

Senior Scope

Serving the towns of **Acushnet ■ Dartmouth ■ Fairhaven ■ Gosnold ■ Marion ■ Mattapoisett ■ New Bedford ■ Rochester**

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COVID Vaccine Rolls Out During Phase 1

The nation entered a new chapter in the global COVID-19 pandemic this winter as vaccines began to slowly roll out for select segments of the population.

The vaccine brought with it a beacon of hope in a year-long crisis that has disrupted everyday life, infected over 100 million people across the globe and killed more than 420,000 Americans. The vaccine also came coupled with a lofty logistical challenge as states attempt to administer the vaccine quickly and equitably.

By Jan. 21, exactly one year after the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention confirmed the first case of COVID-19 in America, all of those in Phase 1 of Massachusetts' vaccination strategy became eligible for the shot.

The state has been formally preparing for this moment since October when it established the COVID-19 Vaccine Advisory Group. The group developed a timeline, which offers a rough estimate of who should receive the vaccine first based on who is most vulnerable and how to best maintain the health care system as a whole.

In December, the Food and Drug Administration authorized the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines for emergency use. Both vaccines require two shots,



On Jan. 26, New Bedford hosted a vaccine clinic at the Andrea McCoy Recreation Center for those who became eligible during Phase 1. Juliette Holt, New Bedford's public health nurse supervisor, administers Moderna's COVID-19 vaccine into the arm of Diane Mendes, a supportive living coordinator from Coastline.

administered 21 days and 28 days apart respectively.

At the top of the priority list were frontline health care workers, approximately 2,900 of whom died in 2020, according to an analysis by Kaiser Health News and The Guardian. Around Christmastime, the vaccine became available to residents and staff of long-term care and assisted living facilities.

Annabella Dougherty, director of Coastline's Nursing Home Ombudsman Program, advocates

for those living in 16 area nursing homes and two local rest homes. Nursing homes have been especially impacted throughout the pandemic, and nearly all the concerns she has fielded in recent months have been COVID-related.

"We're still here to advocate for the residents and their families," Dougherty said. "If they have any concerns, don't be afraid to reach out. We can resolve issues over the phone."

Continued on page 7

PIT Count Proceeds Amid Pandemic

With a pandemic still raging, New Bedford's Homeless Service Providers Network started conducting the Point-in-Time Count on Jan. 26.

The PIT Count, which happened throughout the nation at the end of January, helps communities secure funding to address homelessness from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The count collects data on homeless individuals who are both "sheltered" (which includes emergency shelters and transitional housing) and "unsheltered" (those living in a place not intended for human habitation, such as a car, outdoors or in a public building).

Jennifer Clarke, the deputy director of community development

for New Bedford, said COVID has impacted the way data is typically collected, especially in larger

conduct the count across multiple days rather than one night.

New Bedford's count was conducted by a small outreach team from Steppingstone Incorporated rather than the dozens of volunteers who usually assist in the endeavor. The resource fair that coincides with the count was also canceled on account of COVID.

Last year, 398 homeless people were counted in New Bedford, 48 of whom were living on the streets. The remaining 350 people were either living in emergency shelters or in transitional

housing programs. According to data collected from the past decade, there has been a relatively stable number of homeless individuals

Continued on page 12



A group at Steppingstone Inc. fills plastic bags with toiletries, which will be handed out as part of the Point-in-Time Count.

communities.

Without being able to rely on volunteers, some communities may struggle to cover their geographical area. But HUD has facilitated waivers, allowing communities to

Mayor Jon Mitchell Tested Positive for COVID-19, Recovers

In a Facebook post published on Jan. 12, New Bedford Mayor Jon Mitchell announced that he tested positive for COVID-19. His wife, children and staffers had tested negative, he said.

"After experiencing mild symptoms this weekend, I was tested for COVID-19 yesterday, and the result was positive," the mayor wrote at the time.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, anyone who experiences mild to moderate symptoms remains infectious for up to 10 days after the onset of symptoms. The mayor said he would continue to work remotely and did not foresee any interruption to services in the city.

He wrote that while he has limited his time spent around others in the past 10 months, he had attended a wake and a Sunday mass and visited a "large store" within the week of his positive test. He said other people occupying those spaces wore masks and observed social distancing, and it was unclear whether or not he was infected in any of those locations.

Throughout the pandemic, the virus has infected citizens and elected officials alike. Not

even world leaders have been immune. U.S. President Donald Trump, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, French President Emmanuel Macron and Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro have all had COVID-19 and recovered. In late January, Mexican President López Obrador announced that he, too, had tested positive.

On Jan. 20, the mayor returned to Facebook with an update. He said he had only experienced mild symptoms and his work continued. He thanked the community for the outpouring of well wishes he received.

"Right now, our primary goal must be to keep the most vulnerable safe so that they may have the opportunity to be vaccinated," he wrote on Facebook. "As the vaccinations of the most vulnerable have already begun, it is critical that we maintain our collective focus in the next several weeks. The simple practices of mask wearing and social distancing, if done faithfully by everyone, will reduce the possibility that the elderly and those with underlying health conditions will become sick. Let's do everything we can to avoid further loss by seeing our effort through."

Letter from the Editor

This was a particularly hard issue to send off to the printer when it was due on Jan. 28 because there was a flurry of news from the state right before deadline. Governor Baker had just announced that the state's vaccination plan was scheduled to enter Phase 2 on Feb. 1, and the exact logistics of how our local communities would adapt to that news was still developing.

The front page story this month follows Phase 1, which began back in December and has helped vaccinate some of our most at-risk populations. On page 7, there's a separate story about Phase 2.

In all that I read and heard regarding this next step in the vaccination rollout, perhaps the most helpful thing I saw was in a release from the Executive Office of Elder Affairs. The EOEIA sent out a three-page memo directed toward residents age 75 and above. In that document, it noted that this process is going to take time.

"Because vaccine supply is limited, you may need to wait several weeks to schedule an appointment," the memo stated.

While that's not easy news to deliver, I do think it's worth underscoring. The nation's vaccination effort is complex, and as more segments of the population

are becoming eligible for the vaccine, there have been supply and distribution problems. Governor Baker said more vaccination sites will be added in the weeks ahead, and the federal government is hoping to ramp up production.

Regardless, this phase in the pandemic will take some extra patience.

If you have access to the internet, I would highly recommend checking out mass.gov/covidvaccine for all the latest information. The website is updated and clarified frequently.

If you are not an internet user, you can reach out to your local council on aging, your local health department, your doctor's office or Coastline for information.

While Phase 2 begins at the beginning of February, the vaccine won't become available for the general public until April at the earliest. Moreover, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is not yet able to estimate when it will stop recommending that people wear masks and practice social distancing. It remains up to us to stay vigilant about protecting one another until the vaccine becomes more widely available.

Best,
 , Editor



Coastline
508-999-6400

Mass Options 844-422-6277
massoptions.org 844-422-MASS



SHINE Counselors in the Greater New Bedford Area

Acushnet Council on Aging 59 1/2 South Main St., Acushnet	508-998-0280	Patricia Midurski Heather Sylvia
Dartmouth Council on Aging 628 Dartmouth St., Dartmouth	508-999-4717	Peggy Vollmer Jane Jacobsen Ann Raymond
Fairhaven Council on Aging 229 Huttleston Ave, Fairhaven	508-979-4029	Dianne Perkins Carolyn Dantoni Freda St. Marie-Johnson
GNB Community Health Center 874 Purchase Street, New Bedford	508-992-6553 x147	Derek Mendes
Immigrants' Assistance Center 58 Crapo St., New Bedford	508-996-8113	Lucy Oliveira
Marion Council on Aging 465 Mill Street, Marion	508-748-3570	Connie Heacox
Mattapoisett Council on Aging 17 Barstow Street, Mattapoisett	508-758-4110	Connie Heacox
New Bedford Council on Aging 181 Hillman St. (for New Bedford residents only)	508-991-6250 508-991-6252	Natasha Franco Luisana Paez-Espinal
PACE, Inc. 166 William St., New Bedford	508-999-9920	Ginny DeSilva Linda Pavao Freda St. Marie-Johnson
Rochester Council on Aging 57 Dexter Lane, Rochester	508-763-8723	Jan Cote
Southcoast Health 200 Mill Road, Suite 109, Fairhaven	508-758-3781	Denise Dupuis Carla Marcelino Sandra Spoor

Senior Scope



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Justin Lees, CEO Coastline
Seth Thomas, Editor
Ann McCrillis, Managing Editor
Philip Beard, Distribution

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To our readers: We are able to publish the Senior Scope newspaper through the support of grant funders, such as the Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs, our advertisers and donors. As the publisher, Coastline is not responsible for the content of third party advertising.

