

PRIME TIME LIVING

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2025 • A SPECIAL ADVERTISING SECTION OF BALTIMORE SUN MEDIA

55+
LIFESTYLE

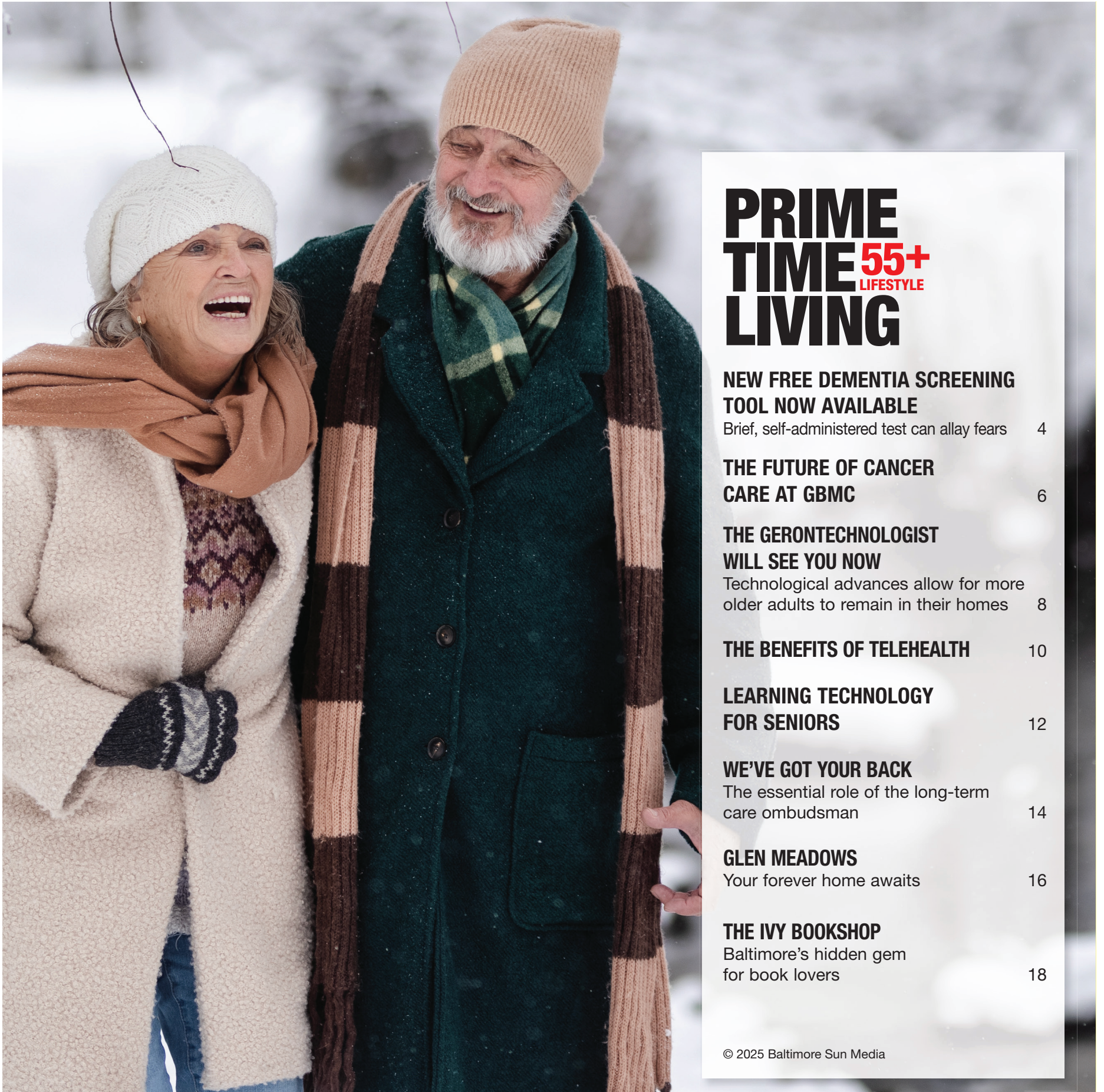
The Future of Cancer Care
GBMC

Glen Meadows
Forever home

Gerontechnologist
Staying home as we age

Ivy Bookshop
Book lovers' hidden gem

We've got your back
Long-term care ombudsman



PRIME TIME **55+** LIVING

NEW FREE DEMENTIA SCREENING TOOL NOW AVAILABLE

Brief, self-administered test can allay fears 4

THE FUTURE OF CANCER CARE AT GBMC

6

THE GERONTECHNOLOGIST WILL SEE YOU NOW

Technological advances allow for more older adults to remain in their homes 8

THE BENEFITS OF TELEHEALTH

10

LEARNING TECHNOLOGY FOR SENIORS

12

WE'VE GOT YOUR BACK

The essential role of the long-term care ombudsman 14

GLEN MEADOWS

Your forever home awaits 16

THE IVY BOOKSHOP

Baltimore's hidden gem for book lovers 18

HEALTH

New free dementia screening tool now available

Brief, self-administered test can allay fears

By Margit B. Weisgal, Contributing Writer



Is it aging or is it dementia? This is the one thought that older adults are constantly stressed about, questioning when they forget a word, not really knowing if it's normal, age-related decline or the first sign of one of the dementias that takes away our ability to think, to reason, to remember.

Now, the Maryland Department of Aging (MDOA) has on its website a free screening tool called AD8 (Ascertain Dementia 8), an eight-item interview to differentiate between aging and dementia. It's easy to access: <https://aging.maryland.gov/brainhealth>

"The AD8 Washington University Dementia Screening Test was developed to compare signs of normal aging to potential signs of mild dementia. This 8-question screening can be used by an individual or their loved one prior to scheduling a full screening with a primary care provider or healthcare practitioner," according to the website.

MDOA's goal is to make this available state-wide. It trained 150 counselors at Maryland Access Point (MAP) sites across the state on how to administer it. MAP specialists work with caregivers, professionals and all individuals with long-term care needs to plan, identify, connect and assist with accessing private and public resources for long-term services and supports. You can reach Maryland Access Point (MAP) by phone:

