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## **Aging Perspectives**

**by Charlie Rehbein**

### **White House Conference on Aging**

Aging in Montana and other rural frontier western states remains a constant concern as we look at the projected demographic changes as our population ages.

The 2015 White House Conference on Aging meets every 10 years and has submitted their final report this month with those challenges in mind. The report states that “As most Americans continue to live longer, healthier lives, there needs to be greater collaboration between the public and private sectors, at the national, State and local levels to ensure older Americans have the opportunity to live with dignity and participate fully in life”.

The key themes that came out of this conference include the following:

- The need to acknowledge our demographic reality. In the United States alone, over 10,000 baby boomers are turning 65 every day. The fastest growing of this demographic are women over age 85. Those that represent racial and ethnic minorities are also increasing. In Montana, it has been projected that within the next 16 years, over 12,000 people annually will be turning 65. By 2025, a decade away, Montana is expected to rank no less than 5<sup>th</sup> in the nation in the percent of our population over the age of 65. This is especially concerning due to the limited resources available in the very rural areas of our state.



- Support for caregivers, both paid and unpaid: The majority of assistance for older Americans is generally provided at home by informal caregivers such as family and friends. These caregivers are the most familiar face of caregiving and are often the primary support system for our older adults. It can be a demanding job and the need exists for our caregivers to be supported and for more resources to sustain that support. In Montana alone, it is estimated there are over 134,000 unpaid caregivers who provide an average of 18 hours per week of care to their loved one on top of balancing other family and work obligations.. This number will only increase with the projected demographic growth.
- The third theme is the importance of collaboration across the public and private sectors in focusing on easily accessible and flexible resources for housing, transportation, health care and long-term services and supports in order to support healthy aging. Increasing the array of web-based technology and mobile devices to help older adults access services they need to stay connected to family and friends and remain active and independent. Montana is on its way to addressing this with the launching of the new Resource Directory. Lifespan Respite Coalition, Aging and Disability Resource Centers and DPHHS have joined together in creating this searchable website to assist in finding available local and statewide resources throughout Montana at [www.Montana-ADRC.com](http://www.Montana-ADRC.com).

It's not like we haven't heard all of this before but it bears repeating and now is the time for action. There are **two events** on the horizon that are opportunities to get involved in these issues for our Montana citizens.

The first is the **Lifespan Respite Summit** which will be held March 9<sup>th</sup> at the Helena Great Northern in Helena. The theme of the Summit is "Riding the Respite Wave; Sustaining the Momentum". It is a daylong Summit with a Keynote Speaker, caregiver panel and roundtable discussion. Our goal at this summit is to create some viable solutions to sustaining the respite funding. The Lifespan Respite Coalition has provided some respite funding these through a 3 year Lifespan Respite grant from DPHHS. The response to this outreach and resource has been well received especially for respite for those caregivers who are on limited income. Many caregivers are very thankful. Now it's time to keep the momentum going. The registration cost is very minimal at \$10. Consider attending this summit to learn how you may be able to contribute. You can



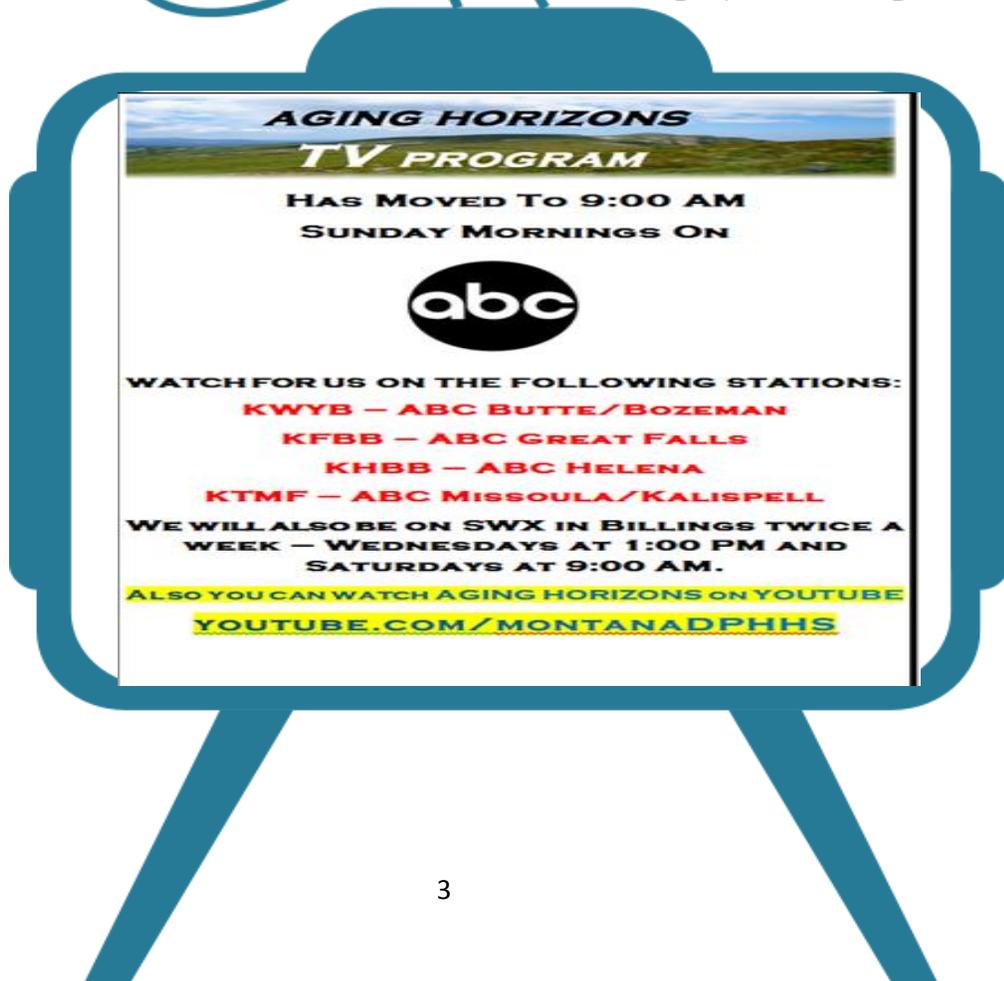
register by going online through the Lifespan Respite Website  
[www.respite.mt.gov](http://www.respite.mt.gov)

