

2023

SENIORS

**SOUTHWESTERN MOUNTAINS SENIOR
RESOURCE GUIDE OF NORTH CAROLINA**



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Welcome to SENIORS

Embracing AGING: A Senior Resource Guide for the Southwestern Mountains of NC



edge, expertise and time. They deserve dignity and admiration for their continued contributions to our world.

The Southwestern Region of NC is called “home” by many older adults. Over 35% of the region’s population is over the age of 60. The shift in population affects all aspects of our lives.

Embracing our older adults is imperative for our region, as well as our state. We strive to meet people where they are to enhance the quality of life for older adults in our communities.

This guide links older adults and their caregivers to resources in an easy to navigate design. The articles and information — along with simply knowing who to call and where to go for help — can benefit all of us as we engage in opportunities and prepare for challenges.

Our desire for the third edition of SENIORS is that we will find knowl-

edge, resources and hope for our communities when we find ourselves on this journey called life.

Sarajane Melton,

Executive Director of Southwestern Commission Area Agency on Aging

The Southwestern Mountains Senior Resource Guide of North Carolina was produced in partnership by the Southwestern Commission Area Agency on Aging and The Mountaineer Publishing Company. Free copies are available at numerous locations that serve older adults throughout Haywood, Jackson, Macon, Swain, Graham, Clay and Cherokee counties. To request copies of this publication, please contact 828-586-1962.

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- Information and Resources • Legal Services Program • Health & Community Education

For more information please call the Southwestern Commission Area Agency on Aging @ 828-586-1962 or visit us online @ www.regiona.org



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SENIORS CONTENT

SUPPORT SERVICES

5 Senior Connections
Discover the vast array of programs offered by local senior centers.

8 Getting Around
Connect with convenient, low-cost transportation services in your community.

9 Senior Meals
Get hot meals at community senior dining sites or through home delivery.

10 Navigating Medicare
Not sure where to start?
Enrollment specialists are here to help.

11 In-Home Services
Understand the spectrum of in-home care and aid that's available.

12 Assistance Programs
Tap extra aid and support for fixed-income seniors.

14 Here to Help
Learn about the myriad resources offered by the Southwestern Commission Area Agency on Aging.

SENIOR LIFE

17 Get Involved
Join the ranks of seniors who give back to their community as volunteers.

20 Community Paramedics
Innovative program brings health care to seniors' doorsteps

22 Embrace Technology
Overcome the digital divide to connect with the world

25 Fall Prevention
Take steps to reduce risk and remain steady on your feet

27 Sound of Silence

- Combating loneliness and social isolation
- Make a difference as a Senior Companion
- Discover the heart-warming joy of animatronic pets
- Friendly phone calls serve as a life line

32 Mental Health
When life gets you down, it's OK to seek help

34 Coping With Grief
Strategies for working through the emotional stages of grief

RESOURCE DIRECTORY

36 Cherokee County

38 Clay County

39 Graham County

40 Haywood County

43 Jackson County

45 Macon County

47 Swain County

48 Regional

Discover your local Senior Center

CONNECT AND ENGAGE WITH OTHER SENIORS, ACTIVITIES AND RESOURCES

For Deb West, every day is a special day at the Tsali Manor Senior Center in Cherokee.

No sooner than the doors open each morning, the senior Center springs to life. Some gravitate to the exercise bikes and treadmills, some gather around a card game, and others just swap the latest news over coffee.

Then comes the activity line-up for the day. Enrichment programs fill the calendar at local senior Centers, from craft workshops and book discussions to fitness and technology classes. Bingo is a perennial favorite, of course.

The staff at senior Centers have as much fun as the seniors do.

"The seniors make it special," said West, manager of



Graham County Senior Center participants out and about on a field trip.

Tsali Manor. "We love being here. It makes us happy. At the end of the day, if we were able to make someone's life a little better, it was all worth it."

Senior Centers provide a welcoming environment to explore new pastimes or experience something you haven't done before — whether it's learning to paint or tai chi.

The programs help seniors stay active and mentally alert, said Keisha Greene, the activities director at the Graham Senior Center.

"It keeps them moving and gets them out of the house. It's good for their mental and physical well-being," Greene said.

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SENIOR CONNECTIONS

Senior Centers regularly host educational talks, like avoiding falls or how to use your smart phone. Some programs tackle aging topics that can otherwise be difficult to confront on your own, like Hospice Care 101 or caregiver burn-out.

At the Graham County Senior Center, there's a monthly talk on a rotating mental health topic.

"They talk about depression, dementia, processing grief, you name it," said Greene. "They also provide resources that seniors can reach out to on anything mental-health related."

Senior Centers also organize a host of field trips, allowing seniors to venture out without having to drive. Destinations can include outlet shops, bowling, holiday events, sightseeing or dinner shows in Gatlinburg. Tsali Manor has even ventured to out-of-state locations like Niagara Falls or Washington, D.C.

Above all, senior Centers provide an essential outlet for socialization and companionship. At Tsali Manor, West realized just how important that companionship is when a



Janice Jones, a regular at the Tsali Manor Senior Center operated by the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, celebrates St. Patrick's Day.

waterline broke and forced them to close for a few days.

"They couldn't wait to get back here to see their friends and socialize," West said.

At the Graham County Senior Center, a morning coffee hour helps seniors get their day off on the right foot.

"They're laughing and telling stories from the past," Greene said. "They're all just precious. We just love them. It's a rewarding job to see them happy."

Senior Centers provide more than a social outlet, however. They also serve as a clearinghouse to connect seniors with resources and support services. Senior Center staff can direct you to the right place for everything from Medicare enrollment and volunteer opportunities to in-home care provid-

ers and heating assistance.

See the directory listings for senior Center locations in your county. For those who can't drive or find a ride on their own, the local transit program in each county provides transportation to and from the Senior Centers.



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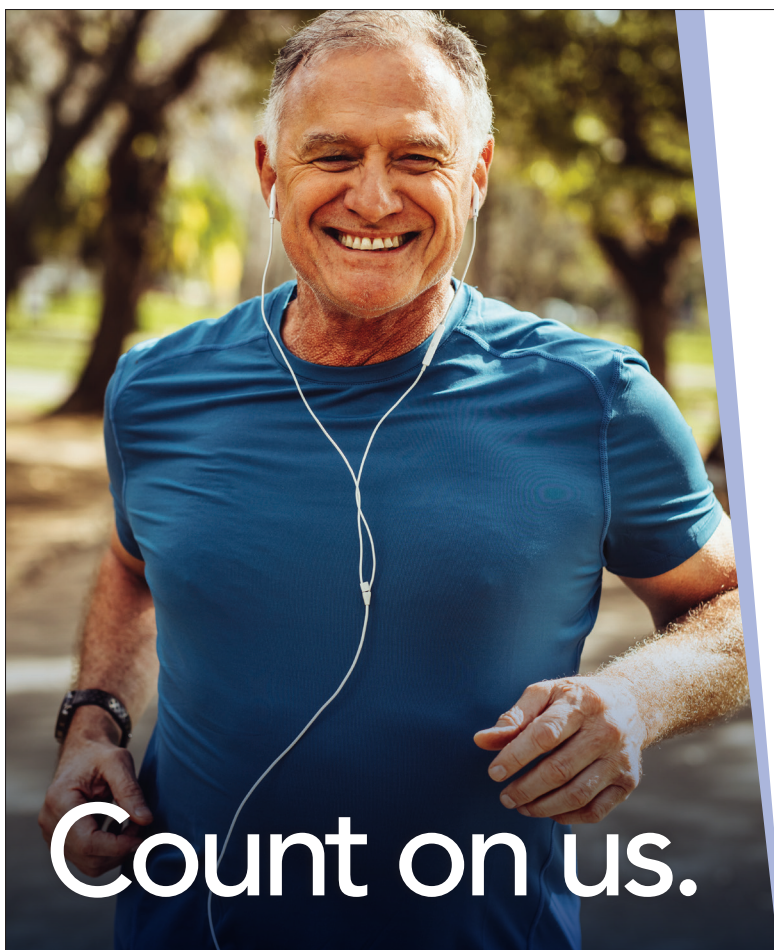


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COUNTY TRANSIT SERVICES WILL GET YOU THERE AND BACK AGAIN

From doctor appointments to grocery shopping, Clay County Transportation has been a lifesaver for Patricia Lepine, who lives alone and doesn't have a vehicle.

"The transportation bus is often my only lifeline. It's really a blessing," she said. "Without them, I wouldn't have a way to get the basics. They're like family — they're very sweet to me."

When Lepine broke her hip, she relied on Clay County Transportation to take her home from the hospital, making an important stop along the way.

"They picked me up from the hospital and took me to the grocery store and the pharmacy to fill my prescription," she said.

Once a month, she makes a big grocery trip, and the transit drivers even help her carry her bags into the house.

Every county in the region has a transit service to assist seniors in getting around. They

also transport seniors to medical appointments and facilities in other counties.

Transit services provide independence for seniors who don't have family nearby, or simply don't want to ask for a ride every time they need to go somewhere.

"They might need our assistance if their family works and isn't able to drive them places," said Marie Gunther, director of Clay County Transportation. "Or the family might not have a wheelchair-equipped vehicle."

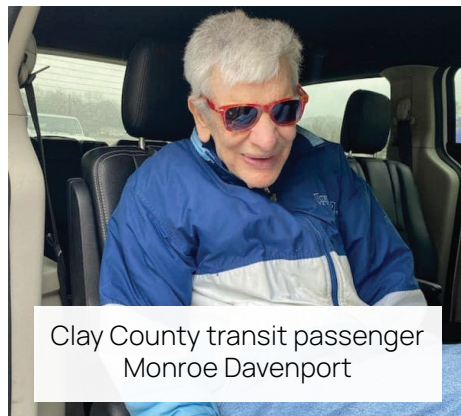
Transit vans are equipped with wheelchair lifts, and service animals are welcome.

For first-timers who might feel shy about riding with strangers, transit drivers and fellow riders will make you feel right at home. For those who are reluctant to ask for help because they don't want to burden anyone, that's what transit is here for, Gunther said.

"We're here to serve all citizens," she said. "We're happy to take you where you need to go."

How to get a ride

County transit services are provided on-demand, meaning seniors must call ahead



Clay County transit passenger
Monroe Davenport

to book a ride. Haywood, Jackson and Macon counties also offer regular routes with scheduled stops.

The charge is nominal, usually between \$1 and \$3 for local trips. The fare can be up to \$5 for longer distances, and trips to neighboring counties are generally \$15 and up.

To schedule a ride, check the listings directory in this magazine for the transit number in your county. Websites include rates for in-county and out-of-county trips, as well as maps of the scheduled stops in counties that also offer fixed routes.

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CONNECT WITH SENIOR MEAL OPTIONS IN YOUR COMMUNITY

More than one dozen meal sites in the seven western counties serve hundreds of nutritious mid-day meals five days a week, alongside the camaraderie of other seniors.

“Not only are we providing a hot nutritious meal, but also a welcoming environment to socialize with other seniors and be a part of the community,” said Jeanne Mathews, aging program coordinator with the Southwestern Commission Area Agency on Aging.

Seniors can enjoy activities and programs along with their meal, including games, crafts, and guest speakers on special topics. Meal sites also provide educational outreach, from health screenings to nutrition counseling, and keep seniors informed about other resources in the community.

Meals are free to those over 60, although adults of any age can enjoy the hot meal for a nominal donation. Seniors who are unable to drive can get a ride to meal locations with their local county transit program.

Check the listings directory in this magazine for the senior meal options in your county.



Home Delivered Meals

Every county has a home-delivered meal program, providing hot mid-day meals five days a week right to your doorstep. Some seniors may only need home-delivered meals for a short period while recovering from a surgery or illness, while others may receive meals for an extended time.

Meals delivered by volunteers are the only social interaction some isolated older adults have each day. Older adults being cared for at home by a caregiver can be eligible for home delivered meals, as well.

Volunteers who deliver the meals are a vital lifeline. There is an ongoing need for more volunteers. A variety of volunteer opportunities are available.

See the listings directory in this magazine for home-delivered meal options or information on volunteering.



