

Area Agency on Aging of Somerset County



Senior News

September 2009



HAPPY LABOR DAY



The History of Labor Day

Taken from the US Department of Labor website

Labor Day: How It Came About; What it Means

Labor Day, the first Monday in September, is a creation of the labor movement and is dedicated to the social and economic achievements of American workers. It is a yearly national tribute to the contributions workers have made to the strength, prosperity, and well-being of our country.

Founder of Labor Day

More than 100 years after the first Labor Day observance, there is still some doubt as to who first proposed the holiday for workers. Some records show that Peter J. McGuire, a general secretary of the Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners and a co-founder of the American Federation of Labor, was first in suggesting a day to honor those “who from rude nature have delved and carved all the grandeur we behold.”

But Peter McGuire’s place in Labor Day history has not gone unchallenged. Many believe that Matthew Maguire, a machinist, not Peter McGuire, founded the holiday. Recent research seems to support the contention that Matthew Maguire, later the secretary of Local 344 of the International Association of Machinists in Paterson, N.J., proposed the holiday in 1882 while serving as secretary of the Central Labor Union in New York. What is clear is that the Central Labor Union adopted a Labor Day proposal and appointed a committee to plan a demonstration and picnic.

The First Labor Day

The first Labor Day holiday was celebrated on Tuesday, September 5, 1882 in New York City, in accordance with the plans of the Central Labor Union. The Central Labor Union held its second Labor Day holiday just a year later, on September 5, 1883. In 1884 the first Monday in September was selected as the holiday, as originally proposed, and the Central Labor Union urged similar organizations in other cities to follow the example of New York and celebrate a “workingmen’s holiday” on that date. The idea spread with the growth of labor organizations, and in 1885 Labor Day was celebrated in many industrial centers of the country.

Legal



Issues

A partnership between
the Area Agency on Aging
and the
Somerset County Bar Association

The topic for this month's feature is "Medicaid"

MEDICAID - Medicaid is a state and federal program that helps pay for long-term care. Once an applicant successfully completes the application process, Medicaid will pay for nursing home costs, and certain home and community-based services. In most nursing home cases, the individual receiving Medicaid benefits must pay his or her income to the facility, less allowance for personal needs, and less an allowance for the community spouse. A short-term resident in a nursing home, certified for 6 months or less, may also be allowed a housing allowance.

ELIGIBILITY - Benefits are available only to individuals who meet these Medicaid eligibility standards. An applicant for Medicaid benefits must prove medical and financial eligibility. Somerset County's Office of Aging and Adult Services, determines medical eligibility for nursing facility care. The nursing home requests a medical assessment automatically when an application for Medicaid benefits is made. To avoid delay, one should be certain this assessment is completed. Establishing medical eligibility is rarely a problem in qualifying for Medicaid to cover nursing home costs. The main challenge is verifying financial eligibility.

All income and resources must be disclosed to the Medicaid caseworker. The applicant's non-excluded, available resources must not exceed the applicable limit.

The eligibility rules for married Medicaid applicants are much more complicated. An elder law attorney familiar with Medicaid planning should be consulted in order to make sure you do not spend-down more money on nursing home costs than is required under Medicaid rules. The spouse of the nursing home resident (community spouse) must also meet certain resource limits.

The community spouse is also allowed to have a certain level of income to avoid impoverishment. Some assets are "excluded resources" and are not counted when determining initial eligibility. For example, the residence is usually an excluded resource where the applicant intends to return home or where in cases where there is a spouse. An automobile is also an example of an excluded resource. - **NOTE DISCLAIMER**

Disclaimer: The information presented in the Legal Issues feature has been prepared for informational purposes only. It is not offered for and does not represent legal advice or a legal opinion on any specific fact or issue.

Next Month's Feature: Avoiding Scams

Know of Someone Who's 100 Years Old?

Should you know of anyone who has reached this remarkable milestone, please contact the Agency at (814) 443-2681 or Toll Free at 1-800-452-0825 between the hours of 8:00 AM and 4:00 PM any Monday through Friday (except those days designated as county holidays). A Centenarian certificate will be presented by the Area Agency on Aging Administrator recognizing this achievement, and their biography will be featured in a future edition of the Senior News.

Athletic Passes for Senior Citizens in the Somerset Area School District



The Somerset Area School District is offering athletic passes to Senior Citizens, age 62 and older, residing in the Somerset Area School District. The pass is for admission to all home athletic events held during the 2009-2010 school year.

There is no cost for the athletic pass. We are hopeful that many Senior Citizens will take advantage of this opportunity and support the student-athletes in the Somerset Area School District.

