



The Beacon

A Newsletter for Long-Term Care Residents

February 2023

VIRTUAL LEARNING FOR SENIORS

You can now attend free, live virtual classes covering topics ranging from computers to mental fitness and social media taught by experts in the field. The NJ Department of Human Services (NJ DHS), through a partnership with the **GetSetUp** interactive online learning community, is making this service available to seniors 60 and older wherever they live in NJ.



These classes are taught **by** older adults, **for** older adults.

This partnership was born in an effort to combat the risk of social isolation. The NJ DHS has made this opportunity available to access from any internet connected device such as a computer, laptop, iPad, or other mobile device. Classes are also available in multiple languages.

New Jersey seniors who are interested in this opportunity can visit the website at getsetup.io/partner/NJ. For any assistance in accessing this opportunity, please contact the Social Worker or Recreational Staff in your long-term care facility.

Valentine's Day
 WORD SCRAMBLE

- KINP _____
- VEOL _____
- ERAHT _____
- URYBRAEF _____
- WETES _____
- DRE _____
- YDCNA _____
- SWOFELR _____
- SIKS _____
- PIUDC _____

1. PINK 2. LOVE 3. HEART 4. FEBRUARY 5. SWEET
 6. RED 7. CANDY 8. FLOWER 9. KISS 10. CUPID
 ANSWERS

VACCINE INFO FROM THE NJ DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Everyone 6 months of age and older is recommended to get an updated COVID-19 **bivalent** vaccine or booster dose that targets the Omicron variant, if it has been at least two months since your most recent booster or primary series (first two shots). COVID-19 vaccines are safe and highly effective at preventing severe illness, hospitalizations, and death.

The CDC recommends updated bivalent Pfizer and Moderna booster shots that target the Omicron variants. The bivalent boosters should be received at least two months after your most recent booster or primary series. These bivalent boosters will target both the original COVID-19 strain as well as Omicron and its sub variants and offer stronger protections against severe illness and death.

Studies show immunity wanes over time with COVID-19 vaccines, increasing the risk of getting a breakthrough infection and spreading it to others. If you have questions about your vaccine eligibility, contact your Social Worker or call the LTCO at 1-877-582-6995.

PUTTING CHECKS ON OVER-MEDICATION



All too often, nursing home residents with challenging behaviors have been diagnosed with schizophrenia and dosed with antipsychotic medications to sedate and “chemically restrain” them. Note that it is extremely rare for schizophrenia to suddenly occur in older people.

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) have tried in the past to address this practice, but now it has announced new measures to protect residents from illegal drugging.

CMS will begin to conduct audits of nursing homes with high rates of schizophrenia diagnoses. They will examine the facility’s evidence for appropriately documenting, assessing and coding a diagnosis of schizophrenia. Inaccuracies will mean downgrades of the facility’s QM (Quality Measure) ratings.

If you believe that you are being improperly medicated or over-medicated, contact the LTCO at 1-877-582-6995 or file an online complaint on our website at www.nj.gov/ltco.

Happy Valentine’s Day!



CANDY
HEART
HUG
LOVE
KISS
SWEET



L O V E S X I
W V G R H U G
S E H E A R T
O S W E E T K
S H K I S S E
C A N D Y I Q
T Q G A O M G

New Jersey Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman

Laurie Facciarossa Brewer, LTC Ombudsman

www.NJ.GOV/LTCO

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