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Inside Aging

The Official Newsletter
of the Pennsylvania Department of Aging

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IN THIS ISSUE: Focus on Aging News: Governor Shapiro Announces Age-Friendly Designation, PDA Launches New Resource for Unpaid Caregivers, Older Adult Advocacy Center for Elder Abuse Opens in Lackawanna County, PDA Hosts Northeast Regional Elder Justice Summit in Pike County, Senior Community Center Grants Announced, 'Aging Together in PA' to Air on PBS Stations, and More! | What's New in the Commonwealth: FDA Clears Blood Test for Alzheimer's Disease, June Commemorations | Good Feels: Older Artists of PA Showcase at Capitol, Lancaster County AAA Host Senior Games | Reminder: Property Tax/Rent Rebate Application Deadline Extended | Events: Black/African American Caregiver Symposium Hosted by Alzheimer's Association, University of Pittsburgh ADRD Caregiver Virtual Support Groups, Kinship Care Summit 2025 | Update on Legislation

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Governor Shapiro Announces Pennsylvania's Designation as an Age-Friendly State by AARP







Governor Josh Shapiro announced that AARP has designated Pennsylvania as an Age-Friendly State, making the Commonwealth one of just 13 states in the country to earn this distinction.

Secretary of Aging Jason Kavulich joined Governor Shapiro to make the announcement at the White Rose Senior Center in York County, which became an Age-Friendly Community in 2020. Pennsylvania is home to 10 of more than 700 Age-Friendly Communities in the country.

The Age-Friendly designation, awarded by AARP in partnership with the World Health Organization (WHO), recognizes states and communities committed to being great places to grow up and grow older.

Read more about the designation and what the Shapiro Administration and the Department of Aging (PDA) have done for older Pennsylvanians.

PDA Launches New Resource to Support PA's 1.5 Million Unpaid Caregivers



Secretary Kavulich recently launched the PA CareKit, a resource to support caregivers including spouses, adult children, and grandparents raising grandchildren, that provides training, connection to respite services, and personalized tools to help informal caregivers address their unique situations.







The launch event, held at the Upper Dublin Library in Montgomery County, included a presentation on the PA CareKit by Nathan Lampenfeld, PDA's William & Hannah Penn Fellow, and a panel on caregiver perspectives moderated by Secretary Kavulich.

Speakers included Senate Aging & Youth Committee Chair Maria Collett, House Aging & Older Adult Services Committee Chair Maureen Madden; Montgomery County AAA director Jennifer Haeussler-Barnhart, and Carrie Cleary, Office of Commonwealth Libraries.

The PA CareKit offers an array of person-centered support like personalized and tailored resource guides, and resources for families to evaluate and select professional caregivers. The development of the PA CareKit started in August 2024 and took nine months to complete. It is the result of year one of implementing ***Aging Our Way, PA*** – a 10-year plan to improve the infrastructure of aging services.

Download the First Five Steps General Resource Guide and Helpful Worksheets



Download the First Five Steps Resource Guide



Download and Print Helpful Worksheets

Print materials from the PA CareKit will be available for free at community libraries, the 52 Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs), and Senior Community Centers across the Commonwealth.

Learn more about the PA CareKit on the Department of Aging's website.

Secretary Kavulich Helps to Open First-of-its-kind Older Adult Advocacy Center for Elder Abuse Victims in Lackawanna County



Secretary Kavulich joined local leaders to open the first-of-its-kind center in the Commonwealth specifically designed to serve older adults who are victims of abuse or neglect in Lackawanna and surrounding counties.

Telespond Senior Services is home to the regionally accessible Older Adult Advocacy Center. The center is the first in Pennsylvania to offer a person-centered approach to abuse investigations, care and treatment plans, and education for older adults while providing emergency respite and short-term transitional living space.

The Older Adult Advocacy Center's coordinated service approach will include:

- **Emergency housing**: Immediate 24/7 short term transitional living for older adults in crisis, including abuse victims, with a four-room, five-bed placement in partnership with the Lackawanna County AAA protective services unit.
- **Support for older adults experiencing abuse**: Specialized services like legal advocacy, emotional support, and safety planning delivered through collaborations with partners such as the Elder Justice Multi-disciplinary Team, Scranton Counseling Center, and The Wright Center for Community Health.
- **Advocacy**: Empowering older adults by giving them a voice in house and legal decisions. Collaboration with organizations such as Lackawanna Pro Bono to ensure support and guidance.
- **Resource Navigation**: Assistance with healthcare, financial aid, and social services to help older adults regain stability.

