

# AGELESS TIMES

September  
October  
2020

Dates to  
Remember

**Monday  
September 7**  
Labor Day  
\*COEDD Closed

**Sunday  
September 13**  
National  
Grandparents Day

**Tuesday  
September 22**  
Fall Begins



**Saturday  
October 31**  
Halloween

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## COEDD AAA Director Retires

Our longtime leader, COEDD Area Agency on Aging Director John Shea, retired July 31, 2020. He leaves with 32 years of knowledge and experience in the Aging field. He is a guy who got things done, and we will miss working with him a great deal!

John began his career with COEDD AAA in July of 1985 when he was hired as the Information and Assistance Specialist, followed by Aging Specialist. He moved into Eldercare Case Management, a program in existence at that time, where he served for 10 years.

In 1998, he left COEDD and joined the team at COCAA (Central Oklahoma Community Action Agency), where he implemented the Central Oklahoma Transit System (COTS), which is still in operation today. He returned to COEDD in 2001 as the AAA Director.

John has made an indelible mark on aging services in the COEDD area as well as statewide. He served as a mentor to many in the field. He was a favorite among community members throughout the COEDD district and he helped them get the critical services they needed, administering grants and providing technical assistance and advocacy. He was innovative in his leadership, with COEDD AAA becoming the first in the state to run the Outreach program in-house. He was instrumental in shaping the statewide Masonic Assistance Program for Seniors after a generous endowment was offered to help older adults by the Oklahoma Masonic Charity Foundation.

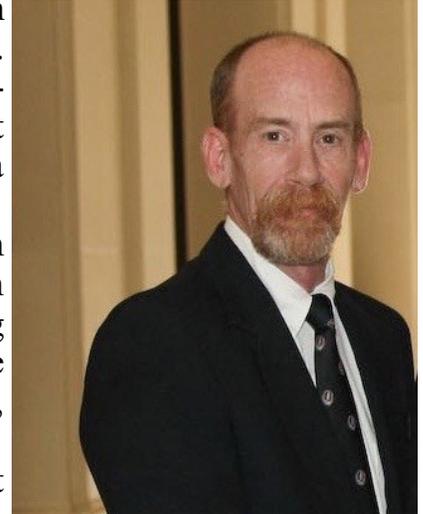


Those are just some of the many highlights through the years. And on top of all that, he's just a fun person to be around! And he's a great boss!

Thank you John for serving older adults for 32 years. As a leader, and one on one with older adults, caregivers, professionals and legislators, you have helped countless people in your time and made a difference in many lives.

We will miss seeing you every day and we hope we can do a good job carrying on your work of serving older adults with care and determination! Happy Retirement to You!

Now you can go do some fishing!



*Are You Reviewing Your  
Medicare Prescription Coverage Every Year?  
You Should Be—It Could Save you Money!*

**Medicare Open Enrollment  
October 15-December 7**



COEDD Area Agency on Aging (AAA), in cooperation with the Oklahoma Insurance Department Medicare Assistance Program, is again offering free Medicare Part D Plan Comparison and Enrollment assistance throughout the Fall Open Enrollment Period—October 15th through December 7th. We're here to help you take the guesswork out of your prescription drug coverage for 2021.

A certified counselor will provide unbiased, easy-to-understand information to help you compare Medicare Part D Plans and assist you in selecting or changing your drug coverage for 2021.

Each year Medicare Part D Plans change their premiums and what they cover, so it is encouraged to review your coverage each year. Remember, this is the only time of year that Part D changes can be made.

Counseling sessions will be done over the phone. To schedule your appointment or for more information, contact Kristi Tischer (Extension 128) at 1-800-375-8255 or 405-273-6410.

**Need Relief on Your Prescription Drug Costs?  
You May Qualify for Medicare “Extra Help”!**

Medicare beneficiaries with limited income and resources may qualify for “Extra Help” to pay for Medicare Part D prescription drug costs. If you qualify, it can help reduce your drug costs, including monthly premiums, annual deductibles, and prescription copayments. Many people qualify and don't even know it.

To qualify for Extra Help, income must be less than \$19,140 a year (or \$25,860 for married couples). Your resources must also be limited to \$14,610 (or \$29,160 for married couples). Your home, the land it stands on, your cars, burial plots, or personal possessions do not count toward the resource limit.

