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Serving Anson County and the Municipalities of Ansonville, Lilesville, McFarlan, Morven, Peachland, Polkton and Wadesboro.

Medicare Beneficiaries Urged to Compare Plans During Open Enrollment

Enrollment ends December 7

NC Insurance Commissioner Mike Causey reminds Medicare beneficiaries to compare and evaluate their current plans and make necessary changes during the annual Open Enrollment Period, Oct. 15 – Dec. 7, 2020. Medicare plans and prices change. It is important for Medicare beneficiaries to take advantage of the Open Enrollment Period by contacting local Seniors' Health Insurance Information Program (SHIIP) counselors to save money, improve coverage or both.

The Open Enrollment Period begins Oct. 15 and runs for eight weeks to give consumers enough time to review and make changes to their Medicare coverage. Changes must be made by Dec. 7, 2020 to guarantee coverage will begin without interruption Jan. 1, 2021.

It's important to contact local SHIIP counselors before making a decision about coverage because beneficiaries may be able to receive more affordable and better Medicare health and/or drug plan options. For example, even if they are satisfied with their current Medicare Advantage or Part D plan, there may be another plan in their area that covers health care and/or drugs at a better price.

SHIIP is a division of the North Carolina Department of Insurance and offers free, unbiased information about Medicare, Medicare prescription drug coverage, Medicare Advantage, long-term care insurance and other health insurance issues. In addition to helping Medicare beneficiaries compare and enroll in plans during the Open Enrollment Period, SHIIP counselors can help people discover if they are eligible for Medicare cost savings programs.

Here are some of the ways to review and compare plans available for 2021:

- Get one-on-one help from beneficiaries' local SHIIP office. In Anson County call Grace Senior Center at 704-694-6616.
- Get one-on-one help from SHIIP, the Seniors' Health Insurance Information Program at NCDOL, by calling 1-855-408-1212, Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- Visit www.medicare.gov/find-a-plan to compare current coverage with all of the options available, and enroll in a new plan if it is advantageous to do so.
- Review the Medicare & You handbook. It was mailed to Medicare recipients in September.
- Call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227) 24-hours a day, seven days a week, to find out more about coverage options. TTY users should call 1-877-486-2048.

For more information about SHIIP and the Medicare Open Enrollment Period, call 1-855-408-1212 or visit www.ncshiip.com.

Christmas Community Outreach Offers Household Items on Saturday

The Lamb of God Church in Wadesboro will hold a Christmas Community Outreach Event this Saturday, December 5 at 10 a.m. They will be giving out free household items and paper products as well as Christmas bags for the youth on a first come, first served basis.

The event will be held at 118 West Wade Street in Wadesboro.

If you would like to donate or volunteer for the event, please call 843-623-3777. The website is logomchurch.com.

"Be an American Worth Fighting For"

Wreaths Across America announces 2020 theme, Local effort again this year

Each year, millions of Americans come together to REMEMBER the fallen, HONOR those that serve and their families, and TEACH the next generation about the value of freedom. This gathering of volunteers and patriots takes place in local and national cemeteries in all 50 states - most recently at more than 2,000 participating locations - as part of National Wreaths Across America Day. Each year, a new theme is chosen to help volunteers and supporters focus their messaging and outreach in their own communities. Today, the organization announces the theme for 2020 is "Be an American Worth Fighting For." **Local Event** On Saturday, December 19 at 12:00 noon Wreaths Across America will be at Anson Memorial Park in Wadesboro to Remember and Honor our veterans through the laying of Remembrance wreaths on the graves of our country's fallen heroes and the act of saying the name of each and every veteran aloud.

Please help our location lay wreaths at as many graves as possible by visiting www.wreathscrossamerica.org and click on "Menu" on the top right corner, then click on "Search" and then enter "Leavitt" and you will see "Leavitt Funeral Home and Anson Community Hospice." You will be able to purchase one or more wreaths and/or volunteer to participate in the wreath laying ceremony. Don't forget to click the "Invite" button to invite your friends and family to join you.

Thank you so much for supporting Leavitt Funeral Home, Anson Memorial Park and Anson Community Hospice and Wreaths Across America! For more information contact Ken Caulder at ken@leavittfh.com or 704-694-2524.

November Mobile Food Pantry Info

Margot Barnes, Director of Anson Crisis Ministry has released statistics from the November Mobile Food Pantry which was held on Wednesday, November 4 at Austin Grove Church.

- Total Families: 91
- Children & Youth up to Age 18: 75
- Youth & Adults Ages 19-64: 153
- Adults Over Age 65: 53

Anson Crisis Ministry received 2,291 lbs. of undistributed food for further distribution. Anson Crisis Ministry is located at 117 North Rutherford Street in Wadesboro. The telephone number is 704-694-2445, email is ansoncrisisministry@windstream.net and the website is www.ansoncrisisministry.org.

