The 2020 Census offers more ways to complete the once-a-decade population count than ever before. Back in mid-March, the public began self-responding over the internet and over the phone—both options for the first time. By May, COVID-19, much in the same way it disrupted nearly every other aspect of American life, upended the original census timeline.

“COVID has changed things rather dramatically,” said Jeff Behler, director of the U.S. Census Bureau’s New York Regional Office. “We should have started knocking on doors on May 13, and we should have been done with data collection at the end of July. Clearly, that couldn’t have happened when we couldn’t do it safely.”

Initially, the U.S. Census Bureau had pushed its deadline for field operations from July 31 to Oct. 31. “Enumerators,” or census takers, only began knocking on doors in early August. But, around the same time, the bureau reversed course, announcing it intended to end field operations a month early.

This means that the deadline to fill out the 2020 Census is now Sept. 30. The U.S. Census Bureau Director Steven Dillingham wrote in a statement that the bureau was ending both field operations and self-response options at the end of September in an effort to keep with original deadline of Dec. 31, when the census is required by law to provide its data to the president.

The Trump administration had asked Congress for a deadline extension back in April, but the effort eventually stalled in the Senate. With lawmakers divided on the issue, the Census Bureau pressed forward with its plan to meet its original December deadline.

Census workers are now tasked with counting the remaining households, many of whom belong to groups that are considered “hard to reach,” such as young children, non-English speakers and renters. Nearly four out of 10 households had yet to be counted by mid-August.

For those who have yet to self-respond, you can expect a visit from an enumerator. Field workers have received COVID training and will be wearing a mask (regardless of

Continued on page 12

Mobile Farm Stand Goes Virtual

Coastline’s Foster Grandparent Program volunteers typically meet throughout the summer, but this year the group wasn’t able to gather together on account of the ongoing pandemic. Now, with local school districts leaning toward an online reopening at the start of the upcoming academic year, it appears that opportunities for the grandparents to meet may remain sparse.

But on Aug. 14, the volunteers were able to reconnect at the Wamsutta Club, which made its parking lot available for the group to meet outdoors in a space large enough to allow social distancing. The Foster Grandparents weren’t the only ones to regroup following a lengthy quarantine. Coastal Foodshed’s Mobile Farm Stand made its return as well. The mobile farm stand, now in its third year, had to radically reinvent itself during the COVID era. Last year, the traveling shop made regular weekly stops throughout New Bedford and at a variety of events. When the farmers market closed in March, so, too, did operations at the farm stand. To ensure the project continued serving customers, the farm stand shifted to online sales.

In just two weeks, the market had completely reestablished itself on WhatsGood, an online farmers market platform, which is available as a website and a smartphone app. The shopping experience is similar to buying groceries online. Before adding an item to your digital shopping cart, the website will display the farm and location from where the item was sourced.

Stephanie Perks, the director of Coastal Foodshed, said that when the virtual market initially opened this spring, it was bombarded with customers.

Continued on page 9

New Bedford Counts, the City’s census-counting effort, was here, there and everywhere this summer in an effort to count people ahead of the new deadline for the 2020 Census, which is now Sept. 30. On Aug. 22, the group visited Market Basket before heading over to West Beach. Pictured from right: Lynn Coish, Algenys Martinéz, and Jose Da Cunha.

Continued on page 12
AARP Massachusetts Awards
Long-Time Coastline Volunteer

George Smith has been selected by AARP, the nonprofit organization for people 50 and older, to receive the 2020 AARP Massachusetts Andrus Award for Community Service – the Association’s most prestigious and visible state volunteer award for community service.

AARP Massachusetts selected Smith for his remarkable service and his extraordinary commitment to improving the lives of others throughout the Commonwealth. His efforts have greatly benefited his community, supported AARP’s vision and mission, and inspired other volunteers.

Known for his incredible energy and warm personality, this life-long resident of New Bedford has made a tremendous difference in the lives of New Bedford’s citizens, the elderly and the disabled, by setting a sterling example of what retirement can look like by devoting his time and energy to volunteering in the community.

Smith volunteers for the New Bedford Age-Friendly Steering Committee, the Senior Action Council, the New Bedford Council on Aging and Coastline Elderly Services, among many others. The award will be formally presented to Smith on a future date.

“This award acts as a symbol to the public that we can all work together for positive social change,” says State Director of AARP Massachusetts Mike Festa. “AARP has long valued the spirit of volunteerism and the important contributions volunteers make to their communities, neighbors and the programs they serve.”

Recipients across the nation were chosen for their ability to enhance the lives of AARP members and prospective members, improve the community in or for which the work was performed and inspire others to volunteer.

As summer winds down, stay safe and be well. (And, please, buy some tick repellent!)
Rhode Island Added to Mass’ Travel Order

For Massachusetts residents looking to take a road trip before summer’s end, the list of destination options is growing shorter. In early August, Governor Baker added Rhode Island to the list of states with travel restrictions in reaction to a recent uptick in COVID-19 cases within that state.

Massachusetts residents who travel to Rhode Island will have to quarantine for 14 days upon return or produce a negative COVID-19 test result. If the test result has not been received prior to arrival, residents must quarantine until they receive a negative test result.

All visitors entering Massachusetts, including returning residents and those who do not meet an exemption, are required to fill out an online travel form, which is available on the Massachusetts Department of Public Health website. Failure to fill out the form or comply with the travel orders could result in a $500-per-day fine.

Some exemptions, which include:
- Form if you meet the criteria for travel to Massachusetts residents who do not meet an exemption, are required to fill out an online travel form, which is available on the Massachusetts Department of Public Health website. Failure to fill out the form or comply with the travel orders could result in a $500-per-day fine.

According to a state report published on Aug. 22, Massachusetts has had 115,850 confirmed cases and 8,690 deaths among confirmed cases. By the end of August, there was a rare glimmer of hope: the number of new reported cases across the nation appeared to be leveling off following a summer surge.