In March, PDA **announced the rollout** of its new Comprehensive Agency Performance Evaluation, or CAPE – an innovative tool designed to boost transparency and accountability of Pennsylvania's Area Agency on Aging (AAA) network that provides a host of supports for older adults, including protective services. PDA is **posting performance results for AAAs monitored under CAPE on its website**.

Protecting Older Pennsylvanians from Abuse

June 15 is World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD), launched by the International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse and the World Health Organization. WEAAD aims to promote a better understanding of abuse and neglect and its effects.

According to the **Administration for Community Living**, an estimated five million older adults are abused, neglected, or exploited each year. Older Americans lose an estimated $2.6 billion or more annually due to elder financial abuse and exploitation.

If anyone suspects an older adult is the victim of abuse, neglect, or exploitation, they should call the PDA's Protective Services Helpline 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at 800-490-8505. All calls are confidential.

PDA Hosts Northeast Regional Elder Justice Summit in Pike County



PDA and the Pike County leaders hosted a regional Elder Justice summit in Pike County on May 15 to discuss county and regional team approaches to elder abuse prevention and elder justice, and share challenges and concerns. The event drew a broad array of stakeholders who work directly with older adults including AAAs, local law enforcement and advocates from Pike, Wayne, Lackawanna, Luzerne, Monroe and Wyoming counties. Speakers included Secretary of Aging Jason Kavulich; House Aging and Older Adult Services Committee Chairwoman Maureen Madden; David Shallcross,

Director of Senior Protection of the Office of Attorney General; Pike County Commissioner Christa Caceres, Former Aging Secretary Brian Duke; Helen Schmid, Director of the newly-opened Older Adult Advocacy Center in Scranton; and Nancy Barrasse, Esq.

The event featured a joint presentation by Caroline Burnell of Temple University and Dr. Lisa Rachmuth of Weill Cornell on the development of multi-disciplinary teams (MDTs), and the differences between MDTs and Elder Justice Task Forces. Said Sec. Kavulich in welcoming participants: “It’s important for us to have forums like this to continue to educate communities, bring communities together, have the conversations about finding solutions and make sure there’s an awareness in the community about what it means to be an older adult and be financially exploited.”

PDA Awards $3 Million in Senior Community Center Grants



Olivia Sims, administrator of the Northumberland County Area Agency on Aging, speaks to older adults at the Herndon Adult Community Center as Secretary Kavulich and Erica

Miller, the center director, look on. The center received a $130,000 Senior Community Center grant.

Secretary Kavulich visited the Herndon Adult Community Center in Northumberland County to announce 40 Senior Community Centers (SCCs) from 24 counties are receiving one of the Department's 2024-25 competitive grants totaling $2 million.

A total of 396 SCCs that didn't compete for the larger grants get to divide up an additional $1 million that Governor Shapiro secured in his first budget to create a new, permanent non-competitive track to the grant program. Since the competitive grants normally fund larger scale projects, the non-competitive grants will allow smaller needs to be met and more SCCs to benefit from the funding. The 396 SCCs will be granted a non-competitive award of $2,525 per center.

Learn about the Grants

'Aging Together in PA: Working to Make a Difference' to Air on PBS Stations

PDA has partnered with public broadcasting stations WVIA (northeastern PA) and WITF (southcentral PA) for a year-long initiative called *Aging Together in PA*. The project is aimed at presenting programming and driving discussion about resources for Pennsylvania's rapidly growing older population. *Aging Together in PA* is designed to educate and inform audiences about the challenges and opportunities impacting older Pennsylvanians.

A 30-minute program titled, "Aging Together in PA: Working to Make a Difference" will feature some of the issues affecting older adults and what can be done to address them.

