performers from the Tallahassee Community College Dance Company demonstrated smooth, technical routines, and the day finished off with a second performance from the Miami Gardens Super Soul Steppers, and a final guest performer with a demonstration from a local Martial Arts group.

The Public Health Needs of Older Floridians

Florida Department of Health

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FROM THE OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

All articles and photos courtesy of the Governor's Press Office

Governor Ron DeSantis Takes Major Steps to Combat Florida’s Opioid Crisis

April 1, 2019, Sanford, Fla. – Today, Governor Ron DeSantis announced that he will sign an executive order continuing his efforts to address Florida’s substance abuse crisis and opioid epidemic. Joining the Governor at the announcement were Lieutenant Governor Jeanette Nuñez, Attorney General Ashley Moody and Department of Children and Families Secretary (DCF) Chad Poppell.

“Substance abuse is a serious public health concern and although great progress has been made, the opioid epidemic continues to devastate families and communities throughout our state,” said Governor DeSantis. “These issues require effective and immediate action and my administration is committed to taking the necessary steps to combat this crisis.”

Governor DeSantis announced that Florida has been awarded $26 million in additional federal funding for Florida’s State Opioid Response Project. This project is designed to address the opioid crisis by reducing opioid deaths, preventing opioid abuse among our young people, and increasing recovery services and access to treatment.

The Governor is also re-establishing the Office of Drug Control within the Executive Office of the Governor. This office was discontinued several years ago, but the importance of restoring its functions could not be more obvious.

Finally, the Governor announced the creation of a Statewide Task Force on Opioid Drug Abuse. The Task Force will develop a statewide strategy and identify best practices to combat the opioid epidemic through education, treatment, prevention, recovery and law enforcement.

Governor Ron DeSantis Announces Dr. Scott A. Rivkees as Florida Surgeon General

April 1, 2019, Sanford, Fla. – Today, Governor Ron DeSantis announced the appointment of Dr. Scott A. Rivkees as Florida Surgeon General and Secretary of the Florida Department of Health.

A practicing pediatric endocrinologist, Dr. Rivkees is a professor and chair of the Department of Pediatrics at the University of Florida College of Medicine and physician-in-chief of UF Health Shands Children’s Hospital, part of UF Health, the university’s academic health center. He also serves as academic chair of pediatrics at Orlando Health and pediatric chair at Studer Family Children’s Hospital at Sacred Heart in Pensacola. During his distinguished career, Dr. Rivkees has served as associate chair of pediatrics for research at the Yale University School of Medicine and on the faculty at Harvard Medical School.

“I am pleased to announce the appointment of Dr. Rivkees as Florida Surgeon General, one of the most important appointments of my administration,” said Governor DeSantis. “Dr. Rivkees brings a wealth of experience and excellent credentials that fit glove-in-hand with Florida’s needs. I look forward to working with Dr. Rivkees, whose leadership will be indispensable in addressing the opioid crisis facing our state and responsible implementation of medical marijuana now that a legislative solution is in place, among other important issues.”

“As one of Florida’s leading physicians and an internationally-renowned expert in his field, I am confident Dr. Rivkees will inspire and spearhead innovative programs as Florida Surgeon General,” said Lt. Governor Jeanette Nuñez. “Dr. Rivkees understands the public health challenges facing Florida families and how the Department of Health can better work with its stakeholders to deliver on our commitment to a healthy Florida. I look forward to working with Dr. Rivkees to make long-term improvements in the healthcare of Floridians.”

PICTURED ABOVE: GOVERNOR DESANTIS JOINS FDVA TO ANNOUNCE FORWARD MARCH INITIATIVE.

Dr. Rivkees understands the public health concerns facing Florida families and how the Department of Health can better work with its stakeholders to deliver on our commitment to a healthy Florida. I look forward to working with Dr. Rivkees to make long-term improvements in the healthcare of Floridians.

Governor Ron DeSantis Announces Forward March Initiative with the Florida Department of Veterans’ Affairs

March 29, 2019, Tampa, Fla. – Today, Governor Ron DeSantis joined the Florida Department of Veterans’ Affairs (FDVA) to announce Forward March, an initiative which aims to unite the combined energy and resources of Florida’s state agencies, veterans’ service organizations, private partners and local communities. The new initiative will work to

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CELEBRATE CLEAN AIR THIS MAY

Office of Communications
Florida Department of Environmental Protection

The next time you step outside your front door, pause for a moment and take a deep breath of Florida’s fresh, clean air. Clean Air Month, celebrated every May, is a reminder of the importance of clean air for human health, natural resources, and a strong economy.