After cases spiked in the South and Midwest throughout June and July, The New York Times reports that states leading the recent decrease in new cases have implemented local mask mandates and reversed or halted reopening plans, shuttering bars, restaurants and gyms – a signal that restrictions are effective.

By the last full week in August, the United States had about 5.7 million cases and 176,800 total deaths, according to data published on Aug. 22, Massachusetts had 115,850 confirmed cases and 8,690 deaths reported in the national. The nation appeared to be leveling off following a summer surge.

After cases spiked in the South and Midwest throughout June and July, The New York Times reports that states leading the recent decrease in new cases have implemented local mask mandates and reversed or halted reopening plans, shuttering bars, restaurants and gyms – a signal that restrictions are effective. After the last full week in August, the United States had about 5.7 million cases and 176,800 total deaths, according to data from Johns Hopkins University. Around the globe, there have been approximately 223,462,700 cases and 809,600 deaths.

When Should You Start Receiving Social Security Benefits?

By Delia De Mello

Social Security

We’re often asked, “What’s the best age to start receiving retirement benefits?” The answer is: there’s not a single “best age” for everyone. The most important thing is to make an informed decision.

Base your decision about when to apply for benefits on your individual and family circumstances.

Would it be better for you to start getting benefits early with a smaller monthly amount for more years, or wait for a larger monthly payment over a shorter time frame? The answer is personal and depends on several factors, such as your current cash needs, your current health and your family longevity.

You should also consider plans to work in retirement and other sources of retirement income. Most importantly, study your future financial needs and obligations, and calculate your future Social Security benefit.

We encourage you to weigh all the facts carefully before making the crucial decision about when to begin receiving Social Security benefits. This decision affects the monthly benefit you will receive for the rest of your life and may affect benefit protection for your survivors.

SSA’s New Retirement Portal

Our new retirement portal will make it easier for you to find and read about retirement benefits, with fewer pages and clearer information. We condensed and rewrote most of the pages to make them easier to understand.

The portal is compatible for use on mobile devices so you can learn and do what you want from wherever you want. Our retirement webpage has information including:

> Retirement Publications
> Benefit Calculators
> Retirement benefits estimates
> Full retirement age information
> Spouse benefits

You and your loved ones can access all of these resources at www.ssa.gov/benefits/retirement. More improvements to Social Security’s website are planned for later in 2020 as the agency seeks to improve the public experience at www.ssa.gov.

SEPTEMBER 2020 Senior Scope 3

Surprent & Benesi, P.C.
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Estate Planning • Elder Law

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Surprent & Benesi, P.C. warmly welcomes you to share your goals for yourself, your loved ones and your legacy. With your goals in mind, using appropriate strategies for you, we will create a comprehensive estate plan that protects you, your family and your assets. Partners, Dan Surprent and Michelle Benesi, are Certified Elder Law Attorneys by the National Elder Law Foundation. This makes our team uniquely qualified to help you prepare for life’s unknowns and provide you with peace of mind. We proudly serve Southeastern Massachusetts, Cape Cod and the Islands and are here to help you protect what matters the most to you.

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**Update**

**Matter of Balance Classes Online**

Coastline will be offering a FREE workshop online beginning Sept. 22, to kick off Falls Prevention Awareness Week. This workshop is designed to reduce fear of falling, empower seniors to be proactive in learning tips to avoid fall risks, grow in self-confidence, and increase strength and flexibility through specific exercises. The workshop will run twice a week from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays, from Sept. 22 through Oct. 15.

Technology is available for those who do not have access. For more information, please contact Rachel Fouts at 774-510-5224.

**Help and Hope Southcoast**

This local public health campaign is bringing discussion and awareness to the stigma associated with mental health. To reach this goal, Help and Hope Southcoast plans on increasing access to services and is inspiring the community to check in with one another when they see people in need. The program is designed to bring all partners to the table with one voice of “Help and Hope.” Visit them online at: www.helphopesouthcoast.com.

**‘Brain Builders’ Online**

Buzzards Bay Speech Therapy has moved its Brain Builders course online. The class helps participants improve memory, word-finding, thinking skills and socialization. Classes will be held this summer from Mondays on 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. Participants can access the classes using the Zoom app or over the phone. For more information, contact Lisa at 508-326-0353 or email lycslp@gmail.com. Funding provided in part by a grant from Coastline and the Executive Office of Elder Affairs.

**‘Grandparents Raising Grandchildren’ Update**

Grandparents Raising Grandchildren, the monthly support group that typically meets at New Bedford City Hall, will be on hiatus for the foreseeable future in light of the ongoing pandemic. However, grandparents in need of support and information are encouraged to call Brenda Grace at 508-996-0168.

The group also hosts an annual scholarship program benefitting the grandchildren of program participants. Call Brenda for more info on how you can contribute to the scholarship program. Grandparents Raising Grandchildren is partly funded by Coastline and the Executive Office of Elder Affairs.

**You Can Still Donate Textiles During COVID**

Gather your textile items, bag these items and visit one of the drop-off locations in Fairhaven. All donations help fund the Town of Fairhaven’s boarding remediation workshops. Bins are located at: The Firemen’s Enrichment Fund, 146 Washington St.; Fairhaven Council on Aging, 229 Hutton Ave.; North Fairhaven Improvement Association, 267 Adams St.; Happy’s Landing, Goulart Memorial Drive (West Island).

You can donate clothing, linens, footwear, stuffed animals and accessories.

**Legal Services**

South Coastal Counties Legal Services continues to provide services to clients during these challenging times. Their offices remain closed; however, intake hours have been extended to Monday through Thursday, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. To apply for services, call 1-800-244-9023 or fill out an online inquiry at sccls.org.

SCCLS is partially funded by Coastline and the Executive Office of Elder Affairs.