Donations for February 2021

Our donors help *Senior Scope* carry out its mission, and we cannot thank you enough for your support. Voluntary donations can be mailed to Coastline, 1646 Purchase St., New Bedford, MA 02740. Checks can be paid to the order of: *Coastline*. We cannot process checks made out to "Senior Scope." You can also call Coastline's Accounting Clerk, Michelle Walton, to donate directly with a credit card. She can be reached at 508-742-9114.

In Thanks:

This donation is for Irene & Phil Lavoie, my role models in life!
Thanks for ALL you do! Happy Valentine's Day! Love you lots.
— Terry, Mike & kids. xo
\$40

In thanks - general donation.

— Anonymous
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For Prayers Answered:

Thank you, Sacred Heart of Jesus and St. Jude.

— Anonymous
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Thank you, Sacred Heart of Jesus and St. Jude.

— Anonymous
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This month: \$78
Year-to-Date: \$98

To: Coastline, 1646 Purchase St., New Bedford, MA 02740
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State Awards \$8.6 Million to Communities for Transportation

On Jan. 7, the Baker-Polito Administration announced a total of \$8.6 million for cities, towns and nonprofit organizations to use under the Community Transit Grant Program, administered by the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT).

The Community Transit Grant Program awards funds for the purchase of vehicles, mobility management activities, and operating costs to meet the transportation and mobility needs of seniors and people with disabilities.

Throughout the state, 30 organizations will be awarded funding for 113 vans and minibuses. Twenty-one agencies received funding for operating and mobility management projects. Regional Transit Authorities, municipalities, councils on aging and nonprofit organizations were among those awarded.

“Community Transit Grants provide critical funding to local organizations to purchase equipment to help people get where they need to go efficiently and safely,” said Governor Charlie Baker. “Our Administration will continue to make efforts to work with local leaders, community stakeholders and the private sector to make transit accessible to everyone.”

Five vehicles will be coming to the South Coast through the grant. The City of New Bedford



Volunteer Linda Perkins, steps off a Rochester COA van to deliver a holiday meal on Dec. 18

will receive two vehicles, and the Mattapoissett Council on Aging and Towns of Fairhaven and Rochester will each receive one vehicle through the grant.

Rep. William M. Straus, who chairs the Joint Committee on Transportation, said he was pleased that additional vans would be coming to the community, especially because they serve a vital function at the councils on aging.

“The COA vans have become a necessity for the COA, and the vans are relied upon heavily to provide transportation for our seniors to physician appointments, supermarkets, COA-sponsored events and more,” said Straus.

While transportation services have remained limited throughout the pandemic, the South Coast councils on aging are still utilizing their fleets for a myriad of services, including food distribution efforts.

Get Your Social Security Benefit Statement

By Delia De Mello
Social Security



Delia De Mello, Social Security

Tax season is approaching, and replacing your annual Benefit Statement has never been easier. The Benefit Statement, also known as the SSA-1099 or the SSA-1042S, is a tax form we mail each year in January to people who receive Social Security benefits. It shows the total amount of benefits you received from us in the previous year so you know how much Social Security income to report to the Internal Revenue Service on your tax return.

If you live in the United States and you need a replacement form SSA-1099 or SSA-1042S, simply go online and get an instant, printable replacement form using your personal my Social Security account at www.ssa.gov/myaccount. A replacement SSA-1099 or SSA-1042S is available for the previous tax year after Feb. 1.

If you don't have access to a printer, you can save the document to your computer or email it to yourself. If you don't have a my Social Security account, creating one is very easy to do and usually takes less than 10 minutes.

With a personal my Social Security account, you can do much of your business with us online.

If you receive benefits or have Medicare, your personal my Social Security account is also the best way to:

- Request a replacement Social Security number card (in most states and the District of Columbia).
- Get your benefit verification letter.

- Check your benefit and payment information.
- Change your address and phone number.
- Change your direct deposit information.
- Request a replacement Medicare card.
- Report your wages if you work and receive Social Security disability insurance or Supplemental Security Income benefits.
- If you're a non-citizen who lives outside of the United States and you received or repaid Social Security benefits last year, we will send you form SSA-1042S in the mail. The forms SSA-1099 and SSA-1042S are not available for people who receive Supplemental Security Income benefits.

Visit www.ssa.gov to find more about our online services. For other questions, call the SSA office in New Bedford at 866-964-7413.

Why serve?

Enrich your life by helping others. When you serve with AmeriCorps Seniors, you join a network of people and organizations dedicated to strengthening the South Coast.



Funding is provided by AmeriCorps and the Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs.

Be a part of something bigger



Foster Grandparents are role models and friends to children with exceptional needs. The program provides a way for volunteers age 55 and over to stay active by serving youth in their communities.

Receive benefits for your service



Foster Grandparent Program volunteers receive a small tax-free stipend for their time and commitment, while benefiting from the impact they make in a child's life on a daily basis.

Contact Coastline for more info



Learn more on Coastline's website at coastlinenb.org. Contact FGP Director Jacqueline Medeiros at **508-742-9198** or via email at jmedeiros@coastlinenb.org.



AmeriCorps Seniors



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Update

Tri-Town Fuel Assistance

The George E. Curtis Charitable Trust is a fund administered by Coastline to help older adults living in Marion, Mattapoisett and Rochester who are having difficulty paying for fuel or electric services. Applicants must be age 60 or over and in financial need. It is a one-time payment and can be used for oil, gas, electric, propane or other fuels. Call your local Council on Aging for more information.

LGBTQ Film Series Returns

The New Bedford LGBTQ Winter Film Series will return this year as a virtual event, featuring film discussions on Zoom. You can follow updates on the film series by visiting the film series' Facebook page at: facebook.com/nblgbtqfilmseries. The films in this year's series include: "Love Simon" on Feb. 14, "Brother to Brother" on Feb. 28, and "Tucked" on March 14.

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: Feb. 8, 10 a.m. to noon at GNBCHC, 399 Acushnet Ave., New Bedford, MA 02740.

The 2021 dates are as follows: March 8, April 12, May 10, June 14, July 12, Aug. 9 and Sept. 13.

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.

The Community Health Center has put out a call for volunteers who can help bag items for contact-free pickup. Volunteers can work from 9 a.m. to noon or just an hour to help out. To volunteer, call Joyce Dupont.

'Grandparents Raising Grandchildren' Update

Due to the increase in COVID-19 cases in the Greater New Bedford region, Grandparents Raising Grandchildren will be offering services over the telephone only. To make an appointment, please call Brenda Grace at 508-996-0168. Her days off are Tuesdays and Wednesdays. You can also call after 5 p.m. on work days.

The group also depends on donations for its annual scholarship program benefitting the grandchildren of program participants. Checks can be made out to Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Inc., and mailed to 119 Parker St., New Bedford, MA 02740. Grandparents Raising Grandchildren is partly funded by Coastline and the Executive Office of Elder Affairs.

Town of Rochester Seeks COA Director

The Town of Rochester is seeking qualified applicants for a full-time Director for its Council on Aging. For a full list of duties for this position, please refer to the Town website at: townofrochester.com. This is a full-time (40 hours/week) position.

To apply, send a cover letter, resume, and list of three references, no later than March 31, 2021. All materials should be emailed, preferably in one file, to this address: COASelectionComm@townofrochester.com

Deadline for applications: March 31, 2021. The Town of Rochester is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

New Bedford Winter Farmers Market

The New Bedford Winter Farmers Market will be held at the Buttonwood Park Warming House on Saturdays through April 24. The market will operate from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The farmers market accepts SNAP/HIP/EBT.

You can shop for local products online through Coastal Foodshed's Virtual Market from Saturday at 8 a.m. to Monday at midnight. Deliveries occur on Wednesday from noon to 5 p.m. Credit/Debit accepted for online purchase only. SNAP/EBT/HIP accepted for pre-order online only; payments upon pickup. Pick-up happens on Wednesdays from 2 to 5 p.m. at Coastal Foodshed's Food Hub, 38 Blackmer St, New Bedford. Delivery Area: Acushnet, Dartmouth, Fairhaven, Marion, Mattapoisett, New Bedford, Rochester. More info at: coastalfoodshed.org.

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.

'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 on Mondays from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. Participants can access the classes using Zoom or over the phone. For more info, 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.

Mass Senior Action Meeting Schedule

Looking to get more active in local and statewide senior issues? Mass Senior Action wants you! Massachusetts Senior Action Council (MSAC) is a statewide, grassroots, senior-led organization that empowers its members to use their own voices to address key public policy and community issues that affect their health and well-being.

MSAC's Bristol County chapter holds monthly Zoom meetings on the fourth Thursday of every month at 1 p.m. Upcoming meetings include will be held on Feb. 25 and March 25. MSAC is currently working on expanding the Medicare Savings Program, SNAP benefits, transportation, long term care and many other issues. If you are interested in joining one of MSAC's meetings, contact Bristol County organizer Zach Boyer at 508-858-8167 or e-mail at zboyer@MassSeniorAction.org. Visit MSAC online at MassSeniorAction.org.

