

Area Agency on Aging IIIA, 3299 Gull Rd., Nazareth, MI 49074 Phone: 269-373-5147 Fax: 269-373-5227 www.kalcounty.com/aaa

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...and much more

Martin Luther King Day
Monday, January 20
Offices Open

Monday, February 17
President's Day
Offices Open



Friday, February 14th
Valentine's Day



Put Health First in 2014

Discover how participating in our **Healthy Living Programs** can improve your quality of life, and pass the good news along to co-workers, friends, and family.

The Area Agency on Aging IIIA is proud to sponsor evidence-based workshops for Kalamazoo County, working with a host of community partners.

The workshops include **CREATING CONFIDENT CAREGIVERS**—a program for those caring for loved ones with dementia or memory loss; **A MATTER OF BALANCE**—managing concerns about falls; and **PATH (PERSONAL ACTION TOWARD HEALTH)**, **CHRONIC PAIN PATH AND DIABETES PATH**—helps people learn tools for the management of long-term health conditions.

Matter of Balance is comprised of eight two-hour sessions, twice a week, designed to facilitate an awareness that simple behavioral changes can help keep an individual independent and maintain a better quality of life.



PATH helps people learn skills to deal with chronic conditions such as arthritis, asthma, diabetes, depression, fibromyalgia and heart disease. The **PATH** workshops are also helpful for caregivers who assist with the management of these conditions. Workshops are for six weeks, 2-1/2 hour sessions a week.

Diabetes PATH is designed for people with pre-diabetes and diabetes; and, **Chronic Pain PATH** is for those with long-term pain management issues.

Creating Confident Caregivers, which uses the university-tested Savvy Caregiver Program model, is an empowering, educational, six-week training program which teaches people how to take care of themselves and to better care for their loved ones. **See p. 4 for scheduled workshop flyer.**

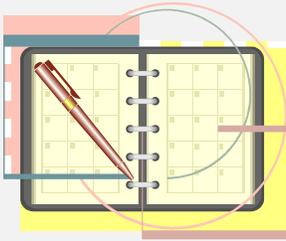
FOR MORE INFORMATION ON HEALTHY LIVING PROGRAMS:

Matter of Balance: 373-5224, mjreed@kalcounty.com, Marilyn Reed, Master Trainer.

PATH: 373-5382, nsbour@kalcounty.com, Norma Bour, Master Trainer.

Creating Confident Caregivers: 373-5141, psstra@kalcounty.com, Patti Stratton, Master Trainer.

See Healthy Living p. 3 for lay coach training opportunities, and scheduled workshops. ▼



Mark Your Calendar

Friday, January 24:
Professionals
Focused on Aging
(PFA), 8:00-9:30 AM,
 Senior Services, 918
 Jasper St. "Why

Kalamazoo County
Needs a Senior
Millage," with Don Ryan,
 Chair, Older Adult
 Services Advisory
 Council, and Judy

Sivak, Director, AAIIIA.

Friday, February 28:
PFA, 8:00-9:30 AM,
 Senior Services.
 Presentation TBD. ❖

How Does Kalamazoo Health Care Compare Nation Wide? by Anne Zemlick, RN

Welcome to 2014! With the anticipation of the New Year and what the Affordable Care Act will bring, it is important to be informed about those whom you are trusting with your health care. There are so many options for home care, acute care and long-term care: How do you choose?

Through Medicare's [Hospital Compare Website](#), you can find information to help make informed decisions about health care providers; know how our local hospitals are doing when addressing stroke, blood clot treatment and prevention, and how they are managing certain illnesses. By accessing [Nursing Home Compare](#) you can get the inspection results and overall ratings of nursing homes; or go to [Home Health Compare](#) for the performance of Medicare-certified home health agencies providing in-home rehabilitative services.

It is important to understand how the site defines the categories and what information is considered pertinent. For example: Hospital 30-day death and readmission measures are estimates of deaths from any cause within 30-days of a hospital admission, for patients who were hospitalized with one or several primary diagnoses such as heart failure or pneumonia. A "Special Focus Facility" (SFF) is a nursing facility that has a history of persistent poor quality of care and is subjected to more frequent inspections and escalating penalties from Medicare and Medicaid.

