



THE INFORMER



Helping older adults and adults living with disabilities discover resources to plan, prepare for, and support living independently for as long as possible.

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Check out our website for more resources and information!

www.altcew.org

A MESSAGE FROM ALTCEW

Welcome to the winter issue of **The Informer**!

Aging & Long Term Care of Eastern Washington (ALTCEW) is excited to launch the second issue of our biannual digital newsletter. Inside the issue you will find information about agency updates, resources, and local services. Enjoy this issue!

STAY SAFE & WARM THIS WINTER

Baby, it's cold outside! With the winter and holiday season comes cold weather. Ice and snow can make life challenging for anyone. Slippery sidewalks and low temperatures cause a wide range of injuries and illnesses, especially for older adults. The following safety tips for winter can be helpful ***(Cont. on page 2)***



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- 12/26: Holiday—office closed
- 1/2: Holiday—office closed
- 1/16: Holiday—office closed
- 1/18: Medicare Getting Started
- 1/26: Medicare Getting Started

Full Calendar of Events: www.altcew.org/news-events/event-calendar

(Staying Warm continued from page 1)

for preventing common cold weather dangers!

1. **Avoid slipping on ice** – Snowy, icy sidewalks and roads make it easy to slip and fall. “Unfortunately, falls are a common occurrence for seniors, especially during the winter,” says **Dr. Stanley Wang**, a physician at Stanford Hospital in Palo Alto, California. Often these falls cause major injuries such as head trauma, hip and wrist fractures, or major lacerations.

It is recommended to stay inside until the roads are clear and wear shoes with good traction and non-skid soles. Traction cleats can be worn as an option with most shoes. Replacing a worn cane tip can make walking easier, and it is advised to take your shoes off once indoors, because snow and ice attached to the soles can, once melted, lead to slippery conditions inside. If you are looking for local falls prevention programs, contact us at 509-960-7281.

2. **Prepare for power outages** – Winter storms can lead to power outages. Stockpile warm blankets. Make sure you have easy access to flashlights and a battery-powered radio. Longer power outages can spoil food in the fridge and freezer so keep a supply of non-perishable foods. If the power goes out, wear several layers of clothing, including a hat. Check out this winter weather checklist from the CDC: www.cdc.gov/disasters/winter/beforestorm/preparehome.html
3. **Dress for warmth** – Cold temperatures can lead to frostbite and hypothermia. That’s why it’s important to wear warm socks, a heavy coat, a warm hat, gloves, and a scarf if heading out.
4. **Manage winter depression** – While the holidays often bring laughter and happy memories, it can bring stress, disappointed, or sadness for others.

It can be difficult and dangerous to get around which may cause less contact with others breeding feelings of loneliness or isolation.

To help avoid these issues, check in on your loved ones; a short, daily phone call can make a big difference. Older adults and adults living with disabilities can also arrange a check-in system with our Check and Connect program. Learn more: altcew.org/check-and-connect.

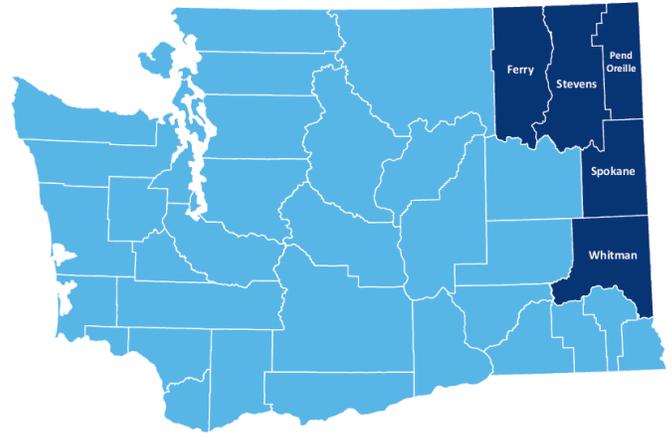
5. **Avoid injuries while shoveling snow** – It’s one of the evils of winter, snow shoveling. If you choose to shovel, take precautions. Remember, when it’s cold outside, your heart works double time to keep you warm. Shoveling can also be dangerous if you have problems with balance or osteoporosis. Ask neighbors or friends to help if you are unable to do so!
6. **Keep the car tuned up** – Driving during the winter can be hazardous for anyone. Get your car serviced before wintertime hits. Checking the oil, tires, battery, and wipers can make a big difference on winter roads. Make sure your roadside assistance plan is up-to-date in case of emergencies. If looking for transportation support, contact our helpline at 509-960-7281.
7. **Prevent carbon monoxide poisoning** – Using a fireplace, gas heater or lanterns can lead to carbon monoxide poisoning. Check the batteries on carbon monoxide detectors or buy a new one if needed.