You can watch the program this month on the following stations:

- WVIA – Thursday, June 26 at 7 PM
- WHYY – Thursday, June 26 at 7:30 PM
- WITF – Sunday, June 29 at 5:30 PM

- WPSU – Sunday, July 6 at 6 PM
- WQED – Monday, August 4 at 7:30 PM
- WQLN – Thursday, August 7 at 8 PM

Learn more here about the *Aging Together in PA* initiative.

Berks County Examines Elder Abuse During Annual Event



Berks AAA director Jessica Jones welcomes attendees to the Berks Elder Abuse Symposium.

The Berks County Area Agency on Aging partnered with the Pennsylvania Department of Banking & Securities to host a one-day Elder Abuse Symposium to promote older adult dignity, security and advocacy.

Secretary Kavulich joined other state, county and local leaders to discuss abuse and mental health concerns impacting older Pennsylvanians. The symposium included a panel discussion with members of the Berks County Elder Abuse Task Force.

PACE Director Tom Snedden Honored by Advocacy Organizations



PACE director Tom Snedden, with former secretaries of aging, from left to right, Richard Browdie, Nora Dowd Eisenhower, Linda Rhodes, and Brian Duke



Tom Snedden, director of Pennsylvania's Pharmaceutical Assistance Contract for the Elderly (PACE) program, was recently honored by two older adult advocacy organizations for his dedication to making PACE into a cost-effectiveness model that has helped millions of older Pennsylvanians live longer and healthier lives.

The Center for Advocacy for the Rights and Interests of Elders (CARIE) presented its 2025 *Spirit of CARIE* award to Tom Snedden and to former Aging Secretary Nora Dowd Eisenhower at its 25th anniversary benefit gala. Penn Asian Senior Services (PASSi) honored Tom at its 20th anniversary gala.

Tom's 40-year career leading PACE has spanned nine governors. In presenting the award from CARIE, Former Aging Secretary Linda Rhodes, who served in Governor Bob Casey's cabinet, praised Tom's dedication to developing the PACE program as "a calling and a public duty," noting, "for four decades, Tom Snedden has been a shining light on the deeply consequential work – often unheralded – that a public servant in state government can yield."

Congratulations, Tom, with continuing thanks for your exemplary service to older adults!

Learn more about PACE.

What's New *in the Commonwealth*

June Commemorations

Celebrating and Serving LGBTQ+ Older Adults



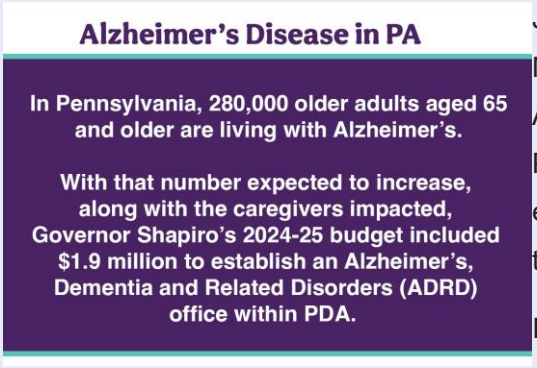
June marks Pride Month, and while the federal government has recently made changes impacting members of the LGBTQ+ community, the Commonwealth and the Department of Aging remain dedicated to providing programs and services for all older Pennsylvanians.

Having faced a lifetime of interpersonal, institutional and systemic discrimination in housing, employment and health care, LGBTQ+ older adults experience greater health disparities, social isolation and lack of support. They are twice as likely to be single and live alone, and four times as likely to not have children.

PDA collaborates with 52 AAAs to better serve LGBTQ+ older adults. This includes ensuring culturally affirming services by providing LGBTQ+ cultural competency training and education to staff, and by providing written and web-based resources specifically to and for the support of LGBTQ+ older adults.

Find LGBTQ+-related resources.

Show Your Purple for Alzheimer's and Brain Awareness



June is Alzheimer's and Brain Awareness Month. PDA is joining the Alzheimer's Association Delaware Valley and Greater Pennsylvania Chapters in calling for everyone to wear purple during the month to raise awareness.

In Pennsylvania, 280,000 older adults aged 65 and older are living with Alzheimer's. With that number expected to increase, along with the caregivers impacted, Governor Shapiro's 2024-25 budget included $1.9 million to establish an Alzheimer's, Dementia and Related Disorders (ADRD) office within PDA.