The other event is the **Governors Conference on Aging** that takes place this September 13, 14 & 15<sup>th</sup> in Billings at the Billings Hotel and Convention Center. Governors Conference on Aging is partnering with Home and Community Based Services Program to put on the 48<sup>th</sup> Annual Governors Conference on Aging/Home and Community Based Conference. The theme of this year's conference is Navigating Choices. There will be several keynote speakers and breakout sessions with the emphasis on positive changes and lifestyle topics. You can register for the conference by going online to the Governors Conference on Aging Website.

<http://dphhs.mt.gov/sltc/aging/GovernorsConferenceonAging.aspx>.

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## ***AGING HORIZONS HAS A NEW HOME!***



## **Coping with Caregiving** ***Take Care of Yourself While Caring for Others***



It can be a labor of love, and sometimes a job of necessity. A total of about 43 million U.S. adults provide unpaid care for someone with a serious health condition each year. These often-unsung heroes provide hours of assistance to others. Yet the stress and strain of caregiving can take a toll on their own health. National Institute of Health (NIH) funded researchers are working to understand the risks these caregivers face. And scientists are seeking better ways to protect caregivers' health.

Many of us will end up becoming a caregiver at some point in our lives. Chances are we'll be helping out older family members who can't fully care for themselves. Such caregiving can include everyday tasks, such as helping with meals, schedules, and bathing and dressing. It can also include managing medicines, doctor visits, health insurance and money. Caregivers often give emotional support as well.

People who provide unpaid care for an elderly, ill, or disabled family member or friend in the home are called informal caregivers. Most are middle-aged. Roughly two-thirds are women. Nearly half of informal caregivers assist someone who's age 75 or older. As the elderly population continues to grow nationwide, so will the need for informal caregivers.

Studies have shown that some people can thrive when caring for others. Caregiving may help to strengthen connections to a loved one. Some find joy or fulfillment in looking after others. But for many, the strain of caregiving can become overwhelming. Friends and family often take on the caregiving role without any training. They're expected to meet many complex demands without much help. Most caregivers hold down a full-time job in addition to the hours of unpaid help they give to someone else.

"With all of its rewards, there is a substantial cost to caregiving—financially, physically, and emotionally," says Dr. Richard J. Hodes, director of NIH's National Institute on Aging. "One important insight from our research is that because of the stress and time demands placed on caregivers, they are less likely to find time to address their own health problems."

Informal caregivers, for example, may be less likely to fill a needed prescription for themselves or get a screening test for breast cancer. "Caregivers also tend to report lower levels of physical activity, poorer nutrition, and poorer sleep or sleep disturbance," says Dr. Erin Kent, an NIH expert on cancer caregiving.



Studies have linked informal caregiving to a variety of long-term health problems. Caregivers are more likely to have heart disease, cancer, diabetes, arthritis, and excess weight. Caregivers are also at risk for depression or anxiety. And they're more likely to have problems with memory and paying attention.

"Caregivers may even suffer from physical health problems related to caregiving tasks, such as back or muscle injuries from lifting patients," Kent adds.

Caregivers may face different challenges and risks depending on the health of the person they're caring for. Taking care of loved ones with cancer or dementia can be especially demanding. Research suggests that these caregivers bear greater levels of physical and mental burdens than caregivers of the frail elderly or people with diabetes.

"Cancer caregivers often spend more hours per day providing more intensive care over a shorter period of time," Kent says. "The health of cancer patients can deteriorate quickly, which can cause heightened stress for caregivers. And aggressive cancer treatments can leave patients greatly weakened. They may need extra care, and their medications may need to be monitored more often."

Cancer survivorship, too, can bring intense levels of uncertainty and anxiety. "A hallmark of cancer is that it may return months or even years later," Kent says. "Both cancer survivors and their caregivers may struggle to live with ongoing fear and stress of a cancer recurrence."

Dementia can also create unique challenges to caregivers. The health care costs alone can take an enormous toll. One recent study found that out-of-pocket spending for families of dementia patients during the last 5 years of life averaged \$61,522, which was 81% higher than for older people who died from other causes.