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Congregate Dining

Home-Delivered Meals

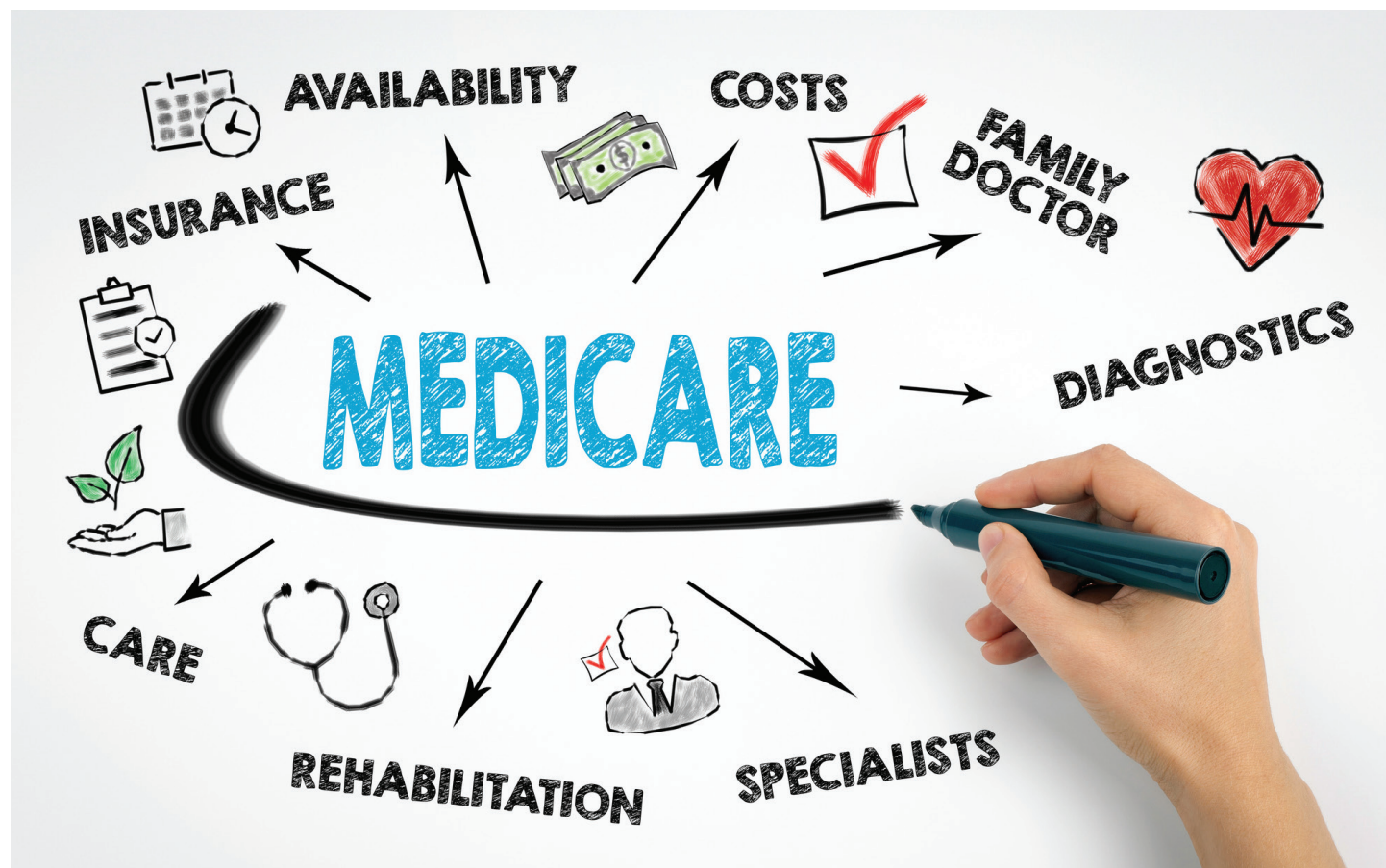
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Deciphering the Medicare Maze

If there's one rite of passage universally shared by all seniors, it's Medicare.

Medicare ads start filling up your mailbox well before the milestone of 65, but it often makes the process of choosing the right coverage even more confusing.

Simply figuring out the various enrollment windows can feel like walking a tightrope. Luckily, there's a program to help seniors sort through the mountain of Medicare decisions. It's called the Seniors Health Insurance Information Program, or SHIIP for short.

Every county in the region has a SHIIP office. SHIIP counselors offer free and unbiased information to help you decide which plans best fit your individual needs. Being proactive up front can save you from financial trouble later. There can be penalties

if you don't choose a plan on time. Or you can end up being locked in to a plan that doesn't work for your needs.

Another Medicare pitfall is choosing the wrong prescription drug plan. Each plan — more than 20 of them — has their own formulary for what medicines are covered. SHIIP counselors can help you figure out which drug plans include your medications.

Another decision point is supplemental insurance. Is it worth it? What if you are still working? And what is Medicare Advantage all about?

Think ahead to all the doctors you might need to see in the coming year. Are they in network for the plan you're considering? A plan might look great in a flier or TV commercial, but sometimes it might not be the best choice for your particular needs.

Dive into Medicare fact-finding

well before you turn 65 so you don't miss the limited initial enrollment window. Be proactive, study those plans and contact your local SHIIP office for help. Counselors are ready and waiting to provide free assistance.

See the directory listings in this magazine for the SHIIP counselors in each county.

In addition to making an appointment with a SHIIP counselor for a Medicare consultation, the federal Medicare website has a tool for comparing various plans online. Go to www.medicare.gov. For more information about the SHIIP program, visit www.ncshiip.com.



When daily life gets challenging, a helping hand can make all the difference

Many seniors need help with daily tasks or routine care in their homes, from bathing and feeding to cooking and cleaning. Sometimes, it can be difficult for an older adult to come to terms with needing help.

Seeking in-home assistance doesn't mean giving up independence, however. Ultimately, in-home aid or home health services can help seniors realize more freedom without having to rely on family members for all their needs. It also allows older adults to stay in their own homes longer by getting help with the tasks they can no longer do independently.

Maybe your eyesight is diminished and you need help reading the mail. Perhaps changing the sheets or cleaning the shower has become too difficult. In-home care could even be getting someone to run errands.

It may feel awkward to have a stranger coming into your home initially, but having someone to socialize with is often one of the greatest benefits. The in-home care provider may also be the only person checking on an older adult's well being on a regular basis.

There are several different types and levels of in-home care available.

Services can range from light-housekeeping, meal preparation and running errands to personal care like bathing, feeding, and dressing, as well as home health care recommended by a physician.

Depending on your situation, the cost may be covered or partly covered.

See the listings directory in this magazine for in-home care providers.

Seniors who qualify for Medicaid may receive in-home care through the Community Alternatives Program, a cost-effective alternative to placement in a long-term care facility. See the listings directory for the CAP contact in your county.



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Fixed-income seniors could be eligible for help

Learn about the options

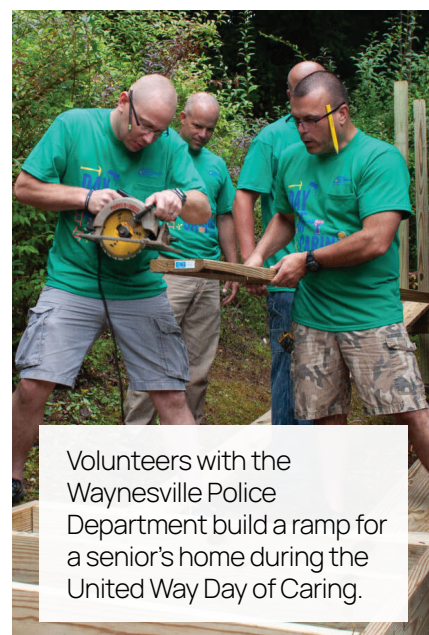
Home modifications

Getting around inevitably becomes more difficult as we age. If routine daily life — like getting to the mailbox or taking a shower — becomes insurmountable, home modifica-

tions can help. Every county has a home modification assistance program. Sometimes, the fix can be as simple as grab bars in the bathroom and hallways. Ramps, a more challenging addition, are often needed following a fall, a broken hip, surgery or a stroke.

Home modification could also include repairs, weatherization or installing smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, including ones with strobe lights for the hearing impaired.

Find the home modification number under your county in the directory listings.



Volunteers with the Waynesville Police Department build a ramp for a senior's home during the United Way Day of Caring.

Staying warm and keeping cool

Heating and cooling costs can be a struggle for seniors on fixed incomes.

Nonprofits, churches and senior agencies offer additional programs in some communities, as well — which can include free fans to stay cool in summer, firewood to help heat your home in the winter or help paying for heating oil. Contact the senior center in your county to get pointed in the right direction.

Also, check with the social services department in your county to see if you qualify for the following energy assistance programs:

- The Crisis Intervention Program provides assistance in the event of a heating or cooling crisis that poses a life-threatening or health-related emergency.
- The Low Income Energy Assistance Program provides a one-time payment toward heating costs for eligible households.

Food pantries

There's a wide variety of food assistance for seniors who need help stocking their cupboards and fridge. Churches and nonprofits run food pantries throughout the region, from weekly food boxes to monthly distributions of staples. To find out what food pantries are available in your community, call the senior center for your county listed in the resource directory.



Dave Bryan at Haywood Christian Ministry carries a box of food to a senior's car.

Medicaid-based assistance

The following programs are available to those who first qualify for Medicaid. For eligibility, contact your local Department of Social Services listed in the resource directory.

- **Assisted Living:** The Special Assistance Program helps pay for an assisted living facility. To be eligible, individuals must be age 65 or older or disabled.
- **Skilled Nursing Facilities:** Medicaid benefits can help cover the cost of long-term care in a skilled nursing facility, based on an income versus cost-of-care formula. The recipient must be able to use some of their income to help pay for the cost of care, and Medicaid will pay the remainder directly to the facility.
- **In-Home Care:** The Special Assistance In-Home Program helps provide in-home care, allowing people to remain



in their home in lieu of entering a long-term care facility. The Community Alternatives Program also provides assistance for in-home care.

- **Medicare Savings Program:** This program helps low-income seniors on Medicare pay for their premiums, deductibles and coinsurance.
- **Medical Transportation:** Qualifying seniors can get help paying for transportation to and from their medical appointments, typically in partnership with the transit program in your county.



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Standing in the gap, connecting the dots

SOUTHWESTERN COMMISSION AREA AGENCY ON AGING BRIDGES MOUNTAIN REGION

The Southwestern Commission Area Agency on Aging serves as an umbrella organization bridging the vast network of senior programs and resources across the seven western counties. Staff of the Area Agency on Aging wear many hats: connecting the public with services in their communities, advising and supporting partner agencies, overseeing state and federal programs at the local level, and advocating for senior resources.

The AAA provides the scaffolding that the region's senior services and programs are built upon. It also serves as an important voice for older adults — advocating for seniors to be included in the conversation when addressing social issues.

“The AAA aging network needs to be at the table for every concern in the region, whether it is housing or broadband or mental health or substance abuse. Those aren't age-specific issues, but the dynamic is often different for the older adult population,” said Sarajane Melton, director of the Southwestern Commission AAA. “We need to look at issues through that lens to ensure we find the right solutions. But it doesn't always get brought up unless we are at the table.”

The AAA played a critical role as a support network for older adults during the pandemic — something it was perfectly positioned to do given its decades of experience. The AAA team helped organizations pivot to providing no-contact services.

“We got a lot of calls from our providers asking ‘What do we do? How do we make this work?’” Melton recalled. “It was a collaborative effort. If something was working in one county, it was ‘Tell us what you're doing and we'll see if it could work in another county.’”

Sharing solutions and best practices is the foundation of the AAA, after all.

“We are that bridge across the region,” Melton said.

That role came into play again as the pandemic eased. Unwinding the new normal of Covid and getting back to



Southwestern Commission Area Agency on Aging staff (from left): Kellie Dula-Handoo, Jeanne Mathews, Sarajane Melton, Anna Rogers, Lisa Allen and Pat Baker.

the old normal has been critical to bring seniors out of isolation and to connect with the larger community once more.

Finding new and better ways of providing services to older adults is paramount to the AAA mission. For example, the AAA recently led the introduction of a new model for in-home aid, a service for older adults who need help with routine tasks and self-care in order to remain in their own home. The new model allows seniors to choose their own caregivers rather than be limited to a list of pre-approved providers, known as “consumer directed in-home aid.”



Participants at the Hiwassee Dam Senior Center in Cherokee County created wooden quilt blocks.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AND PROGRAMS

The Southwestern Commission Area Agency on Aging serves as a liaison for many of the federal, state and local programs and services for older adults across the seven western counties.

Here are a few programs managed directly by the Area Agency on Aging not covered elsewhere in this publication. For more information on any of these programs, call the AAA at 828-586-1962 or visit www.regiona.org/aaa-2.

Senior Legal Support

There's a host of legal documents that are important for seniors to have on hand, from a living will to power of attorney. The Area Agency on Aging provides funding for an older adult to prepare a single legal document of their choice.

The service is intended to get seniors thinking about the future and help them get their affairs in place should the unexpected arise.

"We feel like it is important for folks' wishes to be expressed, and the best way to make sure they are carried out is to have a written legal document that specifies it," explained Sarajane Melton, director of the Southwestern Commission Area Agency on Aging.