1-844-MAP-LINK (1-844-627-5465), or online: marylandaccesspoint.211md.org.

"There's a stigma to discussing challenges, especially those related to memory, which should be a normal part of health screenings," explains Mark Tesoro, MDOA behavioral health specialist, who updated the screening tool for the department. "Your mental health is crucial, but people are very hesitant to discuss it. Fear prevents them from asking questions because the answer can be unsettling. They need the ability to say to themselves, 'Let's see if this is really more than normal aging,' and then use AD8 more frequently.

"We chose this tool for several reasons. It's very brief and it can be self-administered. If necessary, the questions can be asked by a caregiver or friend, so if you do come up with some challenges, some questionable areas, it recommends you see your internist, or a specialist.

"This is not meant to be a cognitive assessment or an evaluation to replace what a doctor would administer. It's to say, 'yes, you should see a profession-

al for more information,' or 'no, you're doing fine.'

"One concern that bothers me since I started on this project is that the subject of mental competence often doesn't come up when you visit with the doctor. Taking care of your mind should be the same as taking care of your cholesterol or vision. We need to change the narrative around brain health. A diagnosis isn't the end of the road. It's the beginning of taking control and finding support."

A screening test in itself is insufficient to diagnose a dementing disorder. The AD8 is, however, quite sensitive to detecting early cognitive changes associated with many common dementing illnesses including Alzheimer's disease, Vascular Dementia, Lewy Body Dementia and Frontotemporal Dementia.

Dementia is a disease of exclusion. There are many physical problems that can mimic dementia, such as hearing loss, Vitamin B12 deficiency, ingestion of toxins and more. There are also physical conditions that increase your risk. This is why you should speak with your clinician and make sure everything else is ruled out.