Research has found that caregivers for people with dementia have particularly high levels of potentially harmful stress hormones. Caregivers and care recipients often struggle with the problems related to dementia, such as agitation, aggression, trouble sleeping, wandering, and confusion. These caregivers spend more days sick with an infectious disease, have a weaker immune response to the flu vaccine, and have slower wound healing.

To learn more about aging-related caregiver resources, contact NIH's National Institute on Aging at 1-800-222-2225 or [niaic@nia.nih.gov](mailto:niaic@nia.nih.gov). To learn about cancer-related caregiver resources, contact NIH's National Cancer Institute at 1-800-422-6237. See the Web Links box to find a variety of online caregiving resources.

*Article featured in [NIH News in Health, December 2015](#)*

	<p><b>2016 ANNUAL LIFESPAN RESPITE SUMMIT</b></p> <p><b>Helena Great Northern Hotel</b></p> <p><b>835 Great Northern BLVD</b></p> <p><b>Helena, MT</b></p> <p><b>March 9, 2016 8:30AM-3:30PM</b></p> <p><b>Registration Fee: \$10</b></p> <p><a href="http://www.respite.mt.gov">www.respite.mt.gov</a></p>
<p><b>It's OK to need it, It's OK to want it, It's OK to get it!</b></p>	

**2016 LIFESPAN RESPITE SUMMIT IS JUST AROUND THE CORNER**

Join us for the Lifespan Respite (LSR) 2016 Summit is scheduled on **March 9, 2016** in **Helena** at the **Helena Great Northern Hotel**. The theme of the Summit this year is: ***Riding the Respite Wave: Sustaining the Momentum.*** There is a minimal registration fee of \$10.



**Keynote Speaker: Glen Fewkes**, Senior Legislative Representative in the Government Affairs Department of AARP National Office is the scheduled Keynote speaker. Mr. Fewkes has been involved in crafting legislation across the country on respite care, family caregiving



workplace flexibilities and caregiver tax credits. The presentation will look at the growing importance of family caregiving across the country, why respite care is so crucial, and how to best advocate for caregivers in Montana. The Summit agenda will continue with a caregiver panel, luncheon and a roundtable discussion.

The Respite grant as a whole and the Summit provide an avenue to educate Montanans about the need for respite and actively participate in discussions about ways to improve the accessibility and sustainability of respite for our Montana caregivers. Your help is needed in the planning process to sustain the respite services and continue to improve the accessibility of respite for our Montana caregivers.



If you are interested in registering for or learning more about the Summit, Lifespan Respite, the respite voucher program, and the Coalition, visit our website at [www.respite.mt.gov](http://www.respite.mt.gov) or contact Kerrie Reidelbach, [kreidelbach@mt.gov](mailto:kreidelbach@mt.gov) or Jackie Stoeckel [jstoeckel@mt.gov](mailto:jstoeckel@mt.gov) at the Montana Office on Aging.

## **Respite care provides a key service to Montana families**

**By Kerrie Reidelbach, DPHHS Lifespan Respite Program**

Nathan was born with significant disabilities. Yet, despite the obstacles he has faced in his 34 years of life, he has always been able to live at home surrounded by his Montana family.

However, Nathan's mom is quick to point out that this wouldn't be possible without the respite care their family has received from the Department of Public Health and Human Services' (DPHHS) Lifespan Respite Program.

This story is not unique as there are 134,000 Montanans who provide care in the home for family members with disabilities.

So, what is respite care? Respite care provides planned or emergency care to an individual with need for support and supervision in order to provide temporary relief to the primary caregiver of that person.



For Nathan and many other Montanans with disabilities and their primary caregivers, this service is life changing.

Caregivers provide a variety of services including everyday tasks such as cooking, feeding, bathing, transferring from a chair to a bed, and transportation to doctor appointments. Additionally they help with administration of complex medications and other health related interventions. Many family caregivers find their role as a caregiver provides spiritual, emotional and even physical benefits.

The various responsibilities and challenges can cause stress on the family caregiver that result in physical and emotional health risks. A 'respite' break can help the family caregiver relax, enjoy favorite pastimes, socialize with friends or even get some sleep. Taking a break also gives the care receiver time with someone else. This has the potential to provide the care receiver with greater social interactions and stimulation.

To help provide family caregivers with the support they need, an effort is underway to connect Montana families with valuable services. The Montana Lifespan Respite Coalition has established a statewide coordinated system of easily accessible, quality and affordable respite care services for Montana's family caregivers or individuals regardless of special needs.

The Coalition has been working to educate caregivers of all ages about the importance of taking a break from their caregiving responsibilities. Recently, the Coalition started a respite program to



help family caregivers get the break they need. If you are a family caregiver or if you know someone caring for a loved one of any age, there is help available.

In addition, the Coalition, in partnership with the Aging and Disability Resource Centers and DPHHS, has created a searchable website to assist in finding available local and statewide resources throughout Montana at [www.Montana-ADRC.com](http://www.Montana-ADRC.com).

Information contained in the website has been submitted by various service providers and agencies to create a searchable directory for finding and accessing services. This website focuses on resources related to Montana seniors, adults with disabilities and respite services for all ages.

