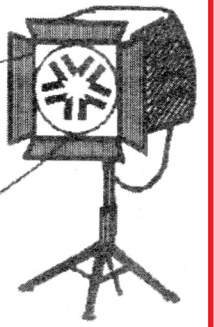


DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA OFFICE ON AGING

# Spotlight On Aging



VOLUME XXIV, ISSUE 12

A newsletter for D.C. Seniors

December 2013



## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

*By John M. Thompson,  
Ph.D., FAAMA*

In this month's edition of "Spotlight on Aging," I would like to share some exciting news about the D.C. Office on Aging's (DCOA) Nursing Home Transition Program, which was started on April 8 with new funding from Mayor Vincent C. Gray.

This program, which is important to me both personally and professionally, is designed to assist nursing home residents to return to the community. During the very short time since the program's inception, the agency has been able to touch many lives across the District of Columbia and neighboring jurisdictions.

I mentioned that this program is personal to me, as I faced a situation for a couple of years when my elderly cousin, who suffered a stroke, remained in a nursing home with no one advocating for her return home. It appeared that my cousin had all odds working against her.

The Area Agency on Aging in her North Carolina hometown, which is equivalent to the functions of the Office on Aging here in the District of Columbia, did not take a strong interest in assisting my cousin with transitioning from an institution. The nursing home was receiving payment from my cousin every month and was not working to discharge her. Lastly, my cousin had no knowledge about home- and community-based services and how she could receive quality care at home and save over \$40,000 of her retirement each year as compared to what she was paying to the nursing home.

Her ordeal lasted well over two years in an institution that prevented her from experiencing Thanksgiving and Christmas in the comfort of her home, where she enjoyed cooking, baking and spending quality time with family and friends for decades. However, as a result of our persistence and advocacy, I am glad to report that my cousin was able to spend this past Thanksgiving at home!

The same approach that I used to help my cousin to return home is what we do in the District of Columbia through our Nursing Home Transition Program. Through this service, my colleagues visit nursing homes across the District of Columbia, and in other jurisdictions, meeting with residents who are interested and able to return home.

After identifying these individuals, we work closely with the nursing home staff, sister District government

See **DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE**, page 32

## In The Community

**DCOA Executive John M. Thompson speaks during a caregiving event held recently at Hughes Memorial.**



**Nearly 100 seniors participated in the roundtable discussion hosted by DCOA at the Congress Heights Senior Wellness Center, located at 3500 Martin Luther King, Jr. Ave. SE.**

**Seniors at the Washington Seniors Wellness Center are engaged during a DCOA sponsored roundtable discussion. The Ward 7 center is located at 3001 Alabama Avenue, SE.**



## Commodity Supplemental Food Program Important Update

As of Jan. 1, 2014, the Greater Washington Urban League location at 2901 14th St NW, Washington, DC, will be closed, and seniors participating in this program will no longer be able to pick up the commodity food bags at this location.

All seniors will be reassigned to a location to start receiving commodity foods from a community-based site. These sites are located throughout Washington, DC and have spe-

cific distribution hours.

The Capital Area Food Bank thanks you for your understanding and we hope that these sites will help provide you with additional services. Please contact the Capital Area Food Bank for your specific locations. There will be no change in service or the items in the bag. For more information, please contact Ms. Washington at 202-644-9800, ext.663 or at 202-644-9861.



GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

VINCENT C. GRAY, MAYOR



# Holiday Depression and Stress

The holiday season can be a time of joy, cheer, parties and family gatherings.

But for many people, it is a time of self-evaluation, loneliness, reflection on past failures and anxiety about an uncertain future.

## What causes holiday blues?

Many factors can cause the “holiday blues” — stress, fatigue, unrealistic expectations, over-commercialization, financial constraints, and the inability to be with one’s family and friends. The demands of shopping, parties, family reunions and house guests also contribute to feelings of tension.

People may also develop other stress responses, such as headaches, excessive drinking, over-eating and difficulty sleeping. Even more people experience post-holiday let down after January 1st. This can result from disappointments during the preceding months compounded by the excess fatigue and stress.

## Coping with stress and depression during the holidays

- Keep expectations for the holiday season manageable. Try to set realistic goals for yourself. Pace yourself. Organize your time. Make a list and prioritize the important activities.

- Be realistic about what you can and cannot do. Don’t put the entire focus on just one day (e.g., Thanksgiving Day). Remember that it’s a season of holiday sentiment, and activities can be spread out to lessen stress and increase enjoyment.

- Remember the holiday season does not banish reasons for feeling sad or lonely; there is room for these feelings to be present, even if the person chooses not to express them.