What will you find for Kalamazoo hospitals? Overall, both Borgess and Bronson hospitals in Kalamazoo do a better than average job managing hospital-wide, 30-day readmissions. The site also compares their outcomes related to 30-day readmissions and death rates for specific diagnoses.

If you are seeking long-term care—rehab or permanent placement—compare licensed facilities within a city, county or anywhere in the country, regarding issues that may be present. By being informed you can ask the right questions and promote better care.

The home health agency data highlights the quality of patient care and patient survey results providing a comparison to other Medicare-certified agencies. You can see how they do with regard to pain control, wound treatment and prevention of bed sores, as well as preventing unplanned hospital care.

There will be many changes in health care during 2014, and they will come fast and furious! Explore this Web site and become an informed advocate for your loved ones and yourself. ◆

Visit
<http://www.medicare.gov/>
 for more
 information

Healthy Living
continued from p. 1

Coaches Needed!

Do you have good communication and interpersonal skills? Enthusiasm, dependability and a willingness to lead small groups of older adults? The ability to lead low- to moderate-level exercise? If so, consider becoming a volunteer **lay leader coach for Matter of Balance** workshops. The coach training is Feb. 12 & 13, OR June 17 & 18, 8 AM to 1 PM, at the HCS Dept., 3299 Gull Road. Please call Marilyn Reed at (269)373-5224 if you are interested!

PATH needs you to become a lay leader. Training dates have not been set as of this publication; but, please do call Norma Bour at (269)373-5382 to get on the PATH to becoming a leader!

The Advisor is published six times a year by the Area Agency on Aging, IIIA. If you would like to receive a copy by mail, please contact:
Janice Bonita, Editor
Phone: 269-373-5147
Email: jgboni@kcalcounty.com

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Area Agency on Aging, IIIA, Health & Community Services Dept., Kalamazoo County Government Director – Judy Sivak

WORKSHOP SCHEDULE:

Matter of Balance :

- Jan. 9–Feb. 27, 1:30-3:30 PM, Portage Senior Center, Call 269-329-4555 to register.
- Jan 21–March 11, 2:00-4:00 PM, Heritage Community of Kalamazoo, (269) 488-2827
- Feb 18–April 8, 1:30-3:30 PM, Westland Meadows, (269) 342-4099 (Cyndi)
- March 10–April 28, 1:00-3:00 PM, Oshtemo Branch, Kalamazoo Public Library, (269) 553-7992 (Angela)
- April 9–May 28, 1:30-3:30 PM, Mt. Zion Baptist Church, (269) 388-3111

Diabetes PATH:

Mondays, March 3 - April 7, 2014
10 am - 12:30 pm
Galilee Baptist Church
1216 N. Westnedge Ave., Kalamazoo
Registration Required
For more information: (269) 373-5382

PATH:

Wednesdays, March 26 - April 30, 2014
1:30 pm - 4:00 pm
Washington Square Library
1244 Portage Rd., Kalamazoo
Registration Required
For more information: (269) 373-5382



I&A Corner

Information & Assistance line (269) 373-5173

The United States Senate Special Committee on **Aging Fraud Hotline** is a new way to report instances of waste, fraud, and abuse within government programs. The Committee's investigators have experience in fraud concerning retirement savings, identity theft, phone scams, Medicare, Social Security, and a variety of other consumer issues important to seniors and the elderly. Callers will get advice and help in navigating the vast array of government agencies involved in consumer protection complaints. If you know or suspect that someone has been a victim of fraud, call (toll-free) **1-855-303-9470** or send an email from the senior-friendly website www.aging.senate.gov/fraud-hotline.