The AAA connects seniors to an elder law attorney in their county. The legal paperwork is handled confidentially by the attorney and client, while the AAA picks up the bill. There is no

income qualification to be eligible for the service, however, there is an application process.

Senior Medicare Patrol

Medicare scams are a big business, with an estimated \$9 billion in Medicare fraud and abuse carried out in the U.S. each year. Scams often involve billing senior's Medicare accounts for services or products they didn't authorize.

Senior Medicare Patrol aims to inform seniors about the potential for scams and red flags to look for. The AAA also presents programs to community groups on request on how to avoid scams.

The Area Agency on Aging also serves as a clearinghouse to help seniors avoid other types of scams. If you've been a victim of a scam, the AAA can point you to the proper entity to investigate and rectify it.

Long-term Care Ombudsman

If you have a concern involving a long-term care facility, the Area Agency on Aging can help mediate or resolve the issue through its ombudsman program. The ombudsman serves as the liaison for the Long-Term Care Community Advisory Committee in each of the seven western counties.

Complaints can be shared anonymously, or the AAA can work cooperatively with families and the facility on specific situations. Long-term care facilities include nursing homes, assisted living facilities and family care homes.



The **Clay County Senior Center** is a multi-purpose facility which houses programs for older adults such as Congregate Meals, Home-Delivered Meals, Health & Wellness, Medicare/SHIP Counseling, Operation Fan/Heat Relief, Senior Companion, and Volunteerism.

The Senior Center provides a wide variety of classes and activities to help our seniors stay active and healthy: Woodcarving, Bridge, Wellness Workout, Rummikub, Dominos, Needlecrafts, Tablet Tutors, Wii Bowling, Hand & Foot, Corn Hole, Yoga, Mah Jong, 5D Beading, Oil Painting, Bingo, and Line Dancing. The Senior Center also has a pool table, shuffleboard table, treadmill, exercise bike and computer lab available for participant use as well as jigsaw puzzles, a reading library and an Information Station filled with useful materials for older adults.

Last but not least, Clay County Senior Center was certified by the State of North Carolina Division of Aging & Adult Services as a Senior Center of Merit in 2010 & a Senior Center of Excellence in 2015.



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Ad26179

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Long-term care provides many benefits and comes in many forms

Can I remain on my own, and for how much longer? It's one of the most difficult choices faced by seniors, one that's often accompanied by a sense of loss and fear of change.

Sometimes, barriers to remaining at home are too great to overcome. Deciding whether it's time to transition to a long-term care facility is ultimately a personal journey, and it can be hard for seniors and their caregivers to weigh the pros and cons objectively.

There are many advantages when transitioning to a long-term care facility, however. Enjoying the company of fellow seniors is another attractive benefit.

In some cases, there's ample time to look down the road and choose the

type of long-term care facility that's right for your situation. In other cases, a decision has to be made quickly, like in the event of a stroke or the unexpected death of a spouse who was serving

as the primary caregiver for their partner.

If possible, plan ahead and choose a long-term care facility before you actually need one.

START THE CONVERSATION WITH LONG-TERM CARE VIDEO SERIES

Deciding whether to enter a long-term care facility can be a difficult crossroads. A new video series produced by the Southwestern Commission Area Agency on Aging is designed to help seniors and their caregivers start the conversation and guide them through the planning process and decision points. The informational video is available online at regiona.org/aaa-2. To find out how to borrow a DVD version, call Anna Rogers, Long Term Care Ombudsman for the AAA, at 828-586-1962, ext. 223 or email anna@regiona.org.



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Volunteering: the gift that keeps on giving

Volunteers make the world go 'round here in Western North Carolina — delivering meals to homebound seniors, sorting donations at thrift stores, exercising dogs at animal shelters or helping at-risk kids with homework.

Without volunteers, the quality of life and community fabric we cherish in the mountains wouldn't be possible. And seniors are the backbone of our volunteer ranks.

Seniors make up 75% of the volunteer workforce, according to John Chicoine, coordinator of the Haywood-Jackson Volunteer Center.

Seniors who serve as volunteers discover a deep sense of purpose.

"Volunteering is a great way to be engaged," said Kellie Dula, family caregiver support coordinator for the Southwestern Commission Area Agency on Aging. "The more you help other people, the more engaged your mind will be."

For Susie Evans, 72, of Murphy, Monday is her favorite day of the week — it's when she delivers meals to homebound seniors. She takes pride in knowing the crucial role she plays in someone's life.

"Sometimes we're the only people these clients see," she said. "I ask if there's anything we can do to help. I'll set digital clocks and change light bulbs. I'll bring them birthday cards or Halloween candy, and at Christmas, we'll sing a Christmas carol."

The personal fulfillment of helping a good cause is what motivates Charlotte Cowan, who volunteers at a thrift store in Sylva that supports the Great Smokies Health Foundation.

"The profits go back to the community, and we're able to meet the needs of a lot of people," Cowan said.

Volunteering is also an outlet to make friends.

"It's an extremely good way to socialize with other people," Cowan said.

At the Swain Senior Center in Bryson City, the volunteers who deliver meals to the homebound are like family.

"It's great for their social interaction, and it gives them a sense of purpose to give back and to be helpful," said Lisa Loftis, director of the Swain Senior Center. "It's exercise, and post-COVID, it's a way to get out and make friends. One volunteer was so excited to reconnect with people he hadn't seen in two years, it was extra special for him and for the clients."

Filling a void

Organizations that rely on volunteers struggled during the pandemic. As the pandemic eased, seniors were among the first to flock back.

"It was definitely seniors leading the community post pandemic," said Cowan. "We reopened gradually, we wore masks and we all had our vaccinations."

Cont. on page 18

GET INVOLVED

Still, many organizations haven't seen a return to pre-pandemic numbers and are desperate to grow their volunteer ranks.

Chicoine, who maintains a database of volunteer opportunities, said there are 65 organizations actively seeking volunteers in Haywood and Jackson counties.

The good news is that seniors interested in volunteering can find something they're passionate about — whether it's an extension of their skills and life experiences or something entirely new.

"Some seniors might want to do something different than what they did during their careers," Chicoine said.



Members of Bicycle Haywood repair and tune up donated bikes to give needy children at Christmas



Susie Evans & Gwen Hathaway delivering meals with the Cherokee County Senior Center.

"Others retire with a wealth of knowledge and are eager to share that where it's needed."

Seniors can give back no matter their age or circumstances, he said. There are even opportunities to volunteer from home.

Finding a volunteer opportunity that's right for you

The needs for volunteers are endless. Dozens of nonprofit organizations are looking for volunteers, making it easy to find the right fit.

- Animal lovers can volunteer with their local animal shelter or animal rescue group, spending time with orphaned pets awaiting their forever home.
- Are you an outgoing, talkative sort? Volunteer to visit and interact with residents at a local nursing home.
- Churches have a large stable of volunteers, from helping with youth after-school programs to community outreach projects, like providing clothing and food to families in need.
- Food pantries rely on volunteers to sort and box food donations and assist with food distribution days.
- Those who love the outdoors can volunteer for environmental groups, from sampling water quality to coordinated stream clean-ups. Hiking clubs host trail workdays, and the national parks and forests engage volunteers in citizen science projects.
- Museums and galleries train docents to explain their collections, as well as people to collect tickets and direct traffic.
- Those with construction or handyman skills can volunteer with Habitat for Humanity or social service organizations that build ramps and install grab bars in seniors' homes.
- Nonprofits that operate thrift stores to support their missions need volunteers to sort and manage the flow of donations. By volunteering at a thrift store, you're also supporting the mission of its nonprofit.
- Book lovers can connect with their local Friends of the Library group, many of which operate used book stores to support the library.

To learn about volunteer opportunities, contact the Senior Center in your county. See the county-by-county directory listings in the back of this guide for contact numbers.

Seniors helping seniors

Seniors eager to give back to their community can find added satisfaction when the people they are helping are other seniors.

"It's a beautiful match when you have seniors helping other seniors," said Kellie Dula, family caregiver support coordinator for the Southwestern Commission Area Agency on Aging.

The Area Agency on Aging has several volunteer opportunities for seniors.

- **Area Agency on Aging Regional Advisory Council:** The Council carries out advisory functions that further the agency's mission of developing and coordinating community-based systems of services for all older adults in the seven western counties and the Eastern Band of the Cherokee Indians. Contact Lisa Allen, Health and Community Outreach coordinator for the Area Agency on Aging at 828-586-1962 ext. 221.

- **NC Senior Tarheel Representative:** Each of North Carolina's 100 counties appoints one delegate and alternate to the nonpartisan N.C. Senior Tarheel Legislature. Volunteers age 60+ meet three times a year to study issues, hear from experts, and develop legislative recommendations to present to the N.C. General Assembly. Contact Lisa Allen at 828-586-1962 ext. 221.

- **Evidence Based Health Promotion Training for Lay Leaders:** Participants complete a four-day training to become a certified leader for the Living Healthy program to become part of a larger group of trainers who receive regular updates through meetings, phone conferences, annual leader retreat and/or webinars. Contact Lisa Allen at 828-586-1962 ext. 221.

- **Long Term Care Community Advisory Committees:** Members advocate for residents and their rights in long-term care facilities and family care homes as volunteer ombudsmen. Contact the county manager's office in your county or Anna Rogers at 828-339-2223.

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Benny Coleman, Community Paramedic with Haywood County EMS.

Managing healthcare at home

COMMUNITY PARAMEDIC PROGRAMS OFFER PROACTIVE APPROACH

In recent years, some Western North Carolina counties have adopted a more proactive approach to senior healthcare through community paramedic programs.

Macon County was the first in the region to create a Community Care Paramedic program in 2015, operated by Macon Emergency Services. What began with 20 patients on the roster has grown to 92 active patients today. Over the years, the program has helped more than 2,000 patients.

The goal of the program is to keep patients from having to go back and forth for stays at the hospital or a rehab center by expanding access to healthcare at home, explained Macon County Community Care Paramedic Coordinator Joey Gibson.

Patients are most often referred to the program by the hospital and doctors, then licensed paramedics will

arrange a visit to the patient's home. They take the patient's vital signs, do blood work if ordered by the doctor, conduct a general physical health assessment and spend time with them to discuss any medical issues they have.

They even do a home safety inspection to look for fall hazards and properly working smoke detectors.

Each patient's situation is unique — some require only educational support, such as how to use their insulin pen or manage their medications.

"An elderly person who might have trouble seeing or might shake due to Parkinson's, they might be unable to deal with their pill planner successfully on their own," Gibson said. "So we will build a pill planner with them that lasts them for two weeks."

Others need ongoing weekly visits to ensure they are staying healthy

enough to remain home. Paramedics keep patients enrolled in the program for at least three months. But some have required assistance since the program's inception seven years ago — a testament to the program's success at helping seniors remain at home instead of going into a care facility.

The community paramedics are able to identify factors that contribute to ongoing health issues, which could in turn lead to hospital stays if not for the in-home support. Many reveal that they cannot remember to take their medication or need help with bathing.

One of the origin stories behind the Community Paramedic Program in Macon County involved an elderly woman with diabetes who kept ending up in the hospital for not taking her insulin. It was finally discovered she didn't have a refrigerator to keep the insulin cold.



Macon County Community Paramedic Joey Gibson.

Gibson said they partner with local organizations to connect those patients to the additional assistance they need.

“We focus on the whole patient, not just their healthcare because health is affected by so many other factors,” Gibson said.

In some cases, the program will partner with home health organizations or hospice to plan which days they visit to ensure the patient is being checked on regularly.

If patients progress to being able to manage their own health, they “graduate” from the program.

“We make graduation a big celebration, because they went from needing support reminding them to take their medicine to being able to do it on their own. It’s a good thing when they no longer need our services,” Gibson said.

As a tax-funded program, these services are free to patients and are ultimately cost effective for the county, Gibson said.

“It keeps the patient from having to call 9-1-1 every day because of their health, and it saves the county money from having to pay extra ambulance crews. We are saving Medicare and Medicaid money as well,” Gibson said.

In Jackson County, a Community Paramedicine Program created by Duke LifePoint offers similar services with the purpose of keeping people “happy, healthy and at home.” Since 2020, the program has seen more than 1,600 patients.

Once a patient is referred and enrolled in the program, a paramedic plans a visit within 24 to 48 hours.

Before the program was launched, patients coming home from the hospital would often be right back again within 24 hours because they failed to follow up with their physician, didn’t have transportation or didn’t have their medication, said Toby Moore, Jackson County EMS supervisor.

Not only do paramedics conduct health exams, they also schedule doctor appointments and arrange transportation for the patient.

With the help of the Community Paramedicine Program, Harris Regional Hospital now has the lowest readmission rates of the 67 hospitals in the LifePoint network, Moore said.