**NB Farmers Market Summer Schedule**

The Brooklawn Park Farmers Market will be held Mondays from 2 to 6 p.m. Closing day is Oct. 26. The market is held inside Brooklawn Park on the Acushnet Avenue side.

The Custom House Square Farmers Market will be held on Thursdays from 2 to 6 p.m. Closing day is Oct. 29. The market is located downtown at Custom House Square on Bakers Lane.

The Clasyk Common Farmers Market will be held on Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Closing day is Oct. 31. Held inside Clasyk Common Park on Pleasant St. in the middle of the park. (Masks and social distancing required at all markets.)

**Mobile Market**

The Greater New Bedford Community Health Center will hold monthly farmers market-style mobile markets in partnership with The Greater Boston Food Bank. Produce is free of charge. Next market: Sept. 14, 10 a.m. to noon. at the Time Square building parking lot, 888 Purchase St.

To register, call Joyce Dupont at 508-992-6553 ext. 142. Pre-registration is strongly encouraged. Those who do not pre-register must wait until the end of the market to shop. Please leave your info: name, date of birth, number of people in household, zip code and phone number.

Follow the health center on Facebook for updates regarding the mobile market: www.facebook.com/gnbchc.

**Help Name a Room in the New Coastline HQ**

Coastline has been working toward a new headquarters in New Bedford. The building, which is still under construction, will be located on Acushnet Avenue. This new space will enable us to better serve our community by providing the public with one central location to meet and discuss your needs. We’re excited to introduce you to the new space once it opens, which will likely happen early next year. As we put the finishing touches on the project, we’ve been brainstorming some names for our new conference rooms. We would like our main conference center to be named after our home, New Bedford, and we’re seeking your input.

Send us your ideas! We would like the name of the conference center to reflect some aspect of New Bedford’s history, geography, citizens or culture. We will need your submissions by Sept. 15. Either email Senior Scope at shomas@coastlinenb.org or leave a voicemail at 508-742-9104.

The winner will receive a year’s subscription to Senior Scope (we’ll deliver the paper to your home), a tour of the building at some future date and a $25 gift card to Sunrise Bakery! We will also announce the winner in a future issue, and Senior Scope is planning a feature about the new building once it’s ready to welcome the public.

**Coastline/BCC Program Seeks Participants**

Coastline is seeking members of the community interested in taking part in a program that pairs college students with individuals who have memory loss. In the fall of 2019, students enrolled in Bristol Community College’s occupational therapy assistant program were given a unique opportunity to apply the skills they had been learning in the classroom out in the community. Coastline and BCC will continue their partnership this fall and are currently seeking a new group of people with dementia to join the students. Occupational therapists work with people with disabilities or injuries to overcome barriers. They assess clients and help them find ways to better execute activities of daily living.

This year the program will be modified to accommodate the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, with students relying heavily on video conferencing to connect with clients rather than entering clients’ homes. If you are interested in taking part, you can reach Patricia Geggatt-Midiri, who operates Coastline’s Caregiver Companion program, directly by calling 508-742-9116 or 774-510-0174 or by emailing pmidiri@coastlinenb.org.
Sit-to-Stands: An Essential Exercise for the COVID-Era

By Cam Bergeron, CSCS
Cam’s Conditioning & Rehab

There are many different types of exercise programs, but from my experience, the program stands above the rest: “sport-specific” training.

Just because it’s called sport-specific training does not mean it has anything to do with sports. During athlete sports conditioning programs, the instructors choose exercises that mimic the movements the athletes use in their sport.

When I am developing programs for personal training or for groups, I always consider sport-specific conditioning. Everyone has their own goals and imbalances, and it’s the instructor’s job to choose the correct exercises to help them achieve their goals. When it comes to the classes I teach at senior centers, I like to capitalize on exercises that will transfer into my students’ daily lives.

The best way to describe this concept is by explaining the difference between squatting exercises and sit-to-stands. When it comes to squatting, the motion can be very tough to keep proper form. This could be due to lack of strength or maybe some injuries in the body. A sit-to-stand starts off with the person sitting on the chair, standing up without using hands, then sitting back down. Independence is my main objective with sit-to-stands. When an individual needs help standing up, it puts a toll on them. My goal is for this never to happen.

Once you master a sit-to-stand there are a few ways to make the exercise tougher. Lower the height of the object you’re sitting on and increase weight. I’m a firm believer in lowering the height of the object before you add weight. My reasoning for this is this same sport specific idea.

If you are physically able to sit-to-stand easily off multiple surfaces around your house, that’s great. But you also want to acclimate yourself to other surfaces around your house, acclimate yourself to other objects that you may come in contact with. Someone else’s couch, chair or toilet may be lower than yours.

I am consistently challenging a client of mine that has a neurological disease with lower sit-to-stands. She went on a cruise last year and was talking to another woman in her beach chair. As she was finishing their conversation, she popped out of her beach chair perfectly. The lady she was speaking with was a personal trainer and was impressed how my client just got up out of a low beach chair without issue.

The woman said “Wow, that’s impressive! Half of my clients can’t even do that.” These are the types of stories I love to hear. There is nothing better than helping individuals increase their functionality.

Sitting-to-stands are one of the most basic exercises to keep us functional and independent. I suggest performing at least 10 sit-to-stands daily. Just remember: if you can easily do 10 repetitions, then try lowering the height of your object. If you have two surfaces that are at vastly different heights, then add a pillow/book/etc. to the lower surface. That way you are going lower, but not too low.

Here is some guidelines for sit-to-stands.

1. Start off with a chair you can comfortably stand up from.
2. Sit about halfway forward on the chair.
3. Toes straight, feet flat.
4. Chest up, head looking straight forward.
5. Breath out and stand up.
6. Squeeze the butt upon standing.
7. Lower yourself back down slowly, breathing in.
8. Repeat.

[Notes: Knees should stay parallel with each other, they shouldn’t dive in. Do not round the back while performing the motion.]