◆
The **Eldercare Locator** and The Conversation Project <http://theconversationproject.org> have created a new guide for older adults, family members and professionals seeking to start conversations about health, legal, financial and end-of-life issues with their family members or friends. To order print copies of "Let's

Talk: Starting the Conversation about Health, Legal, Financial and End-of-Life Issues," go to www.n4a.org/programs/eldercare-locator/resources. Orders of up to 25 units are free. To access the "Let's Talk" guide online, go to www.n4a.org/pdf/Conversations.pdf

Healthy Michigan Plan Approved
Work on health care enrollment process begins

LANSING – The Healthy Michigan Plan received approval from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). The plan, which Gov. Rick Snyder signed into law on Sept. 16, will extend health care benefits to 322,000 low-income Michigan residents in spring 2014. To be eligible to apply for the Healthy Michigan Plan you must be between the ages of 19-64, not currently eligible for Medicaid, not eligible for or enrolled in Medicare, and earning up to 133 percent of the Federal Poverty Level.

For more information about the progress of the Healthy Michigan Plan or developments regarding the enrollment process, visit www.michigan.gov/healthymichiganplan. ◆

Kalamazoo Valley Museum Hosts Films, Discussions on Health and Inequality



KALAMAZOO (MICH.)

The Racial Healing Initiative of the Southwest Michigan Black Heritage Society is teaming up with Kalamazoo Valley's Arcadia Campus Committee for Cultural Understanding to present a

free series of short film segments from "Unnatural Causes: Is Inequality Making Us Sick?"

This series, accompanied by facilitated discussion, will be shown in the Mary Jane Stryker Theater at the Kalamazoo Valley Museum from **noon to 1 p.m. on the third Wednesdays of September through March, excluding December. Participants are encouraged to bring a lunch. Beverages and cookies will be provided.**

The film segments and facilitated discussion will examine the root causes of the alarming socioeconomic and racial inequities in health. New findings suggest there is much more to health than bad habits, health

care, or unlucky genes. The social circumstances in which we are born, live, and work can actually get under our skin and disrupt our physiology as much as germs and viruses.

The topics to be explored are:

January 15: "Place Matters" — Why is your street address such a strong predictor of your health?

February 19: "Collateral Damage" — How do Marshall Islanders pay for globalization and U.S. military policy with their health?

March 19: "Not Just a Paycheck" — Why do layoffs take such a huge toll in Michigan, but cause hardly a ripple in Sweden?

The Kalamazoo Valley Museum is operated by Kalamazoo Valley Community College and is governed by its Board of Trustees.

Contributed by Dawn Kemp—Public Information Specialist; Kalamazoo Valley Community College

Reprinted from www.communityvoicesonline.com

It's Time to Join or Renew Membership in KCASI!

The Kalamazoo County Advocates for Senior Issues is currently concentrating its efforts on scheduling important programs for 2014, as well as on its membership drive. Dues are for the calendar year; however, if you paid during Oct.-Dec., 2013, for 2014, your membership is good through the end of 2014.

Here are the links to the 2014 KCASI Membership Form and Sponsorship Form:

[2014 KCASI Membership Application Form](#)
[2014 Sponsorship Form](#)



The next KCASI meeting is scheduled for February 17th; 1:15 PM for refreshments and networking, followed by the meeting from 1:30 to 2:45 PM. The topic will be, *Why Kalamazoo County Needs a Senior Millage*. Local legislators will be invited to come and hear this important presentation. Please be there for this presentation and hear the facts about what aging in Kalamazoo could mean to you now and in the near future.

(There will be no KCASI January meeting. There will be a Legislative Committee Meeting January 17th. If any members of KCASI are interested in attending who currently do not receive the Legislative Committee mailings, please contact Janice at 269-373-5147.)

Many Thanks to our 2014 Sponsors:

- Area Agency on Aging IIIA • Hospice Care of Southwest Michigan • Disability Network Southwest Michigan
- Presbyterian Villages of Michigan • Senior Services Southwest Michigan • Stay Home Companions
- UnitedHealthcare Community Plan

Creating Confident Caregivers®

AN EMPOWERING, EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM FOR INDIVIDUALS CARING FOR A PERSON WITH MEMORY LOSS OR DEMENTIA



CREATING CONFIDENT CAREGIVERS

About the program -

Creating Confident Caregivers is a program for those caring for loved ones with dementia or memory loss. This unique, 6-week training uses the university tested Savvy Caregiver Program and provides participants with information and resources to better manage the stress of caregiving.