Senior Citizens **who reside in Somerset School District** and wish to participate are encouraged to mail their name, address, phone number, and date of birth along with a **self-addressed stamped envelope** to:

ATHLETIC OFFICE

Somerset Area Senior High School
645 S. Columbia Avenue, Suite 130
Somerset, PA 15501

Passes will be available from Wednesday, July 1, 2009 through Tuesday, September 15, 2009. If you have any questions, please call the Athletic Office at (814) 444-3230.

MEDICARE, APPRISE & YOU

The following information is provided by the Area Agency on Aging State Health Insurance Program (SHIP) known as the APPRISE Program in PA. This information is taken from the **Philadelphia Coming of Age** web newsletter.

Medicare Fraud: Prevention and Tips

Detection Tips

You should be suspicious if the provider tells you that:

- The test is free; he only needs your Medicare number for his records. NOTE: For clinical laboratory test, there is no co-payment, and a provider may in good faith state that the test is free, since there is no cost to the person with Medicare.
- Medicare wants you to have the item or service.
- They know how to get Medicare to pay for it.
- The more tests they provide the cheaper they are.
- The equipment or service is free; it won't cost you anything.
- Offer you payments or gifts to go to clinics or offices.

Be suspicious of providers that:

- Charge co-payments on clinical laboratory tests, and on Medicare covered preventive services such as PAP smears, prostate specific antigen (PSA) test, or flu and pneumonia shots.
- Routinely waive co-payments on any services, other than those previously mentioned, without checking your ability to pay.
- Advertise "free" consultations to people with Medicare.
- Claim they represent Medicare.
- Use pressure or scare tactics to sell you high priced medical services or diagnostic tests.
- Bill Medicare for services you did not receive.
- Use telemarketing and door-to-door selling as marketing tools.

Prevention Tips

To help prevent Medicare Fraud you should report suspected instances of fraud. Whenever you receive a payment notice from Medicare, review it for errors. The payment notice shows what Medicare was billed for, what Medicare paid, and what you owe. Make sure Medicare was not billed for health care services or medical supplies and equipment you did not receive.

The following is a list of tips to prevent fraud:

- Don't ever give out your Medicare Health Insurance Claim Number except to your physician or other Medicare provider (or to an authorized and identifiable representative of an Area Agency on Aging or Apprise counselor).
- Don't allow anyone, except appropriate medical professionals, to review your medical records or recommend services.
- Don't contact your physician to request a service that you do not need.
- Do be careful in accepting Medicare services that are represented as being free.
- Do be cautious when you are offered free testing or screening in exchange for your Medicare card number.
- Do be cautious of any provider who maintains they have been endorsed by the Federal government or by Medicare.
- Do avoid a provider of health care items or services which tells you that the item or service is not usually covered, but they know how to bill Medicare to get it paid.

September is Mushroom Month Quick Mushroom Soup

1 lb Mushrooms, chopped or sliced
4-6 Cups Beef, Chicken or Vegetable Stock
1 Cup Heavy Cream, Half & Half or Milk
2 Tbs Dry Sherry (Optional)
Combine mushrooms and stock in pot and bring to a boil over high heat. Add cream or milk and / or sherry if desired. Serves 4 to 6.

Caregiver Assistance

Windber Caregiver Support Group

September 10, 2009 at 10:00 AM

Somerset Caregiver Support Group

September 24, 2009 at 10:00 AM

Please contact the Area Agency on Aging at (814) 443-2681 or 1-800-452-0825 for further information

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Volunteer Opportunities Through RSVP

The Retired and Senior Volunteer Program of Somerset County provides placement services and support benefits to people age 55 and over who wish to serve their community by volunteering for one of 70 organizations county-wide. For information about these and other volunteer opportunities, please call RSVP at (814) 443-2681 or 1-800-452-0825.

Somerset Food Pantry - This pantry is serving more families in need and could use more help to sort, pack and carry food items on their Wednesday morning distribution day. Contact the pantry at Trinity Lutheran Church in Somerset.

Somerset Hospital - A new position to assist elderly patients who are high risk of falls is being developed. The hospital wishes to have a team of "Sitters on Call" who would spend a few hours sitting with a patient to provide gentle reminders to those who do not understand why they are restricted. This would be an on-call as needed position. Contact Kelly Young at the hospital for details.

Windber Hospice - Compassion is the key element for this assignment. Trained volunteers provide support to patients and their families in their homes or in the unit at Windber Hospital.

Turkeyfoot Lending Library - This community-based library operates on a part-time basis with a total volunteer staff. Join in this great effort to provide books and computer access by becoming an aide to prepare materials for shelves or to man the desk and do filing. This library hopes to grow in books and hours of operations with more volunteers.

This Agency is a branch of

Somerset County Government
under the Commissioners of

Somerset County

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If you would like to obtain
further information about
any newsletter topics or
Agency services please call

the Somerset office at

443-2681 or

1-800-452-0825

Find us online at:

www.somersetaaa.org