This website may:

- be helpful for a family member that lives out of state or out of town from their loved one and are trying to help them find resources they need,
- help a family member or friend caring for a loved one in their home that may need assistance,
- help professionals who work with and advocate for people needing resources,
- help Montana communities learn more about resources available locally, or
- help identify any gaps in services that may be needed.

Funds are available on a sliding fee scale to make respite care affordable for all Montanans who need this service. More information is available at [www.respite.mt.gov](http://www.respite.mt.gov).

*Kerrie Reidelbach is the Lifespan Respite Program manager for the Department of Public Health and Human Services.*



***Youth is the gift of nature, but age is a work of art.***

Stanislaw Jerzy Lec



## LOOKING FOR A RESOURCE?????

**THE AGING & DISABILITY RESOURCE CENTER DIRECTORY IS HERE FOR YOU!**

### ***Who created this Resource Directory?***

DPHHS, Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRC) and the Montana Lifespan Respite Coalition are proud to announce the launching of the ADRC Resource Directory. These programs have joined together in creating a searchable website to assist in finding available local and statewide resources throughout Montana.

This directory is available to the general public and is found at [www.Montana-ADRC.com](http://www.Montana-ADRC.com).

### ***What is the ADRC Resource Directory?***



The ADRC Resource Directory focuses on resources related to Montana seniors, adults with disabilities and respite services for all ages. Various service providers and agencies submitted information to create this directory making it possible for the public to find and access services. The directory is updated on an annual basis.

### ***What can this Resource Directory do for you?***

This website may:

- ✓ help a family member or friend caring for a loved one in their home that may need assistance
- ✓ be helpful for a family member that lives out of town or out of state from their loved one and are trying to help them find resources they need,
- ✓ help professionals who work with and advocate for people needing resources,
- ✓ help Montana communities learn more about resources available locally, or
- ✓ help identify any gaps in services that may be needed.



## *LIEAP and Energy Share Can Help*



Winter is here and heating bills can pile up fast. Do you know someone who is worried about how they're going to pay those bills? If so, call one of the numbers below to see what's available for help, either for your friend or for you. In Montana, it's about neighbors helping neighbors. That can be as simple as going with a friend to complete an application. Call now to find the office nearest you that handles both LIEAP and Energy Share applications:

Montana Citizens' Advocate at 1-800-332-2272  
Energy Share of Montana at 1-888-779-7589

You can also find information at [www.energysharemt.com](http://www.energysharemt.com) and [http://mt.bridgetobenefits.org/Low\\_Income\\_Energy\\_Assistance\\_Program.html](http://mt.bridgetobenefits.org/Low_Income_Energy_Assistance_Program.html).

## **Yes, Your Heat CAN Be Turned Off In The Winter!**

Many people think the utility company cannot shut a person off in the winter. However, under certain circumstances that can happen. There are special rules in the winter time though. From November 1 to April 1 a regulated utility may not shut off gas, underground propane, or electric service without prior approval from the Public Service Commission (PSC – the state agency that regulates some utility companies such as NorthWestern Energy, Energy West and Montana-Dakota Utilities). The PSC does not approve winter shutoffs if the customer is unable to pay (as demonstrated by being a recipient of a public assistance program) or if a member of the customer's household is either at least 62 years old or handicapped. Remember, **it is the customer's responsibility to inform the utility** if one or more of these circumstances exist in the household. For more information visit the website of the Public Service Commission, <http://psc.mt.gov/consumers/energy/pdf/UtilityRules03012001.pdf> or call them at 406-444-6199 or 1-800-646-6150.



Additionally, electric cooperatives and propane vendors are **not** regulated by the PSC; each one has their own rules so be sure to check with your energy provider on what those are.

# Stretching the \$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$

## Senior Commodities



With winter comes many challenges including increase in heating bills, limited mobility and other unforeseen expenses. Senior commodities may be one resource that you could be eligible for to

Commodities provide a variety of canned goods and storable vegetables to supplement a senior’s own food purchases. Commodities are distributed monthly in designated community locations.

Many Montana communities provide commodities for qualifying seniors. To qualify, seniors must be 60 years and older and be at 130% Federal Poverty Level (FPL)

For 2015 FPL guidelines, this is about \$1275/month in a household of 1 or \$1725/month in a household of two. The amount increases by \$451 per additional household members. Contact your local **Area Agency on Aging** for Commodity information, eligibility and distribution schedules at 1 800-551-3191.

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### TRY THESE NUTRITIOUS RECIPES TO GET YOUR NEW YEAR OFF TO A GOOD START

Submitted by Minkie Medora RD

#### **BREAKFAST PARFAITS – FAST AND SIMPLE** - Makes 2 servings

- 1 cup reduced fat Greek yogurt
- 1 cup fat free milk
- ½ cup rolled oats or muesli
- 1 cup chopped fruit – banana, apple, berries



Combine yogurt and milk and oats or muesli. Put in 2 tall glasses or parfait cups, cover and let them sit overnight. This allows the oatmeal or cereal to soak. In the morning, stir in fruit – and enjoy.

**LENTIL, FARRO AND SWEET POTATO SOUP** – Makes 4 servings

This soup makes a lovely winter meal – served with hot rolls or biscuits.