The Clean Air Act, designed to control air pollution on a national level, is one of the most comprehensive air quality laws in the world. The Florida Department of Environmental Protection’s Division of Air Resource Management is charged with protecting and managing Florida’s air resource.

Federal law establishes limits for six common air pollutants to ensure good air quality.

- **CARBON MONOXIDE** is produced mainly by motor vehicles. Florida has seen a significant decline in carbon monoxide levels thanks to vehicle-emission controls and other measures.
- **LEAD.** Leaded gasoline was a primary source of lead emissions, but most fuels are lead-free today.
- **NITROGEN DIOXIDE** is produced by emissions from vehicles, power plants, and other sources. Florida has never registered a violation of the ambient standards set for this pollutant.
- **OZONE** occurs naturally at ground level, but fuel combustion and other processes can produce additional ozone. DEP monitors ozone air quality in the state’s major urban areas.
- **PARTICLE POLLUTION** refers to a mixture of solid particles and liquid droplets found in the air. Fine particles can be emitted by fuel combustion and other sources; coarse particles might result from windblown dust. DEP monitors particle pollution throughout the state.
- **SULFUR DIOXIDE** is produced by emissions from power plants and industries that burn fossil fuels, and by the production of sulfuric acid. Great strides have been made in reducing sulfur dioxide emissions.

State and local governments do much of the work to meet federal standards. The Division of Air Resource Management monitors air quality throughout the state, issues air permits to industrial and commercial facilities, and conducts compliance activities to ensure those permits are followed. DEP has one of the most robust air quality networks in the nation, with 99 air monitoring sites across Florida with a total of 211 monitoring instruments.

You can take steps to help keep Florida’s air clean:

- Properly inflate tires to improve gas mileage and reduce emissions.
- Turn off lights in empty rooms. On hot days, use fans instead of lowering the thermostat, and keep doors and blinds closed.
- Plant native trees that provide shade in the summer and allow light in the winter.

Clean Air Month is a great time to get outdoors to enjoy the fresh air and natural beauty at any of Florida’s 175 state parks, trails and historic sites. Commitment to maintaining Florida’s exceptional air quality will help ensure natural resources and activities remain enjoyable for generations to come.

The kickoff event featured breakout sessions focusing on housing, mental health, emergency assistance and legal matters to help Florida’s 1.5 million veterans receive the best resources and tools they so rightly deserve.

“Forward March is the start of an ongoing effort to determine best practices and ensure the state of Florida sets the national standard for veteran services and support,” said FDVA Executive Director Danny Burgess. “I look forward to teaming up with Governor DeSantis, various agencies and veterans’ organizations in this important work to boldly serve Florida’s Veterans.”

Over the following months, Forward March will meet with veterans throughout Florida’s communities to hear their stories and address the issues facing our nation’s heroes while focusing on finding ways to eliminate redundancy for effective delivery of veteran services.

ensure the state of Florida is providing the very best services and support for our veterans.

“As a veteran myself, I am proud to be Governor of the most veteran-friendly state in the country,” said Governor DeSantis. “I look forward to working with Director Burgess, the Florida Department of Veterans’ Affairs and partners across our state to ensure those who have served our country are receiving the care they need and deserve.”
When Cheryl and Tom Cherry leave their Clermont home in June to get on the road to Albuquerque for the 2019 National Senior Games, it will be the final leg of their trip that began last December when they qualified at the 2018 Florida Senior Games, presented by Humana.

In an effort to be properly trained for their national competition, Tom and Cheryl will have competed in five local Senior Games around the state. Besides the competition, they have developed a training regimen that includes riding 150 miles a week, and they will have spent hours in their garage that has been transformed into a gym.

“As retired people, we are very active,” Cheryl said. “The Senior Games have changed our lives. It’s a reason to get up and get out of our comfort zone.”

They weren’t exactly taking in the scenery on their bikes while pushing themselves to record the best possible times and win medals; nevertheless, the Cherrys have seen quite a bit of the natural wonders Florida offers, while reaching speeds over 20 mph in time trials competition.