Common Ground

For the next three years, the New Bedford Whaling Museum will be collecting and sharing the stories of the Greater New Bedford community. Stories collected might be shared by the Common Ground project and could end up in the final exhibition planned for 2022. Email your written story to: stories@whalingmuseum.org.

The R.U.O.K. Program

The R.U.O.K. Program is a free telephone calling service provided by the Bristol County Sheriff's Office in cooperation with the local Police Department and Council on Aging. It is designed for older adults and people with disabilities living in Bristol County.

How it works: The Bristol County Sheriff's Department will make a telephone call to an individual's home at approximately the same time each day. If no one answers, the Sheriff's Department will call back shortly. If no one answers the second time, their First Responder will be called immediately to check on their status.

The RUOK Program provides peace of mind for both the individual and their family. There is no equipment to purchase, and no special codes to remember. To enroll in the program, call 508-994-8932 or 888-809-8932. This program serves communities in Bristol County, including Acushnet, Dartmouth, Fairhaven and New Bedford.

Help and Hope SC

Help and Hope South Coast offers daily resources to address mental health issues during the pandemic. Visit them online at: www.helphopesouthcoast.com.

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Do you need a profession that provides a good working environment with a great work-life balance and allows you to make a difference?

If so, visit:
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for employment opportunities.



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Now Accepting Applications. Overlooking New Bedford Harbor and Buzzards Bay, Olympia Tower is now accepting applications for 1 & 2 bedroom apartments. Specially designed for people 62 years old and over and for handicapped or disabled persons who are 18 years old and over. Enjoy the convenient downtown location and feel secure in the friendly atmosphere. Rent based on 30% of adjusted income. Income requirements, please call for info.



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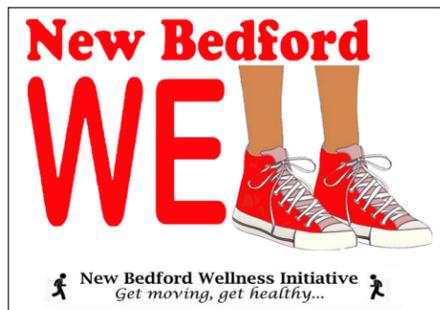


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Your Health

Heart Month is More Than Just Diet and Exercise



By Dr. Michael Rocha
New Bedford Wellness Initiative

Many years ago, Dr. Bernard Lown taught me the most important part of being a cardiologist are the relationships.

Yes, the science is exciting. So many lives have been saved, extended, and bettered thanks to medical advances over the years. Some of them, like the cardiac care units, are attributable to Dr. Lown himself!

Cardiologists should make use of that technology when their patients would benefit, but they also need to look to each patient as an individual. There's more to caring for the heart than medicine.

Meaningful patient relationships and listening are the most sacred tools in medicine. Words have power. They can even be healing. It's about being present and supporting each other. The best prescription is not always one we fill at the pharmacy.

Sometimes it's a large dose of reassurance and suggestions to better navigate our daily lives.

The importance of listening, real listening, doesn't just stop with our doctor-patient relationships. In 2021 we need to practice better person-to-person listening with everyone we meet, paving a road of understanding.

Modern medicine focuses so much time and money in taking care of disease, it often forgets how much more powerful it can be to prevent those diseases in the first place. Not everything is preventable, but doctors who take the time to get to know their patients can make a difference. They can help them live healthier lives and improve their well-being. One of the greatest joys of being a physician is when someone makes a

change such as walking more, eating healthier, reducing stress, improving personal relationships, or stopping smoking. We all celebrate together in these successes. We keep working with hope and concern for those that are struggling to make these changes.

Dr. Lown challenged us in New Bedford to build a larger movement. To find more people that are committed to creating a well community. The New Bedford Wellness Initiative instructors have answered that call during this pandemic and our community has responded in kind.



Dr. Michael Rocha



Dr. Bernard Lown, a Nobel Peace Prize winner, helped advance the field of cardiology.

We have reached other parts of the country and world with our programs in the last year as we have adapted to a physically distanced yet virtually connected world.

In-person 'Walk with a Doc' has been happening again since July at Buttonwood Park. Pandemic restrictions did not allow us to transition indoors with mall walking, but everyone voted to continue to walk outdoors during the remainder of the winter. This shows commitment, strength and community.

The most important lesson Dr. Lown teaches is compassion. You don't need to be a doctor to administer it, and it cures our all too

common diseases of disconnection and loneliness.

This year during Heart Month, please commit to something good for your heart -- both your physical heart and your emotional heart. Move more, eat healthier, but also take time for kindness and gratitude. We all need healing in these unprecedented times. This is the message for Heart Month 2021. We welcome others with open arms and open hearts to join us in this Heart Movement.

Dr. Michael Rocha is the Director of Heart Failure Services at St. Luke's Hospital and Director of the Echocardiography Laboratory at Hawthorn Medical Associates. He is the director of the New Bedford Wellness Initiative and one of the local physicians who leads the 'Walk with a Doc' program.

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 'Walk with a Doc' program, in which a local physician leads a group for a walk, has been meeting at Buttonwood Park at 9 a.m. on Saturdays. Masks and physical distancing are required.

Simple Stretches for the Spine

By Cam Bergeron, CSCS
Cam's Conditioning & Rehab

What is one thing that basically everyone experiences at some point in their life? Lower back pain, most of which comes from a misalignment of the spine.

Each vertebrae has a disc in between. This disc acts as a shock absorber and prevents the spine from being bone-on-bone. When a disc is moved out of place, it rubs against nerves and misaligns the spine. This misalignment is a lot more drastic than just a tight muscle causing misalignment.

A tight muscle can relax itself over time, but everyday activities tighten muscles within the body. Fortunately, stretching the lower body daily can help keep the body aligned and the muscles loose.

Below are a few exercises and stretches that can help most lower back problems. These exercises can be performed on the floor, bed or any flat surface. A firmer surface is preferred.

Pelvic Tilt & Bridge: Lay on your back, knees bent, feet flat. Perform a pelvic tilt by pushing your belly button down, so your lower back flattens to the ground. Hold that pelvic tilt, breath out and lift hips up as high as you can. Squeeze the glutes (butt). Slowly decelerate back down to the surface. Repeat and complete 15 repetitions.

Knees Left to Right: Lay on your back, knees bent, feet flat, and legs together. Arms out like a T, palms down. Begin by rotating knees to the left. Your right leg will be stacked on top of left leg. Keep rotating to the left until a stretch occurs in the lower back, right side, right leg, or right arm. Only rotate as much as you can to the left; the right should stay on the ground. Once a mild stretch is reached, then slowly rotate to the right. Perform 12 reps each side and hold the last repetition on each side for 30 seconds.

Hamstring Stretch: Lay on your back with a strap, belt towel, etc. Place the strap around the ball of your foot and lie completely flat. Using the strap, pull the leg up with a slight bend in the knee until a stretch occurs in the hamstring, butt, or lower back. Hold at mild discomfort for 30 seconds and switch sides. Perform two sets on each side.

Ankle on Knee Stretch: Lay on your back, knees bent, feet flat. Place your right ankle onto your left knee. Grab your left leg and pull it toward your chest. You will reach a point where you feel stretching in the right leg, hip, or lower back. Hold at mild discomfort for 30 seconds and switch sides. Perform two sets on each side.

MCB's New Bedford Office Closes, Services Continue

The Massachusetts Commission for the Blind has closed its New Bedford and Worcester offices effective Jan. 1, though services will continue as normal. MCB's New Bedford office was located at 888 Purchase St., inside the Olympia Building. The decision to close two of its four locations was brought on by the pandemic.

Back in March 2020, MCB started to provide services virtually. The MCB said that most services are provided in the community, either at homes, schools or group facilities. Without a pressing need to maintain a formal office space, and with telework policies already in place, MCB opted to close the New Bedford and Worcester offices. MCB said about 25 employees worked at the New Bedford and Worcester offices. There were no layoffs as part of this decision.

The other two offices, located in Boston and Springfield, will remain open.

"Our team at the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind proved that COVID can't and won't stop the services that we provide for individuals who are blind and visually impaired across the state," MCB Commissioner David D'Arcangelo wrote in a statement provided to *Senior Scope*. "While modifications were necessary due to the pandemic, our team rose to the



challenge to successfully telework and provide services remotely."

Moving forward, MCB will continue to provide services and programs, and that includes visits with consumers in Worcester, New Bedford and across the state.

The MCB helps people who are legally blind access employment opportunities and resources that can help increase independence and self-determination.

The Massachusetts Commission for the Blind can be reached at 1-800-392-6450 or 617-727-5550. You can find more information online at: mass.gov/mcb. MCB can be reached via email at: MCBinfo@mass.gov.

The Massachusetts Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired can also be reached at 888-613-2777.

Coping with Stress and Fear from COVID-19

Take care of your body. Eat healthy, well-balanced meals. Exercise regularly. Get plenty of sleep. Take deep breaths, stretch or meditate.