- ¼ Cup Red lentils dry (or ½ cup cooked)
- ¾ Cup water
- ½ Tbsp coconut oil or canola oil
- ½ cup yellow onion – diced
- ½ tsp fresh ginger – grated
- 1 garlic clove - minced
- 2 cups low-sodium vegetable or chicken broth
- ¼ Cup farro\* - dry
- ½ cup sweet potato, diced into small cubes
- ½ cup red bell pepper, diced
- ½ cup tomatoes, diced
- ½ tsp cumin
- ½ tsp cinnamon
- ¼ tsp turmeric (optional)
- 2 cups fresh spinach
- ¼ cup raisins



In a small pot, add dry lentils and water. Bring to a boil and reduce to medium-high heat. Cover and cook for 10 mins or until lentils are tender.

While the lentil cooks, heat oil, garlic, onion, ginger in a 3 quart pot over medium-high heat.

Cook until onions are translucent – 10 mins.

Once lentils are cooked, drain excess water and add to the larger soup pot.

Add the broth, ginger, farro, sweet potato, red pepper, tomato, cumin, cinnamon, turmeric, spinach and raisins.

Bring to a boil, reduce heat, cover and cook for about 30 mins, or till farro is tender.

\*Farro is a cracked wheat that came from Italy. It is very high in fiber and nutrients like Vitamin B and zinc. Farro is found in most grocery stores. If you cannot find it, substitute with cracked wheat bulger and reduce the cooking time.

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*"I advise you to go on living solely to enrage those who are paying your annuities. It is the only pleasure I have left." --Voltaire*



## **SNAP (FOOD ASSISTANCE) FOR SENIORS: BE SURE TO COUNT MEDICAL EXPENSES ON THE SNAP APPLICATION**

Some people, particularly seniors, are reluctant to apply for SNAP benefits because they assume they won't be eligible. There's a lot of confusion and misinformation regarding SNAP eligibility, but it's free to apply. So, if you find it difficult to afford your fixed expenses and buy food, you should consider completing a SNAP application.

Income and expenses are the two primary factors reviewed when evaluating SNAP eligibility. You'll provide this information on the application and eligibility staff will review it with you during an interview, which is usually conducted by phone. Your net income will be used to determine if you are eligible, and if so, the amount of SNAP benefits you will receive. There are certain expenses that can be deducted from your gross income to determine your net income. These expenses include shelter (rent, mortgage, property taxes, homeowner's insurance, etc.), utilities, earned income, standard, dependent care, and excess medical expense deductions. The excess medical expense deduction is particularly important to seniors (and disabled individuals) because it can significantly reduce your net income, making you eligible, or eligible for higher SNAP benefits.

Claiming medical expenses not only reduces your net income, but also may allow you a larger shelter expense deduction, reducing your net income even further.

The medical expense deduction works much like other SNAP deductions, which are taken from your household's gross income. The deduction applies only to the medical costs of the senior and/or disabled household members; it does not apply to other household members who are not either seniors or disabled. Medical expenses in excess of \$35 per month can be deducted, and there is no limit on the amount deducted.

For SNAP, seniors are individuals aged *60 or older*. Deductible medical expenses include health insurance premiums, transportation costs to obtain medical treatment, over-the-counter medication, medical equipment, and dental expenses. Medical expenses that you have already paid and those that you've incurred but not yet paid can be deducted. However, past-due medical bills cannot be deducted unless you are paying them or have a payment agreement in place; credit -card interest charges for medical expenses also cannot be deducted. Any medical expense or portion of an expense that is or will be reimbursed by an insurance company, Medicare or Medicaid also cannot be deducted.

SNAP rules allow for most medical expenses to be deducted. Other than special diets and nutritional supplements (such as "Ensure" and "Boost"), almost all unreimbursed



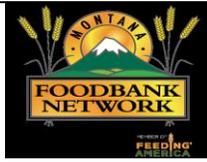
medical costs can be deducted, even those not covered by health insurance or that typically do not require a prescription.

You do not have to list all possible deductible medical expenses on the application. It is *very important*, however, to discuss medical expenses during your interview. You'll need to provide verification of your medical expenses, but this can be done after the interview. Documents (prescription receipts, EOBs, etc.) are the best verification, but if needed, eligibility staff who have your written permission, can also call your providers. Getting your medical expense information together and having it verified might seem like additional work, but the good news is that if your medical expenses don't change by more than \$25, you won't have to re-verify them. If you already receive SNAP, you can report your medical expenses at any time.

SNAP applications can be completed online at [www.apply.mt.gov](http://www.apply.mt.gov) , in person at an Office of Public Assistance (OPA) near you, or you can call the Montana Public Assistance Helpline (PAHL) at [1-888-706-1535](tel:1-888-706-1535) and request an application. If you need assistance completing the application, staff at an OPA office can help you, or you can call the PAHL at 1-888-706-1535 and request assistance. The website [www.dphhs.mt.gov](http://www.dphhs.mt.gov) has a wealth of information about SNAP and other assistance programs as well.

