

## Thank You Bernie & Welcome Kathryn

Thank you to Bernadette Janz for her years of service to SEWAAA, and welcome to Kathryn Holub as the new chairperson of SEWAAA's Board of Directors.

Bernadette was appointed to the Board in October, 1999 and held the position of Board chairperson from Nov. 2005 to Nov. 2007. Kathryn was appointed to the Board in October, 2002, and elected chairperson in November, 2007.

We are grateful for their service and leadership!

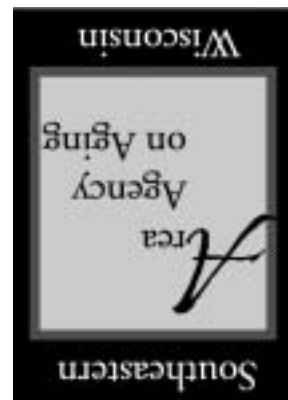


*Pictured from left: Kathryn Holub, Bernadette Janz*

*For newsletter advertising, questions, or comments,  
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"The mission of the Southeastern Wisconsin Area Agency on Aging is to enable older adults to remain vital, active, participating members of society by advocating for the development and continuation of quality services, providing accurate information, offering educational programs, and other opportunities and to provide assistance and guidance to families, caregivers, providers of services, elected officials, businesses, and the community."

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# SENIOR

## News & Views

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## Five New Year's Financial Resolutions

Once again, it's time to make New Year's resolutions.

This year, try making (and keeping!) some *financial* resolutions for the coming year.

As with all resolutions, the financial ones are easier to keep if they don't force you to drastically change your lifestyle. Here are five financial resolutions that you will hopefully keep for years to come.

### **1. Increase your retirement plan contributions.**

If your salary goes up this year, increase the percentage of your earnings that you defer into your 401(k) plan (or your 403(b), if you work for a non-profit agency, or 457(b) if you work for a state, county, city or other governmental agency).

With tax-deferred growth, pre-tax contributions and a variety of investment choices, these plans are great retirement savings vehicles.

Plus, since the money is taken out before it even reaches your check, you won't really "miss" your increased payments.

The contribution limit for these plans has increased to \$15,500. (If you're 50 or older, you can contribute an additional \$5,000.)

**2. "Max out" on your IRA.** You can put up to \$4,000 into a traditional or Roth IRA, or \$5,000 if you are 50 or older.

If you cannot come up with the maximum amount at once, try dividing your IRA contributions into 12 equal monthly payments and have the money taken automatically from a checking or savings account.

### **3. Build adequate cash reserves.**

Try to build a sufficient cash cushion - about six to 12 months' worth of living expenses - to handle any unexpected financial needs, such as a major car repair or an expensive new appliance.

(continued on page 7)

# Medicare: A Healthy Start for Health Insurance

Even though the main enrollment period to reevaluate your Medicare prescription drug coverage is over, now is a good time to make sure you understand your options for how you get other Medicare covered services.

***First, remember that although most citizens become eligible for Medicare at age 65*** (even though the age for full Social Security is going up), sometimes people do not enroll in Part B coverage because they have creditable health coverage through an employer.

Once the active employment ends, however, anyone eligible for Part B must contact Social Security to enroll in Medicare B within 8 months or else pay a penalty.

After that, they will only be able to enroll in Part B during Open Enrollment from January 1st through March 31st, with coverage to begin as of July 1st that year.

Keep this in mind, as employers don't always know to remind folks if they or their dependents on Medicare need

to sign up for Part B when the employee retires.

Others on Original Medicare may have secondary insurance from a retiree plan or a supplemental insurance and are getting concerned about rising premiums.

There are all sorts of plans offered by many of the same insurance companies that are actually Medicare Advantage Plans - a different way to obtain and pay for your Medicare A & B services.

Sometimes drug coverage and other benefits not covered by Medicare are even included at monthly premiums that are much lower than traditional supplements.

How can this be?...

Medicare Advantage Plans ARE NOT THE SAME AS SECONDARY INSURANCE that pays the balance of bills after Medicare pays its share.

They are private insurance plans that receive a monthly payment from Medicare for each member and then are responsible for covering

Medicare services for members according to a unique contract.

These plans ALWAYS have costs that members must pay when they use medical services.

They may limit you to certain providers, require prior authorization for services, or assign copayments differently than Medicare does.

***January 1 through March 31st is also Open Enrollment for Medicare Advantage Plans.***

That means Medicare beneficiaries can switch from Original Medicare to one of these plans, switch from one Advantage Plan to another, or leave the Advantage Plan and return to Original Medicare.

The change cannot be used to get drug coverage if you don't have any, or to drop it so you have no drug coverage.

The choices are overwhelming in the SEWAAA area. Each county has at least 31 different plan choices with some having up to 50.