Virtually connect with others. Talk with people you trust about your concerns and how you are feeling.

Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories,

including social media.

Make time to unwind. Try to do some other activities you enjoy. Make the best of your time at home by teleworking if you're able or catching up on reading, exercising or other hobbies.

Focus on healthy eating and regular exercise to control stress and stay healthy. Eat healthy foods when you can, like fruits, vegetables

and lean proteins. Find ways to exercise safely at home. If you go outside, follow social distancing guidelines and wear a mask or cloth face cover.

Control stress. Take breaks from the news, try deep breathing exercises, or do an activity that you enjoy.

Take everyday actions to prevent the spread of germs.

Clean your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Cover your cough/sneeze. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.

Help is available: Visit [Mass.gov/COVID19](https://www.mass.gov/COVID19) or call 2-1-1. Call Coastline at 508-999-6400.

[From the Massachusetts Department of Public Health]

Enfrentar el estrés y el temor causados por COVID-19

Cuide su cuerpo. Comidas saludables y balanceadas. Haga ejercicio con regularidad. Duerma lo suficiente. Respire profundo, estire el cuerpo o medite.

Conéctese con los demás virtualmente. Hable con personas de confianza acerca de sus preocupaciones y sus sentimientos.

Tome descansos de ver, leer o escuchar noticias, incluyendo en redes sociales.

Dedique tiempo a diario para relajarse. Intente hacer otras actividades que disfrute. Aproveche al máximo su tiempo en casa, trabaje desde el hogar, si puede. Lea un libro, haga ejercicio o disfrute de su pasatiempo favorito.

Enfóquese en la alimentación saludable y en el ejercicio regular para controlar el estrés y mantenerse sano. Coma alimentos saludables siempre que pueda, como frutas, vegetales y

proteínas sin grasa. Encuentre formas de hacer ejercicio de manera segura dentro de su hogar. Si usted sale, respete el distanciamiento social y utilice una mascarilla o una cubierta de tela para la cara.

Controle el estrés. Tome descansos de las noticias, intente hacer ejercicios de respiración profunda o realice alguna actividad que usted disfrute.

Tome precauciones todos los

días para evitar la propagación de gérmenes. Lave sus manos frecuentemente con agua y jabón por al menos 20 segundos, o use un desinfectante de manos a base de alcohol que contenga como mínimo 60% de alcohol. Cúbrase la boca al toser o estornudar. Evite tocarse los ojos, la nariz y la boca.

Hay ayuda disponible: Visite [Mass.gov/COVID19](https://www.mass.gov/COVID19) o llame al 2-1-1.

Como lidar com o estresse e medo da COVID-19

Cuide de seu corpo. Faça refeições saudáveis e balanceadas. Exercite-se regularmente. Durma bastante. Respire fundo, faça alongamento ou medite.

Mantenha conexões virtuais com outras pessoas. Converse com as pessoas em quem você confia sobre suas preocupações e sobre como está se sentindo.

Dê um tempo e pare de assistir, ler ou escutar as notícias da imprensa o tempo todo, incluindo as da mídia.

Reserve um tempo para relaxar. Experimente fazer outras atividades que você gosta. Aproveite da melhor maneira possível o seu tempo em casa, trabalhando de casa, se puder, botando a sua leitura em dia, exercitando-se ou dedicando-se aos seus hobbies.

Concentre-se em alimentação saudável e exercícios regulares para controlar o estresse e permanecer com saúde. Coma alimentos saudáveis quando puder, como frutas, legumes

e alimentos ricos em proteínas magras. Encontre maneiras de fazer exercícios em casa com segurança. Se tiver que sair, siga as diretrizes de distanciamento social e use uma máscara ou outra cobertura de rosto feita de pano.

Controle o estresse. Não fique grudado nas notícias o tempo todo, experimente fazer exercícios de respiração profunda ou dedique-se a alguma outra atividade que você gosta de fazer.

Tome precauções todos os dias para prevenir a disseminação dos germes. Lave as mãos frequentemente com água e sabão por no mínimo 20 segundos, ou use um álcool gel higienizador com pelo menos 60% de álcool. Cubra o nariz e a boca ao espirrar ou tossir. Evite tocar seus olhos, nariz e boca.

Se precisar de ajuda: Acesse [Mass.gov/COVID19](https://www.mass.gov/COVID19) ou ligue para 2-1-1



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UnitedHealthcare SCO 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 SCO program.

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Phase 1 continued...

While Dougherty and her team of seven volunteers have been able to consult with residents via video conferencing apps like Skype and FaceTime, she's looking forward to interacting with people directly. Jen Davis, the administrator of Sacred Heart Skilled Nursing & Rehabilitative Care in New Bedford, said that she, too, is looking forward to restrictions loosening.

"We very much see [the vaccine] as the biggest and best move in the right direction that we've seen in quite a while," said Davis.

Through a federal vaccination program, nursing homes like Sacred Heart partnered with either CVS or Walgreens. Davis said that CVS managed two clinics at Sacred Heart thus far, with a third and final clinic on the way in February. The vaccine was delivered directly to residents who wanted them in their rooms and at a clinic for staff.

Moving forward, her biggest concern is "separating fact from fiction" regarding the vaccine.

"We need to get people to understand that this was a scientifically driven process, that it's safe, and that it's worth doing in the long run to protect yourself and your family...and our residents," Davis said. "I would encourage anyone that's able to please get the vaccine and to support health care workers because we're all still working very hard."



Stephanie Sloan, Assistant Director of the New Bedford Health Department (left) and Rhonda Mcloughlin, a volunteer with Emergency Management (right), check people in at the Andrea McCoy Recreation Center, which was converted into a vaccination site during Phase 1 of the vaccination rollout. About 80 people were vaccinated on Jan. 26.

First responders became eligible for vaccination in mid-January, followed by those in congregate care programs, emergency shelters and prisons, which included prison staff.

On Jan. 26, New Bedford's Andrea McCoy Recreation Center transformed into a makeshift medical center with partition walls dividing the basketball court into separate rooms. There was a waiting room off to one side, a section in the center of the court to administer shots and an observation area toward the back where those who were vaccinated were monitored for 15 minutes to ensure they didn't have an adverse reaction to the vaccine.

It was a trial run of sorts for the city. Earlier in January, small groups of first responders were vaccinated at the New Bedford Health Department. The spacious recreation center enabled the operation to scale up. New Bedford Health Director Damon Chaplin said once the process is streamlined, they could vaccinate upwards of 60 people an hour at the center.

As the state progresses through Phase 2, Chaplin said the city is planning to assemble a mobile vaccine team that can bring a condensed version of the clinic directly to elderly housing and to low-income populations throughout the city.

"The mobile team will be a

combination of the New Bedford Health Department and EMS," said Chaplin. "We'll coordinate with the property managers, evaluate their available space and set up a clinic in the buildings."

"For our elders, we're going to go to them as best we can. But this facility will be available to those who can get here," he said, referring to the recreation center.

As local governments work out the details of their vaccination strategy in early February, Chaplin recommends contacting your local health department or council on aging with questions about the rollout. (For a closer look at Phase 2, see the separate article below.)

Chaplin plans to record a presentation with New Bedford Cable Access to provide an overview of Phase 2 and discuss the facts about the vaccine.

"My job is to not trick anyone into doing anything," he said. "My job is to provide each individual with as much information as I can so that they can make sound decisions for themselves and their families."

Juliette Holt, New Bedford's public health nurse supervisor said the vaccine is the Health Department's top priority.

"We're getting a lot of calls, and unfortunately sometimes we can't give a definitive answer because we're working day-to-day," said Holt. "But we're gearing up for Phase 2. Everybody will get vaccinated...it just takes time."

State's Vaccine Rollout Enters Phase 2 Starting Feb. 1

Massachusetts began its vaccination rollout strategy by prioritizing those most at risk for catching the virus and by doing its best to support the overburdened health care system. With Phase 1 of the vaccination rollout underway, the state is turning its focus to the next step.

During a press conference on Jan. 25, the Baker-Polito administration announced that Phase 2 would begin on Feb. 1. At the time, the number of new COVID cases and hospitalizations started to decline after a surge brought on by the holiday season.

Baker said that by mid-February, the state plans to have 165 publicly available vaccination sites open throughout the state with the capacity to administer 305,000 vaccines a week, but how many vaccines will actually be administered at these sites "will depend on several variables, including the availability of doses from the federal government."

The state's website features a map of the state with all available vaccination sites, which enables those who are eligible to make an appointment at any given location. The website will be regularly updated as new locations become available.

The state is also in the process of opening seven mass vaccination sites, which includes Gillette Stadium and Fenway Park. By Feb. 15, the state intends to open 71 more retail pharmacy locations.

