

NEWSLINES

OF THE DIVISION ON AGING, DISABILITIES AND VETERAN SERVICES



John P. Curley
Freeholder Liaison

WINTER 2015

Tel. 877-222-3737

732-431-7450

www.visitmonmouth.com/aging

BE PREPARED: Another Severe Winter Approaches !

By: Michael Ruane, Director, Monmouth County Division on Aging, Disabilities and Veterans Services

As I'm writing this article, the driving rain is pounding outside my office window and the wind promised for tomorrow will surely scour the trees of their remaining red, yellow and gold leaves.

The weather forecasters and the squirrels tell us that this winter may outdo the last one with more snow and freezing weather. If true, it could be a tough time for all of us but especially our seniors and citizens with disabilities. There are many things we can do to prepare ourselves and our loved ones, but here are a few basic ways to prepare:

Be Informed: Know the local advance alerts and warnings and how you will receive them: Radio, TV, reverse 911, sirens, police & fire vehicles; Know about local emergency plans for shelter and evacuation and local emergency contacts for police, fire, first aid and your OEM.

Make a Plan: How will you get to a safe place? How will you contact one another? How will you get back together? What will you do in different situations? Identify actions that should be taken before, during and after an event. Also identify the hazards that have happened or could happen in your area and plan for the unique actions for each.

Seniors: Create a network of neighbors, relatives, friends and co-workers to aid you in an emergency; Discuss your needs and make sure everyone knows how to operate necessary equipment; Keep specialized items ready, including extra wheelchair batteries, oxygen, catheters, medication, food for service animals and any other items you might need; Keep a list of the type and model numbers of the medical devices you require; Be sure to make provisions for meds that require refrigeration; Make arrangements for any assistance to get to a shelter.

People with functional or access needs: Those who are deaf or hard of hearing may need to make special arrangements to receive emergency warnings; Single working parents and those with limited English may need help planning for disasters and emergencies; People without vehicles may need to make arrangements for transportation; People with special dietary needs should take precautions to have an adequate emergency food supply; Sign up for the "Register Ready" program by calling 732-431-7400.

Build a Kit: A disaster supplies kit is a collection of basic items your household may need in the event of an emergency. Try to assemble your kit well in advance of an emergency since you may need to survive on your own after an emergency. Have your own food, water and other supplies in sufficient quantity to last for at least 72 hours. You could get help in hours or it might take days. Your kit should include:

Basic Disaster Supplies Kit: Battery-powered or hand cranked radio and a NOAA Weather Radio with tone alert and extra batteries; Flashlight and extra batteries; First aid kit; Whistle to signal for help; Manual can opener for food; Local maps; Dust mask to help filter contaminated air and plastic sheeting and duct tape to shelter in place; Moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties for personal sanitation; Wrench or pliers to turn off utilities; Cell phone with chargers (home/auto/solar) and inverter.

LOOK INSIDE FOR
**CURRENT
TOPICS**

VET eCLAIMS & FULLY
DEVELOPED CLAIMS - 2
NJ HOME REPAIR
ADVOCACY PROGRAM - 3
CAREGIVER RETREAT
A HUGE SUCCESS - 3

Continued on page 2

Be Prepared (Continued from page 1)

Food and water: Store at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food; Choose foods your family will eat; Remember any special dietary needs; Avoid foods that will make you thirsty; Choose salt-free crackers, whole grain cereals and canned foods with high liquid content; Stock canned foods, dry mixes and other staples that do not require refrigeration, cooking, water or special preparation. Be sure to include a manual can opener and eating utensils.

Get Involved: Volunteer to support disaster efforts in your community; Get trained and volunteer with a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), Medical Reserve Corps unit and/or other Citizen Corps Partner Program; Be part of the community planning process by joining or starting a preparedness project; Support major disasters by donating cash or goods.

FEMA – the Federal Emergency Management Agency - in conjunction with the American Red Cross have published a series of pamphlets on disaster preparation. The following pamphlets are available at the Office on Aging: Preparing for Disaster; Preparing Makes Sense – Get Ready Now; Preparing Makes Sense for Older Americans; Preparing For Emergencies Now: Information for People with Disabilities; Makes Sense Preparing Your Pets for Emergencies Makes Sense; Food and Water in an Emergency; Flood Preparation and Safety; and an Emergency Supply List. Drop by our office and pick up a copy or call 732-431-7450 and we will mail a pamphlet to you.

eClaims and electronic Fully Developed Claims: The fastest way to get a VA claim decision

If you're a Veteran that needs to file a disability compensation claim for the first time or you need to submit a new claim for a previous service-related condition, there is now a faster, easier way to get a claim decision. With the help of the Monmouth County Veterans Service Office (MCVSO), you can file an electronic claim, or eClaim with the VA. You can call the MCVSO at 732-683-8675 and get help with your eBenefits and get a faster VA decision.

What is an eClaim? VA now offers Veterans the ability to initiate and submit claims online through the VA/DOD eBenefits web portal. All you need is a free Level 2 Premium eBenefits account to start your eClaim today.

An eClaim removes all of the paper clutter connected with filing a traditional paper claim. You can now directly submit your information online into VA's claims processing system. This allows VA to more quickly process your information and make a faster claim decision.

For an even faster disability compensation claim decision, Veterans can also choose to file an electronic Fully Developed Claim (FDC) through eBenefits.