COMMUNITY PARAMEDIC CONTACTS

Haywood County

828-400-0523

Macon County

828-349-2067

Jackson County

828-507-0032

Swain County

828-488-6021

Graham County

828-479-7967

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Overcoming the digital divide

In today's digital era, it's become increasingly difficult to function without the internet — from paying bills or managing finances to using telehealth services or comparing Medicare plans.

The internet also opens a world of possibilities to stay connected with loved ones, whether it's staying abreast of what the grandkids are up to through social media posts or monthly video chats with children who live elsewhere.

But for many seniors, diving into the world of technology can be daunting. The older we get, it seems the more we resist change, creating a psychological barrier that can sometimes be hard to move past.

Needing help to join the digital community is nothing to be ashamed of, however.

Bridging the gap

Luckily, there are options to bridge the digital divide in Western North Carolina, so you don't have to get left



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behind. Learning to navigate technology and figuring out how to use your devices can be as simple as popping into your local library or visiting your local Senior Center.

Jayne Williams, a former high school math teacher turned self-taught tech guru, offers her services to those who need some direction using their electronic devices at the Haywood County Senior Resource Center. Williams offers free drop-in classes on Android devices and everything iPhone.

“I learn every time I have a class,” said Williams. “And there are no stupid questions here.”

Williams not only offers one-on-one help for seniors stumped by their devices, but provides digital education, as well. She covers which cell carriers work well in the area, which devices are more user-friendly for seniors, and tricks to make your devices meet your needs — from enlarging font sizes to setting up apps.



Sandra Rowland frequents the classes offered at the Senior Resource

Center and says they have helped her
Cont. on page 24

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immensely — not only to overcome that digital barrier, but to stay up-to-date on new platforms. As a fiber artist, she leans heavily on YouTube and Pinterest to keep up with fiber art trends.

“I have a ways to go, but I am learning how to learn it,” said Rowland. “Learning something new that is life changing means figuring out how to adjust it to your own wants and leaving a door open for discovery.”

Even seniors who know the basics can benefit from the free classes — from building confidence to being able to spot scams targeting seniors via social media and email.

“Technology can be a dangerous thing if someone isn’t educated about those dangers,” said Michelle Claytor, activities director for the Haywood Senior Resource Center.

Embracing technology allows seniors to connect with the world and remain independent, she said.

Local libraries throughout the region also offer technology assistance, from scheduled sessions to drop-in troubleshooting.

“Bring in your devices and questions. We are always here to help,” said Zach Jones, community engagement librarian for the Haywood County library system.

Aside from the designated help session — Tech Tuesdays at the Waynesville library and Wired Wednesdays at the Canton library — Jones welcomed seniors to simply walk-in with their questions any time.

Classes and education offered via the Senior Centers and local libraries are vital to closing the digital divide for seniors here in Western North Carolina. The world is just a click away.

Digital Seniors Program lauded for breaking through the technology barrier

A pilot program launched by the Fontana Library System has helped dozens of seniors make the leap into the online world — proving it’s never too late to embrace digital technology.

“I hear many older adults across the region talk about how they don’t understand technology and feel like they are getting left behind in this digital world,” said Lisa Allen, health and community educator with the Southwestern Commission Area Agency on Aging. “They lack confidence in their ability to learn.”

Enter the Fontana Library Digital Seniors Program.

The grant-funded program made it possible for 70 seniors without internet at home to join the digital world and eliminate the isolation barrier. Seniors were provided with Chromebooks and hotspots, plus training on how to use the devices to get online.

“We want to help seniors use the internet and technology in a way that is useful for them — connecting with their grandkids, social media, watching shows online, and other meaningful ways,” said Laura Lansford, adult services supervisor at the Macon County Library and project manager for the Digital Seniors Program. “The biggest thing is making

sure folks who don’t have access to the internet and technology gain access.”

The training included group classes on how to use the devices, plus one-on-one support and trouble-shooting in the seniors’ own homes. The Southwestern Commission Area Agency on Aging was a partner in the project by connecting the library system with older adults who could benefit from receiving Chromebooks and hotspots.

The Digital Seniors Program was funded by a grant from the State Library of North Carolina, thanks to funds earmarked through the federal Library Services and Technology Act.

“Digital inclusion is now a reality for 70 older adults in Jackson, Macon and Swain counties,” said Allen. “This project has offered safety and a trusted relationship to assist them.”

Fontana Regional Library received the Outstanding Community Service Award for 2022 from the Southeastern Area Agencies on Aging Association. The project hailing from our rural corner of Appalachia was chosen for the prestigious award from a nine-state region.

The initiative was such a success it has now entered a second phase, which includes the addition of two Digital Navigators to offer one-on-one support.

The danger of falls and how to prevent them

Many things come with aging, but falling, and the potential injuries it can cause, doesn't have to be one of them. As adults age, falls pose a health risk that could rob seniors of their independence and cause financial hardship.

As the Aging Program coordinator for the Southwestern Commission Area Agency on Aging, Jeanne Mathews is passionate about educating seniors that falls are predictable and preventable.

"The most important thing is helping older adults realize that falling is not a normal part of aging and there are things you can do to prevent falls," she said.

Falls are the leading cause of fatal and nonfatal injuries among older adults, according to the Centers for Disease Control. While those at highest risk for fall injuries are 80 and older, one in four adults ages 65-plus are at risk of falling.

And as the U.S. population of Baby Boomers ages, these risks increase.

The most common fall injuries include breaking of wrists, legs and hips — caused by the person trying to brace the fall or catching themselves on a wall or countertop, Mathews says.

Fall injuries can rob older adults of their independence, leading to recovery time in a hospital, rehabilitation center or nursing facility.

"Falls can cause significant injury, which can then change their quality of life and can also be quite costly, depending on what kind of injury they have," Mathews said.

According to the CDC, falls among older adults cost \$50 billion in medical care annually.



Fall prevention

A combination of factors contribute to falls, says Lori Schrodt, a physical therapist and professor at Western Carolina University.

Common causes are balance impairments, muscle weakness, trip hazards, improper footwear, medications, low vision, dizziness and difficulty walking, Schrodt said.

As a former home health therapist and fall credentialed professional, Schrodt says one of the easiest ways to prevent falls is to first assess your environment.

"Take a tour of the house or have someone else take a tour of the house and look for things you might trip over," she said.

Throw rugs are a common culprit for falls, as well as loose cords and wires, furniture and other objects blocking an open walking path. For those who wish to keep rugs in the home, Schrodt says it's important to make sure they are low-profile with a non-skid backing.

Schrodt suggests equipping bathrooms with grab bars inside the bathtub and next to the toilet, and rubber mats on the floors. Bright nightlights should be installed in dark areas to improve visibility.

Cont. on page 26

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FALL PREVENTION

The Southwestern Commission Area Agency on Aging can connect seniors with the appropriate resource in their county to get help installing fall-prevention equipment, such as grab bars.

Proper footwear is also beneficial in preventing falls.

“A lot of older people like to wear shoes around the house. Whether it’s slippers or regular shoes, they should be secure on your foot, meaning it has a closure or Velcro so it’s not going to slide off your heel,” Schrodts says.

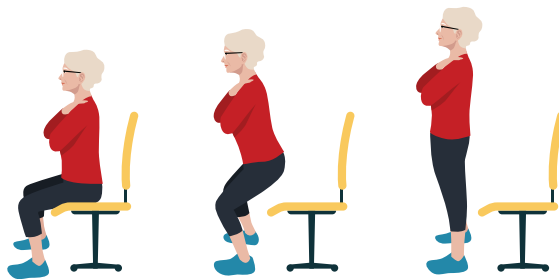
Preventative exercises

One of the best fall-prevention measures is keeping chronic conditions at bay early in life by following a healthy diet and exercising to retain muscle strength, Mathews says.

“The better shape you’re in as you age, typically the better your chances are for not falling,” Mathews says.

When it comes to physical exercises, Schrodts recommends seniors undergo a physical therapy evaluation first.

“Physical therapy evaluation will help tailor exercises to



individual needs. That’s because no two people fall for exactly the same reason,” Schrodts says.

Additionally, a physical therapist is able to help patients who require a cane or walker identify the best product to meet their needs.

But there are some general exercises that people can practice from almost anywhere to improve balance and strength.

Schrodts suggests older adults practice standing up from a sitting position five to 10 times without using their hands. This exercise promotes lower body strength. For balance, stand at your kitchen counter and lift one leg at a time without holding onto something.

“Aside from falls, exercise helps you feel more confident on your feet,” Schrodts says. “It’s part of a good health plan that enables you to stay at home independently, and ultimately that’s what people want. They want to stay home and they want to feel good — and part of that’s feeling confident in your mobility.”

Partnership provides free shoes to seniors

Samaritan’s Feet International, a worldwide nonprofit, began in 2003 with the mission of providing shoes to children around the world. Now 20 years later, the organization has donated more than 9.2 million pairs of shoes worldwide.

Since then, the nonprofit’s mission has expanded to help more than needy children. Deborah Cox-Roush, senior program manager for Samaritan’s Feet International, has worked with the organization to target another vulnerable demographic: America’s seniors.

“98 million Americans will be over 55 by 2030 — with more over the age of 55 than under 15. I’m very concerned that America is not prepared,” she said.

Better shoes can prevent falls, assist with mobility, and overall health and wellness for seniors.

“But more importantly, it can provide dignity to those who have given so much to us,” Cox-Roush said.

The initial goal was to provide 12,000 pairs of shoes to seniors, which will soon be surpassed with the help of local organizations like the Southwestern Commission Area Agency on Aging (AAA). Since 2021, the AAA has helped fit and provide free shoes to almost 1,000 seniors.

“We have seen first-hand the devastation of falls and how a good-fitting pair of shoes can really help with that,” said Lisa Allen, aging specialist for Health and Community Outreach with the AAA. “We knew this was our chance to delve into the practicality of good fitting shoes.”

AAA has been coordinating shoe clinics in each of



the seven western counties it serves. In addition to shoes, seniors are also provided socks, a hygiene kit and information on fall prevention. Additional clinics are

Each clinic operates differently. In Jackson County, for example, senior center directors identified those most in need of shoes and worked with the Western Carolina University Physical Therapy Department to assist seniors one-on-one with shoe fittings. Cherokee County offered a senior resource fair, which included the shoe clinic. And in Macon County shoes were offered as part of the home-delivered meals program.

Those who wish to be fitted for a pair of free shoes or attend a shoe clinic may contact Allen at 828-586-1962, ext. 221 or lallen@regiona.org.

You're not alone

TOOLS FOR OVERCOMING SENIOR ISOLATION

The majority of older adults experience some form of isolation and loneliness later in life, which can impact both mental and physical health.

“There is a stigma older people feel — I’m old and in the way, and no one wants to hear my complaints,” said Larry Reeves, recently retired Long Term Care Ombudsman for the Southwestern Commission Area Agency on Aging. “They may be shy, or feel they don’t have a lot to offer. Some people lose their self-esteem as they grow older. They think they don’t look like they used to or have the same vitality.”

While cut from the same cloth, isolation and loneliness are not exactly the same thing.

Isolation is a physical state. The children have moved away. A couple has retired to the mountains and doesn’t know how to make new friends. A spouse has passed away. Declining health or mobility has made it difficult to get out — something that’s particularly acute in rural areas.

“Distance creates a sense of being cut-off from family, friends and social networks,” Reeves said. “A lot has to do with the ability to communicate with others. It may be because of a decline in physical ability so they can no longer walk or drive.”

Meanwhile, loneliness is more of a mental state. Loneliness can stem from isolation, but not always. Even those who have neighbors in the next room, such as residents of a long-term care facility, may experience loneliness.

Cont. on page 28



Strategies for combating isolation and loneliness

- Make yourself ready for engagement. Say to yourself: “I’m going to be available. It’s not too much trouble.”
- Invest in adaptive equipment, such as good hearing aids, good magnifying devices and good walkers, many of which you can obtain affordably through programs for seniors.
- Keep your mind active and find ways to socialize, from utilizing your local library to participating at your local Senior Center.
- Maintain mobility by doing flexibility and

endurance exercises.

- Pick up a new hobby or take a class. Community colleges offer enrichment short-courses and workshops on everything from crafts to genealogy.
- Learn to use email, Zoom or social media to connect with others, from visiting with family virtually to participating in online programs.
- Consider a roommate or a pet.
- Look into volunteering opportunities.
- Don’t be worried about talking about your feelings and struggles. People are generally receptive if you ask for help.
- Learn the resources available to you and use them.

SOUND OF SILENCE

“They may be surrounded by lots of people, but they feel alone because they don’t really know these people or feel they don’t care about them,” said Jeff Jones, coordinator of the Social Bridges Project.