*DeAnn Caussyn is a Human Service Specialist, SNAP Policy with HCSD/Montana DPHHS*





## Food and Nutrition Survey



The State Office on Aging in collaboration with the Food Security Council of the Montana Food Bank requests your help in learning about hunger concerns for our elderly population. Please help us by filling out the questions below so that we may learn more about this problem. Return survey to:  
Jacqueline Stoeckel, Mt Office on Aging, P.O. Box 4210, Helena, MT 59604-4210

<b>FOOD SECURITY QUESTIONS</b>		Please respond to the following statements based on the <u>last 12 months</u> . You do not need to write your name. Thank you		
Zip code _____				
STATEMENT	YES	NO	SOMETIMES	
I worry that my food will run out before I have money to buy more.				
The food I buy does not last, and I do not have money to get more.				
I am not able to eat proper, balanced meals because of what I can buy.				
I eat smaller meals or skip meals because there is not enough money for food.				
I am hungry but do not eat because there is not enough money for food.				
I have lost weight because there is not enough food to eat at home.				
I live far from the store and do not have a way to buy food till someone takes me.				
<b>Choose all that apply:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> I get SNAP (food stamp) benefits <input type="checkbox"/> I get food from food banks and food pantries <input type="checkbox"/> I get Senior Commodity food boxes <input type="checkbox"/> I get Senior Farmer's Market Vouchers				
<b>Choose all that apply:</b> I participate in: <input type="checkbox"/> Home Delivered Meals <input type="checkbox"/> Congregate (senior center) Meals				
<b>Other comments:</b>				



## **Governor’ Advisory Council Member and Billings’ resident Alex Ward to lead AARP Montana Executive Council**

AARP Montana State Director Tim Summers announced on December 31, 2015, the appointment of Alex Ward as State President – the highest state-level volunteer position within the nonprofit, nonpartisan organization.

“We are delighted that Al has stepped into this key leadership position,” Summers said. “His extensive professional experience with AARP, his distinguished service as a volunteer leader and his passion for our mission make him an ideal choice.”

Ward, a Billings resident, will lead the AARP Montana volunteer Executive Council and



work to achieve AARP’s vision, mission and strategic priorities in communities across the state. He will also serve as the principal AARP volunteer spokesperson in Montana. Ward succeeds Helena resident, Joy Bruck as President, who served six years in the position. Ward’s appointment is effective Jan. 1, 2016.

“Selection as State President is a tremendous honor,” said Ward. “During my entire career, I served in positions committed to public service. This appointment represents a culmination of that work. It is a privilege to have this opportunity to work alongside Tim Summers, the AARP staff and a splendid corps of dedicated and tireless volunteers toward the common goal of enhancing the quality of life for all Montanans as we age.”

Retired, Ward is a former AARP Outreach Director with a celebrated career in law enforcement and the military. He is the author of three books and several publications on crime prevention and consumer protection, the recipient of several lifetime achievement awards, a current or former board member of numerous organizations, and as an adult education specialist, he has taught over 700 classes in crime and loss prevention to law enforcement, security, business and general public audiences.

Ward’s volunteer and professional experience with AARP totals more than 21 years – most recently, he served as an executive council member leading the consumer protection and Native American outreach efforts for the office.

In 2013, Ward was selected to receive the Andrus Award for Community Service, the Association’s most prestigious volunteer award. Last year, the State of Montana honored Ward with the Montana Consumer Protection Award for his programs that have



educated thousands of Montanans about how to avoid fraud. He recently received recognition in the Wall Street Journal for his outstanding consumer protection work.

Ward began his career by serving his country in the U.S. Marine Corps, enlisting during the height of the Vietnam War. By the end of his enlistment, Ward served as one of two technicians in an Air Traffic Control Tower at the helicopter landing field at Camp Pendleton. His commitment to serve his country continued with the U.S. Coast Guard as a Reservist for 16 years. Continuing his career in public service, Ward served more than 25 years as a police officer with the Bellevue Police Department in Washington State. As a security consultant, his consumer protection and crime prevention efforts were directed towards adult education.

In his retirement, Ward continues his long track record of public service by volunteering not only with AARP, but also with several organizations including the Governor’s Council on Aging, The Montana Crime Prevention Council, the Marine Corps League, the Reserve Officers Association and various Indian tribes and tribal organizations.

Ward holds a Master’s degree in Adult Education from Seattle University and a Bachelor’s degree in Political Science from the University of Washington.

Summers also thanked Joy Bruck, AARP Montana’s outgoing state president, for years of valued service on behalf of Montanans of all generations. “AARP members and the 50-plus throughout the state owe a debt of gratitude to Joy Bruck for her courageous advocacy on their behalf, her great ability to bring their concerns and hopes to leaders throughout the state and nation, and her strong commitment to Montana. We wish her all the best as she explores new opportunities for growth and service.”

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## ***New AAA Director Western Montana Area Agency on Aging***

***Welcome to Tammy Walston*** as Director of Western Montana Area Agency on Aging. Ms. Walston is taking over for Duane Lutke, who retired after 33 years as the Area Agency Director, which served Lake, Lincoln, Mineral and Sanders counties and the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes.



## **Governor’s Advisory Council Mini-Grant Applications are now available**

### **Does your organization need help with a project?**

The Governor’s Advisory Council on Aging raises funds in order to give mini-awards to groups who need help with an activity or project which benefits senior citizens.