- Leave “yesteryear” in the past and look toward the future. Life brings changes. Each season is different and can be enjoyed in its own way. Don’t set yourself up in comparing today with the “good ol’ days.”

- Do something for someone else. Try volunteering some of your time to help others.

- Enjoy activities that are free, such as taking a drive to look at holiday decorations, going window shopping, or making a snowperson with children.

- Be aware that excessive drinking will only increase your feelings of depression.

- Try something new. Celebrate the holidays in a new way.

- Spend time with supportive and

caring people. Reach out and make new friends, or contact someone you haven’t heard from in a while.

- Save time for yourself! Recharge your batteries! Let others share in the responsibility of planning activities.

## Can environment be a factor?

Studies show that some people suffer from seasonal affective disorder (SAD), which results from being exposed to fewer hours of sunlight as the days grow shorter during the winter months. Phototherapy — a treatment involving a few hours of exposure to intense light — is shown to be effective in relieving depressive symptoms in patients with SAD.

Other studies on the benefits of phototherapy found that exposure to early morning sunlight can be effective in relieving seasonal depression. Recent findings, however, suggest that patients respond equally well to phototherapy when it is scheduled in the early afternoon. This has practical applications for antidepressant treatment because it allows the use of phototherapy in the workplace as well as the home.

*Information courtesy of the National Mental Health Association.*

For help locally, call the D.C. Department of Behavioral Health seven days a week, 24-hours a day at 1-888-7WE-HELP (1-888-793-4357).

## Director's message

*From page 31*

tal agencies, and community-based providers to ensure that we locate housing, home and community-based services, and other resources that will help a discharged nursing home resident return to the community.

As this is a new challenge for those who have become accustomed to nursing home living for an extensive period of time, our transition coordinators work closely with each individual in ensuring their success during and after transition. Success for the agency is not only discharging the person, but ensuring that they remain in the community and experience quality and productive living.

To date, I am excited to report that our agency has been successful in assisting 57 nursing home residents return to the familiar surroundings of their communities. Some of these individuals are seniors, while others are not quite at the age of 60.

In reviewing the data, the agency learned that the average length of a

nursing home stay for these citizens is approximately three and a half years. These are not typical residents whose nursing home stays were only for short-term rehabilitation. Additional data reveal that DCOA’s assisted discharges have taken as little as six days.

Do you know of someone who is in a nursing home but would like to return to the community? If they are a District resident living in a D.C. nursing home or in a neighboring jurisdiction and desire to return to their homes, we would like to hear from you.

In this season of giving, why don’t you give them the gift that they so desire by telling them about our program and calling us so that we can visit them in the nursing home? Our team will work swiftly at beginning the transition process if they are ideal candidates for returning to the community.

Please contact Dr. Chantelle Teasdell, associate director of the DCOA’s Aging and Disability Resource Center, at 202-724-5622 or [chantelle.teasdell@dc.gov](mailto:chantelle.teasdell@dc.gov) for more information about the program or to make a referral.

## The District Releases First Alzheimer's State Plan

*Alzheimer's disease is the sixth-leading cause of death in the U.S. and ranked as the ninth-leading cause of death in the District*

The D.C. Office on Aging (DCOA) announced the release of the District’s first-ever State Plan confronting Alzheimer’s disease.

According to the Alzheimer’s Association, 9 percent of seniors living in the District have the disease. This chronic illness not only impacts the lives of those with this disease, but has a profound effect on their families and social networks. For this reason, the District of Columbia State Plan on Alzheimer’s Disease seeks to set measurable goals to help improve the lives of District residents living with this disease, and to reduce the burden on caregivers and their families.

“We developed this plan to ensure that all residents diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease and their caregivers receive the adequate support needed to reduce the burden that is often associated with this illness,” said BB Otero, deputy mayor for Health and Human Services.

The plan engages District government agencies, federal partners, the private sector and non-profits to make Alzheimer’s disease a priority for the city. Additionally, the plan outlines several goals and inclusive strategies to enhance care and support for individuals suffering from Alzheimer’s.

These goals include:

- Developing comprehensive research and data,

- Enhancing quality care for seniors diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease,

- Creating a robust public awareness campaign to increase awareness about Alzheimer’s disease throughout the District, and

- Improving training and workforce development.

“We understand that Alzheimer’s disease is a complex issue that will take time and collaboration for various stakeholders to address this problem. With an increase in the number of Washingtonians living with the disease, there will also be an increase in family caregiving demands, both emotionally and financially.