What is an electronic Fully Developed Claim (FDC)? When you provide all required evidence at the same time you submit a claim electronically through eBenefits and certify that you have no more evidence, you are filing an electronic FDC. Providing all your documentation up front helps VA issue the fastest claim decision possible. Be aware, your claim will be removed from the FDC Program and processed through the traditional claim route if you do not include sufficient evidence, fail to attend your VA medical appointment or if additional evidence is received after



submission. You can learn more about the FDC Program and filing an eClaim at www.benefits.va.gov/fdc or visit the VBA Media & Publications Page to view informative videos on these topics.

Contact your appointed Veterans Service Officer for help filing an eClaim or electronic FDC, or visit www.eBenefits.va.gov and follow the guided step-by-step process. Agents at VA's toll-free number 1-800-827-1000 can also answer any questions you may have. Don't get stuck waiting for a claim decision longer than you have to – take control of your claim and file an eClaim today!

NJ Home Repair Advocacy Program (HRAP)

By: Michael Ruane, Director, Monmouth County Division on Aging, Disabilities and Veterans Services

There is still \$500,000 available for Monmouth County seniors and residents with disabilities through the NJ Home Repair Advocacy Program (HRAP). The program is funded through the Federal Social Services Block Grant program and is administered by the NJ Department of Human Services through the Monmouth County Division on Aging, Disabilities and Veterans Services' Aging and Disabilities Resource Connection (ADRC).

The Program may include replacement of interior wall boards, mold remediation, restoration of heating and cooling systems, fixing electrical problems, patching/replacing roofs, cutting and removal of trees, debris disposal and the refurbishing of major home appliances. HRAP eligible households could receive up to \$5,000 in assistance and up to \$10,000 with a valid waiver. Some assistance may be available for raising homes through another grant program. Applicants must attest that they have not received funding from any other state or federal agency, private insurance or charitable organization for the current items and/or services being requested on the application. In addition, documentation must be provided regarding what programs were applied for and the amount received, or copies of denials from homeowners insurance, FEMA and flood insurance.

This program officially kicked off late last year and will continue until September 30, 2015. The ADRC has been receiving inquiries and applications. For more information or to request an application, call the Monmouth County Office on Aging at 732-431-7450. HURRY!!!

Caregiver Retreat a Huge Success

On a beautiful Saturday this past November, the Monmouth County Division on Aging, Disabilities and Veterans Services hosted its Fifth Annual Caregiver Retreat at the Sheraton Hotel in Eatontown. Nearly 125 family caregivers attended the event which was made possible by the National Family Caregiver's grant. Monmouth County Freeholder John P. Curley kicked off the morning by thanking the attendees and reading a proclamation that designated November as Family Caregivers Month in Monmouth County.

The Retreat was an opportunity to recognize the caregivers for the service that they perform and also to better equip them with information and access to resources that will make their work easier. Over 25 local healthcare providers and businesses were on hand to provide valuable information to the participants.

"Many people do not consider themselves caregivers," Freeholder Curley said. "But when they think about all they do for their loved ones and how much time they spend doing it, they realize that they are. They do it because that's what families and friends do for the people they care for and love."

"We teach caregivers how to care for themselves as they are caring for someone else," said Colleen Smith, the County's caregiver specialist from the Office on Aging. "That's important because if you don't have the energy or a good frame of mind to care for yourself, you're not going to be able to take care of someone else."

Continued on page 4

NEWSLINES

Jointly funded by the Monmouth County Board of Chosen Freeholders and the New Jersey Division on Aging Services, Department of Human Services

Caregiver (Continued from page 3)

"It's very hard to see your parents or loved one decline," said Michael Ruane, director of the Office on Aging, Disability and Veterans Services. "Caregiving can be defined as around-the-clock care for someone at home, or someone who has already had to place a loved one in a facility and still visits them once a day or several times a week. Or, it could be someone caring for them long-distance and flying to see them every couple of months. It's all caregiving and it's all stressful."

After a light breakfast, the attendees heard a keynote address titled "Caregivers for Aging America: Worth, Appreciation and Self Care" by Joan Wills, RN, Regional AVP for Geriatric Services, St. Barnabas Healthcare System. Wills oversees geriatric services at Monmouth Medical Center and its southern campus at Kimball Medical Center in Lakewood. The St. Barnabas Healthcare System is routinely recognized for excellence in geriatric care.

Ms. Wills talk focused on the necessity of self-care and conveyed some strategies to accomplish that. Three breakout sessions ensued and the topics included: a description of state and federal programs that provide assistance in the home; strengthening mind, body and spirit with yoga; and the benefits of canine therapy. Participants were uniformly grateful for the retreat, the information it provided and the opportunity to spend time with other caregivers. This year's retreat will also take place in November.

If you are a caregiver and are interested in attending, please call the Monmouth County Office on Aging at 732-431-7450 and leave your name and contact information. When the date and location of the event is finalized, you will be notified with the particulars.

Michael T. Ruane, Executive Director

Thomas A. Arnone

John R. Curley

Lillian G. Barry

Serena DiMaso, Deputy Director

Gary J. Rich Sr., Director

Chosen Freeholders

Monmouth County Board of

Return Service Requested

Freehold, New Jersey 07728

P.O. Box 1255

**Monmouth County Division on Aging,
Disabilities and Veteran Services**

PERMIT NO. 207
FREEHOLD, NJ 07728

PAID

PRESORT STANDARD
U.S. POSTAGE