Many older adults take advantage of the Senior Centers in their county, where they can socialize with other seniors, engage in activities and get a free or cheap lunch — all of which are designed to alleviate isolation and loneliness.

“We always suggest that people who are isolated come to the Senior Center so they can be sure they get a meal, because if they get depressed, they don’t eat. And they just need to be around other people,” said Keisha Greene, the activities coordinator at the Graham County Senior Center in

Robbinsville.

Greene said the Graham Senior Center lost more than half of its regulars after being closed for two years during the pandemic. Many who returned couldn’t remember each other’s names or how to play games that they played before the shutdown.

“They just lost a lot of cognitive function when their daily routine changed,” she said.

The Tsali Manor Senior Center in Cherokee also ceased indoor activities during the pandemic, but because it serves 250 families in the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, the center moved most of its activities outdoors.

Staffers continued to prepare lunches, handing them out to people as they drove through the center’s parking lot.

“We were out there every day in masks and gloves, in rain, cold and freezing weather,” said Deb West, Tsali Senior Center manager. “We also sent out meals to our tribal members who are homebound, with boxes of food, groceries and household supplies.”

After being holed up during the pandemic, many seniors have yet to plug back in to the world around them. Whether it’s engaging with your local Senior Center, church or community clubs — or simply resuming the activities you used to enjoy — finding ways to connect with others is paramount to combating isolation and loneliness.

“If you don’t socialize, you will get depressed,” Greene said.



Seniors engage in friendly competition over a game of hearts as part of the Haywood County Senior Games.



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Make a difference as a Senior Companion

Seniors interested in serving as companions to fellow seniors — from running errands to preparing meals — can earn a tax-free stipend under Mountain Project's Senior Companions Program.

In addition to driving seniors to the grocery store, hair appointments and other errands, companions help around the home with tasks like changing the sheets, cleaning out the fridge, reading the mail or just visiting. These small acts often make the difference in a senior being able to stay in their own home.

"Volunteers find it rewarding to make a difference in someone's life so they're able to maintain their dignity and stay at home," said Program Director Chuck Nye.

The pandemic decimated the ranks of volunteers for the program, resulting in a long waiting list of seniors waiting for a companion, according to Nye. Those in need include frail older adults, adults with disabilities, those with terminal illnesses and those whose caregivers need respite.

Senior Companions not only serve as a lifeline for getting to appointments and carrying out tasks the older adult struggles to accomplish on their own, but also com-



Patsy Parton serves as a Senior Companion in Haywood County.

bat loneliness and isolation that come from living alone.

Senior Companions must be at least 55 years old and able to volunteer between 15 and 40 hours a week. They are paid a tax-free hourly stipend and reimbursed for gas, as well as receive paid vacation and sick leave.

For information on becoming a Senior Companion, contact Mountain Projects at 828-452-1447.



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Animatronic pets bring joy to seniors

Some older adults really miss the pets they've had all their lives, but are no longer able to take care of. They can't walk the dog or change the cat's litter box, but they would love to have a pet to sit on their lap while they watch television at night.

Enter the animatronic pets available through the Southwestern Commission Area Agency on Aging via a federal grant.

"You'd think they were real animals until you get close to them," said Kellie Dula, Family Caregiver and Dementia Support Coordinator with AAA. "They provide the closeness of having a real pet without the physical responsibility."

They are especially comforting to seniors living alone.

"If you're feeling isolated and alone, having some kind of companion helps to relieve that feeling. So a pet of some sort can help with that," Dula said.

The battery-operated animals, made by Joy for All, include cats, dogs and birds. They move, make sounds and react to touch in very life-like ways.

"If you are a pet lover and you can't have one, this is an excellent alternative," Dula said.

Dula has seen first-hand the difference animatronic pets make, citing one lady who had become argumentative and irritable.

"We showed her one of the cats and she calmed down im-



Animatronic pets provided by the AAA bring joy to clients at the Macon County Care Connection Day Program.

mediately. It really improved her quality of life and absolutely improved her attitude," Dula said.

To inquire about an Animatronic Pet, contact Dula at 828.565.1826. Or kellie@regiona.org.



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866.466.9734 or visit FourSeasonsCare.org

A friendly phone call can make all the difference

In the sparsely populated mountains west of the Nantahala Gorge, a dozen seniors who live alone get a call once a day from a Graham County sheriff's deputy. If they don't answer, the deputy calls again and again, then they send a squad car to the house just to make sure they're OK.

"They really look forward to that call every day, because sometimes that's the only call they get," said Graham Jail Administrator Edward Cable, who makes sure the call list is attended each day. "Our folks try to give them the time to talk about anything they want to talk about. One lady told us she would sit there for days and not see anyone, so we would also make sure a deputy dropped by every few days."

Senior Calling Programs throughout Western North Carolina are a lifeline for isolated residents, offered by the sheriff's office or local senior center depending on the county.

"It's important for seniors who are living alone without family or friends nearby to have that communication and peace of mind that someone is looking out for them," said Michelle Claytor, director of the phone assurance



program with the Haywood Senior Resource Center.

In addition to being a friendly voice on the other end of the phone, volunteers can connect seniors, as needed, with resources and assistance programs or talk them through computer questions.

Seniors who would like to get on the calling list and volunteers willing to make calls can contact the program in their county and ask for the seniors phone assurance program.

Cherokee County: 828-837-2521, ext. 1434

Clay County: 828-389-6354

Graham County: 828-479-8650

Haywood County: 828-356-2813

Macon County: 828-349-2058, ext. 0

EBCI: 828-359-6290



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It's OK not to be OK

SENIORS STRUGGLING WITH MENTAL HEALTH AREN'T ALONE

Mental health plays a huge role in our ability to function properly, not only in society but in ways that make us happy, healthy and comfortable in our day-to-day lives. When this part of our wellbeing suffers, everything else suffers, as well.

While the importance of mental health has been in the spotlight nationally since the pandemic, many older adults are still reluctant to admit when they need help. Senior advocates in the region hope to change that stigma, conveying the message that “It’s OK to be not be OK.”

An estimated 20% of people over age 55 years experience some type of mental health issue, including anxiety, cognitive impairment and depression, according to the Centers for Disease Control.

“When you’re feeling down and or having a hard time, the superpower is to reach out,” said Chris Gadzik, licensed therapist and speaker at the 2022 Aging Conference hosted by the Southwestern Commission Area Agency on Aging.

The conference brought together experts in the field to have what can sometimes be tough conversations about the reality of mental health issues among older adults. Hope was a key word during the conference.

“There is always hope, no matter the age, no matter what you’ve done, you have self-worth,” said Sarajane Melton, director for the Southwestern Commission Area Agency on Aging.

However, finding hope can be a challenge for those suffering from depression, one of the top mental health issues among older adults. Symptoms of depression can often mimic grief.

“Loss of appetite, can’t sleep, foggy brain, can’t think straight, interesting things that don’t seem interesting.



These are very specific experiences that happen with grief that actually mimic depression,” said Gadzik. “We have all grieved, and so it’s a little easier to understand what depression is when comparing it to grief.”

Gadzik said there is no shame in talking about your emotions, but older adults come from a generation when stoicism was expected, particularly in Appalachian culture.

“We’ve developed this notion that talking about our emotions is akin to weakness,” said Gadzik. “We think this so much that it becomes normalized.”

Reaching out for help

The older people are, the less likely they are to get help when they need it. Adults over 65 are more likely to report that they “rarely” or “nev-

er” receive the social and emotional support they need compared to those in the 50 to 64 age bracket, according to the CDC.

“Most seniors don’t want to acknowledge a mental health issue. It’s embarrassing to them,” said Robin Boles, community liaison for Behavioral Health Services at Haywood Regional Medical Center. “Seniors usually don’t want someone to know if they are having problems.”

Boles, a nurse for 30 years, has seen an evolution in the field of mental health, including wide-spread acceptance of getting help when needed. Still, the senior population hasn’t embraced the concept of sharing their feelings with a professional the way the rest of society has.

“There is nothing wrong with

Seniors aren't immune from substance use

Substance use can be a heavy and misunderstood topic that affects millions in the United States, and no segment of the population is immune — not even seniors.

With the rise of Covid came a rise in social isolation, coupled with escapism, made seniors vulnerable to alcoholism and prescription medication abuse. There are options and resources for those who need help to overcome, not only the substance use, but the root issue that led to this path.

"There is a stigma associated with substance abuse that shouldn't be there," said Sheila Jenkins of No Wrong Door in Macon County. "We see people everyday that are down on themselves, have no self-worth, and feel they deserve their circumstances, but that's not true."

No Wrong Door is a non-profit dedicated to recovery

for those who are experiencing substance use or mental health challenges, for both victims of addiction and their families.

Jenkin cited loneliness and isolation as a major catalyst for the trend in seniors facing substance use.

"This is a generation that doesn't like to tell people their business," said Jenkins. "This is also a generation that doesn't associate alcohol with a problem or addiction, it's often just accepted, but you can become an alcoholic before you know it."

David Garrett, workforce development director with the Southwestern Commission, is also an advocate for recovery models that use peer support, rather than someone trying to go it alone.

"Folks can get better quality of help, with someone who has been in their shoes," said Garrett. "If you are struggling, reach out by phone, by email, walk in the door."

having depression, or any mental health issue in your life. Depression is normal, especially for those with limited mobility," Bole said. "I wish more seniors would go and talk to their physician, who can refer them to counseling."

If you or a loved one are experiencing a mental health crisis, reach out to family or friends, talk to your doctor or contact one of the support lines listed to the right.

Mental Health Resources

No Wrong Door

sheila@nowrongdoorwnc.org
828-349.3366

Vaya Behavioral Health Crisis Line

800-849-6127

*Walk-in clinics are also available at
Appalachian Community Services or
Meridian Behavioral Health Services.
You can set up an appointment by
calling the crisis line.*

Haywood Regional Behavioral Health Unit
828-452-8667

Senior Life Solutions, Swain Medical Center
828-488-4044

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
800-273-8255 (800-273-TALK)

National Alliance on Mental Illness HelpLine
800-950-NAMI (6264)
Or text "HelpLine" to 62640

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My heart is broken. How do I go on?

We all experience the death of a loved one. Some endure the deep pain of divorce. Others lose their life's purpose when exiting a career.

As seniors, we face additional challenges — physical decline, family and children moving away and the crossroads of whether to leave our home and go to a care facility.

It's hard, and Rev. Sharon Davis understands. Davis, the pastor of two United Methodist churches in Haywood County, has experienced painful loss in her own life.

Early in the pandemic her sister was diagnosed with leukemia and died three months later.

"The hardest part was not being able to be with her to say goodbye," Davis said. "I couldn't hold her hand or give her a big hug. She lived in

New York City where so many were dying from COVID, and I couldn't be there for her."

Like Davis, all of us live through the death of loved ones, and it is heartbreaking.

"It is normal to have trouble eating and sleeping initially," Davis said. "Many struggle with the 'what ifs' and the 'if onlys' like I did. Birthdays and Christmas are reminders of the absence. Certain events, like going to church alone for the first time after the death of a spouse, can trigger anxiety."

As a licensed mental health counselor, Davis spent years as a bereavement counselor in Florida.

"Some grief is delayed by the busyness right after a death. And then comes the quietness, the time alone when it is important to acknowledge the reality of the loss," Davis said.

"The hurt is bone-wearying at first, yet hopefully you will understand that grieving is an important part of healing. To hide from the reality of the loss delays feeling better."

It is normal to feel helpless at first, Davis said. For clients who had lost a spouse, they not only were coping with grief, but had to adjust to learning new tasks.

Men may not know how to fix a meal or do their laundry. Women may be unaccustomed to yard chores, taking the trash out or carrying in all the groceries themselves.

A good way to help a survivor go on is to be part of a bereavement group. Sharing experiences with others is a reminder that you are not alone on the journey.

Others need professional counseling if grief is unrelenting — especially

COPING WITH GRIEF

when it impacts the person's ability to carry on with daily living like having enough food in the house, bathing regularly or even getting out of bed each day.

"People grieve differently and that is okay," she said. "In one group, a woman told us, 'I have not cried — is there something wrong with me?'"

Grief is a process that includes many ups and downs. It may take longer for some than others to begin breathing deeply again and even to smile. Despite the adage, time doesn't really heal all wounds. But time will make it easier.



Reach out for help

- To find a grief support group in your area, contact the **Southwestern Commission Area Agency on Aging** at 828-586-1962.
- Call the **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration** helpline for treatment referral and information service at 800-662-HELP(4357).
- Call the **National Alliance on Mental Illness** for advice and support at 800-950-NAMI(6264).