During the Jan. 25 press

Phase 2 • Feb-March

Listed in order of priority

- Individuals age 75+
- Individuals age 65+, people with 2+ comorbidities
- Other workers, including K-12, restaurant, retail, transit, and grocery workers
- Individuals with one comorbidity

More information is available at mass.gov/covidvaccine. You can also call 2-1-1 to access the state's non-emergency help line. [Graphic adapted from Mass.gov.]

conference, Baker announced that those age 65 and above would be moved up the priority list to become second in line.

About two weeks prior, the CDC had urged states to vaccinate everyone age 65 and over. By that point many states had already moved forward with their own vaccination plans, which prioritized other groups, like health care workers and people living in congregate settings.

That plan was revised, and the priority list is as follows:

- Individuals age 75+
- Individuals age 65+, individuals with 2+ comorbidities (which includes conditions like COPD,

cancer, chronic kidney disease, heart conditions, obesity, pregnancy, type-2 diabetes)

- Other workers in select industries
- Individuals with one comorbid condition

How will you know if it's your turn to receive the vaccine?

According to the state's website, during Phase 2, people will be vaccinated either by their employer, their primary care physician, or at their local pharmacy or clinic. People who have comorbidities will be contacted by "treating clinicians, health insurers (including MassHealth), and patient advocacy groups...to encourage them to

receive COVID-19 vaccination."

How do you sign up for a vaccination appointment? The state's website features a map of vaccination sites. When you click on one of those sites, a menu with additional information, including a link to schedule an appointment, should pop up. More information on how to get assistance scheduling an appointment will be available as local governments work out the details of distribution. You can call your local council on aging, your local health department, your doctor's office or Coastline for info.

The Executive Office of Elder Affairs cautions that "it may take several weeks to get an appointment at a location near you. As more vaccine supply arrives in Massachusetts, additional appointments will become available."

Should I get the vaccine? While the vaccination is not mandatory, it can help protect you and the people around you. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, experts believe the COVID-19 vaccine may prevent you from becoming seriously ill even if you contract COVID-19.

Where do I go for updates?

Visit mass.gov/covidvaccine or call 2-1-1. If you are not an internet user, you can reach out to your local council on aging, your local health department, your doctor's office or Coastline for information. Contact info for each town's health department has been added to the "Councils on Aging" section on pages 10 & 11 of *Senior Scope*.

Rental Assistance During the COVID-19 Pandemic

By Andrew Bardetti, Esq. & Juliana Madden
South Coastal Counties Legal Services

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, it has become more difficult for many tenants to pay their monthly rent. The Pew Research Center published a study reporting that one in four Americans are finding it harder to pay bills due to COVID-19. If you are in need of assistance, the following resources may be able to help you.

Residential Assistance for Families in Transition (RAFT) and Emergency Rental and Mortgage Assistance (ERMA) function as homelessness prevention programs.

For all kinds of households at risk of homelessness during the COVID-19 state of emergency, RAFT provides up to \$10,000 during a one-year period. This assistance is not limited to families with children. RAFT can help with: past and future rent, utility bills, security deposits, moving costs and other housing necessities.

ERMA is similar to RAFT, but has different financial eligibility guidelines. ERMA also provides up to \$10,000 in financial assistance to families and individuals having trouble making housing payments during the COVID-19 state of emergency.

ERMA only helps with rent or mortgage arrears and stipends. Unlike RAFT, ERMA does not assist with moving costs or utility arrears. Bristol County applicants can apply for RAFT and ERMA through the NeighborWorks Housing Solutions website, nhs.mass.org/apply-for-raft or by phone at 781-422-4204.

In addition to RAFT/ERMA, there may be other rental assistance options available to you. Catholic Social Services is a local nonprofit that can provide financial assistance to eligible people in need.

To access Catholic Social Services' rental assistance options, applicants must be faced with eviction and have been served with a 14 day or 30 day Notice to Quit for nonpayment of rent due to COVID-19.

If the eviction was not COVID-19 related, applicants must have been served with a Notice to Quit. To find out if you are eligible, applicants can call the New Bedford Coordinator at 508-999-4757 or the Fall River Coordinator at 774-520-2555. More information can be found at their website, cssdioc.org.

Another local agency which provides help to people with housing issues is People Acting in Community Endeavors, or "PACE." The Housing Opportunity Center at PACE provides limited rental assistance for those individuals and families that are homeless or at risk of homelessness. The program also provides referrals to resources and provides housing search lists for people seeking permanent housing. To apply, call PACE's Housing Opportunity Center at 508-993-0033.

Recently, the Center for Disease Control Prevention (CDC) moratorium on evictions was extended to March 31, 2021, meaning that there is a pause on nonpayment evictions.

To be protected by the moratorium, tenants need to have signed the CDC declaration form and provided a copy to their landlord. Essentially, the form provides protection to people who have fallen behind on rent due to a loss of income or extraordinary medical expense; have applied for governmental assistance; would be homeless or doubled-up if evicted; and who have used best efforts to make rental payments.

Since the form is signed under the pains and penalties of perjury, make sure you read it carefully to make sure all of it applies to you before signing. To fill out or review the declaration, applicants can go to this link: cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/declaration-form.pdf.

To learn more about the Massachusetts COVID Eviction Legal Help Project (CELHP) and your rights, visit: evictionlegalthelp.org.

If you are experiencing homelessness, New Bedford's Coordinated Entry System provides rapid shelter entry and rehousing options. To learn more, you can call 508-999-4757 or go to their website: nbhspn.com/1-800-homeless-is-coordinated-entry.

Additionally, at this time, some homeless shelters in the area have decided to allow constituents to directly call them for services instead of going through New Bedford Coordinated Entry System. Two local homeless shelters that can be contacted directly are Sister Rose's House at 508-997-3202 and Grace House at 774-628-9743.

A helpful website provides a number of social services programs in the area, including rental assistance. To check out the website, go to: nbrenthelp.com.

Finally, South Coastal Counties Legal Services Offices (SCCLS) is a nonprofit law firm that provides free civil legal help to low-income and disadvantaged residents of Southeastern Massachusetts, Cape Cod and the Islands in a variety of civil legal matters.

If you are facing eviction, been denied disability or unemployment benefits, experiencing domestic violence or are faced with another civil (non-criminal) legal issue, please call 1-800-244-9023 to apply for legal help. The intake line is open from Monday to Thursday between 9 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. To learn more about the services SCCLS provides, you can visit our website: sccls.org.

COVID-19 has taken a financial and emotional toll on thousands of citizens across the country and in our community. If you need help with rental assistance or are facing eviction, consider calling one of the organizations listed above for help during this challenging time.

Trivia

FOR YOUR ENTERTAINMENT – KIM CAMARA

- 1.) Translate... "VOILA!"
A.) Here it is! B.) Boo! C.) Goodbye! D.) Right now!
- 2.) What is the center of the earth called?
A.) Crust B.) Mantle C.) Core D.) Lava
- 3.) What event prompted the first New Year's Eve ball drop in Times Square?
A.) A publicity stunt B.) A drunken accident
C.) A fireworks ban D.) A newspaper rivalry
- 4.) How do bird bones differ from human bones?
A.) They are 3 times stronger B.) They are hollow
C.) They produce more energy D.) Birds don't have bones
- 5.) What state produces the most pumpkins?
A.) Illinois B.) Texas C.) Florida D.) Maine
- 6.) What was the original name for "candy corn"?
A.) Pumpkin Teeth B.) Hay Rollies
C.) Sugar Pikes D.) Chicken Feed
- 7.) An estimated 40 percent of Campbell's Cream of Mushroom Soup is used for what?
A.) Chicken and Dumplings B.) Green bean casserole
C.) Beef Stroganoff D.) Tuna casserole
- 8.) What is the most visited U.S. national park?
A.) Yellowstone B.) Great Smoky Mountains
C.) Mammoth Cave D.) Grand Canyon
- 9.) What ship stranded the group on Gilligan's Island?
A.) S.S. Orca B.) S.S. Minnow
C.) S.S. Reliable D.) S.S. Gilligan

[Answers listed on page 11]

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Nutrition

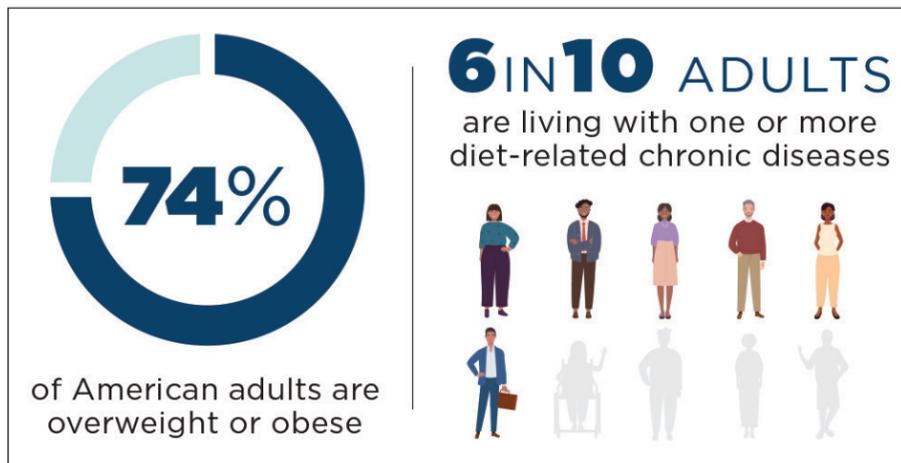
New Dietary Guidelines Recommend Making “Every Bite Count”

A new set of guidelines, published on Dec. 29, urges Americans to focus on nutrient-rich foods, with an emphasis on vegetables, fruits, and whole grains, while limiting sodium, added sugar, saturated fat, and alcohol.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Department of Health and Human Services jointly update the report every five years. The 2020-2025 edition of “Dietary Guidelines for Americans” features more age-specific details than previous iterations.