What's In It For You?

Learn about -

- Dementia and its effects on the brain
- Caregiver resources
- Managing behaviors
- Improving caregiving skills
- How to handle everyday activities more easily
- Taking care of yourself to better care for your loved one



Testimonial -

"After the first class, I felt a weight had been lifted. I learned so much. It's helpful to know what I'm experiencing is normal and I'm not alone."

—Family Caregiver

Respite Care -

Care for your family member with memory loss can be arranged so you may attend the sessions.

Ask for details when you register.

Classes Offered

Day & Dates: March 25th, April 1, 8, 15, 22 & 29th.

Time: 2:00-4:00pm

Location: Kalamazoo County Health & Community Services, Wing 1, 2nd Floor Conference Room F

Address: 3299 Gull Road, Kalamazoo

DONATIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED

To register contact:

Patti Stratton, LLMSW

(269) 373-5141

psstra@kalcounty.com

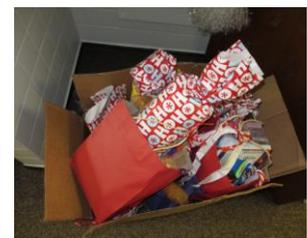
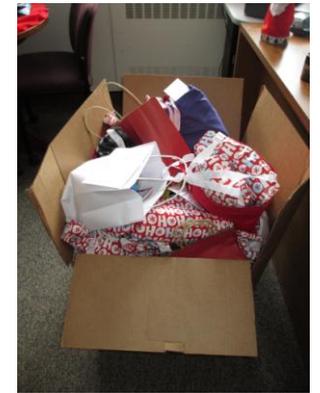
Thank you for Warming Hearts this Season!

Many, many thanks to the **Hearts to Hands Stitchers of Kalamazoo First Presbyterian Church** for the beautiful blankets and shawls they made and donated to help us fill gift baskets for Choices for Independence program clients. CFI Care Consultants delivered the gifts to those folks without families and who needed holiday cheer.

We appreciate our Advisory Council members, staff, and others who generously donated gift basket items.



Enjoy these photos From Santa's workshop.



Volunteer as a Counselor for Medicare Beneficiaries by Lisa Fuller

Are you a person who likes to solve puzzles and mysteries, enjoys meeting and working with people, are someone who faces barriers and obstacles with courage, determination and good humor? Then you are just the kind of person Senior Services of Southwest Michigan needs!

MMAP (Medicare/Medicaid Assistance Program) volunteer counselors provide information about and assistance with issues related to Medicare and Medicaid. These issues include, but are not limited to: eligibility and enrollment, covered services and

items, prescription drug assistance, Medicare fraud and abuse, appeal procedures, and help for low-income persons.

...volunteer counselors provide information about and assistance with issues related to Medicare and Medicaid.

As a counselor, you will be provided comprehensive, informative and interactive training of thirty-six hours, and continued monthly training, and mentoring and support by the MMAP team. MMAP is a state-

wide program with the local office at Senior Services Southwest Michigan. It is a free assistance program for individuals eligible for Medicare. Volunteers are asked to commit to a minimum of one year of service and 10-15 hours per month. Join MMAP and make a difference in your clients' lives from your very first day!

The next training is March 13, 14, 20, 21, 27 & 28, and will be held at Life EMS. If you would like more information, contact Lisa Fuller, MMAP Regional Coordinator, at (269)382-0515 ext. 203.

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Social Security Service to Change



Social Security

Dear Colleague:

I want to let you know about some important upcoming changes to the services we provide at Social Security offices across the country.

As of February 2014, the Social Security Administration will no longer offer Social Security number (SSN) printouts and benefit verification information in our field offices. However, to ensure a smooth transition, we will continue providing these services if requested until April 2014. We are making these changes to meet the increasing demands for our services at the same time that our agency budget has been significantly cut by over \$1B in each of the last three years. During this same time period we have invested in technology that offers more convenient, cost-effective, and secure options for our customers to obtain certain services without visiting a local office.