The purpose of the Mini-Grant Program is to help facilitate up front funding of innovative ideas that will serve senior interests in local communities. Funding for these grants is provided through donations.

The one time only mini-grants range from \$200 to \$1,000. Applications can be received from any governmental agency or 501(C) 3 non-profit organization. The community receiving the grant must have a population fewer than 10,000. Photos of the completed project and accounting for funds received will be required as well as a report to the Governor’s Advisory Council on Aging by year end.

Eligible activities include a full range of services needed by Montana’s seniors such as training and education, development of support services, creating or enhancing on-going services to meet a specific or unmet need of seniors in the community. They should exhibit collaboration with the aging network, and public/private sector partnerships are encouraged.

To apply for a mini-grant visit our Governor’s Council on Aging webpage [Governor’s Advisory Council on Aging](#) and click on Mini-Grants or contact Jackie Stoeckel at the Office on Aging [Jstoeckel@mt.gov](mailto:Jstoeckel@mt.gov) or 1 800-332-2272.

**MINI-GRANT APPLICATION FOR SENIOR PROJECTS must be received by August 3rd, 2016.**



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### ***Become a Sponsor***

***Perhaps*** your business or program would like to consider a Mini Grant Award sponsorship?

Many of our senior centers and nonprofit programs for seniors run on a shoe string and a prayer and need that extra boost to



replace worn out appliances, updating exercise equipment, putting a new roof on or to provide an innovative project for seniors in their community. They can't accomplish all of this on their own.



The Governor's Advisory Council does engage in fundraising activities but we find that the applications and needs are increasing. We are reaching out to you and your program staff who may not be aware that the mini grants are out there. They would like to invite you to consider a sponsorship to such a worthy cause.

You will have the opportunity to sponsor a mini-grant by either submitting a sponsorship form on line [Governor's Conference on Aging](#) or contacting Jackie Stoeckel @ [jstoeckel@mt.gov](mailto:jstoeckel@mt.gov) or 406 444-6061 and she will be happy to forward you a sponsorship agreement. There are three levels of sponsorships ranging from \$300-\$1000. Recognition varies from an acknowledgement and ad in the conference program to photo-shoot and business recognition with the grantees at the awards banquet. This year two of the Mini-Grant Sponsorship packages offer sponsors an opportunity to have their business logo displayed on the conference website. The best recognition however, is knowing that your business was a part of enhancing senior lives in the rural communities.

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**did you know?**

**The Mystery Flavor Dum Dum is a mixture of two flavors that come together when the end of one batch of candy meets the beginning of the next batch.**



## **MARK YOUR CALENDAR**



***ATTENTION!!!!!!!!!!***

***CONFERENCE REGISTRATION HAS BEGUN!***

### **48<sup>th</sup> Governors Conference on Aging and Home and Community Based Services Conference**

Registration for the 48<sup>th</sup> annual Governor's Conference on Aging has begun for the 2016 conference year. The conference will be held this year in Billings at the Billings Convention Center and Hotel the week of September 13-15, 2016. The Governor's Conference on Aging is teaming up with Home and Community Based Service Conference. A block of rooms have been reserved for the conference and you can find that information on the Website for the [Governor's Conference on Aging](#)

The theme this year is "***Navigating Choices***". We are in the process of recruiting several great Keynote Speakers and break out presentations. The agenda continues to be developed for the three day conference so check back often by clicking on [Agenda](#).

The Conference continues to include the Centenarian Luncheon which is scheduled for September 13 at this same location. We are looking for the oldest Montanan. Last year



127 centenarians were profiled in the conference program and 22 of them joined us along with the Governor for the Luncheon.

This year's conference will also include an awards banquet on Wednesday evening (September 14). Home & Community Based Services will continue their tradition of this awards banquet honoring various caregivers and scholarship recipients.

This conference runs solely on the support of our sponsors. There are several Sponsorship packages offered this year. Home and Community Based Services continues to offer their consumer scholarship sponsorships allowing members who are limited in income to attend the conference. Governor's Advisory Council's Mini Grant Awards help senior programs in rural areas with innovative projects for their senior community. This year several of the sponsorship packages include recognition of the sponsor by having their business logo appear on the Conference Website. The earlier these sponsors purchase a sponsorship, the longer the exposure their business will receive from those who view the website.

For more information regarding the conference go to our website at:  
<http://dphhs.mt.gov/sltc/aging/GovernorsConferenceonAging>

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## Montana's Centenarian Search

### *The Search for Montana's Oldest Citizens*

Each year at the Governor's Conference on Aging, we want to recognize Montana's centenarians. **Even if we have honored or recognized them before**, we want to continue to acknowledge their achieving centenarian status and each year over age 100 is an amazing accomplishment.

In January of each year, we start to identify and recognize Montana's centenarians; those who will reach the age 100 this year as well as all those who are over 100.

**We continue to identify and honor Montana's oldest citizen and those centenarians who also served in the armed services**, so please provide the information above even if you or the centenarian has received a certificate in previous years and have attended a Centenarian Luncheon at previous Governor's Conference on Aging. The 2016 Governor's Conference on Aging will be held in Billings on September 13, 14 and 15. The Centenarian Luncheon is planned for September 13<sup>th</sup>.