Even with age-specific recommendations, the document frequently emphasizes “the importance of a healthy dietary pattern as a whole – rather than on individual nutrients or foods in isolation” across the entire lifespan. While recognizing that every stage of life comes with specific dietary needs, the guidelines recognizes the importance of establishing and sticking to a health dietary pattern throughout one’s lifetime to promote health and prevent chronic disease.

According to the guidelines, a healthy dietary pattern includes a relatively higher intake of vegetables, fruits, legumes, whole grains, low- or non-fat dairy, lean meats and poultry, seafood, nuts, and unsaturated vegetable oils. People should consume a relatively



The latest “Dietary Guidelines for Americans” urges the public to commit to a lifelong healthy eating pattern to avoid disease. Source: *Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2020-2025*.

lower amount of red and processed meats, sugar-sweetened foods and beverages, and refined grains.

Despite the fact that most Americans do not follow these recommendations, the report notes that people age 60 and above are more likely than any other age group to abide by a healthy eating pattern.

There is room for improvement, however. Below are some recommendations the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines offers specifically for people over age 60.

Try a wider variety of proteins: While most older adults are eating adequate amounts of protein, the dietary guidelines suggest adding some variety to your plate. Most

older adults source their protein intake from meats, poultry and eggs. The guidelines suggest adding seafood, dairy, beans, peas, lentils and fortified soy alternates, like tofu and tempeh. By adding some of these options to your regular dietary pattern, older adults can better meet their nutritional needs.

Talk to Your Doctor about B12: People over age 60 should consider their intake of vitamin B12, because, for some older adults, the ability to absorb this nutrient can decrease with age. Some medications can decrease absorption as well. Vitamin B12 can be found in a variety of foods, such as fortified breakfast cereals or tuna. Some people may want

to consider dietary supplements. Though, the guidelines note that those who are considering a supplement should first talk to their health care provider to determine if that would be appropriate.

Stay Hydrated: On average, older adults drink less fluids than any other age group – about two fewer cups per day, according to the report. Drinking water aids digestion and prevents dehydration. In addition to drinking plenty of water, the guidelines note that the water contained in fruits and vegetables help with fluid intake as does low-fat or fat-free milk.

Limit Alcohol: Put plainly, the guidelines steer the public away from drinking alcohol for any reason. However, the guidelines cap alcohol consumption at two drinks a day for men and one drink a day for women. This decision was met with controversy when the document was initially published, as an advisory panel recommended the cap be one drink a day for both men and women. Regardless, the final report states that drinking alcohol puts older adults at “higher risk of falls, car crashes, and other injuries that may result from drinking.” Drinking alcohol can also interfere with the management of chronic diseases and can interact with medications.

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Councils on Aging

Acushnet COA

For more information, call the Acushnet Council on Aging at 508-998-0280. The center is located at 59 1/2 South Main St., Acushnet, MA 02743. Acushnet Board of Health: 508-998-0275.

The Acushnet COA continues to provide services to seniors in a safe and reliable manner. While the Senior Community Center building remains closed to the public, all staff are available by phone or email, Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., to meet your outreach and administration needs.

Medical transportation is available and Meals on Wheels continue to be delivered. While we are taking time off from outdoor programming, we are working behind the scenes to install privacy fencing and heaters in the outdoor area to resume classes once the weather allows.

SNAP update: Thanks to the advocacy of the Mass Senior Action Council, the Department of Transitional Assistance has agreed that the cost of face masks can now be claimed for the SNAP medical expense deduction to boost your monthly SNAP benefit. For more information please call 508-961-2000.

Toe Nail Care: By appointment. Call 508-998-0280.

Dental Care: Dental Care by appointment. To set up an appointment or for more information, call 508-827-6725 or email smiles@mobiledentalhygiene.com.

Limited computer use at the Acushnet Public Library: Computers are now available at the Acushnet Public Library by appointment only. Computers have been spaced 6 feet apart and will be sanitized between each use. Each session is limited to 45 minutes, and patrons can book 1 session per day. To make an appointment, call 508-998-0270.

Snow Parking Ban for Acushnet: By vote of Town Meeting, parking is restricted as follows: in water district, parking allowed opposite side of hydrants, out of water district, parking allowed north side of street running east and west; and, parking allowed on west side of streets running north and south.

Dartmouth COA

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 Board of Health: 508-910-1804.

A update from Lynne Antunes, Director of Dartmouth Libraries: The Dartmouth Council on Aging and the Dartmouth Public Libraries will soon be working together to provide home delivery of library materials to seniors living in Dartmouth. The COA has offered to use their vans and drivers to deliver library books, audiobooks, videos, etc. to Dartmouth seniors who find it difficult to get to the libraries.

The Dartmouth Libraries have been providing curbside pickup service to library patrons since June 1st, 2020. Library patrons can place holds on items they want to borrow, or can call the library and ask staff members to place holds on their behalf. Once the requested items are available, the library contacts the patron to schedule a pickup time. Both library buildings have a pickup table just inside their entrance. Staff members check out and package items for patrons and leave a batch on the pickup table every half hour. Now, this offer from the COA will make it possible for Dartmouth seniors to borrow library materials without leaving home.

If you are 65 or older and live in Dartmouth, you are eligible to use this service. To get started, please call Southworth Library at 508-999-0726 or the North Branch Library at 508-999-0728 and ask to be signed up for this service. A staff member will ask for your library card number, name, address, and phone number. It would also be very helpful if you can provide your voting precinct number, which will be used to help us map out the most efficient delivery route. If you do not have a library card, or need to update or replace yours, you may call Southworth Library to speak to Lynne Antunes at extension 4105, or call the North Branch Library to speak to Sharani Robins at extension 4306.

Library staff members are dedicated to providing the best service possible. I want to thank the staff at the COA for reaching out to the libraries and offering this proposal to improve library service to the senior community of Dartmouth.

New Zumba for Beginners: After receiving some feedback from viewers,

this month Dartmouth Community Media and Zumba instructor Michelle Thimus will be bringing you a series of four new basic classes choreographed for beginners. This easy to follow class will focus on simple dance steps, balance and range of motion. Please check your local listings

Legal Assistance: Please call the center for information, appointment and protocol. New Elder Law Consultations with Atty. Brandon Walecka. Second Thursday of the month from 10 to 11 a.m. by appointment.

Justice Bridge through UMass Law: Last Wednesday of the month from 2 to 3 p.m. by appointment.

The COA Newsletter: 1.) You can receive the newsletter on the town website: Google "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.) 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.

Fairhaven COA

For more information, call the Fairhaven Council on Aging at 508-979-4029. The center is located at 229 Huttleston Ave., Fairhaven, MA 02719. Visit the Fairhaven COA website at: fairhaven-ma.gov/council-aging. Fairhaven Board of Health: 508-979-4023 ext. 125.

Holiday Closing: The Fairhaven Senior Center will not be open for calls on Feb. 15 in observance of Presidents' Day.

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.

The Dental Hygienist: We are excited to offer dental cleanings, exams, desensitizing treatments, denture care, temporary fillings and crown re-cements, if needed. Services are covered for anyone with MassHealth Standard/Medicaid and Senior Whole Health. We offer affordable rates for individuals without dental insurance, as well as grant funded services for eligible individuals. Please call 508-827-6725 to set up an appointment or with any questions. Smiles@mobiledentalhygiene.com.

Fuel Assistance Recertifications: For new applications, call Maria Grace at PACE at 508-999-4473. If you have any questions, please call Phyllis at the Senior Center at 508-979-4029.

Project Bread Foodline: Project Bread's FoodSource Hotline (1-800-645-8333) is able to provide SNAP application assistance over the phone and help you identify all of the allowable expenses such as housing and medical costs to ensure you receive the full amount of benefits that you are entitled to. They can also answer questions from current SNAP recipients, including using their SNAP funds to purchase groceries for delivery, navigating the Healthy Incentive Program (HIP), and providing information about other local food resources. The hotline is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Clients are also encouraged to connect with us via our Live Chat featured on: www.gettingsnap.org.