At the Good Life Games in Pinellas County, they pedaled along the road adjacent to one of the top-rated beaches in the country at Fort DeSoto Park. When they climbed on their bikes at the Capital City Senior Games in Tallahassee, they ventured down the road in the Apalachicola National Forest. At the Charlotte County Fit For Life Senior Games, the roads wound through the lowlands and mangroves leading out to the Gulf of Mexico. At the Gulf Coast Senior Games in Manatee County, Cheryl noticed several deer had wandered out to the racecourse as spectators.

In their final pre-National Senior Games tune-up in April, they competed just outside their backdoor at the Lake Senior Games in Clermont.

But their western-leading road to Albuquerque will also be full of adventure as they explore New Mexico and Colorado in a four-to-six week trip.

“We are going to make it a big vacation,” Cheryl said. “We’re going to get to Albuquerque early to acclimate to the altitude (the course is over 5,800 feet above sea level). Then we’ll go to the Grand Canyon and Taos, New Mexico, and visit some friends in Denver. It’s a great opportunity to see the West and ride our bikes.”

The Cherrys have been cycling together in Senior Games competitions since 2013. By the 2014 Florida Senior Games, Cheryl and Tom were winning medals to qualify for the 2015 National Senior Games in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Cheryl won a gold medal in the 10K Time Trial event and a silver in the 5K Time Trials. Tom finished in the middle of a very crowded 65-69 age group in both events.

By the 2015 Florida Senior Games, Cheryl was setting a 5K Time Trials record in the 65-69 age group. Their goals have changed from their 2015 trip to Minneapolis when Cheryl’s goal was to win medals. She and Tom are now in the 70-74 age group and have taken a few steps back to enjoy the journey in 2019.

“We’ll be doing stuff on the fly this time,” she said. “In 2015, we were a little nervous competing on the national level for the first time. Now the reason we’re going is to have fun.”

Cheryl and Tom’s propensity for competition and their ability to set and accomplish goals come from their backgrounds prior to climbing on the bikes. Cheryl is a 20-plus-year breast cancer survivor who underwent nine surgeries in her 40s. She
realized after overcoming the ordeal that she wanted to make the most of her life.

Having witnessed his wife kick cancer in the backside and survive other setbacks, including neck-fusion surgery, knee replacement, and a broken arm after a bike crash, Tom, a former college football player at Penn State and high school football coach of 30 years, is highly impressed by his wife’s toughness.

“Every time I talk to someone about her, I have to say what a tough woman she is,” Tom said in an Orlando Sentinel article in 2017.

Exercise and fitness take precedence in the lives of Cheryl and Tom Cherry as they schedule their lives around daily training. Cheryl calls Tom a “natural athlete,” and she has a background as a professional dancer and has competed in triathlons. Cheryl’s son is also a fitness trainer who directed them into their first Senior Games competition.

“We work really hard to make it happen,” she said.

But much like every other Senior Games athlete, they realize the benefits go beyond the active and healthy lifestyle. Cheryl also points to the camaraderie the Games and the cycling community bring into their lives.

“Having something in common with people our own age is very important at this time in our lives,” she said.

The Cherry’s road to the 2019 National Senior Games, where over 600 Florida senior athletes are registered to compete, will conclude when they lock their spikes into the pedals of their bikes on the western outskirts of Albuquerque, New Mexico, on June 15 and 16. The scenery and climate will be much different from what they experienced during their training in Florida.

They won’t be fazed. They’ve been riding this road for nearly seven years.

**THE FLORIDA SPORTS FOUNDATION** and National Senior Games announced that Broward County and Greater Fort Lauderdale will be the host of the 2019 and 2020 Florida Senior Games, presented by Humana, and the 2021 National Senior Games.

The 2019 Florida Senior Games, presented by Humana, will be held December 7-15, 2019, and competition and registration information is forthcoming. Dates for the 2021 National Senior Games in Broward County have not been announced.

With the selection of Greater Fort Lauderdale, as the Games eighth host community in 2019 and 2020, athletes will have the opportunity to compete in facilities and venues that will be utilized throughout Broward County in the 2021 National Senior Games.
THE OFFICE OF FINANCIAL REGULATION OFFERS VALUABLE RESOURCES TO FLORIDA’S SENIORS

Ronald L. Rubin, Commissioner
Office of Financial Regulation

The Florida Office of Financial Regulation (OFR), which helps citizens safely and securely conduct their financial business, is a valuable resource. If you plan to deposit funds at a bank or credit union, borrow from a lender, get money from a check casher, or invest through a financial advisor, be sure to verify their OFR license at flofr.com, or by calling (850) 487-9687.