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April 12	September 13
May 10	October 11
June 14	November 8
July 12	December 13
August 9	

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CHEROKEE

HEALTHCARE

Erlanger Western Carolina Hospital

3990 East US Hwy 64 Alt, Murphy
828-837-8161

Urgent Care Center, Erlanger

183 Ledford St., Murphy
828-837-4712

Cherokee County Health Department

228 Hilton St., Murphy
828-837-7486

Andrews Health Center,

Cherokee County

15 High School Dr., Andrews
828-835-4536

HOSPICE AND PALLIATIVE CARE

Good Shepherd Hospice

75 Medical Park Lane, Suite C, Murphy
828-516-1104

Four Seasons Hospice and Palliative Care

3 Wilson Street, Andrews
866.466.9734 | www.fourseasonsclf.org

HOME HEALTH AND IN-HOME SERVICES

Community Alternatives Program:

Erlanger Western Carolina Hospital
3990 East US Hwy 64 Alt, Murphy
828-837-8652

Cherokee County Department of Social Services

4800 W US Highway 64, Murphy
828-837-7455

Golden Years of Murphy

518 US-64, Murphy
828-837-6769

Mountain Home Health Services

115 Mountain Home Nursing Lane, Hayesville
828-389-8106

Independent Personal Private Care Home Health

828-367-6340

Personal Touch Assisted Living

83 Wilson St., Andrews
828-321-2657

Turning Point Services

225 Valley River Rd., Suite E, Murphy
828-557-1759

SKILLED NURSING AND ASSISTED LIVING FACILITIES

Elaine's Care

288 6th St. and 17 Moore St., Andrews
828-321-9501

L and N Family Care Home

142 Grassy Knob Rd., Andrews 828-321-5898

Valley View Care and Rehabilitation Center

551 Kent St., Andrews
828-321-3075

Murphy Rehabilitation and Nursing

230 Highway 141, Murphy
828.835.7580

Autumn Halls of Unaka

14949 Joe Brown Highway, Murphy
828-835-8103

Covenant Family Care

515 Nottley River Rd., Murphy
866-653-9337

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE

Cherokee County Senior Services

69 Alpine St., Murphy
828-837-2467
www.cherokeeconomy-nc.gov/262/Senior-Services

Southwestern Commission Area

Agency on Aging
125 Bonnie Lane, Sylva
828-586-1962 | regiona.org/aaa

SENIOR CENTERS AND SENIOR MEAL SITES

Penland Senior Center

69 Alpine St., Murphy • 828-837-2467
www.cherokeeconomy-nc.gov/262/Senior-Services

Hiwassee Dam

7829 Highway 294, Murphy
828-644-0300

Andrews Sunshine Center

54 Park St., Andrews
828-321-4505

Unaka

14945 Joe Brown Hwy., Murphy | 828-835-8313

John Welch Senior Center, Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians

302 Airport Road, Marble
828-835-9741

HOME DELIVERED MEALS

828-837-2467

www.cherokeeconomy-nc.gov/262/Senior-Services

TRANSIT

Cherokee County Transit

77 Hardin St., Murphy
828-837-1789
www.cherokeeconomy-nc.gov

MEDICARE

Seniors Health Insurance Information Program (SHIIP)

Cherokee County Senior Services
69 Alpine St., Murphy
828-837-2467

MEDICAID

Department of Social Services

4800 W U.S. Highway 64, Murphy
828-837-7455

HOME MODIFICATIONS

Four Square Community Action

61 Milton Mashburn Dr., Andrews
828-321-4475
www.foursquarecommunityactioninc.com

CHEROKEE

PUBLIC LIBRARIES

- Andrews: 871 Main St.
828-0321-5956
- Murphy: 9 Blumenthal St
828-837-2417

SUPPORT GROUPS

Dementia Support Group
Murphy Rehab & Nursing
828-835-7588

EBCI

Cherokee Tribal Resources

A health resource directory for enrolled members of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians is available at cherokee-phhs.com/resource-guide

LEGAL AND ESTATE PLANNING

Stricker Law
102 Hiwassee St., Murphy
828-835-7373
Strickerlaw.com

PHYSICIANS AND MEDICAL PRACTICES

Smoky Mountain Foot & Ankle Clinic
35 NC Hwy 141, Murphy
828-835-8389
smokymountainfootclinic.com



HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT MEDICARE



SHIIP HAS ANSWERS.

The Seniors' Health Insurance Information Program (SHIIP) has experts specially trained to answer your Medicare questions and to help you with other insurance issues important to seniors, such as:

- selecting a Medicare prescription drug plan
- preventing Medicare billing fraud and abuse
- choosing a Medicare supplement plan
- long term care insurance

**Call Cherokee County
Senior Services at
828-321-4505**



Protect yourself and your loved ones from Medicare fraud.



Medicare loses an estimated \$60 billion each year due to fraud, errors, and abuse. Every day, these issues affect countless beneficiaries nationwide.

HOW DOES HEALTH CARE FRAUD HAPPEN?

There are many fraud schemes associated with Medicare. For example, a "representative" might call offering an incentive – perhaps a free back or knee brace – and tells you all he needs is your Medicare card number. It may seem harmless, but this is attempted fraud and it could lead to identity theft.

HOW DO I PROTECT MYSELF?

The Social Security Administration and Medicare will never call you or visit. Never share your personal information with anyone who calls on the phone or comes to the door. Don't accept medical equipment or supplies unless they are ordered by your doctor.

NCSMP has information to help you identify fraud schemes and simple tips to help you avoid them.

Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) is a national program for people with Medicare of all ages and is administered by the Administration for Community Living. NCSMP is administered by the NC Department of Insurance.

1-855-408-1212
WWW.NCSHIP.COM



CLAY

HEALTHCARE

Clay County Public Health Department

345 Courthouse Dr., Hayesville

828-389-8052

www.clayhdnc.us

HOME HEALTH AND IN-HOME SERVICES

Community Alternatives Program:

Clay County Department of Social Services

119 Courthouse Dr., Hayesville

828-389-6301

Hospice of North Carolina

964 Highway 69, Suite 12, Hayesville

828-516-1104

Clay County Community Paramedic

828-389-8052

Mountain Home Health Services

115 Mountain Home Nursing Lane, Hayesville

828-389-8106

Western Carolina Home Healthcare

2996 NC 69, Ste. 5, Hayesville

828-389-4699



SKILLED NURSING AND ASSISTED LIVING FACILITIES

Clay County Care Center

86 Valley Hideaway Dr., Hayesville

828-389-9941

Hayesville House

480 Old Hwy 64W, Hayesville

828-389-8700

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE

Southwestern Commission Area

Agency on Aging

125 Bonnie Lane, Sylva

828-586-1962

regiona.org/aaa

SENIOR CENTER

Clay County Senior Center

196 Ritter Rd., Hayesville

828-389-9271

www.seniors.claync.us

SENIOR MEALS

Clay County Senior Center

196 Ritter Rd., Hayesville

828-389-9271

www.seniors.claync.us

Home Delivered Meals

828-389-9271

www.seniors.claync.us

TRANSIT

Clay County Transportation

391 Courthouse Dr., Hayesville

828-389-0644

www.transportation.claync.us

MEDICARE

Seniors Health Insurance Information Program (SHIIP)

Clay County Senior Center

196 Ritter Rd., Hayesville

828-389-9271

www.seniors.claync.us

MEDICAID

Clay County Department of Social Services

119 Courthouse Dr., Hayesville

828-389-6301

www.dss.claync.us

HOME MODIFICATIONS

Four Square Community Action

828-321-4475

www.foursquarecommunityactioninc.com

PUBLIC LIBRARY

Moss Memorial Library

26 Anderson St., Hayesville

828-389-8401

SUPPORT GROUPS

Caregiver Support Group

Clay County Care Center

828-230-3664

LEGAL AND ESTATE PLANNING

Strickler Law

102 Hiwassee St., Murphy

828-835-7373

Strickerlaw.com

PHYSICIANS AND MEDICAL PRACTICES

GRAHAM

HEALTHCARE

Graham County Urgent Care & Family Practice

21 South Main St., Robbinsville
828-479-7777

Graham County Public Health Department

191 P and J Rd., Robbinsville
828-479-7900
www.health.grahamcounty.org

HOME HEALTH AND

IN-HOME SERVICES

**Community Alternatives Program:
Graham County Health Department**
828-479-7900

Mountain Home Health Services

115 Mountain Home
Nursing Lane, Hayesville
828-389-8106

Sawyer's Home Care

533 Sweetwater Rd., Robbinsville
828-479-4948

Turning Point Services

416 Rodney Orr Bypass, Robbinsville
828-479-9470

SKILLED NURSING AND ASSISTED LIVING FACILITIES

Graham Healthcare and Rehabilitation Center

811 Snowbird Rd., Robbinsville
828-479-8421
www.grahamnursing.com

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE

Graham County Senior Center

185 West Fort Hill Rd., Robbinsville
828-479-7977
grahamcounty.org/senior-center

Southwestern Commission Area

Agency on Aging
125 Bonnie Lane, Sylva
828-586-1962 | regiona.org/aaa

SENIOR CENTERS AND SENIOR MEAL SITES

Graham County Senior Center

185 West Fort Hill Rd., Robbinsville
828-479-7977
grahamcounty.org/senior-center

Snowbird Senior Center, Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians

157 Jackson Branch Rd., Robbinsville
828-346-6746

HOME DELIVERED MEALS

Graham County Senior Center

828-479-7977
grahamcounty.org/senior-center

TRANSIT

Graham County Transit

201 West Fort Hill Rd., Robbinsville
828-479-4129
Grahamcountytransit.org

MEDICARE

Seniors Health Insurance Information

Program (SHIIP)

Graham County Senior Center
185 West Fort Hill Rd., Robbinsville
828-479-7977
grahamcounty.org/senior-center

MEDICAID

Graham County Social Services

191 P And J Rd., Robbinsville
828-479-7911
grahamcounty.org/social-services

HOME MODIFICATIONS

Four Square Community Action

828-321-4475
www.foursquarecommunityactioninc.com

PUBLIC LIBRARY

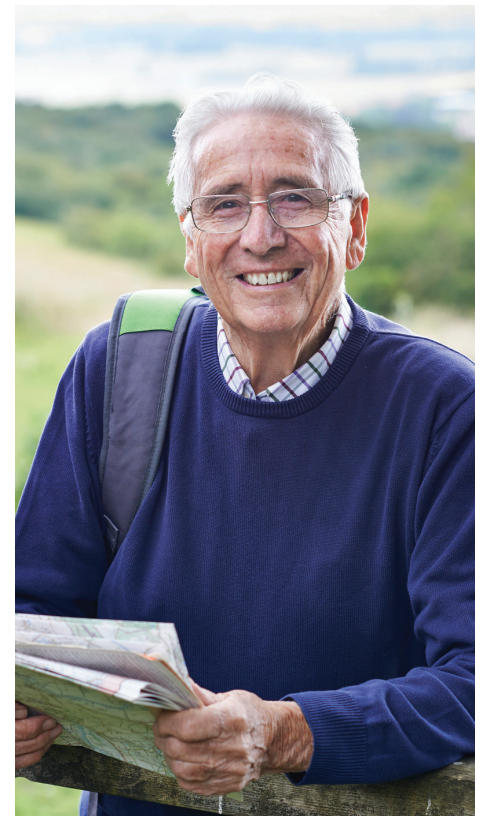
Graham County Public Library

80 Knight St. Robbinsville
828-479-8796

EBCI

Cherokee Tribal Resources

A health resource directory for enrolled members of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians is available at cherokee-phhs.com/resource-guide



HAYWOOD

HEALTHCARE

Haywood Regional Medical Center, Duke LifePoint

262 Leroy George Dr., Clyde
828-456-7311 | www.myhaywoodregional.com

Urgent Care West, Duke LifePoint

556 Hazelwood Ave., Waynesville
828-452-8890 | www.myhaywoodregional.com

Urgent Care Canton, Duke LifePoint

55 Buckeye Cove Rd., Canton
828-648-0282

Mercy Urgent Care

120 Frazier St, Waynesville
828-210-2121 | mercyurgentcare.org

Mission My Care Now

360 Hospital Dr., Clyde
828-213-4444

Blue Ridge Community Health

490 Hospital Dr., Clyde
828-246-6372

Haywood Health and Human Services

157 Paragon Parkway, Clyde
828-452-6675 | www.haywoodcountync.gov

HOSPICE AND PALLIATIVE CARE

Haywood Hospice & Palliative Care

43 Bowman Dr., Waynesville
828-452-5039
lhcgroupp.com/locations/haywood-hospice-and-palliative-care/

HOME HEALTH AND IN-HOME SERVICES

Community Alternatives Program

Haywood Health and Human Services
Department
828-356-2810

BAYADA Home Health

50 S. Main St., Waynesville
828-452-0010

CarePartners Home Health, Mission

88 Waynesville Plaza, Waynesville
828-452-3600

Home Care Services of Haywood Regional Medical Center

18B Bowman Dr., Waynesville
828-452-8292
lhcgroupp.com/locations/home-care-services-of-haywood-regional-medical-center