Update from the Millicent Library: The library is now offering book bundles for children and adults. Want to try out some new authors, but unsure of which books to get? Fill out a quick form and the librarians will be happy to find some books for you based on your favorite genres or authors. When you pick up your book bundles, browse the titles we selected and read something new!

Veterans' Service Officer: Bradford Fish. Call 508-979-4023 ext. 114. Open by appointment only.

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. COA hours of operation are: operating Monday through Thursday, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. Marion Board of Health: 508-748-3530.

Grab n' Go: Registration is a must by the Friday before. Call 508-748-3570. Please consider a donation of \$5 for each lunch, but this is a suggestion. We do not want to exclude anyone from joining us due to cost as we encourage

Continued on Page 11



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*Income guidelines may apply. Please inquire in advance for reasonable accommodations. Info contained herein subject to change w/o notice.

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Memory Loss Caregiver Support Group

ONGOING ZOOM SESSIONS

First Wednesday of Month | 1 - 2 p.m.
First & Third Thursday of the Month | 1 - 2:30 p.m.



Dementia Friendly Q&A
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everyone to get out and enjoy a nice homemade lunch. Feb. 2: Turkey and bacon sandwich with beet salad; Feb. 4: Baked potato soup; Feb. 9: Tuna salad sandwich with tomato, basil and mozzarella; Feb. 11: No soup; Feb. 16: Chicken parmesan sandwich with garden salad; Feb. 18: Tortellini soup; Feb. 23: Roasted veggie wrap with pasta salad; Feb. 25: Chicken pot pie soup

Valentine's Day Luncheon: A delectable Italian luncheon will be served up on Feb. 14 at 1 p.m. The luncheon is being sponsored by Dwight Crosby of Tri Town Motors of Marion. The event will be a drive-through distribution, so drive on over and feel the love. Sign up by calling the council on aging at 508-748-3570 by Feb. 8.

Transportation: We continue to offer transportation to routine doctor's appointments. We request as much advanced notice as possible – at least 48 hours (not counting weekends and holidays). Transportation to grocery stores will be accommodated on a case-by-case basis. Only one passenger will be allowed on the buses at one time, with the exception of those accompanied by a caregiver or relative. Buses are sanitized between rides.

Inclement Weather Policy: When the Marion Public Schools are closed due to a weather-related emergency, COA-sponsored activities, including transportation, will also be canceled. If you aren't sure, call the COA office at 508-748-3570.

Dental Cleaning: Schedule your appointment for Feb. 17 by calling 508-827-6725.

Podiatry Clinic: Call to schedule your appointment.

Waterfront Memory Café: Wednesdays from 1 to 2 p.m. Weekly programming for individuals with Alzheimer's or other memory loss, with their care partner, family or friend, in a safe, supportive environment. Call for details.

Memory Loss Support Group: Feb. 11 and 25 from 1 to 2 p.m. Hosted online by Community Nurse Home Care. Call 508-992-6278 for log in information.

Friendly Caller Program: If you are interested, or know someone in need of a friendly phone call, please contact Karen Gregory at 508-748-3570.

Mattapoisett COA

For more information, call the Mattapoisett Council on Aging at 508-758-4110 or go to mattapoisett.net/council-aging. The center is located at 17 Barstow St., Mattapoisett, MA 02739. Mattapoisett Health Department: 508-758-4100 ext. 213.

Program Update: Programs and services are limited due to COVID-19. An "all call" will be made when programs/services resume in any form. Any updates and/or other information will be sent to anyone in our database via telephone, email; and anyone may find updates on Facebook, and the COA page on the Town's website. Such communication may relate to programs and services (start, halt, change, etc), but it may also relate to weather or safety issues. If any of your contact information has changed, please let us know so that we can update your information.

Exercise: Programs available via YouTube, cable television, and Zoom with local entities. Recommend calling a friend to do the class with you; you can both be on the phone and watching the same class and give each other some incentive. Contact the COA for resources.

Food: If you need groceries or other necessities, call the COA for assistance.

Medical Rides: Call 508-758-4110, no later than 48 hours ahead (earlier notification appreciated).

Medical Equipment: Always available, based on inventory. Contact the COA.

Friendly Caller Program: Benefit from a weekly call with a friendly voice! Call Liz at 508-562-2788 for more info.

Fuel Assistance: Mattapoisett COA is teaming with the local fuel assistance program through P.A.C.E. (People Acting in Community Endeavors) to offer filing assistance. One-on-one appointments are available on Tuesdays and Thursdays, by appointment, at the COA. At this appointment you will have direct phone access with a PACE representative to answer your questions and to ensure your application is complete and processed. Photocopies can be made of any necessary documents you must submit. Contact the COA to make your appointment by calling 508-758-4110 or email: coadirector@mattapoisett.net.

New Bedford Councils on Aging

The Rosemary S. Tierney Community Center and the Buttonwood Senior Center will remain closed to the public until further notice. For updates and assistance, contact the New Bedford Council on Aging at 508-991-6250. New Bedford Health Department: 508-991-6199.

Social Day: The New Bedford Council on Aging's Social Day Care Program has returned. Contact the New Bedford COA for more information at 508-991-6250.

Co-ed Adult Indoor Pickleball: New Bedford Parks & Recreation is offering indoor pickleball from Nov. 3 to June 10, 2021 at the McCoy Rec Center, 181 Hillman Street, New Bedford, MA 02740. Held Tuesdays and Thursdays.

First session: noon to 1 p.m. Second session: 1:15 to 2:15 p.m. Limited to eight players per hour. Two courts are available. All players must be McCoy Rec Center Members and adhere to COVID-19 safety protocols. Masks must be worn at all times in the facility. Register online at: newbedfordma.myrec.com.

Friendly Calls: Volunteers are calling those who have utilized our services in the past to check in. We are looking for others who would be willing to connect. If you would like to receive a friendly call, call the New Bedford Council on Aging at 508-991-6250.

Rochester COA

For more information, call 508-763-8723. The Rochester Council on Aging is located at 67 Dexter Lane, Rochester, MA 02770. Visit the website at townofrochesterma.com/council-aging. Facebook: [facebook.com/RochesterMass](https://www.facebook.com/RochesterMass). Rochester Board of Health: 508-763-5421 Ext. 202.

Staff is still able to arrange van rides, food distribution, lending of medical equipment and a few other services. Please call for details or if you have needs. We provide free transportation to and from local appointments for Rochester residents. Please call for a ride with one of our friendly drivers at least 24 hours in advance so we can schedule a driver.

The Senior Center participates in various programs for those who are food insecure. Eligibility varies depending on the program. If you are experiencing food insecurity, even if temporarily, please call us. It would be our pleasure to assist you in navigating these programs. The Senior Center can also help with fuel assistance programs for families and seniors.

Dementia Directory

www.alzconnected.org

Memory Cafés (Call for updates)

Memory Cafés are supportive gatherings for individuals with memory loss and their care partner, family or friends. Due to the ongoing outbreak of COVID-19, many in-person gatherings and events have been canceled. Contact the cafés and support groups below for updates and information about reopenings. Visit www.memorycafedirectory.com/cafe-connect for a list of virtual memory cafés that you can access through video conference apps or over the phone.

Marion Waterfront Memory Café: Every Wednesday. 1 to 2 p.m. At the Marion COA, 465 Mill Street, Marion. RSVP: 508-748-3570.

Café da Memoria: Fridays at Project Independence, 250 Elm St., New Bedford. 12:30 to 2 p.m. Para mais informação contactar 508-979-1693.

Alzheimer's Support Groups (Call for updates)

Mondays: LGBTQ Phone Support Group: First Monday of the month. For partners/spouses of people living with dementia. Contact Barb Meehan at 508-291-0660 or bamscats@gmail.com.

Tuesdays: Dartmouth COA with Carolyn Greany, 508-304-4587. Every other Tuesday, 3 to 4:30 p.m. Meetings are for caregivers and the individual diagnosed. RSVP.

Wednesdays: Fairhaven COA with Fairhaven Community Nurse & Hospice Care, 508-992-6278. First Wednesday of the month, 1 to 2 p.m. **Royal of Fairhaven Nursing Center:** with Maureen Bradley, 508-997-3193. Fourth Wednesday of the month, 6 to 7 p.m. **New Bedford, Wilks Library:** 1911 Acushnet Ave. with Alan Johnson, 508-775-5656. Fourth Wednesday of the month, 2 to 3:30 p.m. RSVP. **Dartmouth COA** first Wednesday of the month, 6 to 7 p.m. Call Nancy Miller at 508-999-4717.

Thursdays: Marion COA: Caregiver Support Group. Call Karen Gregory at 508-748-3570 to pre-register. Every other Thursday, 1 to 2 p.m. **Residence at Cedar Dell** from 5-6 p.m., fourth Thursday of the month. Call 508-636-0590.