If you are a Centenarian or are aware of one and would like them to receive a Certificate of Recognition from the Governor, please supply us the following information:

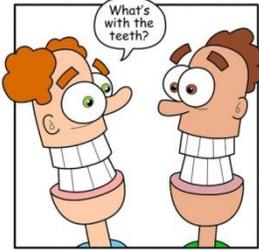
- 1) **Centenarian's Name.\***
- 2) **Where is the Centenarian living now?\***
  - a) **City:**
- 3) **Contact person (who to send certificate to).\***
- 4) **Contact person's phone number and e-mail address \***
- 5) **Mailing address (where to send the certificate).\***
- 6) **Birth date of Centenarian.\***
- 7) **Where were they born?**
- 8) **If not born in Montana, what is their story on how they got to Montana?**
- 9) **Are they a veteran?**
- 10) **What is the secret to their longevity?**
- 11) **What has been the most amazing event in their life that they would like to share?**
- 12) **What is their favorite quote?**
- 13) **Anything else they would like us to know about the centenarian?**
- 14) **Would the centenarian be willing and able to attend the Governor's Conference on Aging in Billings on September 13?**
- 15) **Please provide a picture of the centenarian if they will be attending the luncheon.**

You can complete and submit the online form by visiting [Montana Centenarian's Program](#) or - mail your centenarian information to:

**Centenarians, DPHHS – SLTC – Aging Services, PO Box 4210  
Helena MT 59604-4210**

## ***Making your Mouth Matter***

Your mouth may hold details about your overall health according to researchers. The health of your gum tissue and teeth can provide your doctor and dentist with details about your risk for health problems. Keeping healthy requires a daily brushing and flossing routine that includes fluoride toothpaste and seeking dental care to prevent and detect disease.



### ***Risk for Health Problems***

Research has shown that people with gum disease may be at higher risk for heart disease and have a more difficult time controlling blood sugar. If you have either heart disease or diabetes get dental care at least once a year and make sure to follow recommended care to prevent problems.

Loss of motor skills may affect the ability for good brushing and flossing and can result in tooth loss or pain. Poor dental health can make eating difficult, creating the risk of poor nutrition and other health problems. Adapting handles of tooth brushes or assistance with daily brushing is a good investment in health.

Germs in the mouth may also contribute to respiratory infections, especially among individuals with limited mobility. Large amounts of plaque and food that remain on teeth hold on to these bad bacteria increasing the risk for inhalation pneumonia.

#### **Reduce Your Risk**

- ✓ Create a daily brushing and flossing routine
- ✓ Use a fluoride tooth paste to prevent decay
- ✓ Get regular dental care

### **Smoking**



If you use tobacco, you are at a higher risk for gum (periodontal) disease. Gum disease creates pockets around teeth that hold bacteria and make cleaning your teeth difficult. Bacteria in the pockets create an infection that may require deep cleaning by a dental provider or surgery. If left untreated, the infection can cause tooth loss. Smoking also jeopardizes the success of treatment of the infection.

### **Medications**



Common medications for high blood pressure, allergies and depression may increase your risk for cavities. These medications can decrease the amount of saliva in your mouth. Saliva naturally protects teeth from the

bacteria that cause cavities. Having decreased saliva also may change the health of gum tissue and can make chewing, eating and swallowing more difficult.

What to do if you think you have dry mouth:

- Ask your pharmacist, doctor or dentist about treatment;
- Drink water often;
- Use sugarless gum or candy to increase saliva;
- Avoid alcohol, smoking and sugary foods.

### Diabetes



If you have diabetes you are at higher risk for dry mouth and gum disease. Research has shown that untreated gum disease can increase blood sugar levels. Keeping your mouth healthy improves your whole body health by reducing inflammation.

### Family History



Ask family members about dental problems so you know the history. If members of your family have had cavities or gum disease you are at higher risk for these problems.

#### Signs of Gum Disease

- ✓ Bad breath that won't go away
- ✓ Red or swollen gums
- ✓ Bleeding gums
- ✓ Loose teeth

**Cavities**, one family treasure you don't want to share! The germs that cause cavities are often passed from family members to children. Avoid sharing utensils, drinks and sloppy kisses with children if you have cavities, since the germs are in your saliva. Remember, baby teeth are important in speech, nutrition and self-esteem for children. Most importantly, cavities are nearly 100% preventable.

**Gum disease** often develops slowly with age but is a trait that runs in families. You can avoid gum disease with good brushing and flossing, don't smoke and get regular dental care to check for disease.



Unfortunately, many older adults do not have dental insurance coverage. Cost has been reported as a barrier to seeking dental care. Making prevention a priority is an important investment to reduce the risk for disease and costly procedures.

The content for this article was adapted from the National Institute for Dental and Craniofacial Research which can be found at <http://www.nidcr.nih.gov/>. If you would like



additional information about oral health in Montana please contact the Montana DPHHS Oral Health Program staff, Tonette Hollingsworth at (406) 444-2660 or [thollingsworth@mt.gov](mailto:thollingsworth@mt.gov).

Happy Brushing!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tonette".

*Tonette Hollingsworth, RDH, MS, is a program staff with the Oral Health Program with Department of Public Health and Human Services*