COEDD Area Agency on Aging can help you apply for this benefit. It's easy and free to apply and can be completed over the phone with a COEDD AAA staff person. Call Kristi at 1-800-375-8255 Ext. 128 or 405-273-6410 Ext. 128 to find out more!

## Fans Available to Those in Need



OG&E recently donated 50 electric box fans to COEDD Area Agency on Aging to provide cooling assistance to older adults in our service area. Thank you OG&E!

If you are in need of a fan, please contact the COEDD AAA Outreach Program at 405-273-6410 Ext. 147.

Pictured left to right: OG&E Community Relations Coordinator Melody Martin, COEDD AAA Director John Shea, COEDD AAA Outreach Manager Richard Ortley



## DON'T FORGET TO VOTE!

The U.S. Presidential Election is right around the corner: Election Day is November 3, 2020. Don't forget to exercise your right to vote and make your voice heard!



Several federal laws protect the voting rights of older Americans and people with disabilities and require accessible polling places. Here are a few voting resources for older adults and people with disabilities:

- **USA.gov/Voting** has information on how to vote, voter registration requirements and deadlines, and locating your state or local election office website. The Oklahoma State Election Board's website is **ok.gov/elections**
- The U.S. Election Assistance Commission offers information online at **eac.gov**
- Individuals in long-term care facilities who have concerns about exercising their right to vote can contact their long-term care Ombudsman program. **COEDD AAA Ombudsman can be contacted by calling 1-800-375-8255, then press 2 for Aging Services.**

**State Protection and Advocacy Systems (P&As)** are another valuable resource. The **Voting Access Program, Help America Vote Act (HAVA)** administered by ACL, provides funding to P&As to support efforts to ensuring full participation by people with disabilities in the electoral process, including registering to vote, casting a vote, and accessing polling places. P&As are responsible for the following HAVA activities:

- Full participation in the electoral process
- Education, training and assistance; Advocacy and education around HAVA implementation efforts
- Training and education of elected officials, poll workers, and election volunteers regarding the rights of voters with disabilities and best practices
- Assistance in filing complaints
- Assistance to state and other governmental entities regarding the physical accessibility of polling places; and obtaining training and technical assistance on voting issues.

Each P&A determines the best mix of HAVA services to provide based on the needs of their community. In Oklahoma, there are two P&As you can contact:

- \* **Oklahoma Disability Law Center** 405-525-7755
- \* **Office of Disability Concerns** 405-521-3756

Source: *The Administration for Community Living website: [acl.gov](http://acl.gov)*

## ELDER ABUSE FACTS



**What is elder abuse?** Elder abuse includes physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, exploitation, neglect, and abandonment. Perpetrators include children, other family members, and spouses—as well as staff at nursing homes, assisted living, and other facilities.

- **Physical abuse** means inflicting physical pain or injury upon an older adult.
- **Sexual abuse** means touching, fondling, intercourse, or any other sexual activity with an older adult, when the older adult is unable to understand, unwilling to consent, threatened, or physically forced.
- **Emotional abuse** means verbal assaults, threats of abuse, harassment, or intimidation.
- **Confinement** means restraining or isolating an older adult, other than for medical reasons.
- **Passive neglect** is a caregiver's failure to provide an older adult with life's necessities, including, but not limited to, food, clothing, shelter, or medical care.
- **Willful deprivation** means denying an older adult medication, medical care, shelter, food, a therapeutic device, or other physical assistance, and exposing that person to the risk of physical, mental, or emotional harm—except when the older, competent adult has expressed a desire to go without such care.
- **Financial exploitation** means the misuse or withholding of an older adult's resources by another.

Learn more about the types of abuse from the National Center on Elder Abuse (NCEA) at [ncea.acl.gov](http://ncea.acl.gov)

**How many older Americans are abused?** Approximately **1 in 10 Americans aged 60+** have experienced some form of **elder abuse**. Some estimates range as high as 5 million elders who are abused each year. One study estimated that **only 1 in 14** cases of abuse are reported to authorities.

**Who are the abusers of older adults?** Abusers are both women and men. In almost **60%** of elder abuse and neglect incidents, the perpetrator is a family member. Two thirds of perpetrators are adult children or spouses.

**What makes an older adult vulnerable to abuse?** **Social isolation** and mental impairment (such as **dementia or Alzheimer's disease**) are two factors. Recent studies show that nearly half of those with dementia experienced abuse or neglect. Interpersonal violence also occurs at disproportionately higher rates among adults with disabilities.