Fridays: Dartmouth COA: First Friday of the month at 1 to 2:30 p.m. Contact Carolyn Lazaris at 774-510-5204 or Stephanie Gibson at 774-510-5209.

Saturdays: The Cottages at Dartmouth Village: 4 to 5 p.m., last Saturday of the month. Call 508-999-0404.

New Bedford Senior Travel Club

The trips that were scheduled this spring as part of New Bedford's Senior Travel Club program have been canceled as a precautionary measure. *Senior Scope* will provide updates from this program as they become available.

February 2021 Trivia Quiz Answers

1. A | 2. C | 3. C | 4. B | 5. A
6. D | 7. B | 8. B | 9. B

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Community

Pandemic Highlights the Ongoing Fight for Equality this MLK Day

Last year's celebration of Martin Luther King Jr. Day ended with a huddled mass clasping hands inside New Bedford's Grace Episcopal Church and singing "We Shall Overcome."

Flash forward one year later, and the world is entirely different. Social distancing has emptied church pews around the nation. Annual events that typically draw large crowds have migrated to the internet. And the mayor of New Bedford, who gave remarks during the event last January, was recovering at home from the coronavirus.

Regardless of the numerous obstacles brought on by the past year, citizens of the South Coast pressed on and celebrated the legacy of Dr. King this January. Local colleges livestreamed presentations over Zoom, and New Bedford Cable Access produced the City's celebration as a TV show (which is also available on YouTube). The show combined new remarks from guest speakers with highlights from previous years' performances and speeches.

Marci Pina-Christian, Chairwoman of the MLK Program, said it was important for the show to go on, especially considering how much the nation has grappled with throughout 2020: COVID-19, a reckoning over systemic racism, major disruptions for students, disparities within the health care system and an economic crisis.

"Yet we still remain hopeful and vigilant in working together



New Bedford's celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s legacy was televised this year, and it featured footage from past highlights. Above: last January, people held hands and sang "We Shall Overcome" at Grace Episcopal Church. Two months later, COVID-19 arrived.

for justice and equality that our democracy promises to us all," said Pina-Christian.

Mayor Jon Mitchell, who offered remarks in a pre-recorded speech from his home, said that social progress doesn't happen on its own – it requires work from all of us.

"When times are tough, it's important for us to return to first principles," he said. "And these times are tough: a 100-year plague, a considerable amount of civil strife, and a general anxiety about our country's future. In this time of uncertainty, we need to think how we can work together."

New Bedford Health Director Damon Chaplin, the event's keynote speaker, focused on the intersection of health and race. Chaplin said that if King were alive today, he would likely demand better protections for those most impacted by the

pandemic.

"Our local public health system here in Massachusetts, which has struggled to protect our most vulnerable populations, has a unique opportunity to reform itself," Chaplin said. "Like many other densely populated cities, New Bedford has been confronted with the devastation of the pandemic, and as a result, suffers from a disparate number of poor health outcomes for its Black and Latino residents."

At the time of the presentation, New Bedford had about 9,600 total positive COVID cases and 252 deaths. He said that although New Bedford's Black and Latino populations represent about 30 percent of the total population, they have accounted for about half of the city's positive cases.

"These communities have long been among the lowest in

resources and highest in poor health outcomes. Structural disparities like funding, staffing and training among local health departments not only affect our rural communities, but our larger cities," he said.

Bristol Community College, which also moved its MLK celebration online, featured Dr. David E. Jones of William Paterson University as its keynote speaker. Jones works as the chief diversity officer and director of talent management at the New Jersey-based college.

Jones said we have a shared responsibility to work toward equality, even if the fight for the rights of a given group may not impact us personally.

"Many of us are still marching for our freedom. To be heard and affirmed in our place in society, in a society that continues to brutalize people on the color of their skin, because of their country of origin, because of their beliefs," he said. "Dr. King fought for equity and so much more. We must do our part to continue marching."

Resources

You can watch the City of New Bedford's 2021 "Day of Remembrance" Program on the New Bedford Cable Network's YouTube channel: [youtube.com/user/CityofNewBedfordMA](https://www.youtube.com/user/CityofNewBedfordMA)

You can also view the program on Facebook at: [facebook.com/CityofNewBedford](https://www.facebook.com/CityofNewBedford).

PIT Count continued...

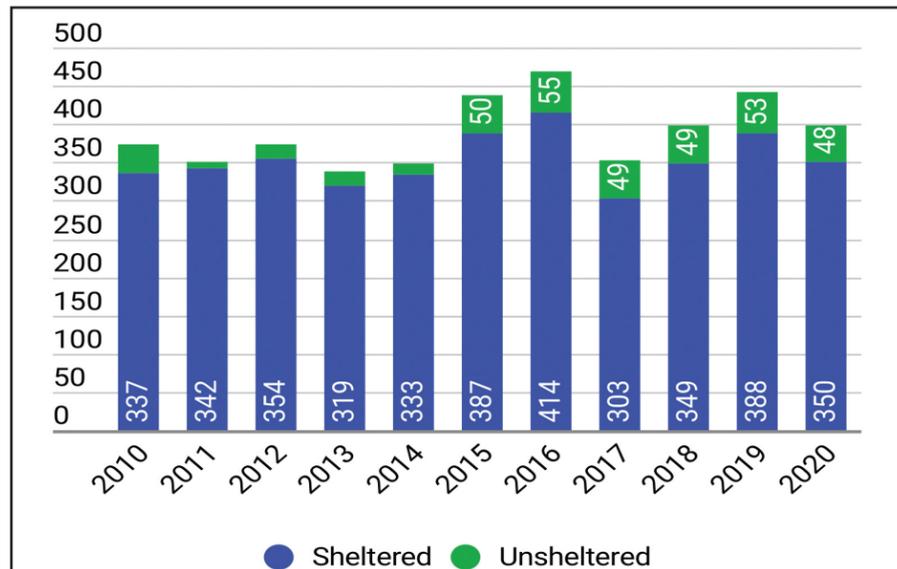
living in the city, typically ranging between 350 and 450 people.

Set amid the post-holiday surge in COVID cases, this year's PIT Count comes at a time when families around the nation are grappling with the economic toll of the pandemic.

According to the latest data from the U.S. Census Bureau's Pulse Survey, which has tracked how households have fared throughout the pandemic, about a quarter of Massachusetts residents reported that they were living in a household "not current on rent or mortgage where eviction or foreclosure in the next two months is either very likely or somewhat likely." A third of respondents said they were struggling to pay usual household expenses because of the pandemic.

Since the early days of the pandemic, the federal government has provided temporary relief through an eviction moratorium, which initially protected some renters from evictions. The moratorium began with the original CARES Act back in March 2020, and was later extended through Jan. 31. Hours after President Biden was sworn into office, he signed an executive order extending the moratorium at least through the end of March.

Danielle Isom, the project



398 people were counted during the 2020 PIT Count, 48 of whom were unsheltered. The number of homeless people in New Bedford has remained relatively stable for a decade.

manager at Steppingstone who has participated in the PIT Count for years, said she worries that once the eviction moratorium is eventually lifted, it will drive more people into homelessness.

The Metropolitan Area Planning Council's "COVID-19 Layoff Housing Gap" report, last updated in October, warned that "without federal, state or court intervention, Massachusetts is likely to see a significant wave of evictions and foreclosures in the coming months."

Joshua Amaral, the assistant executive director at People Acting in Community Endeavors (PACE) and chair of HSPN, said that while

housing in Boston is notoriously expensive, housing in New Bedford has become increasingly unaffordable over the past decade.

"You can't relocate because there is nowhere you can go that's cheaper," said Amaral. "And I think people are forced into undesirable situations, whether that's homelessness, rooming with other people or couch surfing."

Moreover, as the cost of rent has increased, wages have not kept pace. According to a 2020 report from the National Low Income Housing Coalition, the national average of what a full-time worker would need to earn to afford a

modest one-bedroom apartment is \$18.65. Seven of the 10 occupations predicted to grow the most over the next decade do not provide that wage, the report notes.

MPAC offered several possible solutions, including additional funding for rental assistance, support and incentives for landlords and tenants to negotiate plans outside of court, further legal assistance and foreclosure protection for landlords affected by missed payments.

With the rollout of the vaccine happening at a slower pace than anticipated, the pandemic will continue to impede on everyday life – and the economy.

"It all travels downhill," said Clarke. "For the tenant who has been affected by the loss of a job or is underemployed or has a health issue... how on earth do you get out of that hole?"

Resources

For more resources and information on rental assistance, please see the article on Page 8.

For a complete overview of last year's PIT Count, visit [nbhspn.com](https://www.nbhspn.com) and check out the "Publications" section (under the "News" menu).

To view the New Bedford Age-Friendly Initiative's "Housing Resources Guide," visit: [coastlinenb.org/housingguide](https://www.coastlinenb.org/housingguide).