As OFR’s new commissioner, I oversee the regulation of Florida’s financial services industry. My top priorities are revitalizing the agency, encouraging financial innovation in the state, eliminating unnecessary regulatory expenses that make financial products more expensive, and fighting financial fraud – especially scams that target Florida’s elder population. An estimated five million American seniors are cheated out of about $36.5 billion each year due to such crimes. These numbers are devastating, and I’m committed to reducing them.

The vast majority of scams are perpetrated by unlicensed entities, so verifying the license of any company or individual you might employ is a critical first step in protecting yourself. I encourage you to do so on our website, and to visit our consumer resources section, which has helpful information on financial topics like red flags that can help you spot criminals before they have a chance to cheat you.

If you think you are a victim of financial fraud or you suspect questionable financial business practices, please file a complaint with us as soon as possible. You can do so online at flofr.com, or call us at (850) 487-9687. We need your help – many of our investigations begin with valuable tips and information from consumers like you.

Check out our online resources today, and reach out if you need our help – our friendly, knowledgeable team is ready to assist you.

WHY WE SHOULD ALL CARE ABOUT ALZHEIMER’S DISEASE
CLINICAL TRIAL RESEARCH…CONTINUED FORM PAGE 14

They may be seeking solutions to their own memory disorder, or hope their involvement will prevent passing on a memory disorder to their children or grandchildren. One study participant summed this up: “Having lost a father to AD, and a sister now dealing with AD, I am concerned about my own future. I hope to benefit from such interventions.” Many are concerned with benefiting science in general. As another participant stated, “Given the predictions of unprecedented increases in people with AD, it is critical that we test potential interventions to prevent the medical crisis that we are facing. Good research is needed to help motivate more people to make the right choices in those and additional activities such as stimulating brain games, studying music, socializing, and meditation.”

Additionally, clinical trials may include drug or medication treatments as well as new techniques and non-drug therapies. Clinical trials may examine ways to prevent AD, treat symptoms of the disease, or cure the disease altogether. Some examples of clinical trials include preventing AD with cognitive training and looking at the impact of music on cognition (thinking). Examining the effects of medications on mild cognitive impairment or the effects of medication on specific symptoms such as hallucinations, delusions, agitation, and aggressiveness in patients with AD will help to find a cure or guide treatment.

It is important to note that some treatments that are available through clinical trials are not available to the general community; therefore, clinical trials may be a way for patients with dementia and their caregivers to have access to new and exciting treatments that they would not have otherwise.

Patients can find out about clinical trials in their area in several ways: asking their health care provider, contacting a local university, or accessing websites that list clinical trials for Alzheimer’s or mild cognitive impairment such as the Alzheimer’s Association, alz.org/alzheimers-dementia/research_progress/clinical-trials, or National Institutes of Health, clinicaltrials.gov.

SUDOKU SOLUTION

www.brainbashers.com
Information and referrals for elder services are available through the Elder Helpline within each county. For the hearing or speech impaired, all Elder Helplines can be accessed through the Florida Relay by dialing 711 from anywhere in Florida.

### Florida Area Agencies on Aging (Counties Served)

#### Northwest Florida

**Area Agency on Aging, Inc.**
5090 Commerce Park Circle
Pensacola, FL 32505
850-494-7101
( Escambia, Okaloosa, Santa Rosa and Walton Counties)

**Area Agency for Aging North Florida, Inc.**
2414 Mahan Drive
Tallahassee, FL 32308
850-488-0055
(Bay, Calhoun, Franklin, Gadsden, Gulf, Holmes, Jackson, Jefferson, Leon, Liberty, Madison, Taylor, Wakulla and Washington Counties)

#### Elder Options

100 SW 75th Street, #301
Gainesville, FL 32607
352-378-6649
(A Rachua, Bradford, Citrus, Columbia, Dixie, Gilchrist, Hamilton, Hernando, Lafayette, Lake, Levy, Marion, Putnam, Sumter, Suwannee and Union Counties)

### ElderSource

10688 Old St. Augustine Road
Jacksonville, FL 32257
904-391-6600
(Baker, Clay, Duval, Flagler, Nassau, St. Johns and Volusia Counties)

#### Area Agency on Aging of Pasco-Pinellas, Inc.

9549 Koger Boulevard North
Gadsden Building, Suite 100
St. Petersburg, FL 33702
727-570-9696
(Pasco and Pinellas Counties)