Dartmouth Community Media (DCTV) has been airing Cam’s exercises classes, which you can access for free on the station’s website and YouTube channel: dartmouth.mediatown.org.

Resources
For more updates from the New Bedford Wellness Initiative visit them online at nbewell.com or follow them on Facebook at facebook.com/NewBedfordWell,

Look for the Initiative’s “Live Streaming Schedule” for a list of classes being offered throughout the week. The “Weekly Wellness Wednesday’s provide updates on the Walk with A Doc program, which is now meeting in-person.
Vamos manter-nos unidos enquanto separados durante estes tempos difíceis!

Susas respostas ao Censo de 2020 estãosegurass, a salvo y protegidas por la ley federal. Sus respostas se pueden usar solamente para producir estadísticas—no se pueden usar en su contra de ninguna manera. Por ley, todas las respuestas a las encuestas sobre hogares y empresas que realiza la Oficina del Censo de los EE. UU. se mantienen completamente confidenciales.

Remanecer únicos en las comunidades a obtener los fondos que necesitan y ayuda a las empresas a tomar decisiones basadas en datos que hacen crecer a la economía. Los datos del censo influyen en nuestra vida diaria, aportando información sobre el financiamiento de servicios e infraestructura en su comunidad, incluyendo atención médica, centros para personas de la tercera edad, empleos, representación política, carreteras, escuelas y negocios. Más de $675 mil millones de fondos federales se distribuyen a los estados y comunidades locales todos los años, con base en los datos del censo.

Por lei, sus respostas no pueden ser utilizadas para fines del cumplimiento de la ley o para determinar la elegibilidad personal para beneficios del gobierno. Por ley, sus respostas al censo no pueden ser usadas en su contra de ninguna manera, por ninguna agencia del gobierno ni tribunal—ni por el Buró Federal de Investigaciones (FB!); ni por la Agencia Central de Inteligencia (CIA), ni por el Departamento de Seguridad Nacional (DHS) ni por el Servicio de Inmigración y Control de Aduanas de los EE. UU. (ICE). La ley exige a la Oficina del Censo mantener confidencial su información y usar sus respuestas solo para producir estadísticas.

Al hacerlo, se asegura de que New Bedford recoja los fondos que merecemos para escuelas, programas de salud, atención médica, SNAP, escolas, planejamento de resposta a emergências e outros serviços importantes em que todos confiamos. Você pode concluir seu censo de qualquer lugar! E certifique-se de que todos os que vivem em sua casa, mesmo que não sejam parentes, sejam contados – e, como sempre, as crianças também contam!

Mais informação disponível em newbedford-ma.gov/census ou em facebook.com/nbcounts. Partilhe esta informação com familiares e amigos! Responda online, pelo telefone ou por e-mail. Toda a informação é confidencial. V our em: my2020census.gov para preencher os seus Censos. 844-474-2020. [Adapted from information from census.gov and NB Counts]

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- Multi-System Complications
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The road to recovery due to a serious medical condition can be a lengthy process that is seldom easy. But there is help along the way. Vibra Hospital of Southeastern Massachusetts is there to provide the specialized care you need right when you need it.

Beginning with a seamless transfer from the hospital, up until the time a patient is able to transition home, the Vibra team of dedicated physicians, nurses and specialized therapists are there every step of the way. Providing the kind of personalized care that makes a real difference. Helping patients with everything from relearning to walk, to breathing without a ventilator, while helping families to understand the process and the outcomes.

All with one goal in mind. Getting patients back to better.

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[Adapted from information from census.gov and NB Counts]
Nearly a dozen people spent a large part of this summer navigating the complex world of Medicare coverage. The group was learning the ins and outs of health insurance to become SHINE counselors, who act as guides for those becoming Medicare-eligible.

SHINE (or “Servicing the Health Insurance Needs of Everyone”) provides free health insurance information, counseling and assistance to Massachusetts residents. The program, which is administered by the Executive Office of Elder Affairs, is operated by a mix of volunteers and employees stationed at various agencies, such as councils on aging and Coastline. And this summer, 23 people took part in an extensive training program to become counselors from the South Coast to Cape Cod.

“Our counselors go through a lot of training,” said Regional SHINE Director Christie Rexford, who’s based in Middleborough. “We’re trained, and we can give you an idea of all of your options so you make the best choice for you. And it’s free.”

The program, which typically revolves around in-person meetings, was forced to switch to a remote platform because of COVID-19, which Rexford said was particularly challenging considering how much copying, printing and faxing is involved. Even this year’s SHINE counselor training had to take place exclusively over the video conferencing platform Zoom.

Still, SHINE pressed forward with training, ensuring the new crop of counselors would be ready ahead of the busy Medicare open enrollment period, which takes place every year from Oct. 15 to Dec. 7.

One of the new recruits, Ginny DeSilva, who works as a health access director at the New Bedford-based nonprofit PACE, printed reams of information to prepare for the final exam scheduled in late August.

“I have a new, great respect for SHINE counselors,” said DeSilva. “It’s a long training, and there’s tons and tons of material to study.”

She said that, for people who are accustomed to receiving health coverage through an employer, it can be easy to coast along, not thinking much about the intricacies of health insurance. But, three months before the month you turn 65 — when you can first sign up for Medicare — she recommends seeking help as soon as possible.

“When it comes to Medicare programs, they’re very complicated, and you definitely need someone who knows what they’re talking about to assist you,” she said.

During open enrollment, those on Medicare can make changes to their health plans and prescription drug coverage to better meet their needs. This year, meeting with a SHINE counselor will likely happen remotely.

“We do have some outreach workers who have started to see people outside,” said Rexford.

The bulk of appointments, though, will happen over the phone or across email. For those who feel more confident with a computer, Medicare’s official website has a tool called the Medicare Plan Finder, which can help you compare coverage options and shop for plans. Rexford said SHINE counselors can answer questions about the Plan Finder if you need help using the service.

