

# AASCC's Monthly News and Notes



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## Independence

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*February 2015*

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### Grants Available through Older Americans Act Title III Funds

All public agencies, private non-profit or proprietary incorporated agencies serving towns within the twenty towns of South Central Connecticut are invited to apply for funding for the fiscal year beginning October 1, 2015 through AASCC. [Find out more.](#)

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### Our Story

#### Moving for Better Balance

Keeping physically active not only strengthens bones and muscles, but also improves mental health and increases your chance of living longer. As you age, staying active also improves your ability to maintain an independent lifestyle. Did you know that one in three adults over 65 fall and that falls are the leading cause of injury death for this population? Falls are also the most common cause of traumatic brain injuries and most fractures among older adults are caused by falls.

Moving for Better Balance is a Tai Chi exercise program designed to improve balance

### Caregiver Corner

Increasingly we see people using walkers to steady their gait. Caregivers need to know how to guide someone who uses a walker; it is important to know how to help them use it safely. When purchasing a walker, get one that is easy to fold. It will make transporting your loved one much easier. It is very important before using a walker that

and increase strength. It is an evidenced-based program developed and recommended by the Administration on Aging. The program consists of 12, two-hour sessions. Participants are pre-screened to ensure their ability to safely participate in the program, but walkers and wheelchairs are not a barrier to participation. This program is modified for individuals with disabilities.

A new class will begin in the spring at East Shore Senior Center in New Haven. For more information contact [jperez@aoascc.org](mailto:jperez@aoascc.org).

*AASCC receives funding through the Federal Older Americans Act for this program. There is no charge for participation in the class, although donations are appreciated.*

*Pictured above are a group of instructors after a recent training, including AASCC's Janet Perez.*

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## CHOICES Corner

### Dialysis Ratings

Star ratings are a way that the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid provide information to consumers about the quality of particular services. Ratings for hospitals and nursing homes have been provided for several years and now star ratings have been added to the Dialysis Facility Compare (DFC) website. These ratings also spotlight excellence in health care quality. In addition to posting the star ratings, CMS updated data on individual DFC quality measures to reflect the most recent data for the existing measures.

"Star ratings are simple to understand and are an excellent resource for patients, their families, and caregivers to use when talking to doctors about health care choices," said CMS Administrator Marilyn Tavenner. "CMS has taken another step in its continuous commitment to improve quality measures and transparency."

The DFC rating gives a one to five-star rating based on information about the quality of care and services that a dialysis facility provides. Currently, nine DFC quality measures are being used collectively to comprise the DFC star ratings. In the future, CMS will add

you remove any loose rugs from the floors and remove any clutter that might become a tripping risk. The person using the walker should wear flat, rubber soled shoes.

When someone you care for is preparing to sit make sure the chair is directly behind them and all four tips of the walker are on the floor. Have your loved one back up slowly, until the edge of the chair is against the back of their legs. With one hand, have him/her reach back and find the arm of the chair. Grab the arm of the chair and release the other hand from the walker and then reach back and grab the other arm of the chair. Make certain your loved one uses their arms to gradually lower themselves into the chair. Once on the seat, have them slide back into the chair. It is very important to remind them NOT TO PLOP!

### Focusing on Excellence

Winter can be a challenging season for all of us, but especially for seniors. Many seniors have difficulty getting out and winter weather conditions produce even more obstacles. In an effort to keep seniors as safe as possible during the winter months, with potential for storms and power outages, AASCC care managers have been busy discussing winter preparedness with consumers making sure that they have the necessary provisions to ride out storms and power outages.

more measures. DFC quality measure data is either updated quarterly or annually. CMS plans to update the DFC's star rating on an annual basis beginning in October 2015.

**Upcoming Events**  
**[View Our Full Calendar](#)**

[Interagency Council](#)  
February 19th

[Ambassador Meeting](#)  
February 24th

[H.O.P.E. Meeting](#)  
February 26th



**Volunteer Opportunity!** SMP Volunteers play an important role in addressing financial fraud and scams by educating Medicare beneficiaries, their families and caregivers through presentations, outreach events, and one-on-one counseling. [Training Opportunity on March 19, 2015](#)

There are many excellent disaster preparedness materials to use as a guide for emergency preparations. One excellent reference source is the [American Red Cross Disaster Preparedness for Seniors by Seniors](#). Kits include (see the guide for complete details): water, food, flashlight and batteries, first aid kit, medications (7 days), personal hygiene supplies, copies of personal documents, cell phone with batteries and charger, emergency contact numbers, cash, emergency blanket, Maps, whistle, one change of clothes, manual can opener, extra keys, pack of cards to pass the time.

Every step you take to prepare ahead is very worthwhile.

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## In the Community

*AASCC provides grants to community organizations through Federal Older Americans Act funding to provide services for individuals 60 years of age or older.*

Bridges...A Community Support System Incorporated is a private non-profit behavioral health agency and a designated Mental Health Authority by DMHAS. Services provided are person-centered, dynamic and recovery-oriented with the focus on empowering individuals through education and advocacy so that they may lead healthy, meaningful and productive lives.

Through Title III funding, Bridges has been providing services for older adults in Milford, Orange and West Haven for a number of years. It is often difficult for this population to admit they require or need assistance with behavioral health issues, due to the sense of shame and the stigma that have historically been associated with these services.

Bridges staff are committed to building relationships with older adults and maintains a monthly presence in the local senior centers to make it easier for individuals to seek help for themselves or others. Bridges has found that often a period of consistent support services

and/or linkage to other appropriate social service programs can lead to improved quality of life and increased independence for older adults.

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## Did You Know

It is estimated that (1 in 5) 20% of people age 55 years or older experience some type of mental health concern. The most common conditions include anxiety, severe cognitive impairment, and mood disorders (such as depression or bipolar disorder).

*Because mental health is essential to overall health and well-being,  
it must be recognized and treated in all Americans, including older adults, with the same urgency as physical health.*

[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)



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