The law that established the office also called for the creation of an ADRD Advisory Committee to convene statewide key players on ADRD State Plan implementation, advocate for policy, secure federal funding, and leverage additional resources to better respond to the unique and complex needs for those living with ADRD and the systems that support them. The committee members will be announced in the weeks to come.

For more information about Alzheimer's, dementia, and related disorders, visit the **Alzheimer's Association website**.

June 19 Commemorates Juneteenth Observance in Pennsylvania

Juneteenth marks June 19, 1865, when union soldiers reached Galveston, Texas, the furthest point in the south, with news of the end of the Civil War. Enslaved people there were previously unaware they had been freed more than two years earlier when President Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation, or that Confederate General Robert E. Lee had surrendered in Virginia two months earlier.

In Pennsylvania, Juneteenth is recognized as a state holiday and is known as Juneteenth National Freedom Day.

Learn about Juneteenth commemorations in PA.

FDA Announces a Potential Medical Breakthrough to Help Diagnose Alzheimer's Disease

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has cleared a blood test that can help doctors diagnose Alzheimer's disease. The test – called Lumipulse – can detect abnormal lumps of protein in the brain, known as amyloid plaques, which can disrupt brain cell function and are a sign of the disease.

The blood test is intended for people who are experiencing symptoms of Alzheimer's disease and is not a screening test.

Read more about this blood test on AARP's website.

Get Some *Good Feels*



Show PDA Your 'Good Feels' Moments

Whether it is volunteers giving of their time and talent, a PEER graduation, or a fun exercise program, PDA wants to see your 'good feels' moments. Send photos and some details to **agingcomms@pa.gov**, and you could see your moment in a future edition of Inside Aging and on **PDA's Facebook page**.

Shapiro Administration Celebrates Older Pennsylvanians During the Older Artists of PA Showcase in the State Capitol





First Lady Lori Shapiro joined the Department of Aging and the PA Council on the Arts for a reception to celebrate the older Pennsylvanians who submitted works of art for the first-ever Older Artists in PA Showcase.

The showcase featured 30 pieces created by Pennsylvanians aged 60 and older. The winning pieces were selected out of more than 500 entries by panels representing **each of the five regions across the Commonwealth**. The selected works of art were on display in the State Capitol East Wing Rotunda throughout May, which is observed nationally as Older Americans Month.



Check out the video and more photos from the reception.

Let the Senior Games Begin!





The Lancaster County Office of Aging (Area Agency on Aging) welcomed more than 700 participants to its 35th annual Senior Games in May.

The oldest participant was 101 and took on billiards.

More than 350 volunteers helped with the Senior Games, which had about 50 events in five venues.

Just a *Reminder*

Application Deadline Extended for Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program



Older and disabled Pennsylvanians now have until December 31, 2025, to file for their 2024 Property Tax/Rent Rebate.

The rebate program benefits eligible Pennsylvanians aged 65 and older; widows and widowers aged 50 and older; and people with disabilities age 18 and older. The maximum standard rebate is $1,000, and the income limit is $46,520 a year for both homeowners and renter.

Older adults can submit their application for free through myPATH in **English** or **Spanish**. Free assistance is available across the state at **Department of Revenue district offices**, **local Area Agencies on Aging**, or state legislators' office.

Older adults must reapply for a rebate every year as they are based on annual income and property taxes or rent paid during the prior year.

Learn more about the Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program on the **Department of Revenue's website**.

In-Person and Virtual *Events*

Alzheimer's Association to Host Third Annual Black/African American Caregiver Symposium

The Alzheimer's Association Delaware Valley Chapter is now accepting registrations for its third annual Black/African American Caregiver Symposium. It will take place from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM on Tuesday, June 17 at the St. John Newman Center in Philadelphia.

This free event will provide support, resources and information to anyone caring for a loved one with dementia. Sessions will cover topics such as the caregiver identity and their health, communicating effectively with family, friends and healthcare professionals, legal planning, and more – all with ready-to-use tips and tools for caregivers.

Register for the Alzheimer's Association Annual Black/African American Caregiver Symposium

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ADRD Caregivers: Sign up for the University of Pittsburgh's Virtual Support Group Meetings

If you, or someone you know, is caring for someone living with Alzheimer's, Dementia, or related disorders, join the University of Pittsburgh Alzheimer's Disease Research Center virtual Caregiver Support Group meetings.