#### Senior Connection Center, Inc.

8928 Brittany Way Tampa, FL 33619
813-740-3888
(Hardee, Highlands, Hillsborough, Manatee and Polk Counties)

#### Senior Resource Alliance

988 Woodcock Road, Suite 200
Orlando, FL 32803
407-514-1800
(Brevard, Orange, Osceola and Seminole Counties)

#### Area Agency on Aging for Aging Southwest Florida

15201 N. Cleveland Avenue, Suite 1100
North Fort Myers, FL 33903
239-652-6900
(Charlotte, Collier, DeSoto, Glades, Hendry, Lee and Sarasota Counties)

#### Your Aging and Disability Resource Center

4400 North Congress Avenue
West Palm Beach, FL 33407
561-684-5885
(Indian River, Martin, Okeechobee, Palm Beach and St. Lucie Counties)

#### Aging and Disability Resource Center of Broward County, Inc.

5300 Hiatus Road
Sunrise, FL 33351
954-745-9567
(Broward County)

#### Alliance for Aging, Inc.

760 NW 107th Avenue, Suite 214
Miami, FL 33172
305-670-6500
(Miami-Dade and Monroe Counties)

Elder Helpline Can Assist Non-English Speakers

By calling the Elder Helpline, Florida’s elders can access information and referral services through a translation service. Telephone interpreters provide live, on-the-line assistance by translating from English into as many as 148 different languages.

If you need information about, or referral to, a service provider outside Florida, call the national Eldercare Locator Service at 1-800-677-1116. An information specialist will assist you Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. – 11 p.m. Eastern time. For people with Telecommunication Devices for the Deaf (TDDs), all Elder Helplines, as well as the Eldercare Locator Service, can be accessed through Florida Relay Service at 1-800-955-8771.

Are you worried that an elder relative or friend may be the victim of abuse? You can report known or suspected cases of abuse by calling Florida’s Abuse Hotline at 1-800-96-ABUSE (1-800-962-2873).
WEAR PURPLE
Show the World Your Heart!

JUNE 15TH
World Elder Abuse Awareness Day

Allison Bryant
Bureau of Elder Rights
Florida Department of Elder Affairs

June 15 is recognized internationally as World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, and by wearing purple on June 15, you show your recognition of the importance of ending elder abuse. Why purple? Purple represents royalty, a position of respect, and a dignified personage.

Elder Floridians are key to Florida’s future. Their experience, knowledge, and continued vitality are essential resources for Florida. Elder abuse and fraud threaten those resources.

International partners first marked World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD) on June 15, 2006. Their goal was to bring attention and action to the extremely significant health and human rights issue, elder abuse. Since the inception of WEAAD, groups around the world mark the day with a variety of events and programs.

Proclamations are issued statewide (from Florida’s Governor to local municipalities) to recognize June 15 as Florida’s Elder Abuse Awareness Day. The issuance of a yearly proclamation serves as a call to action for all Floridians to work together to prevent elder abuse. The prevention of elder abuse means that our most valuable resource, elders, are safe from neglect, exploitation, and abuse.

To learn more about what events are happening in your area for World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, call the Elder Helpline at 1-800-96-ELDER (1-800-963-5337), and ask to speak with your local elder abuse prevention coordinator.

REMEMBER TO WEAR PURPLE ON JUNE 15. TELL YOUR FRIENDS AND FAMILY TO WEAR PURPLE TOO!

Denise Jones, Community Coordinator
Aging and Disability Resource Center of Broward County

Seniors contribute wisdom, experience, and support to Florida’s communities, yet in their hour of need, they can often be taken advantage of physically, emotionally, and financially. The good news is that you have the power to end elder abuse. Whether you are a loved one or a simple acquaintance, it is vital that you reach out to an elder in need.

If you suspect that an elder is being abused, neglected, or exploited, it is best to take action immediately. Call the Florida Abuse Hotline at 1-800-962-2873. The power to prevent elder abuse is in your hands, and there is assistance available for abused elders.

Trainings on preventing and reporting abuse, identifying theft, frauds and scams, personal safety, and other topics can be conducted at your local churches, synagogues, businesses, groups, or organizations.

If you would like to schedule a training in the Broward County area, please contact the Health And Wellness Coordinator:

Vanessa Rico-Robie
Health and Wellness Coordinator
The Aging And Disability Resource Center of Broward County
954-745-9567, Ext. 10249

The Power to Prevent Abuse Is in Your Hands

Denise Jones, Community Coordinator
Aging and Disability Resource Center of Broward County

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