Before DeSilva had joined the training, she thought she might have been better off if she had benefited from the service back when it was time for her to sign up for Medicare. At the time, she scheduled a meeting with her coworker at PACE, who helped her through the process.

“I think it’s a program that’s definitely needed and helpful to a lot of people,” she said. “They need more SHINE counselors.”

SHINE Program Prepares for Open Enrollment with New Recruits

State’s ‘Stop the Spread’ Initiative Expands, Extends to Sept. 12

Back in July, the Commonwealth launched a COVID-19 testing program in eight communities where rates of the coronavirus were higher than the statewide average and where there had been a decline in testing since spring. Notably, the tests were free of charge.

That effort, which was initially scheduled to end on Aug. 14, has extended to Sept. 12 and has expanded into 17 communities.

In early August, Governor Charlie Baker announced that the “Stop the Spread” initiative could now happen in Agawam, Brockton, Chelsea, Everett, Fall River, Framingham, Lawrence, Lowell, Lynn, Marlborough, Methuen, New Bedford, Randolph, Revere, Springfield, Taunton and Worcester.

All residents of these 17 communities, including asymptomatic individuals, are urged to get tested at one of these locations. While these sites are being launched in these communities, they are open to all residents of the Commonwealth. Tests will continue to be free of charge.

According to the state, while Massachusetts has seen a decrease in COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations since May, there has been a slight uptick in certain communities this summer.

Separately, Baker also signed an updated order on gatherings, reducing the limit on outdoor gatherings from 100 to 50 people for the final exam scheduled in late August. Visit them on Facebook for their schedule: facebook.com/sharecounts.

Resources

To reach a SHINE Counselor, contact your local COA or call the regional number, 1-800-231-1155.

A contact list of local SHINE counselors is published in every issue of Senior Scope on page 2. See page 10 and 11 for COA updates about SHINE throughout the open enrollment period.

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That effort, which was initially scheduled to end on Aug. 14, has extended to Sept. 12 and has expanded into 17 communities. In early August, Governor Charlie Baker announced that the “Stop the Spread” initiative could now happen in Agawam, Brockton, Chelsea, Everett, Fall River, Framingham, Lawrence, Lowell, Lynn, Marlborough, Methuen, New Bedford, Randolph, Revere, Springfield, Taunton and Worcester.

All residents of these 17 communities, including asymptomatic individuals, are urged to get tested at one of these locations. While these sites are being launched in these communities, they are open to all residents of the Commonwealth. Tests will continue to be free of charge.

According to the state, while Massachusetts has seen a decrease in COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations since May, there has been a slight uptick in certain communities this summer.

Separately, Baker also signed an updated order on gatherings, reducing the limit on outdoor gatherings from 100 to 50 people (the limit on indoor gatherings will remain at 25 people). The order requires face coverings in instances where more than 10 people from different households congregate.

The second part of “phase 3” in the governor’s reopening plan has been postponed indefinitely.

Public safety officials, including state and local law enforcement, health care workers and the governor’s office, are enforcing these orders, and event hosts in violation of these orders will be subject to fines or cease and desist orders.

SHINE counselors can help you navigate the complex world of Medicare. In addition to helping you sign up for coverage, they can help walk you through the online Plan Finder tool on medicare.gov. See page 2 for a list of local SHINE counselors.

Got one or both of these cards? Get more.

Get more benefits than you’re currently getting from Original Medicare and MassHealth with the UnitedHealthcare® Senior Care Options (HMO D-SNP) plan. It combines your doctor, hospital and prescription drug coverage into one plan for a $0 plan premium.

Call today to enroll or get answers to your questions.

Anthony Nieves-Roman
Licensed Sales Agent
1-857-222-2143, TTY 711
anthony.nieves-roman@uhc.com

UnitedHealthcare Community Plan

UnitedHealthcare® SSO is a Coordinated Care Plan with a Medicare contract and a contract with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Medicaid program. Enrollment in the plan depends on the plan’s contract renewal with Medicare. This plan is a voluntary program that is available to anyone 65 and older who qualifies for MassHealth Standard and Original Medicare. If you have MassHealth Standard, but you do not qualify for Original Medicare, you may still be eligible to enroll in our MassHealth Senior Care Option plan and receive all of your MassHealth benefits through our SSO program.

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Medicare Plan Finder

SHINE Program Prepares for Open Enrollment with New Recruits

State’s ‘Stop the Spread’ Initiative Expands, Extends to Sept. 12

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Resources

Greater New Bedford Community Health Center, 874 Purchase St., is offering testing by appointment or walk-up, Monday through Friday from 8:30 to 11:30 a.m. Call 508-742-3807.

The following agencies are offering testing at various locations throughout the City. Visit the state’s “Stop the Spread” website for the most up-to-date schedule at: mass.gov/info-details/stop-the-spread.

• Seven Hills Behavioral Health Van: 508-996-0546.
• South Coast Health: 508-973-1319.
• Alert Ambulance Service Inc.: 401-654-4679.

New Bedford Counts, which helps residents fill out the 2020 Census, will be stationed at some of these events. Visit them on Facebook for their schedule: facebook.com/nbcouc.
What is a Last Will and Testament and Do I Need One?

By Brandon Walecka, Esq.
Surprenant & Beneski

The coronavirus pandemic getting you thinking about preparing a Will? You may be worried about how your exposure to the disease or preexisting health conditions may make you more susceptible to COVID-19. The need for an estate plan is constant, but now more than ever, we seek the peace of mind that having our affairs in order can bring.

What is a Last Will and Testament?

A Last Will and Testament is a legal document that communicates your final wishes pertaining to your assets – for example, what to do with your personal possessions, whether distributing to an individual, a group, or donating them to a charity(ies), and who is responsible for making the distributions.

How a Last Will and Testament Works.

Typically, you write a Will, conforming to certain legal formalities, while you are alive. Upon your passing, if you owned assets solely in your name (without a beneficiary designation, joint owner or a trust), that asset will need to pass through a process called “probate” before being distributed.