These meetings offer opportunities to ask questions and get support you may need.

The meetings are held virtually on the last Tuesday of the month from 6:00 PM to 7:30 PM.

If you would like to participate in the monthly meetings, email Melita Terry at **terrymh@upmc.edu**.

You're Invited to Attend the Kinship Care Summit on September 13



The Department of Human Services' Office of Children, Youth, and Families along with PA KinConnector are hosting a Kinship Care Summit on Saturday, September 13 from 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM at Whitaker Center, 222 Market St., Harrisburg.

The summit will feature tips and tools for kinship families, access to on-site resource organizations, video stories of kinship families, live question-and-answer session with caregivers and experts and more.

Learn More and Register for the Kinship Care Summit

Update on *Legislation*

Looking Back

Legislation

- **SB 731** (Farry) – PACE/PACENET Social Security COLA Moratorium
  - Third Consideration and Final Passage in the Senate on June 2
  - Referred to House Aging & Older Adult Services Committee on June 3

- **SB 738** (Gebhard) – Financial Exploitation Update to the Older Adult Protective Services Act
  - Introduced and referred to Senate Banking & Insurance Committee on May 12

- **HB 1528** (Madden) – Grandfamily Assistance

- Introduced and referred to House Aging & Older Adult Services Committee on May 30

Committee Hearings

- On May 5, the House Aging & Older Adult Services Committee held an informational meeting on Pennsylvania's Older Adult Protective Services. Testifiers included the following:
  - Secretary of Aging Jason Kavulich
  - Krista Geer, Executive Director, Active Aging (Crawford County Area Agency on Aging)
  - JR Reed, Executive Director Lehigh County Area Agency on Aging

Watch the hearing here on YouTube.

- On May 12, the House Aging & Older Adult Services Committee held a voting meeting on **HR 7** & **HR 209**.

- On May 14, the House Aging & Older Adult Services and Health Committees held a joint informational meeting on Pennsylvania's Registered Nurse Aide program. Testifiers included the following:
  - Jeanne Parisi, Deputy Secretary for Quality Assurance, Department of Health
  - Zach Shamberg, President & CEO, Pennsylvania Home Care Association (PHCA)
  - Austin Cawley, Legislative Director, LeadingAge PA
  - Cesar Nieves, Union Member, SEIU Healthcare PA
  - Wayne Reich, Chief Executive Officer, Pennsylvania State Nurses Association (PSNA)
  - Brenda Scafiro, Senior Director of Client Relations, Credentia

Watch the hearing here on YouTube.

- On June 2, the House Aging & Older Adult Services Committee held an informational meeting on **HB 1310** – an Act amending the Human Services Code,

in public assistance, further providing for medical assistance payments for institutional care. Testifiers included the following:

- Juliet Marsala, Deputy Secretary of the Office of Long-Term Living, Department of Human Services
- Matt Yarnell, President, SEIU Healthcare PA
- Zach Shamberg, President & CEO, Pennsylvania Home Care Association (PHCA)
- Charles Quinnan, Sr. V.P and Chief Government Affairs, LeadingAge PA
- Phoebe Ministries, Chief Operating Officer, Jason Shott, Chief Operating Officer, Phoebe Ministries

Watch the Livestream meeting here: **https://youtu.be/q8UlenFCAF4**

Looking Ahead

Committee Hearings

- On June 10, the House Aging & Older Adult Services Committee will hold an informational meeting on the financial exploitation of older adults and its connection to OAPSA (Older Adult Protective Services Act). Presenters will include:
  - Secretary Jason Kavulich, Department of Aging
  - Teresa Osborne, Advocacy and Outreach Director, AARP Pennsylvania
  - Rick Cimakasky, Director of Fraud and Security Management, Penn Community Bank
  - Lauren Greenaway, Assistant Manager of Fraud, Belco Community Credit Union
  - Ed Martel, Chief Operating Officer, Jonestown Bank & Trust Company

House 2025 Session Schedule

- June 9, 10, 11, 16, 17, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30

Senate 2025 Session Schedule

- June 9, 10, 11, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30

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