*(continued on page 6)*

# *Current Advocacy Issues*

## *Nutrition Site Managers Training Event*

Over one hundred Nutrition Site Managers from Kenosha, Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Racine, Walworth, Washington and Waukesha Counties participated in a full day of training on November 2, 2007 at Davian's Banquet and Conference Center in Menomonee Falls.



Included in the training was a short power point presentation on advocacy entitled, “The ‘A’ Train,” which focuses on ADVOCACY, AGING and ACTION.

In order to further educate, inform and empower Nutrition Site participants to learn about legislative issues that affect them and how to contact their legislators, bright yellow "A" Train placemats were distributed.

The placemats will expand awareness of Advocacy and highlights the significance of the Older Americans Act.



*The photo above includes left to right Amy Ramsey, Nutrition/Prevention Specialist for the Bureau of Aging and Disability Resources, Mary Tree, Nutrition Director for Racine County, Pat Pollworth, SEWAAA staff and Mary Ferrell, Nutrition Director for Ozaukee County.*

# ADRCs: Your “One Stop Shop”

Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRCs) are friendly places that can be considered your "one stop shop" for information and assistance.

Information specialists at the ADRC will provide accurate, unbiased information related to all aspects of aging or living with a disability.

They can provide information about all of the programs and services available throughout the county it serves, and about public benefits that may be also be available.

*Anyone* who has questions or needs assistance related to aging, physical disabilities, developmental disabilities, mental health issues or substance use disorders, can receive information specifically tailored to each person's situation.

*It all begins with a phone call to your county ADRC!*

Through the Bureau of Aging and Disability Resources,

Wisconsin is the first state in the nation to offer its citizens access to Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRCs).

In our SEWAAA area, state funded ADRCs currently exist in Ozaukee, Racine and Kenosha.

The ADRC will be opening very soon in Washington and Waukesha.

Walworth County's ADRC is scheduled to open later this year.

The Older Americans Act helps support the ADRC by providing funding for outreach to older persons and their health care providers, prevention programs and the chronic disease self management program, caregiver support programs, elder abuse public education, financial abuse prevention and intervention, and Medicare information and benefits assistance, to name a few.

Source:  
<http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov/LTCare/pdf/adrc11oaa.pdf>

***Wisconsin is the first  
state in the nation to offer its  
citizens access to ADRCs***

## WI State Budget

On October 26, 2007, Governor Jim Doyle signed into law the State Budget, which contains good news for seniors, including the following:

✓ Money to expand the Family Care program over the next two years, creating Adult and Disability Resource Centers in Wisconsin Counties. (For additional information on ADRCs, see “ADRCs: Your One Stop Shop” on page four of this newsletter).

✓ Additional Ombudsman positions for Family Care enrollees under the age of 60, and funding for Care Management Organizations (CMO's) to provide services for eligible seniors.

✓ Continue funding for SeniorCare through June 30, 2009.

*(Continued on page 5)*

# 60+ *Resources*

*Are you age 60 or older? You can learn more about community-based programs and services by contacting one of these counties in the Area Agency on Aging's district.*

## **KENOSHA COUNTY**

Kenosha County Aging and Disability Resource Center  
8600 Sheridan Road, Suite 500 Kenosha, WI 53143  
262-605-6646 or 800-472-8008  
Website - [www.co.kenosha.wi.us/dhs/divisions/Aging](http://www.co.kenosha.wi.us/dhs/divisions/Aging)

## **OZAUKEE COUNTY**

Ozaukee County Aging and Disability Resource Center  
121 West Main, P.O. Box 994 Port Washington, WI 53074  
262-284-8120 or 262-238-8120  
Website - [www.co.ozaukee.wi.us/aging](http://www.co.ozaukee.wi.us/aging)

## **RACINE COUNTY**

Racine County Aging and Disability Resource Center  
1717 Taylor Street Racine, WI 53403  
262-638-6800 / Benefit Specialist 262-638-6322  
Website - [www.hsd.racineco.com](http://www.hsd.racineco.com)

## **WALWORTH COUNTY**

Department of Health & Human Services  
W4054 Hwy NN, P.O. Box 1005 Elkhorn, WI 53121  
262-741-3200 / Benefit Specialist: 262-728-4745  
Website - [www.co.walworth.wi.us](http://www.co.walworth.wi.us)

## **WASHINGTON COUNTY**

Washington County Aging and Disability Resource Center  
333 East Washington Avenue, Suite 100 West Bend, WI 53095  
262-335-4497 / Website - [www.co.washington.wi.us](http://www.co.washington.wi.us)

## **WAUKESHA COUNTY**

Waukesha County Department of Senior Services  
1320 Pewaukee Road Waukesha, WI 53188  
262-548-7848 / Website - [www.waukeshacounty.gov](http://www.waukeshacounty.gov)

## State Budget: *Good News*

*(continued from page 4)*

It is estimated that 105,000 older persons will be enrolled in SeniorCare during the first year of the budget, and 107,100 persons in the second year.