What is a Probate?

Probate is the name of the process of transferring the property of a deceased person to that person’s heirs or beneficiaries.

The Massachusetts Probate and Family Court, known as the probate court, oversees the process of transferring the property of the deceased person. There is a probate court in each Massachusetts county.

If the person dies without a Will this is known as an intestate probate. The person submitting such a filing as called a Personal Representative.

Who is a Personal Representative (formerly known as Executor/Executrix)?

A Personal Representative (PR) is a fiduciary who has assumed a series of important responsibilities and duties through the probate process. A PR has a duty of loyalty, impartiality, to preserve and account for estate assets. Selecting the right person to serve as PR upon your passing is critical and should not be taken lightly.

When is a Probate Needed?

Generally, in Massachusetts, anytime the decedent individually owns any real property or personal property valued at more than $25,000 a full probate is needed. If the decedent owns less than $25,000 in personal property, one car, and no real estate, a simplified process known as a “voluntary administration” can be done instead of a full probate.

What Happens if You Die Without a Will?

If you die intestate—that is, without a Will—the state oversees the distribution of your assets, which it will typically distribute according to a set formula. Typically, property goes to a surviving spouse first, then to any children, then to extended family and descendants, following common law. If no family can be found, property typically reverts to the state.

This formula can have unexpected results.

In Massachusetts, if you are married and you die without a Will, what your spouse gets depends on whether or not you have living parents or descendants.

If you don’t, then your spouse inherits all of your intestate property. If you do, they and your spouse will share your intestate property in varying amounts based on the formula.

If you die without a Will in Massachusetts, your children will receive an “intestate share” of your property. The size of each child’s share depends on how many children you have, whether or not you are married, whether your children are also the children of your spouse, and whether your spouse has any children from a previous relationship.

Further complications may ensue if your children are minors, as the court will appoint a representative to look after their interests.

A Properly Drafted Will Means Peace of Mind.

While obtaining professional advice when executing a Will is not a legal necessity, you should be aware that a Will must meet certain requirements as provided by state law in order to be valid.

The satisfaction in knowing that your estate plan will be distributed the way you intended. By executing a valid Last Will and Testament, you can save your family a great deal of stress, burden, and cost at an already difficult time.

[More info on legal services on page 4]
Nutrition

The opening of the virtual market happened at a time when public knowledge about COVID-19 was rapidly evolving and stepping foot inside a grocery store felt especially perilous. The new online market, however, was a place to shop safety, and it made door deliveries. (Plus, unlike the larger chain grocery stores, the virtual farm stand managed to keep flour, a COVID-era rarity, in stock.)

Customers may also take advantage of the Healthy Incentives Program (HIP), which provides SNAP users with extra benefits when purchasing fresh fruits and vegetables. HIP can only be used at farmers markets, farm stands and CSAs.

Farm Stand continued...

The mobile farm stand aggregates products — including produce, meat, maple syrup and honey — from farms throughout the region. Beyond its own virtual market, Coastal Foodshed launched a 12-week program during the pandemic aimed at keeping farmers’ businesses afloat. The Southcoast Farmer to Family Relief Program, which was funded as part of the SouthCoast Community Foundation’s COVID relief effort, helped bring local food into food pantries.

“The goal was to help people who needed it, but also to help farmers who had lost markets,” said Dan King, who manages the mobile farm stand and virtual market. “A lot of farms lost direct-to-restaurant sales. The amount of farms that we work with now is greater than it was because their regular channels dwindled.”

With numerous agencies now offering free produce boxes as part of a wide-ranging COVID-relief effort, Coastal Foodshed is looking to identify locations where food remains hard to access.

“There are a lot of resources out there right now for food, so we have to go places where people are not getting food,” said Perks, adding that Coastal Foodshed intends to keep the virtual market operational beyond the COVID era.

In the interim, the group was happy to see the mobile farm stand make its return for the Foster Grandparents.

“This event was great, getting back in the swings of things and interacting with customers — even with strange mask guidance and blue tape on the ground,” said King. “It’s still nice to provide the service again.”

To order from the farm stand online, either download the WhatsGood smartphone app or visit sourcewhatsgood.com. Click on Massachusetts and search for “Coastal Foodshed Virtual Market.” Deliveries can be made to: New Bedford, Dartmouth, Acushnet, Fairhaven, Mattapoisett, Rochester and Marion. SNAP/EBT/ HIP customers can make online orders, but will have to pick-up at 38 Blackmer St., New Bedford. Call for info: 508-259-2647.

For more food resources, including the NB Farmers Market summer schedule, see Page 4. Call Coastline at 508-999-6400 for more information about Meals on Wheels or follow Coastline on Facebook for more resources: www.facebook.com/ CoastlineNB.

Caring for you in your neighborhood — it’s what we do best

Dental care at no cost to you

Nurse Care Manager to coordinate your care

$305 towards eyeglass frames

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YMCA membership or $55 per month for gym membership

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Acushnet COA

For more information, call the Acushnet Council on Aging at 508-998-0280. The center is located at 59½ South Main St., Acushnet, MA 02743.

Important Note: A “No Congregation” policy will be in effect any time patrons utilize the Acushnet Senior Community Center; individuals must maintain a safe distance, with a minimum distance of 6 feet from other individuals. Our lending library remains closed. Water coolers and coffee stations are not available.

COA Exercise Classes: With the cooler weather beginning to roll in, some exercise classes will resume at the COA. All classes will be held outside, weather permitting, and access to the building will still be prohibited. Masks and social distancing will be required. Please call for the schedule, 508-998-0280.

Medicare Open Enrollment: From Oct. 15 to Dec. 7. We are trying to devise some alternative ways of helping Medicare beneficiaries navigate the open enrollment period. We are hoping that for those who are tech savvy, we can hold a virtual appointment via phone and email. We will be able to do enrollments into new plan or help with new plan if necessary and mail you summary cards. We will not be able to assist non-Acushnet residents. We will have information for nonresidents as to where they can find their local SHINE counselor. Contact the COA with questions.