“Therefore, we have created a five-year plan that includes various short- and long-term solutions that seek to enhance the lives of persons with Alzheimer’s disease and their families,” said D.C. Office on Aging executive director John M. Thompson, Ph.D.

“The District of Columbia needs an ambitious plan to educate and support individuals with Alzheimer’s and those who care for them,” said Sally White, co-chair of the Senior Advisory Coalition and the executive director of Iona Senior Services. “We look forward to working with the D.C. Office on Aging and others to meet the important goals set forth in the new State Plan.”



# District Senior Takes Part in National Competition

Ms. Senior D.C. Nancy A. Berry was one of 34 contestants 60 years of age or older to compete in the Ms. Senior America Pageant held at the Resorts Hotel in Atlantic City, N.J. Ms. Senior D.C. performed a jazz dance to “Sweet Georgia Brown” from the play Bubbling Brown Sugar. Berry also talked about a “Plan B” as part of her philosophy during the evening gown and philosophy of life segment of the competition.

Ms. Tennessee Senior America Carolyn Corlew was crowned the winner, singing a hip shaking “Tell Momma” by Etta James during the talent segment. Corlew also wore a stunning strapless, white sequined gown that dazzled audiences with its shimmering effect.

First runner-up was Ms. New Jersey Senior America, and second runner-

up was Ms. Nevada Senior America.

Included in the top 10 finalists for the pageant was a contestant from Colorado who competed with her service dog and an escort to assist with her visual disability. During her philosophy of life segment, a contestant from Louisiana in her 90s said, that “90 is the new 60.”

Ms. Senior America Pageant contestants are judged on a personal interview with a panel of judges, their philosophy of life, talent and evening gown presentations. A complete list and information is located at [senioramerica.org](http://senioramerica.org).

Congratulations also to Shirley Rivens Smith, Ms. Senior DC 2009, who was appointed Parliamentarian for the National Senior America Alumni Organization during the pageant activities.



Ms. Senior D.C. Nancy A. Berry joins with other state champions, including Debbi Miller, Ms. Senior Virginia, at the pageant.



Ms. Senior America Carolyn Corlew during the crowning.



Berry poses during the evening gown competition.

## DCOA Job Announcement

The D.C. Department of Human Resources has posted **Job #22575 Supervisory Public Health Analyst** for the D.C. Office on Aging. Located within the Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC), this position is responsible for participating in the overall management of the ADRC under the general supervision of the Associate Director for ADRC.

Responsibilities also include overseeing and monitoring the services rendered through the Hospital Discharge Planning, Diabetes Self-Management Programs and other grant-funded projects within the ADRC.

The incumbent serves as an au-

thority on the ADRC program, and has oversight responsibility for ensuring that all Medicaid recipients who are receiving long-term care or home and community-based services are provided with adequate and appropriate services.

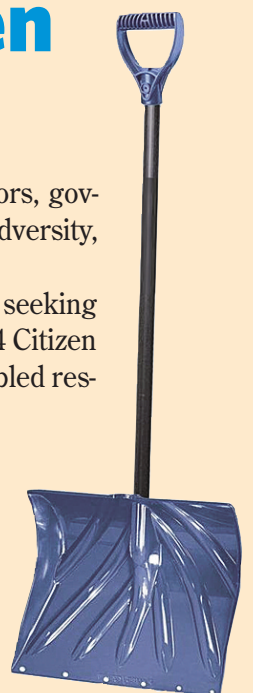
Duties also include responses to all funding opportunities available to increase ADRC programs. This full-time position has a salary of \$76,996 - \$107,794. The **Supervisory Public Health Analyst** position will be open until filled. Only online applications will be accepted; visit [www.dchr.dc.gov](http://www.dchr.dc.gov) to view the complete position description.

## 2013-2014 Citizen Snow Team

The District of Columbia is at its best when neighbors, government and businesses work together in the face of adversity, challenges, and even Mother Nature.

Serve DC – The Mayor’s Office on Volunteerism is seeking volunteers from across the District to join our 2013-2014 Citizen Snow Team that will clear sidewalks of elderly and disabled residents after it snows.

The District requires property owners (residential and commercial) to clear the sidewalks surrounding their property within 24 hours after a snowfall. Even a dusting of snow can be too much for elderly or disabled residents to shovel. That’s why we are asking you to volunteer your services and make winter a little easier on everyone.





# Community Calendar

## December events

### 4th • 11 a.m.

Model Cities will hold a holiday bazaar at 1901 Evarts St. NE. For more information, call 202-635-1900.

### 11th • 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The Bernice Elizabeth Fonteneau Senior Wellness Center will hold a community health and information fair. The center is located at 3531 Georgia Ave. NW. For more information, call 202-727-0338.