Because the SSN printout is not an official document with security features, and is easily duplicated, misused, shared illegally, or counterfeited, eliminating it helps prevent fraud. Employers, departments of motor vehicles, and other entities requiring SSN verification can obtain this information in real time or overnight using online government services such as E-Verify and Social Security's Business Services Online.

Beneficiaries and recipients needing a benefit verification letter can obtain one **immediately** by registering for a *mySocialSecurity* account at www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount, or through the mail within 5–7 days by calling our national toll-free number, 1-800-772-1213.

The Kalamazoo Social Security office does have three public access computers in the lobby. Individuals that do not have access to a computer can utilize these public access computers to create and/or access their *mySocialSecurity* account in addition to conducting other online Social Security business.

I appreciate your support for this effort as we work to provide the best possible service to the American people. For future updates and news, visit www.socialsecurity.gov/thirdparty.

If you have questions, please feel free to contact me at 1-877-322-5883 X18872 or vonda.vantil@ssa.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Vonda VanTil".

Vonda VanTil
Public Affairs Specialist
Social Security Administration

Custom Care *Peace of Mind*

Custom Care is the Area Agency on Aging's fee-for-service geriatric care management program provided by licensed professionals who specialize in assisting older adults and their families discover solutions

to their long-term care needs.

Our service is confidential, respectful, and follows professional protocols.

Call the AAAIIIA Information & Assistance line at (269) 373-5173 or visit our Web site at

www.kalcounty.com/aaa for more information. ∞



*Write it
on your heart
that every day
is the best day
in the year.*

*CS
Ralph Waldo Emerson*

Attention Disabled Veterans - Public Act 161 of 2013

Recently Governor Snyder signed into law Public Act 161 of 2013. This act amends MCL211.7b regarding property tax exemption for disabled veterans and un-remarried surviving spouses of eligible disabled veterans. As used in this section, "disabled veteran" means a person who is a resident of this state and who meets one of the following criteria:

- 1) Has been determined by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs to be PERMANENTLY and TOTALLY DISABLED as a result of MILITARY SERVICE and entitled to veterans' benefits at the 100% rate.
- 2) Has a CERTIFICATE from The United States Veterans' Administration, or its successors, certifying that he or she is receiving or has received pecuniary assistance due to disability for SPECIALLY ADAPTED HOUSING.
- 3) Has been rated by The United States Department of Veterans' Affairs as INDIVIDUALLY UNEMPLOYABLE.

To obtain the exemption, an AFFIDAVIT showing the facts required by this section and a legal description of the property shall be filed by the property owner or his or her legal designee with the supervisor or other assessing officer during the period beginning with the tax day for each year and ending at the time of final adjournment of the local board of review.

To have 2013 property taxes exempt, the affidavit needs to be filed with the local assessor for the December board of review. Please be aware that this is the last opportunity for any changes for the 2013 tax year.

This affidavit can be obtained at the Kalamazoo County Veterans Service Office located at the 3299 Gull Road. Please have proof from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs of one of the above listed ratings when obtaining affidavit.

Any questions regarding Public Act 161 of 2013 can be directed to James Tucker at 269-373-5304 or Aaron Edlefson at 269-373-5284 with the Kalamazoo County Veteran's Service Office. ★



May you have
a Happy and
Healthy 2014

from the staff of
Area Agency on
Aging, Region IIIA



Staff News



WELCOME!

Don Saldia, RN, is the new Care Consultant for the Choices for Independence program. Don has several years' experience as a nurse, and we are very pleased that he has joined our staff.

FEBRUARY ANNIVERSARIES:

John Weir, BSW, Long Term Care Ombudsman, celebrates 17 years with the Area Agency on Aging IIIA.

Patti Stratton, LLMSW, Care Consultant with Choices for Independence, and Creative Confident Caregivers Master Trainer, is part of our team for nine years.

Congratulations! We're lucky to work with these caring professionals

AREA AGENCY ON AGING IIIA

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