AARP Friendly Caller Program: We may be isolated, but we don’t have to be alone. “AARP Friendly Voices” has trained AARP volunteers who will provide a call to say hello. To register, call AARP directly at 1-888-281-0145.

Visiting Dental Hygienist: The Public Health Dental Hygienist provides dental cleanings, screenings, oral health, information and education. Services have resumed at the Acushnet COA. The next date is Sept. 8. Contact Holly for an appointment at 774-766-7233.

Annual Walk to End Alzheimer’s: Walks will take place in your own community this year. Track your walk through the Walk Mobile app. There will still be an opening ceremony and Promise Garden ceremony through an online platform. Register at: https://www.walkAlzManh.org.

Senior Center Without Walls: Senior Center Without Walls is a California-based program with classes and discussion groups that bring seniors together over the phone. Register by phone at 877-797-7299.

For more information, call the Dartmouth Council on Aging at 508-999-4717. The center is located at 628 Dartmouth St., South Dartmouth, MA 02748. A complete list of events can be found at: www.towndartmouth.ma.us.

Dartmouth COA Newsletter: Did you know there are three ways to get the Council on Aging Newsletter? 1.) On the town’s website: Perform a Google search for “Town of Dartmouth Council on Aging.” Click the newsletter link on the left of this page. The newsletter will open in a new window where you can read it online or print it. 2.) Email: To receive the newsletter by email, please call us at 508-999-4717 with your email address. 3.) Regular Mail: To receive the newsletter by regular mail, please call us at 508-999-4717 to request to be put on our mailing list.

Red Cross Blood Drive: Hosted by the Dartmouth COA on Sept. 15 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Please call 1-800-RED-CROSS (1-800-733-2767) or visit redcrossblood.org and enter: the DARTMOUTH COA.

Coffee Talk: Start your day with coffee and a virtual smile with our friends at the COA. We invite our friends to join the staff at the COA on Tuesdays at 10 a.m. via ZOOM starting Sept. 1. Zoom Meeting ID: 988 9154 1490; Password: 666. Call us at 1-646-876-9023.

Medicare Diabetes Prevention Program: The DCOA is working with the YMCA to bring this program to the center. This two-year program is led by a lifestyle coach who will help community members to make changes that will improve their overall health and reduce their chances of developing type 2 diabetes. Medicare Part B will cover costs for those who qualify. For information call Nancy at the center, or Lisa Rahn, Program Coordinator for the YMCA: 508-996-9622 ext. 141 or email her at lrahn@ymca.org.

Lunch and Run: Sept. 24 from 12:30 to 2 p.m. Drive thru BBQ Chicken, Paradise Rice and Dessert. Call to sign up 508-999-4717. Free. Fresh Produce Pick Up: For Dartmouth families and/or seniors struggling to access fresh produce. Wednesdays from 8 to 10 a.m. at the Quinn Elementary School while supplies last. Proof of residency required. No advanced sign-up.

Chair Yoga: Classes are now open for appointment only. Visit www.towndartmouth.ma.us/dartmouth-community-media for class schedules and more information. Classes are also available on YouTube.

For more information, call the Fairhaven Fairhaven Council on Aging at 508-979-4029. The center is located at 229 Hanover St, Fairhaven, MA 02719. Visit the Fairhaven COA website at: fairhaven-ma.gov/council-aging

Transportation: The COA van will run Monday through Friday beginning at 8 a.m. for in-town shopping and errands as well as daily trips to Market Basket. All passengers will have their temperature taken before entering the van and must wear a mask while on the van. The van will be thoroughly sanitized after each use. Volunteer medical transportation has not yet been resumed.

Osteo Class: Osteo classes are on Mondays and Fridays from 9:30 to 9:45 a.m., weather permitting. The classes will take place outside near the Bocce Court under the shady trees. Please wear a mask. All chairs will be properly sanitized before and after use.

The Dental Hygienist: Now scheduling appointments at the Fairhaven COA. Please call the hygienist directly for an appointment at 774-766-7238. Provides dental cleanings, screenings, oral health, information and education.

SHINE: Medicare Open Enrollment will be available from Oct. 15 to Dec. 7. SHINE appointments arranged at the Fairhaven COA are for Fairhaven seniors only. Seniors from surrounding communities can call the Council on Aging in their Town for SHINE information. No appointments for SHINE will be held at the Fairhaven COA. SHINE counselors will be working from home. All correspondence between the senior and the SHINE counselor will be done over the phone and email, if possible. Call the COA for more info at 508-979-4029.

State Primary Election: Tuesday, Sept. 1 from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. Polling Locations: Precinct 1 - Town Hall; Precinct 2 - Hasting Middle School; Precinct 3 - Hasting Middle School; Precinct 4 - Fire Station (meeting room); Precinct 5 - Recreation Center; Precinct 6 - Recreation Center. Do you need a ride? Seniors who need transportation to the voting polls, call 508-979-4029 at least one day in advance.

Marion COA

Call the center at 508-748-3570. The center is located at the Benjamin D. Cushing Community Center, 465 Mill St., Marion, MA 02738. Like us on Facebook: facebook.com/marioncoa.

Drive-In Days: Sept. 10 from noon to 1 p.m. Come enjoy an afternoon luncheon on the grounds of the Community Center or to go. On the menu: BLT sandwiches. Seating is limited. Please call to register at 508-748-3570.

Continued on Page 11
SEPTEMBER 2020

Senior Scope

Special Event: Sheryl Faye presents “Susan B. Anthony: Failure is Impossible.” Sept. 21 at 1 p.m. on Marion’s Public Service YouTube Channel. Visit marionma.gov and scroll to the bottom of the page. Click on the YouTube icon under “Connect With Us.”