**What are the warning signs of elder abuse?**

- **Physical abuse, neglect, or mistreatment:** Bruises, pressure marks, broken bones, abrasions, burns
- **Emotional abuse:** Unexplained withdrawal from normal activities, a sudden change in alertness, or unusual depression; strained or tense relationships; frequent arguments between the caregiver and older adult
- **Financial abuse:** Sudden changes in financial situations
- **Neglect:** Bedsores, unattended medical needs, poor hygiene, unusual weight loss
- **Verbal or emotional abuse:** Belittling, threats, or other uses of power and control by individuals.

**What are the effects of elder abuse?** Elders who have been abused have a **300% higher risk of death** when compared to those who have not been mistreated. While likely under-reported, estimates of **elder financial abuse and fraud** costs to older Americans range from **\$2.9 billion to \$36.5 billion** annually. Yet, financial exploitation is self-reported at rates higher than emotional, physical, and sexual abuse or neglect.

**Are there criminal penalties for the abusers?** Most states have penalties for those who victimize older adults. Increasingly, across the country, law enforcement officers and prosecutors are trained on elder abuse and ways to use criminal and civil laws to bring abusers to justice. Review elder justice laws, statistics and other state resources compiled by the NCEA.

**How does a person make an elder abuse report?** If an older adult is in immediate, life-threatening danger, call 911. Anyone who suspects that an older adult is being mistreated should contact a local Adult Protective Services office, Long-Term Care Ombudsman, or police. **The Oklahoma Adult Protective Services Hotline is 1-800-522-3511.** Or you can call COEDD Area Agency on Aging for more information at 1-800-375-8255 Ext. 128.

**How can elder abuse be prevented?** Educating seniors, professionals, caregivers, and the public on abuse is critical to prevention. If you're an older adult, you can stay safe by:

- Taking care of your health.
- Seeking professional help for drug, alcohol, and depression concerns and urging family members to get help for these problems.
- Attending support groups for spouses and learning about domestic violence services.
- Planning for your own future. With a power of attorney or a living will, you can address health care decisions now to avoid confusion and family problems later. Seek independent advice from someone you trust before signing any documents.
- Staying active in the community and connected with friends and family. This will decrease social isolation, which has been connected to elder abuse.
- Posting and opening your own mail.
- Not giving personal information over the phone.
- Using direct deposit for all checks.
- Having your own phone.
- Reviewing your will periodically.
- Knowing your rights. If you engage the services of a paid or family caregiver, you have the right to voice your preferences and concerns. If you live in a nursing home, call your Long Term Care Ombudsman. The ombudsman is your advocate and has the power to intervene. Call COEDD AAA Ombudsman at **1-800-375-8255, then Press 2.**



Reprinted from National Council on Aging website: [ncoa.org](http://ncoa.org)

## Caregivers: Take a Much Needed Break



The Respite Voucher Program at COEDD Area Agency on Aging is a state and federally funded program in Oklahoma that provides financial assistance to in-home, unpaid family caregivers who need a break once in a while. Vouchers can be used to pay for that time, called respite care. A family caregiver is the person who provides ongoing care for a loved one.

Caregivers include spouses, adult children, or other relatives caring for a person age 60 or older who needs assistance with activities of daily living due to chronic health issues including Alzheimer's, dementia or other conditions. This program also covers Grandparents raising Grandchildren. Grandparents must be over 55 years old, have legal custody of the grandchild, or the grandchild must have a developmental disability to be eligible.

The vouchers, designed to offer temporary relief, give full-time caregivers the opportunity to leave the home for a short time to recharge and relax without having to leave the care receiver home alone.

When hiring in-home help, whether the person is a family member or a friend, trust and comfort should be priorities. As a caregiver, there must be trust of that person, but the care receiver needs to be comfortable with that person also. Be sure to check references of anyone you hire and the qualifications of professionally licensed health care companions.

For more information about the Respite Voucher Program in the COEDD area or to request a voucher application, call Caregiver Coordinator Debra Case at 405-273-6410, extension 130.

## Outreach Program

The goal of the COEDD Outreach Program is to assist older adults in accessing services and resources in their communities so they are able to age in place and continue to live independently in their respective communities. Trained specialists conduct needs assessments to find appropriate resources that may enhance their lives, such as home-delivered meals or needs related to health and safety.