Remember to ask for help if needed! Whether you need snow shoveled, or to stock up on nourishing groceries, reach out to a family member, neighbor, or friend. Wintertime poses challenges for everyone, but with a bit of planning and awareness, you can experience the joys of spring soon enough.



Aging & Long Term Care - Who We Are

Aging & Long Term Care is the local Area Agency on Aging for Spokane, Ferry, Stevens, Pend Oreille, and Whitman Counties. We help older adults and adults living with disabilities discover the resources needed to plan, prepare for and support living independently. Our vision is to provide the best home and community-based services to support healthy living and aging in place.



Our agency offers a variety of programs and services:

- **Community Living Connections Helpline:** Free helpline that provides information about local aging services for older adults, adults living with disabilities, people living with dementia, and caregivers. Individuals who call in can opt in for additional supports such as options counseling and care coordination. Contact us at 509-960-7281.
- **Check and Connect:** A free program that provides regularly scheduled phone calls to clients to reduce feelings of isolation during the pandemic and beyond.
- **Statewide Health Insurance Benefits Advisors:** Help with Medicare is just a phone call away, reach us at 509-625-4801! We can help review Medicare plans and compare options for coverage for free.
- **Medication Management:** We offer free support for those who need help managing their medications.
- **Care Transitions:** This free program helps you during your hospital discharge to ensure you receive the quality of care needed during your recovery at home.
- **Preventing Falls:** We offer A Matter of Balance and FallsTalk, free falls prevention activities to help you remain independent.

Alone, Aging & Long Term Care cannot fulfill our mission. We work with local partners and contract with community agencies to provide long-term services and supports. Services include in-home care, home-delivered meals, family caregiver support, transportation, and more.

For additional information, visit altcew.org.

If you need services or support, contact our Community Living Connections helpline at 509-960-7281.

Dear Aging & Long Term Care...

“Are there any blood pressure monitors that I can take home to monitor my blood pressure over time and track my readings?”
- PLEASE HELP!

Dear Please Help,

Providence Community Wellness has partnered with the Spokane County Library District to create blood pressure self-management kits. These kits allow you to monitor and track your blood pressure at home!

They have a check out time of one month and include logs to keep track of your readings. Kits are now available for check out at any of the 11 libraries in the Spokane County Library District. Click here for information on checking out a kit: www.sclcd.org/why-your-blood-pressure-matters-our-new-self-monitoring-kits

Write and submit your own question to Dear Aging & Long Term Care at marketing@altcew.org.



Art, Prose, & Poetry

*By: Savannah Reams –Taylor, Community Outreach Specialist
Details from the American Society on Aging*

Acknowledging the benefits of joy and creation is an important aspect in the conversation of health and well-being. As the American Society on Aging (ASA, www.asaging.org) closes their year of Generations Today, and moves into elevating health and well-being, they shared creative contributions from ASA members. These span poetic, prose, and visual forms in response to a call for submissions earlier this year.

Please enjoy these contributions!

Visual art exhibits:

- ⇒ [The Art of Aging](#), a curation of painted and audio portraits from Aging Well Whatcom
- ⇒ Dalia Gottlieb Tanaka presents [The Brushstrokes of Dementia](#)
- ⇒ Vincenzo Santone's acrylic on paper [Mama Mia and Keys](#)

A series of memoirs:

- ⇒ Katherine Seligman's [Banking in Absentia](#), reflecting on a complicated relationship when severing odd financial ties
- ⇒ Carol Heape expresses admiration for a woman living alone against all odds in [A Lesson in Determination](#)
- ⇒ Toni Mirosevich advises us to "Slow down or you're never going to get it" in [The Subtext \(or A Messy Draft\)](#)
- ⇒ Elana Keiffer ponders how to exit the stage on one's own terms in [My Grandmother's Last Lesson](#)
- ⇒ ASA RISE alum Julia Yarbough writes of how musical memories assuaged feelings of loss in [Missing My Mother and Moving Through Grief](#).