Yard Sale: The Friends of Marion COA is hosting a yard sale on Oct. 10 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. (Rain date: Oct. 11.; backup date: Oct. 12.) Now accepting donations. Cannot accept furniture. Only select electronic items and appliances are accepted. Call 508-758-4110 or 508-3570 for info.

Transportation: Offering transportation to routine doctor’s appointments. We request at least 48 hours advance notice. Transportation to grocery stores is scheduled as follows. Monday: Stop & Shop, Fairhaven. Tuesday: Market Basket, Plymouth. Wednesdays: Shaw’s, Wareham. Thursday: Walmart, Wareham.

Podiatry Clinic: Call the COA to schedule your appointment.

Dental Cleanings: The Dental Hygienist Program provides dental cleanings, screenings, oral health information and education, including denture adjustments. To schedule an appointment, call Dr. Foley at 774-766-7238.

Memory Loss Support Group: Sept. 10 and 24 from 1 to 2:30 p.m. This Tuesdays at 8:30 a.m.

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New Bedford Art Museum/Artworks! Returns with an Eye on Safety

Back in the first week of March, a group of patrons were weaving through an elaborate art piece that was suspended from the ceiling of the New Bedford Art Museum/Artworks! gallery. The guided tour was for people with memory loss and their loved ones and featured lots of interaction.

Curator Jamie Uretsky would stop and ask open-ended questions about the vibrant contemporary art on display, and she would pass around various objects meant to simulate the textures featured in the works. This newspaper and a news crew from a Boston-based ABC affiliate were there to document how art appreciation can combat the social isolation that often burden caregivers and those with memory loss.

And then, about a week later, the world changed. That story never appeared in this paper. The pandemic placed Senior Scope on hiatus, and New Bedford’s downtown art museum closed its doors.

But this summer, following some extensive modifications to the way it operates, the museum has reopened to the public.

“You can’t wait for people to come back and experience this space,” said Ashley Occhino, the executive director of New Bedford Art Museum/Artworks’ (NBAM). While some museums around the state opened their doors in July as part of the third phase in Governor Baker’s reopening plan, NBAM opted to hold off until mid-August to better prepare the space. Arrows and signage now direct patrons throughout the museum, a smaller gallery toward the back where social distancing would have proved difficult was closed, and even the museum’s gift shop has been rearranged to create better flow.

To ensure the safety of its visitors, the museum now restricts its capacity to six people every half hour, which means that families would effectively have the place to themselves. The works on display in March have been uninstalled and replaced with a selection from the members’ show, a benefit exhibition that will support youth mentoring programs, and a room lined with pastels from the New Bedford Free Public Library’s collection, among others. Exhibits and workshops have also migrated onto the museum’s website, and their YouTube channel offers artist interviews.

And for the first time, the museum’s gallery has dedicated large spaces to creating art. Through the end of the year, NBAM is encouraging the public to take a break from the endless stream of COVID news by relaxing in its newly assembled “pop-up studios.” During the pandemic, NBAM secured a grant through New Bedford Creative to supply visitors with art kits — complete with paper, pencils and prompts to get your started — at no extra charge beyond general admission.

“It’s a chance for people to interact and do something with each other while they’re here,” said Occhino. “The materials you receive in that kit are yours to keep, and you can take them home with you.”

The first pop-up studio is themed around portraiture, a nod to how the art form may look a little different in the era of mask mandates. The other studio will be based on the work of Soo Sunny Park. Both stations have places to sit and watch instructional “how-to” guidance. Occhino hopes the interactive projects will give people an opportunity to unpack some of the stress that’s come to define 2020.

“Let’s be honest — it’s been a long six months. We all have stuff we need to work through right now,” said Occhino. “I want people to walk out of here feeling a little better about life.”

Census continued...

local mask mandates) and will be following social distancing protocols.

“We also are giving our census takers small packages of masks that they can give directly to the respondent if they prefer to complete the interview with a mask on and they don’t have one,” Behler said.

Enumerators wear an official photo ID and carry a smartphone, both of which feature a U.S. Dept. of Commerce watermark. They will be carrying an official census bag as well. If you want to confirm an enumerator’s credentials, you can call 212-882-7100, and the Census Bureau can verify that person’s employment.

In New Bedford, where the self-response rate is around 57 percent (nearing the bottom tier among states), census workers have been joining other COVID-relief efforts, such as food banks or testing sites.

13, 14, a long line of people standing 6 feet apart formed down North Street. Seven Hills Behavioral Health was offering free COVID-19 testing as part of Governor Baker’s “Stop the Spread” campaign, and health care workers swabbed citizens in the parking lot of the Boys & Girls Club of Greater New Bedford. Across from the testing site sat a New Bedford Counts booth, where city workers and an official census enumerator were encouraging those who had not yet participated in the COVID test to fill out their census. In three hours, they collected data on 32 people.

The district coordinator for the City of New Bedford, stressed that the 2020 Census will determine the fate of funding for federal programs for the next decade.

“The census has only one question — ‘Where do you live?’” said Coish.

And while the 2020 Census is often noted for being the first to be made available online, you do not need the internet to self-respond. You can simply pick up the phone.

“ ‘You’re going to talk to a live person.’ They’re basically interviewing you over the phone, asking you the questions as if you were filling out the paper form,” said Behler. “If for some reason you can’t get through to a person, you can leave a message and a census representative will call you back.”

Resources

New Bedford Art Museum/Artworks! is open Thursday through Sunday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

You can reserve tickets online at newbedfordart.org or by calling 508-961-3072. Tickets are $8 for adults, $5 for seniors, and free for children under 12 when accompanied by an adult. If you have an EBT Card, admission is free for two adults and three children.

Subjects over the age of five are asked to wear a mask. All patrons are asked to arrive five minutes prior to the start of their purchased time slot. The museum is located at 608 Pleasant St. in New Bedford.