They also offer chore service for older adults age 60 years and above with functional, physical or mental impairment. This program provides one time assistance paying for services such as heavy housework, yard work, or other like needs.

If you know someone who might need an outreach visit, you can contact Program Manager Richard Ortley at 405-273-6410 or 1-800-375-8255 Ext. 147.

# OMBUDSMAN NEWS



During the COVID-19 pandemic, it is a good time to remind long term care residents of their right to infection control.

## **The nursing home should be taking steps to prevent and control COVID-19.**

### **Staff should:**

- Wear personal protective equipment, such as facemasks and gloves.
- Wash their hands or use hand sanitizer before and after contact with each resident, after using medical equipment, and after taking off masks, gowns, and/or gloves.
- Place alcohol-based hand sanitizer in all resident-care areas, including both inside and outside resident rooms.
- Practice cough etiquette/hygiene.
- Stay home when sick.
- Clean residents' hands after toileting or eating.
- Clean and disinfect medical equipment between residents and areas of the facility.

### **Administration should:**

- Complete a special assessment developed by the federal government to determine if the facility's infection control plan and protections are adequate to address COVID-19.
- Communicate frequently with local and state Departments of Health, Emergency Management, and CDC to share facility conditions, obtain the most up-to-date information and resources, and ask for help as needed.
- Put a plan in place for frequent communication with residents and families about facility conditions and individual resident updates.

## **What to do if there are concerns about the facility's infection control practices or other issues**

- Talk to the director of nursing or administrator about your concerns and ask what they will do to address them.
- Contact the Long-Term Care Ombudsman program for assistance. The Ombudsman program advocates for residents and can help resolve concerns. To contact **COEDD AAA Ombudsman**, call **1-800-375-8255, Press 2 for Aging Services**.
- File a complaint with your state survey agency. In Oklahoma, you can file a complaint with the **Oklahoma State Department of Health at 405-271-6868**.

\*This agency is currently focusing only on complaints classified as "Immediate Jeopardy," which means that the problem/concern has caused serious harm, injury, impairment, or death. If you believe your concern rises to that level, make sure to indicate that in your complaint.

\*File a complaint even if you don't think it is Immediate Jeopardy. The complaint will still be entered into the system. The federal government will be issuing guidance about how these complaints will be handled.

Source: [theconsumervoice.org](http://theconsumervoice.org)

COEDD Area Agency on Aging  
Serving Hughes, Lincoln, Pawnee, Payne,  
Pottawatomie, Okfuskee, and Seminole Counties

400 N. Bell St.  
Shawnee, OK 74801

Phone: 405-273-6410  
Fax: 405-273-3213  
Toll-Free: 1-800-375-TALK (8255)  
Senior Info-Line: 1-800-211-2116

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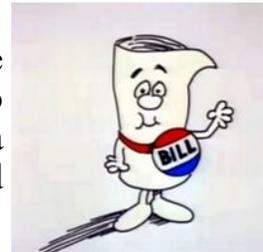
**Return Service Requested**

Director	<i>Jonathan Mitchell</i>
Planner	<i>Glenna Jones</i>
I & A Specialist	<i>Kristi Tischer</i>
Caregiver Coordinator	<i>Debra Case</i>
Outreach Manager	<i>Richard Ortley</i>
Outreach Specialist	<i>Demri Doyle</i>
Outreach Specialist	<i>Jean Ann Elliott</i>
Bookkeeper	<i>Floy Alexander</i>

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## **THERE OUGHT TO BE A LAW!**

How many times have you said this to yourself when you have encountered something that needs to be fixed? Those of us who work alongside Older Oklahomans sometimes encounter a barrier that, if removed, would make their lives less stressful and safer.



The Oklahoma Silver Haired Legislature (OSHL) is asking for bill ideas and/or bill resolutions to be submitted for the OSHL's consideration for the 2021 State Legislative Session. If you have an idea, let Bo Fallon, the OSHL Alumni Association's First Vice President, know about your idea. The OSHL is asking for all SHL Senate or House Bill and Resolution ideas to be submitted as soon as possible. Fallon can be reached at 580-536-7880. Bo would be happy to visit with you about your idea.

The Oklahoma Silver Haired Legislature is accepting membership applications now. So if you are 60 years of age or older, and interested in advocating for Older Oklahomans, as well as learning about the State Legislative Process, please give us a shout. We are on Face Book. We also can be reached at 405-743-4623, Trish Emig's phone number.