A series of poems examining the passage of time, the rejection of norms and the embracing of change and memory:

- ⇒ Sandy Alissa Novack's [Dignity Series](#)
- ⇒ Jane Seskin's [Three Poems](#)
- ⇒ Julie Chafets Grass conjures vivid color in [For Dylan Thomas Who Also Did Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night](#)
- ⇒ Linda Howe Steiger asks what's to come in [Old Woman's Lament](#)
- ⇒ Marie Eaton's corporal ode [This Body of Mine](#)
- ⇒ [A Salute to Grandmothers](#) from Catherine Bryson
- ⇒ Anne Palmer shifts from alto to tenor in [Standing Next to Ethan Moreno](#)



Community Living Connections

By: Kari Stevens, Community Living Connections Director

Happy Holidays from the CLC! Community Living Connections is a department within Aging & Long Term Care that can connect you with the right kind of help, when and where you need it. Our team consists of Information and referral staff, application assistance staff, short term options counseling, housing assistance, dementia/cognitive loss assistance, social isolation help, and Medicare counseling assistance.

Our goal is to promote well-being, independence, dignity, and choice for all individuals we serve. Please contact us at 509-960-7281 for objective, confidential information about community resources and service options to meet your individual needs.

With the holiday weather comes SNOW! CLC would like to thank the following organizations for providing volunteers to help our seniors and individuals with disabilities with snow removal:

- LDS Church
- Sun City Church
- North Church
- Gonzaga Prep High School
- First Presbyterian Church, Sheltering Tree
- St. Georges High School
- ST. Thomas More Parish and School.

Without their willingness to assist our seniors and individuals with disabilities, our community members who contact us for help would have no way to clear driveways and sidewalks. These organizations are a valuable partner, and we are very thankful to work with them!

The holidays can be hard for some of our aging and isolated neighbors. If you or someone you know is struggling this season, please consider our Check and Connect program. A volunteer is matched with you, and will call you weekly, or however often you request, just to connect and have a conversation. This service is free and can mean all the difference to someone having a hard time with isolation. Give us a call!

Wishing all a safe and joyous season. Stay warm!

CHECK IN ON YOUR NEIGHBORS THIS WINTER!

We've been dealing with a lot of snow this season. Seniors and people living with disabilities may struggle with shoveling especially if plows push additional snow onto sidewalks and driveways. You can help by checking in on your neighbors and seeing what kind of support they need!

Community Living Connections is additionally looking for community groups to volunteer for our snow removal program and assist older adults and people living with disabilities shovel driveways and sidewalks. Our volunteers are amazing but they are struggling to meet the need.

How to Volunteer? Call 509-960-7281.

Staying Active and Connected

*By: Savannah Reams-Taylor, Community Outreach Specialist
Details from engAGED*

Remaining socially engaged and connected can improve your quality of life! It's also associated with better mental and physical health. According to psychologist **Julianne Holt-Lunstad** of Brigham Young University, "being connected to others socially is widely considered a fundamental human need—crucial to both well-being and survival." As we get older, we can expect to experience significant changes. These events can result in a loss of connection which can cause you to become isolated, lonely, or both—and a lack of connection can also impact caregivers. Participating in activities can help you stay connected and active in our communities.

You Can Engage in the Community By:

- Volunteering for an organization or institution, whether it's a local club, nonprofit organization, faith community or another type of organization. Learn about local volunteer opportunities on page 9.
- Rekindling creative talents or learning new ones by taking art classes, learning how to play a musical instrument, or singing in a choir.
- Getting involved in intergenerational opportunities to support youth, such as mentoring or tutoring.
- Taking lifelong learning courses, educational classes or technology training at a senior center, local college, or university.
- Participating in health and wellness classes.
- Using technology to connect to friends and family.
- Seeking employment opportunities or developing entrepreneurial skills.

Need More Support? If you have concerns about your mental health, consider:

- **Contacting your primary care physician.** Call your health insurance provider to find in-network providers if you do not currently have a primary care physician. Have questions about your Medicare coverage? Connect to your local Statewide Health Insurance Benefits Advisors (www.altcew.org/programs-services/medicare). If you don't have health insurance, you can find a local community health center by visiting: findahealthcenter.hrsa.gov.
- **Connecting to a mental health or behavioral health professional.** Contact your insurance plan to find in-network mental health or behavioral health providers or search for a mental health or behavioral health professional in your community at: findtreatment.samhsa.gov.
- **Joining a local support group.** There are many support programs for older adults, people living with disabilities, caregivers, people living with dementia, and more. Contact Community Living Connections to learn more about local support groups at 509-960-7281.
- **Calling a friend or family member.** Tell a friend or family member how you've been feeling. They may also be able to help you find a provider who can help.