Mountain Projects In-Home Aid

2177 Asheville Rd., Waynesville
828-452-1447 | mountainprojects.org

No Boundaries Integrated Services

47 Forga Plaza, Waynesville
828-456-7930

Turning Point Services

367 Dellwood Rd., Waynesville
828-452-7832

Western Home Healthcare

754 S. Haywood St., Waynesville
800-429-0369

Advantage Care Services

32 Montgomery St, Waynesville
888-350-5397

SKILLED NURSING AND ASSISTED LIVING FACILITIES

Autumn Care Nursing and Rehabilitation

360 Old Balsam Rd., Waynesville
828-456-7381
www.saberhealth.com/locations/autumn-care-of-waynesville

Silver Bluff Village

100 Silver Bluff Dr., Canton
828-648-2044 | www.silverbluffvillage.com

Silver Bluff Rehab

100 Silver Bluff Dr., Canton
828-549-1550 | www.silverbluffvillage.com

Maggie Valley Nursing and Rehabilitation

75 Fisher Loop, Maggie Valley
828-926-4326

Haywood House

27 N. Main St., Canton
828-276-1004

Haywood Lodge & Retirement Center

251 Shelton St., Waynesville
828-456-8365
Haywoodlodge.com

Skyland Terrace & Rehabilitation

516 Wall St., Waynesville
828-452-3154

Pigeon Valley Assisted Living

55 Lake Dr., Canton
828-648-2044
www.silverbluffvillage.com/pigeon-valley

Smoky Mountain Health and Rehabilitation Center

1349 Crabtree Rd., Waynesville
828-454-9260

Spicewood Cottages

Dementia & Alzheimer's Care
39 Loving Way, Clyde | 828-452-0238
www.haywoodlodge.com/spicewood-cottages

Chestnut Park Retirement Center

84 Chestnut Park Dr., Waynesville
828-456-5858

McCracken Rest Home

203 McCracken St., Waynesville
828-456-9004

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE

Senior Resource Center

81 Elmwood Way, Waynesville
828-452-2370 | www.haywoodseniors.org

Mountain Projects

2177 Asheville Rd., Waynesville
828-452-1447 | Mountainprojects.org

Southwestern Commission Area Agency on Aging

125 Bonnie Lane, Sylva
828-586-1962 | regiona.org/aaa

SENIOR CENTERS

Senior Resource Center

81 Elmwood Way, Waynesville
828-452-2370 | www.haywoodseniors.org

HAYWOOD

SENIOR MEALS

Waynesville Armory*

44 Boundary St., Waynesville
828-452-2370

Canton Armory*

1 Pigeon Street, Canton
828-452-2370

Maggie Valley Community Building*

3987 Soco Rd., Maggie Valley
828-452-2370

*Managed by Mountain Projects

Home Delivered Meals

Haywood Health & Human Services
828-356-2442

TRANSIT

Haywood Transit

50 Armory Dr., Clyde
828-565-0362 | www.haywoodtransit.com

MEDICARE

Seniors Health Insurance Information Program (SHIIP)

Mountain Projects/Haywood Senior Resource Center
81 Elmwood Way, Waynesville
828-356-2800
haywoodseniors.org/shiip

Medicare Insurance Plan Helpline Haywood Regional Medical Center

855-582-5181
www.myhaywoodregional.com

MEDICAID

Haywood County Health and Human Services

157 Paragon Parkway, Clyde
828-452-6620
www.haywoodcountync.gov

HOME MODIFICATIONS

Mountain Projects

2177 Asheville Rd., Waynesville
828-452-1447
mountainprojects.org/index.php/housing-rehabilitation

ADULT DAY PROGRAM

Maple Leaf Adult Respite

63 Elmwood Way, Waynesville
828-356-2236
www.haywoodcountync.gov




AUTUMN CARE

OF WAYNESVILLE

360 Old Balsam Rd. Waynesville, NC 28786
Ph: 828-456-7381

A skilled nursing facility located in beautiful Waynesville, NC

- Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Speech Therapy
 - Long Term Care • Respite Care
 - 24 Hour Skilled Nursing Care



Caring for life

Ad26802

Ad26242




828-356-2800

- SHIIP—Senior's Health Insurance Information Program
- Senior Companion Program
- Foster Grandparents
- Ensure Nutrition Program
- Haywood/Jackson Volunteer Center
- Disability Partners
- Vaya Health - Geriatric Team
- Information & Assistance
- Caregiver List for Haywood County
- Nutrition Meal Sites
- Phone Assurance Program
- Project Lifesaver
- In-Home Services
- MemoryCare
- Creative Living Programs/Trips

81 Elmwood Way, Waynesville, N.C.
www.haywoodseniors.org
Facebook: Haywood County Senior Resource Center

HAYWOOD

PUBLIC LIBRARIES

- **Waynesville:** 678 S Haywood St.
828-452-5169
- **Canton:** 11 Pennsylvania Ave.
828-648-2924
- **Maggie Valley:** 3987 Soco Rd.
828-356-2541
- **Fines Creek:** 190 Fines Creek Rd.
828-356-2551

SUPPORT GROUPS

Dementia Support Group

Senior Resource Center
828-926-0018

Grief Gatherings

3:30 p.m. on second Wednesday of the month
Coffee Cup Café, 48 Haywood Park, Clyde
828-452-5039

Haywood Dementia Response Effort

81 Elmwood Way, Waynesville
828-356-2817 | haydre.org

Parkinson's Support Group

Senior Resource Center
828-356-2800

Bereavement Support Group

Senior Resource Center
828-452-5039

Women's Cancer Support Group

703-609-9107

Widows and Widowers Support Group

828-476-0808

Survivors of Suicide Loss

910-528-0169

EBCI

Cherokee Tribal Resources

A health resource directory for enrolled members of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians is available at cherokee-phhs.com/resource-guide

FUNERAL SERVICES

Smoky Mountain Cremations & Funeral Service

3264 Broad Street, Clyde
828-565-3024
www.smokymountaincremations.com

HEARING, VISION AND DENTAL

Michael Gillespie Family Dentistry

611 S Haywood St., Waynesville
drgillespie.com | 828-456-9007

INSURANCE

Apply 4 Medical 2 Day

P. O. Box 33, Waynesville
828-356-5540 | Apply4medical2day.com

Farm Bureau Insurance

1520 Asheville Rd., Waynesville • 828-452-1425
www.ncfbins.com/waynesville

Melissa Worley

Independent Agent • 828-507-0915

LEGAL, FINANCIAL AND ESTATE PLANNING

H&R Block Tax Preparation

65 Eagles Nest Rd., Waynesville
828-452-2495
www.hrblock.com/local-tax-offices/north-carolina/waynesville/65-eagles-nest-rd/32224

Pamela Penny Williams Realtor Group

Beverly-Hanks Real Estate, Waynesville
pwilliamsrealestategroup@beverly-hanks.com |
828-248-0469

MEDICAL SUPPLIES

Carolina Breathing Solutions

755 S. Haywood St., Waynesville
828-452-1919 | Carolinabreathingsolutions.com

Mountaineer Oxygen Services

42 Branner Ave., Waynesville • 828-452-3095

www.mountaineeroxygenservices.com

NONPROFITS

Haywood Healthcare Foundation

262 Leroy George Dr., Clyde

828-452-8343 | Haywoodhealthcarefoundation.org

Waynesville Recreation Center

550 Vance St., Waynesville
828-456-2030

PHYSICIANS AND MEDICAL PRACTICES

Comprehensive Pain Consultants

90 Haywood Office Park, Waynesville
828-483-4438 | Cpcdoctors.com

Mountain Laurel Dermatology

11 Falcon Crest Lane, Clyde
828-565-0560
www.mountainlauldermatology.com

Movement for Life Physical Therapy

13 Haywood Office Park, Waynesville
828-452-1306
www.movementforlife.com/physical-therapy-clinics/north-carolina/north-carolina/waynesville

Smoky Mountain Foot & Ankle Clinic

289 Access Rd., Waynesville
828-452-4343 | smokymountainfootclinic.com



JACKSON

HEALTHCARE

Harris Regional Hospital,

Duke LifePoint

68 Hospital Rd., Sylva
828-586-7000

Harris Regional Hospital Urgent Care

176 Walmart Plaza, Sylva
828-631-9462

Mountain View Physicians Urgent Care

98 Cope Creek Rd., Sylva
828-586-7925

Jackson County Health Department

538 Scotts Creek Rd., Sylva
828-586-8994

Blue Ridge Community Health

293 Hospital Rd., Sylva
828-477-4334

HOSPICE AND PALLIATIVE CARE

Harris Palliative Care and Hospice

81 Medical Park Loop; Suite 204, Sylva
828-631-1702

HOME HEALTH AND IN-HOME SERVICES

Community Alternatives Program:

Health Keeperz

52 Colonial Square, Sylva
828-471-5230 | healthkeeperz.com

Caring Hands Support Services

100 County Services Park, Sylva
828-586-5494
www.aging.jacksonnc.org

Harris Home Health

26 Westcare Drive, Suite 303, Sylva
828-586-7410

DisAbility Partners

525 Mineral Springs Rd., Sylva
828-631-1167 | Disabilitypartners.org

Turning Point Services

1 University Dr., Killian 205, Cullowhee
828-227-3318

SKILLED NURSING AND ASSISTED LIVING FACILITIES

Vero Health & Rehab of Sylva

417 Cloverdale Rd., Sylva
828-631-1600 | www.mountain.care

Morningstar Assisted Living

95 Morning Star Dr., Sylva
828-586-4002



Jackson
Medical Associates

1188 Skyland Drive
Sylva NC

QUALITY, COMPASSIONATE, & ACCESSIBLE HEALTHCARE

- chronic disease management
 - In-house physical therapy
 - urgent care needs
 - women's health
 - cosmetic procedures
 - accepts patients throughout the lifespan beginning at age 2
-

Phone **828-339-CARE**

Fax **828-339-2274**

8:00am - 6:00pm Monday - Friday

9:00am - 5:00pm Saturday

JACKSON

Skyland Care Center

193 Asheville Hwy., Sylva
828-586-8935
skylandcarecenternc.com

The Hermitage

185 Brickfarm Rd., Sylva
828-586-9070

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE

Jackson County Department on Aging

100 County Services Park, Sylva
828-631-8039
www.aging.jacksonnc.org

Southwestern Commission Area

Agency on Aging

125 Bonnie Lane, Sylva
828-586-1962
regiona.org/aaa

Mountain Projects

25 Schulman St., Sylva
828-586-2345
mountainprojects.org

SENIOR CENTERS AND MEAL SITES

Jackson County Senior Center

100 County Services Park, Sylva
828-586-5494
www.aging.jacksonnc.org/jackson-county-senior-center

Cashiers Senior Center

217 Frank Allen Rd., Cashiers
828-745-6856
www.aging.jacksonnc.org

HOME DELIVERED MEALS

Jackson County Department on Aging

828-586-5494 | www.aging.jacksonnc.org

TRANSIT

Jackson County Transit

1148 Haywood Rd., Sylva
828-586-0233
www.jacksoncountyttransit.com

MEDICARE

Seniors Health Insurance Information Program (SHIIP)

Jackson County Department on Aging
100 County Services Park, Sylva
828-631-8037 | www.aging.jacksonnc.org

MEDICAID

Jackson County Department of Social Services

15 Griffin St., Sylva
828-586-5546

HOME MODIFICATIONS

Mountain Projects

25 Schulman St., Sylva
828-586-2345
mountainprojects.org/index.php/housing-rehabilitation

Project C.A.R.E.