The next Mobile Food Pantry will be held on Wednesday, December 2 at Pleasant Hill UMC, located at 126 Church Street in McFarlan. Arrive and register between 8 and 10 a.m.

937 Reported Cases of COVID-19 in Anson County

As of Monday, November 30 the Anson County Health Department posted that Anson County had 937 reported cases of COVID-19. 104 of those cases were active. At that point they had discharged 833 cases, 819 to baseline health and fourteen deaths.

In a release the Health Department stated, "With the number of cases rising in our state, we would like to encourage people to take a part in protecting themselves and others. Remember to wear a mask, keep distance from others, wash your hands often, and download the SLOWCOVID app. Learn more about the free SlowCOVIDNC Exposure Notification app at covid19.ncdhhs.gov/SlowCOVIDNC. #StayStrongNC. Let's all do our part!"

The NC Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) reported statewide as of Monday, November 30 there were 364,512 total cases of COVID-19, with 5,261 deaths, 5,295,290 completed tests and 1,966 hospitalized.

As of Monday, November 23 there were 339,194 total cases of COVID-19, with 5,039 deaths, 4,965,564 completed tests and 1,460 hospitalized. On Monday, November 2 there were 278,028 total cases of COVID-19, with 4,390 deaths, 4,116,019 completed tests and 1,146 hospitalized. On Monday, October 5 there were 219,754 total cases of COVID-19, with 3,637 deaths, 3,188,371 completed tests and 971 hospitalized.

Recent history in Anson County: March 31 - 1 case; April 28 - 23 cases; May 26 - 62 cases; June 22 - 107 cases; July 27 - 285 cases; August 3 - 306 cases; August 26 - 408 cases; September 4 - 461 cases; September 28 - 605 cases; October 5 - 649 cases; October 26 - 720 cases; November 2 - 738 cases; November 23 - 876 cases.

Shop Safely This Holiday Season

Black Friday kicks off the holiday shopping season and has made a name for itself as the largest shopping day of the year. Many friends and family shop together to plan a day scoring deals upon deals. But satisfying shopping experiences can quickly turn sour if we're not careful. Following these tips will help keep you safe however you choose to shop in this holiday season and during a pandemic.

Shopping during COVID-19 Whether shopping in person or picking up items, taking a few extra precautions this year will help keep you, your family and friends safe during the COVID-19 era.

- Plan Before Your Trip
- Curbside, contactless pick-up. Many retailers offer curbside pick-up for online shopping. Utilize this feature to minimize contact with others.
- Utilize special hours. Stores also offer special shopping hours for those in COVID-19 high-risk categories. Try shopping at these times, if they apply to you, to reduce your contact in public areas.

Remember the Three Ws

- Wear a face covering
- Wait six feet from other people
- Wash your hands. Use hand sanitizer frequently while shopping and bring sanitizing wipes to wipe down your shopping cart.

Shopping in-person

- Hold Your Purse Next to Your Body
- Do not let your wallet be an easy target for theft. Keep it close to your body, that way it is more difficult for thieves to take.
- Purses with zip closures and ones with over-the-shoulder straps are best because a passerby can't reach into them or quickly take it off your arm/shoulder.
- If you are not carrying a purse, put your wallet in one of your front pockets. Back pockets are easy targets for pickpockets.
- Use One Method of Payment and Avoid Using Cash
- Carry one credit or debit card with you on your shopping trip when paying with a card. Carrying a single card means only one card needs to be canceled in the event of a theft and minimizes the opportunity for fraud if your wallet or purse is stolen.
- Carrying cash is attractive to thieves because there is no way to track its use once they have it. If you are paying with cash, take it out of your wallet only when the cashier is asking for payment. This avoids you "flaunting" your cash for others to see.
- Be Aware of Your Surroundings
- Make sure to lock your vehicle, and do not leave personal items unattended or out in the open in your vehicle.
- Stay Alert in and Around Your Vehicle. There will be more people out on the roads, so drive defensively and be alert for road rage.
- Park in areas that are well-lit.
- When returning to your vehicle after shopping, look around and under it before approaching it.
- Place shopping bags out of sight or in the trunk, if possible.

Shopping Online

- Only Use Safe Sites for Purchases
- Shop on sites that use SSL or secure sockets layer protection. These sites are identified with a URL that starts with https. This means the site has a level of protection that secures your payment information from being compromised when making a purchase.
- Connect Safely - Shop only through a trusted Wi-Fi connection. Avoid making purchases on public networks because of the risk of being hacked. A secure connection, virtual private network or hotspot will provide security for your payment.
- Choose Your Card Wisely - Debit card fraud protections are not as strict as those for credit cards. That means if your payment information is compromised, the fraudulent payment will be immediately drafted from your bank account. Using a credit card will prevent direct loss to your bank account in the event of a fraudulent charge.