For more tips on supporting social connections and emotional wellness, visit engAGED The National Resource Center for Engaging Older Adults: www.engagingolderadults.org.



SHIBA Volunteers Make a Difference – JOIN OUR TEAM!

By: Monica Kudrna, SHIBA Coordinator

You can make a difference in the lives of others by helping them navigate Medicare. You don't have to know Medicare – we'll train and mentor you!

Not only does volunteering offer vital help to people in need and in your community, but the benefits can be even greater for you serving as a volunteer! **Volunteering can:**

- Connect you to others
- Help reduce stress and combats depression
- Keep you mentally stimulated and provides a sense of purpose
- Help with your overall physical health, which prolongs your life
- Get you out of the house and involved in your community
- Bring fun and fulfillment to your life



For more information, please contact Monica Kudrna, SHIBA Program Coordinator, 509-458-2509 ext. 339.

VISION STATEMENT

Our Vision is to provide the best home and community based services to support healthy living and aging in place.

- * We Listen... to our community to understand individual needs.
- * We Adapt... to our changing world.
- * We Provide Solutions... using innovative services to improve quality of life.

The Inflation Reduction Act and Medicare

JUSTICE IN AGING

FIGHTING SENIOR POVERTY THROUGH LAW

The Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 (IRA), which Congress passed recently, includes sweeping Medicare prescription drug reforms and changes to the Part D program to protect people with Medicare from high out-of-pocket costs. [Justice in Aging's new fact sheet](#) provides a summary of the IRA's health provisions that will bring cost savings to low-income older adults.

Here's a list of the policies the Act will impact:

- Expands Medicare Part D "Extra Help" subsidy by raising the income limit
- Caps Medicare Part D Out-of-Pocket Costs and caps insulin at \$35 a month
- Expands no cost vaccine coverage for people with Medicare
- Lowers drug prices
- Extends enhanced ACA tax credits for those not eligible for Medicare

The Statewide Health Insurance Benefits Advisors (SHIBA) will be able to screen beneficiaries for income eligibility for Medicare Part D Prescription Extra Help savings program. Individuals can talk to a SHIBA volunteer by calling (509) 625-4801.

Read more detail in the Fact Sheet: justiceinaging.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Medicare-Prescription-Drug-Reform-in-the-Inflation-Reduction-Act.pdf

AMMP Receives Prestigious Aging Innovations Award

By: Savannah Reams-Taylor, Marketing & Outreach Coordinator and USAging

Aging & Long Term Care's **Advanced Medication Management Program (AMMP)** received a 2022 Aging Innovations Award from USAging, one of the highest honors presented by USAging to its members!

AMMP, which helps clients find solutions to address complex health conditions and create safe and effective medication management plans, was among 43 local aging programs to receive honors during USAging's 47th Annual Conference and Tradeshow this past July in Austin, TX. **The local program received special recognition, receiving a second place Innovation Award.**

Learn more about this program: www.altcew.org/programs-services/medication-management



Become a Individual Provider!

A Individual Provider (IP), is somebody who cares for an older adult or adult living with a disability. Duties include personal care, light housekeeping, cooking, and possibly transportation. Independent Providers receive competitive wages, full benefits, and schedule their own hours!

How to become a Health Care Provider?

Contact Consumer Direct of Washington:

Website: www.consumerdirectwa.com

Phone number: 1-866-214-9899

Email address: infocdwa@consumerdirectcare.com



Care Transitions

Aging & Long Term Care offers targeted services to support clients and ensure a seamless continuum of care during your recovery! You can contact our helpline to learn more at 509-960-7281.

Our purpose is to ensure our clients:

- Navigate complicated medical and social service systems
- Create a plan to determine necessary supports
- Are using medications in the most safe and effective way
- Become more skilled and accountable in managing health outcomes

We offer free support for those who manage a chronic health condition and were recently hospitalized. Coordinators will work with existing services you may already have set up, and actively advocate for your needs!

Learn more:

www.altcew.org/programs-services/care-transition



Learn new skills with GetSetUp!