### 11th • 10:30 a.m.

Model Cities Senior Wellness Center will host a community outreach health fair sponsored by Verizon. Model Cities is located at 1901 Evarts St. NE. For more information, call 202-635-1900.

### 13th • 11 a.m.

Seabury Resources for Aging Ward 5 will distribute toys to the Second New St. Paul Day Care Center, 2400 Franklin St. NE. For more information, call Vivian Grayton at 202-529-8701.

### 15th to 17th

Model Cities hosts a Christmas in the Cities trip to see the Rockettes in New York and a Christmas show in Atlantic City. The trip departs on Dec. 15 at 7:45 a.m. There is a \$246 donation for the trip. For more information, call 202-635-1900.

### 17th • 2 p.m.

Seabury Resources for Aging Ward 5 will hold its holiday open house at 2900 Newton St. NE. For reservations, call Vivian Grayton at 202-529-8701.

### 18th • 1 to 3 p.m.

Attend a community health and wellness fair at St. Mary's Court apartments, 725 24th St. NW. For more information, call 202-223-5712.

### 19th • 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Model Cities Senior Wellness Center will hold a community health and wellness fair. Model Cities is located at 1901 Evarts St. NE. For more information, call 202-635-1900.

## Health Insurance Enrollment Help

DC Health Link, in partnership with DC Public Library, has opened two new health insurance enrollment centers, one in downtown DC and the other in Ward 7. At each enrollment center, trained experts — known as DC Health Link Assistants — and licensed health insurance brokers will be on-hand to answer questions and guide people through the process of obtaining health insurance.

In addition to the new Enrollment Centers, a series of health insurance enrollment events will be hosted throughout the city to help District residents and small businesses compare and choose quality, affordable health insurance plans.

- DC Health Link Enrollment Center at the **Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library, 901 G St. NW**, operates Monday through Wednesday, 10:30 a.m. to 8 p.m., Thursday and Friday 10:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. and Saturday, 10:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

DC Health Link Enrollment Center at **Deanwood Library and Recreation Center, 1350 49 St NE**, operates Monday and Wednesday 10:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Tuesday and Thursday 2 to 8 p.m. and Friday and Saturday 10:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The Enrollment Centers at both libraries will be open until March 31, 2014.

### Resources for Consumers

New website: [www.DCHealthLink.com](http://www.DCHealthLink.com)

- Toll-free hotline – 1-855-532-5465
- In-person assistance from trained experts
- Enrollment began Oct 1, with coverage taking effect January 1, 2014.
- In order for coverage to begin on Jan. 1, 2014 enrollment needs to occur by Dec. 15
- Events will be held at libraries, CVS stores, recreation centers, and elsewhere throughout March

## Hypothermia and Hyperthermia Watches

The District of Columbia is committed to protecting the homeless from extreme weather injury by meeting the demand for shelter during hypothermia (not enough heat) and hyperthermia (too much heat) seasons.

The District's Winter Plan for homeless services is in effect from Nov. 1 to March 31, the hypothermia season, when all homeless people must be housed when the temperature falls below freezing (32 degrees F).

### Call the Hotline

**You can help.** Call the hotline when you see a homeless person who may be impacted by extreme temperatures.

The **Hypothermia/Hyperthermia Hotline, 1-800-535-7252**, is operated by the United Planning Organization (UPO).

Families seeking emergency shelter should go to the **Virginia Williams Family Resource Center at 33 N St. NE**. The shelter operates Monday through Friday between the hours of 8 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. (except for holidays and days on which the District government is closed).

After 3:30 p.m. and on weekends, during extreme temperature alerts, families should call the **Shelter Hotline** (same number as above) for transportation to the DC General family shelter or other available family shelter.

Some of the severe weather shelters operate from 7 p.m. to 7 a.m. during extreme temperature alerts only.

### Seasonal Shelters

Other single adult hypothermia and hyperthermia beds will also be available 7 p.m. to 7 a.m. These shelters open at the time of the first alert of the season and remain open every day of the extreme temperature season. These are seasonal shelters.

Overflow single adult shelters operate only when all other shelters are near capacity.

## SPOTLIGHT ON AGING

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500 K St., N.E.,  
Washington, D.C. 20002  
202-724-5622 • [www.dcoa.dc.gov](http://www.dcoa.dc.gov)

John M. Thompson, Ph.D., FAAMA  
**Executive Director**  
Darlene Nowlin  
**Editor**  
Selma Dillard  
Darrell Jackson, Jr.  
**Photographers**

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