

# Hinsdale/Peru COA Newsletter

## December 1, 2022 Volume 4 No 4

Hinsdale/Peru Council on Aging  
39 South Street, Hinsdale, MA 01235  
www.HinsdaleMass.com T: 413-655-2929

*It is the Mission of the Hinsdale/Peru Council on Aging to encourage participation, to provide services available to seniors and to promote activities that will enhance their quality of life.*

**“To know how to grow old is the masterwork of wisdom, and one of the most difficult chapters in the great art of living.”** (Henri F. Amiel)

**Board Members:** Cathy Spinney, Janet Verge, Marion Tinney, Carol Ann Pullo, Jill Cole, Eve Grippaldi, Jennifer Stark, Joanne Larmon

### **A note from the COA Board:**

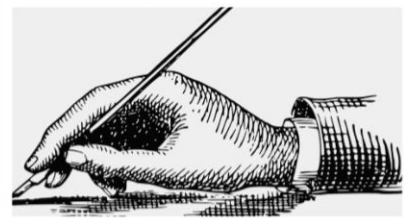
The Hinsdale/Peru COA holds **monthly luncheons** for seniors on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of the month. We ask that those who wish to attend call for reservations. We occasionally have seniors who make reservations and do not show up; or those who show up without making reservations. We must order the correct amount of food from Ozzie’s so that there is enough for all and/or there is no waste. *Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.*

The **September luncheon** of meatloaf, carrots and mashed potatoes had 36 in attendance (in spite of the rainy weather). Bob Graves, Hinsdale Town Administrator, gave an update on plans to resurface Rte. 143, the Middlefield Road project and the where we are at with the state mandated work on the Hinsdale recycling center.

Our **October luncheon** had a Halloween theme with Goulash on the menu. The guest speaker was Helen Bloomer of *Branches School of Berkshires* located in Dalton. She spoke of the work she has been doing with autistic children. She also stressed the importance of recognizing the early signs and intervention for children with challenges. The seniors had many questions on the subject during the question and answer period.

**Witty Words of Wisdom:** *“One of the strangest aspects of living with certain kinds of memory loss is knowing that forgetting is happening.”* (Poet Floyd Skyloot)

*This newsletter is paid for, in part, by the Executive Office of Elder Affairs*



### **MARK YOUR CALENDAR:**



**December 9, 2022**  
**Annual Christmas Party**

**January 12, 2023**  
**Senior Luncheon**  
Speaker: Hinsdale Police Chief Susan Rathbun

**February 16, 2023**  
**Senior Luncheon**  
Speaker: TBA

### **Medicare Part D Drug Plan Open Enrollment**

**October 15, 2022 thru December 7, 2022.**

Call your SHINE Counselor, Cathy Spinney 413-655-2929 to review your prescription needs and find the overall lowest annual drug cost for you. Let her help you navigate the confusing world of Medicare!!

## BCAC Government Fuel Assistance Program

**Fuel Assistance**, also known as the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), is a federally funded program to help low-income households with their heating bills. The program begins November 1st and ends April 30th each year. All heating types may be eligible for assistance: oil, propane, kerosene, coal, cord wood, wood pellets, natural gas, electric and even some households that have heat included in their rent.

Any low-income household whose gross yearly income falls at or below the income guidelines may be eligible. Homeowners and tenants are both eligible to receive fuel assistance. LIHEAP eligibility is evaluated based on your gross household income for the past 4 weeks.

Don't wait to apply for income-eligible assistance programs. Visit the BCAC online customer portal. *This website portal helps you assess your possible eligibility* for the Massachusetts Home Energy Assistance Program (commonly called Fuel Assistance) and submit the online application. To access the portal: <https://toapply.org/BCAC>. You can also call BCAC's Pittsfield office 413-445-4503 or our Shine Counselor, Cathy Spinney, at 413-655-2929 for more information.

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## New Law on Motor Vehicle Inspection Stickers

The Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles is announcing, effective November 1, 2022, motor vehicles passing the required inspections **will get a new sticker with the month that their last sticker expired**, valid for one year. Any vehicle owner late in getting a vehicle inspected, beyond one year from the last inspection, will no longer get a sticker displaying the month the new inspection occurred.

The penalty for driving vehicles with an expired sticker, or driving an uninspected vehicle, may result in a moving violation and lead to additional fines, etc. In addition, vehicle owners will no longer receive a printed inspection report when a vehicle passes inspection.

For more information see: [www.mass.gov/news/new-motor-vehicle-inspection-stickers](http://www.mass.gov/news/new-motor-vehicle-inspection-stickers)

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## Over-the-Counter Hearing Aids

FDA Finalizes Historic Rule Enabling Access to Over-the-Counter Hearing Aids for Millions of Americans.