Wildlife Commission Encourages Safe Practices for Tree Stand Hunters

During deer season, the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission reminds hunters to always follow safety guidelines when hunting from a tree stand.

"It's of the utmost importance to always use a fall-arrest system and follow the tree stand manufacturer's recommended safety procedures," said Carissa Daniels, the Commission's outreach manager. "These steps can go a long way in helping hunters stay safe while hunting with a tree stand."

The Commission's hunter safety education campaign, Home From the Hunt, and the Tree Stand Safety Awareness Foundation offer these tree stand safety recommendations:

Prepping Your Tree Stand

- Before use, check the stand's belts, chains, bolts and attachment cords for damage and wear. Replace them, if necessary.
- Ensure you do not exceed the stand manufacturer's maximum height or weight limits.
- Purchase a full-body safety harness as part of a fall-arrest system.

Setting Up Your Tree Stand

- Let someone know where you are setting up your stand ahead of time.
- Select a healthy, straight tree for your tree stand.
- Have another person assist with setting up the stand.

Using Your Tree Stand

- Always wear and utilize your harness and its tree tether to stay connected to the tree from the time you leave the ground to the time you return to the ground.
- Maintain three points of contact, as most falls occur when climbing up or down.
- When climbing or descending, use a lineman's belt and/or lifeline.
- Raise and lower equipment using a haul line - Never carry anything as you climb.
- Bring an emergency signal device, such as a cell phone or a whistle.

For more information on tree stand safety, visit the Tree Stand Safety Awareness Foundation webpage treestandingsafetyawarenessfoundation.org.

For information on the Hunter Education Program, hunting seasons and Hunting Heritage Apprentice Permits, visit ncwildlife.org or call 919-707-0031.

Highway Patrol Encourages Traffic Safety During Holidays

The State Highway Patrol is gearing up for the holiday season and for the increased number of roadway users expected across our state. Prior to traveling, the SHP strongly encourages the public to visit the NC Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) for the latest to help slow the spread of COVID-19. Best practices during the holiday season and information on our state's current response to COVID-19 can be found by visiting the DHHS website.

According to the American Automobile Association (AAA), more than 47 million people will travel by automobile across our nation representing a reduction from last year's predictions. AAA relates this decrease in travelers to our country's current public health landscape. Nonetheless, members of the State Highway Patrol will increase visibility on highly traveled corridors in an effort to promote safe driving habits.

"Although this holiday season might look vastly different for many families, a commitment to safe driving must be paramount for those traveling," said Col. Glenn McNeill Jr., commander of the State Highway Patrol. "The safety and health of all across our state should guide our activities this holiday season and part of that equation is safety behind the wheel of a vehicle."

Motorists can partner with our lifesaving mission by practicing these safe driving principles:

- Don't drive distracted: Eyes on the road and hands on the wheel, let passengers control the use of technological devices.
- Always wear a seat belt: Regardless of the time of day or seating position, a seat belt should be put on before starting your travel.
- Never drive while impaired: Use one of the many safe alternatives to driving after consuming, and plan ahead to ensure a safe end to the evening.
- Maintain a safe speed and reduce speeds during inclement weather. Remember, the speed limit is set for ideal driving conditions. If wipers are required to be on, lights should be activated as well.
- Check traffic conditions before starting your travel at www.DriveNC.gov.

As always, motorists can contact the SHP by dialing *HP(47) if law enforcement assistance is needed.

UWI Brick Paver Fundraiser

Uptown Wadesboro, Inc. is again offering the opportunity to purchase laser-engraved brick pavers to honor the memory of someone special, recognize an organization, a business or high school graduating class. The pavers will be placed at the location of your choosing in the uptown area as a lasting tribute. This makes a great gift too.

The bricks come in two sizes, four-inch brick to accommodate three lines of print for \$50, and the eight-inch brick with six lines of print for \$100. Clip art may also be added to enhance your brick for free.

Download the Brick Paver Order Form by going to uptownwadesboro.com. You may also pick up a form at the REV Uptown, located at 114 West Wade Street.

For more information please call the Uptown Wadesboro office at 704-694-4181 ext. 3.

COVID-19 Information

To stay up to date on COVID-19 in North Carolina, visit ncdhhs.gov/coronavirus or text COVIDNC to 898211. Call 2-1-1 (or 888-892-1162) for general questions or for help finding human services resources in your community.

For a national perspective, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at www.cdc.gov.

For a world-wide perspective, visit the World Health Organization website at www.who.int.