All dementia is not Alzheimer's disease. There are many different types. In general, though, early detection of any form of dementia is critical. By identifying

cognitive changes promptly, physicians can connect individuals with appropriate treatments, support services, and care plans that make a meaningful difference in their lives.

"We aren't ready for people to really live longer," Tesoro adds. "Look at other countries that have very old individuals. They are ahead of us in providing support. That's why Longevity Ready Maryland, our long-term plan for Maryland's aging population, is so important. There are many aspects to preparing for our aging population."

Maryland has been chosen by the Centers for Health Care Strategies as one of 10 states to participate in the Multisector Plan for Aging Learning Collaborative, which creates a valuable blueprint to help states design a coordinated system of high-quality care and support services that promotes healthy aging, independent living and social engagement.

Of the 6.1 million residents currently living in Maryland, nearly 1.7 million are 60 years or older. About 300,000 Marylanders are over the age of 85, the fastest growing segment of the older population, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. In addition to Marylanders grow-

Dementia, continued on page 20

Glen Meadows, continued from page 16

ment will assist in making them happen. The Resident Dining Committee, for instance, will meet with the team to discuss meal suggestions, in line with its commitment to providing the most enjoyable dining experience possible. As a resident, you may select Dining Dollars, the flexible meal plan that you spend down each month, using it at any of the dining locations: the Bell Tower Café, the Private Tea Room and the Notch Cliff Dining Room, where reservations are recommended. Or you can cook in your full-service kitchen, complete with dishwasher, microwave, stove and refrigerator/freezer.

“The country setting and beautifully landscaped gardens are only a few of the reasons why I love living here. The abundance of activities and outings offered have made it easy to make new friends.”

– Mary R., resident

Residents enjoy a vibrant lifestyle, from staying active at the Wellness and Fitness Centers to gathering for social occasions like happy hour. They also engage with the broader community by volunteering at various venues beyond our campus.

In a special expression of the caring community, many residents choose to support their neighbors in Skilled Nursing Care or Assisted Living. They bring warmth and connection through simple acts of kindness – helping with mail delivery, sharing the gift of reading aloud or simply offering companionship.

“Glen Meadows’ array of services allows you to choose whatever you need at a given time. We offer a full spectrum of care so that no matter what stage of life someone is in, they can find a supportive community here,” Delaney explains. “Our goal is to meet people where they are and help them live life to the fullest.”

Jennifer Thompson, whose mother lives at Glen Meadows, described the organization as a lifeline. “We were worried about how she would adjust to leaving her home, but she’s happier now than she’s been in years,” Thompson says. “The staff treat her with so much kindness and respect, and she’s made a lot of new friends.”

Care At All Stages

Those living at Glen Meadows start their new lives in maintenance-free apartments or patio homes with a variety of amenities: librar-

ies, and on-site dining, as well as access to community activities, a full calendar and social events. There’s a beauty and barber shop, lifelong learning through local colleges and universities, gardening, hiking and fishing. And Glen Meadows is only 10 minutes from Baltimore and close to Washington, D.C.

For seniors who need some help with daily activities such as dressing, bathing or medication management, residents can stay in the Assisted Living Neighborhood. It provides assisted living services in a supportive environment. The goal is to focus on maintaining independence while offering the assistance they need.

You can also receive skilled nursing/rehabilitation services for those with complex medical needs, offering round-the-clock care. Short-term rehabilitation services, such as physical and occupational therapy, are also available for seniors recovering from surgery or illness.

And for individuals living with Alzheimer’s disease or other forms of dementia, there are memory support programs that provide specialized care in secure, structured environments designed to promote safety and well-being.

“When the time comes,” Devaney says, “we have hospice that comes to us, to our community. You stay in your home throughout. Should you need it, we have respite care for people both inside and outside Glen Meadows.