✓ Funding for expansion of the Volunteer Ombudsman program (4 positions), one additional Ombudsman position for Family Care and one additional position for the Medigap Helpline.

✓ Maintain current Homestead Tax Credit law.

*For further information on the State Budget and Governor Doyle's initiatives, visit:*

*<http://www.wis.gov.state.wi.us/index.asp>*

# Medicare in 2008:

## *Info You Need to Know*

(continued from page 2)

The terms of each plan can change from year to year. Comparing them is no easy task.

### ***So what should you consider before changing health insurance?***

- ✓ Consider whether what you have is working for you now and fits your budget.
- ✓ Check carefully to see whether a change will actually save you money.
- ✓ Will you be able to go to the doctors/hospitals/medical providers you prefer?
- ✓ What sort of medical needs do you typically have each year and what copays would you have to pay for the different options?
- ✓ If your coverage includes prescription drug coverage, does it may protect you from the "donut hole" that Medicare Part D has?
- ✓ What sort of health risks do you face in a "bad year?" How would your costs under a dif-

ferent insurance change if you had a stroke or got cancer, for example?

- ✓ Compare rates for hospital stays, outpatient services, skilled nursing stays, therapy, lab tests, and durable medical equipment along with doctor visit copays.
- ✓ If there are any out-of-pocket limits on your total costs, what services do they include and what are not included?
- ✓ Although no one but you can decide which is the best choice for your circumstances, there are some sources for unbiased information on all the options.

***The Wisconsin Medigap Helpline at 1-800-242-1060 has trained counselors to help you understand the impact of a possible change.***

They can also help if you made a decision that you didn't fully understand. So can your local elderly or disability benefit specialist.

Remember that there are a couple of special trial periods where you can disenroll from a Medicare Advantage plan and

get back to Original Medicare with the right to get a Medicare Supplement as well, but you must use them within 12 months of starting on the Advantage Plan.

They only apply to people who dropped a supplement to try the Advantage Plan or are trying it as their first means of getting Medicare A & B services.

If you dropped an employer plan to try the Advantage Plan, the State of Wisconsin also allows you to get guaranteed issue for a supplement if you drop the Advantage plan within 12 months.

But Medicare will only let you out before March 31st this year or again during enrollment next fall.

So, take time for a quick check-up to make sure you have a healthy understanding of how your Medicare hospital and health care coverage works. Before you sign up for any changes, first check out all your options!

***Here's to your health!***

# Top 5 New Year's Financial Resolutions

*(continued from page 1)*

By building an emergency fund, you won't need to tap into your investments. And by giving your investments the potential to grow as long as possible, you'll accelerate your chances for progress toward your long-term financial goals.

## 4. Review your investment portfolio.

It's a good idea to review your investment portfolio at least once a year.

Over the course of 12 months, your life can change in many ways. If your life changes significantly, your investment goals may also change.

But even if your circumstances haven't changed much in a year, you should review your holdings to make sure your investment mix reflects your individual risk tolerance, time horizon and long-term objectives.

A financial professional can help you review your invest-

ments to make sure you are still on track.

## 5. Don't take a "time out" from investing.

In every year, you can find any number of events - war, political turmoil, natural disasters, market volatility, etc. - that might motivate you to "take a break" from investing.

Remember, the most successful investors keep on investing, no matter how gloomy the news may be.

Therefore, in 2008, look beyond the headlines. Instead, focus on quality investments and your long-term investment strategies.

If you can achieve these New Year's resolutions, you'll go a long way toward potentially improving your financial situation in 2007 - and beyond.

*source: www.edwardjones.com*

## *Keeping All of Your Resolutions*

Whether your resolutions included health related goals, getting organized, losing weight and exercising more, eating better, smoking or drinking less, or perhaps revolved around work, education, travel, etc., there are ways to help you succeed in reaching your goals. Be sure your resolutions are things you WANT to do, not what you feel you NEED to do, and be realistic in striving for goals that are attainable.

Keep trying...you can always start over if you haven't stuck to the resolutions you made at the beginning of the year.

- ✓ Have a contingency plan for when you are tempted.
- ✓ Make a list of the benefits of changing and put it someplace where you will see it every day.
- ✓ Form a support system of friends and family, who will cheer you on.
- ✓ Track your progress and give yourself rewards

*Happy New Year!*

***Sign up by March 1st to be on the Wisconsin Do Not Call List by April 1st: 1-866-9NO-CALL or <http://nocall.wisconsin.gov/web/home.asp>.***