The FDA recently took action to establish a **new category of over-the-counter hearing aids**, enabling consumers with perceived mild to moderate hearing impairment to purchase hearing aids directly from stores or online retailers.

For more information go to: [www.fda.gov/news-events/press-announcements/fda-finalizes-historic-rule-enabling-access-over-counter-hearing-aids-millions-americans](http://www.fda.gov/news-events/press-announcements/fda-finalizes-historic-rule-enabling-access-over-counter-hearing-aids-millions-americans)

*(From the September 1, 2022 issue of Aging Services Network News)*

## Important Questions to Ask your Doctor about a Dementia Diagnosis

Maybe you suspected this was coming, or it could be a total surprise to hear the doctor say 'you have dementia'. It is a hard diagnosis to hear. You may not be able to absorb much information immediately after hearing the diagnosis. Below is a list of questions that other people living with dementia have found helpful. These questions are a good place to start. If possible, bring someone you trust with you to your appointments. You may also want to record what the doctor tells you.

- **What is causing the dementia? Can it be reversed?** It can be helpful to know the type of dementia you have to know what to expect. There may be reversible causes
- **Explain to me more about the tests used to make the diagnosis and the results.** It is ok to ask for more details. Especially about the various tests that looked at your individual cognitive abilities and disabilities.
- **What can I expect from my specific type of dementia? Will it get worse?** Knowing as much as you can about any medical diagnosis can help you plan for how you and your family will learn to accept and cope with your diagnosis.
- **What treatments or medications are available?** Only a handful of medications have been approved to treat Alzheimer's disease; they are often prescribed to treat other types of dementia as well. Ask your physician if any might work for you, as well as what side effects might develop.
- **Can I/Should I still work & drive?** Many people living with dementia can continue to work and may also be able to continue driving. Based on the cognitive test results the doctor may place some limits on these activities

Accessed 4/8/2022: <https://daanow.org/papers-webinars/> (Quoted in part From Dementia Action Alliance)

## ~~~~~ Mattresses and Clothing Banned from Landfills

The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection has added textiles and mattresses to its disposal ban effective Nov. 1<sup>st</sup>. They will no longer be allowed in landfills. The ultimate goal is to reduce the amount of waste deposited in the constantly shrinking space still available in landfills, according to DEP officials.

John Fischer, DEP deputy division director for solid waste, said that "95 percent of textiles recovered can be reused. Used clothing, footwear and other household textile products such as sheets, towels, curtains, pillows and stuffed animals can be reused or recycled." According to waste composition analyses, approximately 230,000 tons of usable clothing, footwear, linens and other textile products are thrown away in Massachusetts annually. Goodwill, Salvation Army and homeless shelters will be happy to accept donations. The First Congregational Church on Maple Street, Hinsdale also has a donation box. Mattresses can be disposed of at Dalton recycling center for a fee.

(From Berkshire Eagle - Oct 19, 2022)

***THIS IS YOUR December 1, 2022 QUARTERLY COA NEWSLETTER. Watch for COA Event Posters announcing Sr. Lunches, events, etc. at Hinsdale Library, Hinsdale Town Hall, Ozzie's and Hinsdale Wine & Spirits. Check for announcements on the Hinsdale Town Website or Facebook.***

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### **More News...**

- ***Attorney Paula Almgren*** will be our guest speaker at the November 17 senior luncheon. Paula specializes in Elder Law, Estate and Tax Planning, Long-Term Care Planning, Medicaid Eligibility Community Based Care, Veterans Benefits and Life Care Planning. Paula will address essential estate planning documents everyone needs and the rules regarding community-based and nursing home Medicaid. She will discuss obtaining VA health care benefits also. *Be sure to bring your Estate-Planning questions and concerns to the luncheon.*
- ***The holiday season is upon us...*** We will be holding our ***Annual Hinsdale/Peru Christmas Party*** in the Hinsdale Fire Station on Friday, December 9<sup>th</sup>. Ozzie's will be catering the event with their usual delicious full-course turkey dinner. We invite all our seniors to partake of the festivities. The dinner is free of charge for Hinsdale & Peru seniors only. As usual, reservations will be required since space is limited.
- ***Let the Board know:*** 1. Do you enjoy receiving this quarterly newsletter? 2. What do you like (or not like) about it? 3. Would you prefer receiving the newsletter by email? 4. Do you want to "unsubscribe" from the newsletter? The Hinsdale/Peru COA would like to hear from you regarding topics you would like to see covered in the newsletter or at our COA Monthly Lunches. Please send an email to [COA@hinsdale.gov](mailto:COA@hinsdale.gov) or leave a message on the COA phone voicemail: 413-655-2300 ext.310.