Visit Soon

Glen Meadows’ website provides complete transparency on pricing that lets you know if it’s in your range. Yes, you’ll still have questions, but we’ve all become informed consumers and shop online for almost anything. Deciding on a forever home has changed from children helping mom and dad to make an informed decision to “I saw this on the website.”

Residents must be at least 60 and dogs, cats and birds are welcomed in Independent Living, but only two per household.

Extensive services are included in monthly fees, such as utilities, maintenance, scheduled transportation (shopping and planned outings), linen services, weekly housekeeping, weight and blood pressure checks, and wellness education programs.

You’ll find a warm welcome at Glen Meadows, one that will make you wonder why you didn’t decide to move there long ago. They’ll be delighted you’re there.

Ombudsman, continued from page 15

LTCOP. Ombudsmen often work with legal aid organizations, Adult Protective Services (APS), and other state and local agencies to address complex issues. For instance, in cases of suspected abuse or neglect, ombudsmen may connect residents with mandatory reporters or adult protective services, always respecting the resident’s confidentiality and consent.

Real-life examples illustrate the critical work of ombudsmen. In one case, a nursing home resident who was a double amputee faced challenges in accessing medical and dental care due to a lack of transportation. The ombudsman intervened, coordinating with facility staff, social workers and external resources to develop a comprehensive care plan. This included arranging transportation, addressing dietary needs, and ensuring the resident’s concerns were heard and addressed.

In another instance, a resident facing involuntary discharge due to smoking in their room was supported by an ombudsman. Through collaboration with legal aid, facility staff and a judge, a resolution was reached that ensured the resident’s rights were upheld while addressing safety concerns.

Challenges and Limitations

The role of ombudsman is strictly advocacy-based, meaning they rely on collaboration with other agencies to resolve problems. Additionally, residents’ fear of retaliation can hinder ombudsmen’s ability to take action, underscoring the importance of building trust and maintaining confidentiality.

Dementia, continued from page 4

ing older, many are experiencing longer, healthier life expectancies, living closer to or beyond 100 years of age. The Census projects older Marylanders will outnumber children for the first time in history by 2034.

Under the aegis of the Maryland Department of Aging are the Area Agencies on Aging (AAA). There are local offices in 19 counties and Baltimore City, that provide a variety of adult services, incorporating assisted living, protective services, and temporary disability programs.

“We want each AAA to have the screening tool,” says Tesoro, “and provide a print-out that the person assessed can take to their doctor to start the conversation. ‘I’m having trouble with certain

The Importance of Public Awareness

Despite their critical role, many people are unaware of the LTCOP and the services it provides. Increasing public awareness is essential to ensuring that residents and their families know where to turn for help. Resources like the National Ombudsman Resource Center (NORC) and state-level offices play a vital role in educating the public and providing accessible information.

As the aging population continues to grow, the LTCOP’s role will become even more crucial. The program’s focus on advocacy, education and systemic reform positions it as a key player in improving the quality of life for older adults in long-term care. By continuing to train dedicated volunteers, collaborate with other agencies and raise public awareness, the LTCOP can ensure that residents receive the care and respect they deserve.

The Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program embodies the values of dignity, respect and advocacy. Through their tireless efforts, ombudsmen empower residents, resolve complaints and drive systemic change, making a profound impact on the lives of older adults. The Maryland Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program, in particular, stands out for its comprehensive approach and dedication to personalized advocacy. As we move forward, supporting and expanding programs like the LTCOP will be essential to meeting the needs of an aging population and ensuring that every individual can live with dignity and independence.

tasks,’ or ‘trouble making appointments.’ Once diagnosed, they can come back to their AAA for help with the community services they need, plus, if required, caregiver resources and supports. We are working on a caregiver checklist now, so caregivers have a better sense of their needs and what’s available. That will help us tailor a response based on what their needs might be.

“The Maryland Department of Aging is small, but we have a broad range of services to support our aging population and their families. All of us care about our constituency and want the best for them. This is just one more way we’re here to help.”