GetSetUp is an online community of people who want to learn new skills, connect with others and unlock new life experiences. Their safe, social and interactive learning environment has been specifically designed for older adults. Classes are taught by older adults and kept small to ensure everyone can actively participate. These classes help people stay mentally and physically fit, create economic opportunities through jobs and re-skilling, and create a community where people find meaning and purpose by helping each other and forming new connections.

“I don’t know where I’d be without GetSetUp because they really have given me a life back. Coming from a life of interacting and being with people and sharing, before the pandemic I really went to feeling like I had no life. This community has made a huge difference in just 3 months.” – Testimonial, Susan from King County.

Learn more or sign up for free: www.getsetup.io



learned a skill they could use for a job, their own business or volunteer work



had access to learning opportunities they wouldn't normally have



felt healthier with GetSetUp and 64% felt more active with GetSetUp



95% feel GetSetUp is a safe virtual environment



find like-minded people and 95% felt it was a safe virtual environment



felt more socially connected and 37% have met a new friend on GetSetUp!

VOLUNTEER WITH US

At Aging & Long Term Care, we depend on volunteers to work directly with our programs. Our volunteers make a difference in the lives of older adults and adults living with disabilities in Eastern Washington!

Volunteer Opportunities:

- **Check and Connect**—Reduce isolation in our community.
- **Falls Prevention**—Help prevent falls in our region.
- **Planning & Management Council**—Help Aging & Long Term Care achieve our mission.
- **SHIBA**—Help people navigate Medicare.
- **SAFE**—Help support senior emergency needs.
- **Dementia Friendly Community**—Support people living with dementia in Spokane.

Learn more about volunteer opportunities with Aging & Long Term Care: www.altcew.org/volunteer

CAREERS

Consider a career at Aging & Long Term Care!

Our agency is regularly hiring to fill a variety of positions! At Aging & Long Term Care, we work together to promote well-being, independence, dignity, and choice for all older adults and individuals needing long-term care. **To learn more about careers and benefits, visit our careers webpage (altcew.org).**

Tree of Sharing!

Since 1982, the Spokane Tree of Sharing has ensured the "often forgotten" members of our community receive a gift each holiday season. Aging & Long Term Care & The Tree of Sharing partnered to provide gifts to our agency's clients.

Thank you to all who purchased tags for our clients and the ALTCEW staff who coordinated and helped with this event!



BRAIN HEALTH CORNER

Spokane Area Dementia Friendly Community

The [Spokane Area Dementia Friendly Community \(DFC\)](#) has been making a community effort to foster quality of life for people living with dementia in our region since 2018. Aging & Long Term Care partnered with the Washington State Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association and Providence Health & Services (including Providence ElderPlace Adult Day Health, Providence Holy Family Hospital, and Providence Sacred Heart Medical Center) to lead this initiative. Additional community partners and family care partners strengthen this community-based effort.

The Spokane Area DFC is an official member of the Dementia Friendly America network (dfamerica.org), a national network of seeking to ensure that communities across the U.S. are equipped to support people living with dementia and their caregivers. Because the number of Washingtonians living with Alzheimer's and dementia will continue to increase, our community needs to collaborate to make Spokane County a better place for people living with memory loss.

This group has been working on a variety of community efforts. For more information about this group and local dementia resources, visit altcew.org/about-who-we-are/spokane-area-dementia-friendly-community.

If you or a loved one are living with dementia and need support, contact Aging & Long Terms Care's helpline at 509-960-7281 and ask for the Dementia Care Specialist.

Become a Dementia Friend!



ALTCEW is seeking people who are interested in becoming Dementia Friends, as well as those who would like to share the message with others by becoming Dementia Friend Champions!

You can join the movement!

Learn more about becoming a Dementia Friend in Spokane:

- altcew.org/become-a-dementia-friend

Learn more about Dementia Friends USA:

- dementiafriendsusa.org

How to Access Dementia Support in Eastern Washington?

Visit the Spokane Area Dementia Friendly Community website:

altcew.org/about-who-we-are/spokane-area-dementia-friendly-community

Visit the WA State Alzheimer's Association website:

alz.org/alzwa?set=1

Contact Aging & Long Term Care's helpline Mon - Fri, 8:30 - 5PM to reach a Dementia Care Specialist:
(509) 960-7281

Contact the Alzheimer's Association's 24/7 helpline:

1-800-272-3900

Subscribe for the Spokane Area Dementia Friendly Community biannual newsletter:

Email dementia@altcew.org