Community Action to Reach Elderly

100 County Services Park, Sylva
828-631-8040
www.aging.jacksonnc.org/project-care-fire

ADULT DAY PROGRAM

Jackson County Adult Day Program

100 County Services Park, Sylva
828-586-5441
www.aging.jacksonnc.org

PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Jackson County Main Library

310 Keener Street, Sylva,
828-586-2016

Albert-Carlton Library

249 Frank Allen Road, Cashiers,
828-734-0215

SUPPORT GROUPS

Dementia Support Group

828-227-7165

Bereavement Support Group

828-450-7575

Breast Cancer Support Group

828-631-8100

Tremor Support Group

828.736.3165

EBCI

Cherokee Tribal Resources

A health resource directory for enrolled members of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians is available at chero-kee-phhs.com/resource-guide

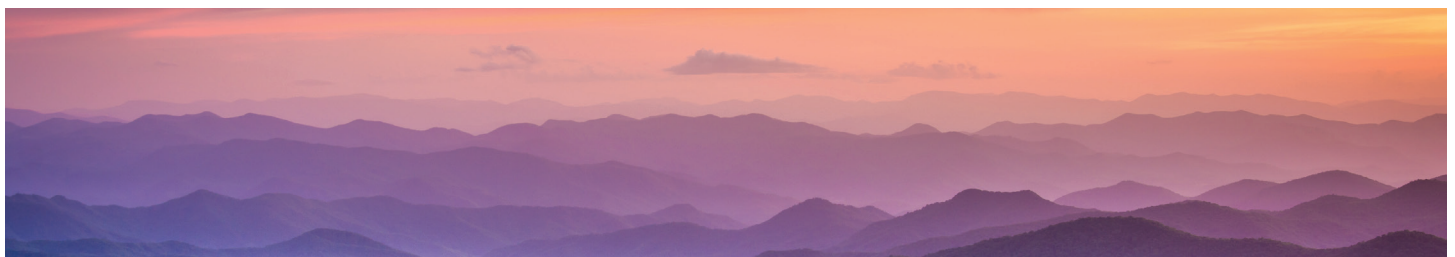
PHYSICIANS AND MEDICAL PRACTICES

Jackson Medical Associates

1188 Skyland Dr, Sylva
828-339-2273 | Jacksonmedicalassociates.com

Smoky Mountain Foot & Ankle Clinic

32 Asheville Highway, Sylva
828-586-8950 | smokymountainfootclinic.com



MACON

HEALTHCARE

Angel Medical Center, Mission Health

124, One Center Court, Franklin

828-524-8411

missionhealth.org/member-hospitals/angel/

Highlands-Cashiers Hospital, Mission Health

190 Hospital Dr., Highlands

828-526-1200

missionhealth.org/member-hospitals/highlands-cashiers

Mission My Care Now, urgent care

190 Riverview St., Franklin

828-369-4427

missionhealth.org/mission-my-care-now

Smoky Mountain Urgent Care

195 Franklin Plaza, Franklin

828-634-7745

Franklin Community Based VA Outpatient Clinic

647 Wayah St., Franklin | 828-369-1781

Community Care Clinic of Franklin

1830 Lakeside Dr., Franklin

828-349-2085

Community Care Clinic of Highlands-Cashiers

52 Aunt Dora Dr., Highlands

828-526-1991

Macon County Public Health

1830 Lakeside Dr., Franklin

828-349-2081

www.maconnc.org/health-department.html

CarePartners Hospice, Mission Health

170 Church St., Franklin

828-369-4206

missionhealth.org/member-hospitals/angel/

SECU Hospice House, Four Seasons

272 Maple St., Franklin

828-524-6375

HOME HEALTH AND IN-HOME SERVICES

Community Alternatives Program:

CarePartners Home Health,

Angel/Mission

170 Church St., Franklin

828-369-4206

missionhealth.org/services-treatments/home-health

Comfort Keepers

35 East Main St., Franklin

828-524-1102

HOSPICE AND PALLIATIVE CARE

Four Seasons

171 Hospital Dr., Suite 600, Highlands

828-526-2552

Medicare got you asking questions? SHIIP has answers.

As part of the North Carolina Department of Insurance, the **Seniors' Health Insurance Information Program (SHIIP)** has experts specially trained to answer your Medicare questions and to help you with other insurance issues important to seniors, such as:

- selecting a Medicare prescription drug plan
- comparing Medicare Advantage plans
- choosing a Medicare Supplement plan
- preventing Medicare billing fraud and abuse



NC DEPARTMENT OF
INSURANCE

MIKE CAUSEY COMMISSIONER

Crawford Senior Center • 108 Wayah Street • Franklin, NC 28734

(828) 349-2059 • M-F 8:00am-5:00pm • Karen Robbins

 **855-408-1212**



www.ncshiip.com

818885

MACON

Companion Health Care

243 Sloan Rd., Franklin,
828-524-6444

Home Care Specialists In The Mountains

232 Cunningham Rd., Suite 2, Franklin
828-349-9500

Mountain Home Health Services

14 West Palmer St., Franklin
828-524-0178

My Choice Home Care

348 South Fifth St., Suite 209, Highlands
828-200-9000

SKILLED NURSING AND ASSISTED LIVING FACILITIES

Chestnut Hill of Highlands

64 Clubhouse Trail, Highlands
828-526-5251

Eckerd Living Center

250 Hospital Dr., Highlands
828-526-1315

Franklin House

186 One Center Court, Franklin
828-363-9965

Grandview Manor Care Center

150 Crisp St., Franklin
828-524-4425

Macon Valley Nursing and Rehabilitation

3195 Old Murphy Rd., Franklin
828-524-7806
www.maconvalley.com

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE

Macon County Senior Services

108 Wayah St., Franklin
828-349-0211
www.maconnc.org/dss-senior-services.html

Southwestern Commission Area Agency on Aging

125 Bonnie Lane, Sylva
828-586-1962
regiona.org/aaa

SENIOR CENTER

Crawford Senior Center

108 Wayah St., Franklin
828-349-2058
www.maconnc.org/dss-senior-services.html

SENIOR MEALS

Community Resource Center

108 Wayah St., Franklin
828-349-0211
www.maconnc.org/dss-senior-services.html

Home Delivered Meals

828-349-0211
www.maconnc.org/dss-senior-services.html

TRANSIT

Macon County Transit

36 Pannell Lane, Franklin
828-349-2222
www.macontransit.com

MEDICARE

Seniors Health Insurance Information Program (SHIIP)

Macon County Senior Services
108 Wayah St., Franklin
828-349-2059 | www.ncshiip.com

MEDICAID

Macon County Department of Social Services

1832 Lakeside Dr., Franklin
828-349-2124
www.maconnc.org/dss-family.html

HOME MODIFICATIONS

Macon Program for Progress

82 East Orchard View Lane, Franklin
828-524-4471

Macon County Housing Department

23 Macon Ave., Franklin
828-369-2605

ADULT DAY PROGRAM

Care Connection Adult Day Program

108 Wayah St., Franklin
828-349-2236
www.maconnc.org/dss-senior-services.html

PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Macon County Main Library

149 Siler Farm Road, Franklin,
828-524-3600

Hudson Library

554 Main Street, Highlands,
828-526-3031

Nantahala Community Library

28 Nantahala School Road, Topton,
828-321-3020

SUPPORT GROUPS

Bereavement Support Group

- Care Partners 828-369-4206
- Four Seasons 828-692-6178

Dementia Support Group First Presbyterian Church,

828-524-3119

Diabetes Support Group

Kim Watkins,
828-349-6688

Stroke Support Group

828-349-6679

Visually Impaired Persons support group

Mary Judernatz, 828-371-8701

Dementia Caregiver's Support Group

Crawford Senior Center, 828-349-2058

PHYSICIANS AND MEDICAL PRACTICES

Asheville Eye Associates

95 Holly Springs Park Dr., Franklin
800-531-3937
ashevilleeye.com

Comprehensive Pain Consultants

5718 US-64 W, Ste 10, Murphy
828-516-4110
Cpcdoctors.com

Smoky Mountain Foot & Ankle Clinic

188 Georgia Road, Franklin
828-349-4534
smokymountainfootclinic.com

SWAIN

HEALTHCARE

Swain Community, Duke LifePoint

45 Plateau St., Bryson City
828-488-2155

Smoky Mountain Urgent Care

80 Veterans Blvd., Bryson City
828-538-4546

Swain County Caring Corner

81 Academy St., Bryson City
828-341-1998
www.swaincaringcorner.org

Swain County Health Department

545 Center St., Bryson City
828-488-3198
www.swaincountync.gov/health-home

HOSPICE AND PALLIATIVE CARE

Harris Palliative Care and Hospice

81 Medical Park Loop; Suite 204, Sylva
828-631-1702

HOME HEALTH AND IN-HOME SERVICES

Community Alternatives Program: Health Keeperz

52 Colonial Square, Sylva
828-471-5230
healthkeeperz.com

PRN Nursing Services

89 Slope St., Bryson City
828-488-0915

Health Department

545 Center St., Bryson City
878-488-3198

SKILLED NURSING AND ASSISTED LIVING FACILITIES

Mountain View Manor Nursing Center

410 Buckner Branch Rd., Bryson City
828-488-2101

Bryson Senior Living

314 Hughes Branch Rd., Bryson City
828-488-2780

Tsali Care Center

10 Echota Church Rd., Cherokee
828-359-6516

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE

Swain County Senior Center

125 Brendle St., Bryson City
828-488-3047

Southwestern Commission Area Agency on Aging

125 Bonnie Lane, Sylva
828-586-1962 | regiona.org/aaa

SENIOR CENTERS

Swain County Senior Center

125 Brendle St., Bryson City
828-488-3047

Tsali Manor, Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians

133 Tsali Manor St., Cherokee
828-359-6860

SENIOR MEALS

Swain County Senior Center

125 Brendle St., Bryson City
828-488-3047

Tsali Manor, Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians

133 Tsali Manor St., Cherokee
828-359-6860

TRANSIT

Swain Public Transit

125 Brendle St., Bryson City
828-488-3213

MEDICARE

Seniors Health Insurance Information Program (SHIIP)

Swain County Cooperative Extension
60 Almond School Rd., Bryson City
828-488-3848 | www.ncshiip.com

MEDICAID

Department of Social Services

80 Academy St., Bryson City
828-488-6921
swaincountync.gov/dss/dss-adult-services.html

HOME MODIFICATIONS

Four Square Community Action

828-321-4475
www.foursquarecommunityactioninc.com

PUBLIC LIBRARY

Marianna Black Library

33 Fryemont Street, Bryson City
828-488-3030

SUPPORT GROUPS

Dementia Support Group

828-359-6294

EBCI

Cherokee Tribal Resources

A health resource directory for enrolled members of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians is available at cherokee-phhs.com/resource-guide

REGIONAL

MENTAL HEALTH

Appalachian Community Services
828-837-0071
www.acswnc.com

Meridian Behavioral Health
828-631-3973
meridianbhs.org

Vaya Health
800-849-6127
www.vayahealth.com

HOME HEALTH AND IN-HOME SERVICES

Bayada Home Health
1200 Ridgefield Blvd Suite 110, Asheville
828-681-5100

Care Partners, Mission
68 Sweeten Creek Road, Asheville
828-277-4722

Comfort Keepers
33 E Main St #3, Franklin
828-348-7669

DisAbility Partners
525 Mineral Springs Drive, Sylva
828-631-1167

Griswold Home Care
11 Maple Cove Drive, Swannanoa
828-393-0701

Home Care Specialists In The Mountains
232 Cunningham Rd., Suite 2, Franklin
828-349-9500
(serving Macon, Jackson, Swain, and Graham counties)

Interim Healthcare
1977 Hendersonville Road, Asheville
828-274-2082

Maxim Healthcare
1269 Tunnel Rd, Asheville
828-299-4388

Mountain Home Care
2270 Hendersonville Road, Arden
828-684-6444

HOSPICE

Four Seasons Hospice and Palliative Care
373 Biltmore Avenue, Asheville
866.466.9734
www.fourseasonscf.org

Good Shepherd Hospice
Medical Park Lane, Suite C, Murphy
828-516-1104
(Serving Graham, Clay, Macon and Cherokee counties)

INSURANCE

Apply 4 Medical 2 Day
P. O. Box 33, Waynesville
828-356-5540
Apply4medical2day.com

Melissa Worley
Independent Agent
828-507-0915

HEARING, VISION AND DENTAL

Gant Hearing
69 Westridge Market Pl., Candler
828-463-5175
Ganthearingcare.com

RETIREMENT COMMUNITIES

Deerfield Episcopal Retirement Community
1617 Hendersonville Rd., Asheville
828-274-1531
deerfieldwnc.org

PHYSICIANS AND MEDICAL PRACTICES

Comprehensive Pain Consultants
57 Howard Gap Road, Fletcher
828-483-4438
cpcdoctors.com

Movement for Life Physical Therapy
Locations in North Asheville, South Asheville, Candler, Hendersonville and Waynesville
www.movementforlife.com/physical-therapy-clinics/north-carolina/north-carolina

Smoky Mountain Foot & Ankle Clinic
49 McDowell Street, Asheville
828-254-7716
Smokymountainfootclinic.com

MEDICARE

Seniors Health Insurance Information Program (SHIIP)
855-408-1212
www.ncshiip.com



HAVE QUESTIONS
ABOUT MEDICARE



SHIIP HAS ANSWERS



Cherokee County
828-837-2467

Haywood County
828-356-2800

Clay County
828-389-9271

Jackson County
828-631-8037

EBCI
828-359-6180

Macon County
828-349-2059

Graham County
828-479-7977

Swain County
828-488-3848



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