

### **SENIOR CHOICES Update**

During the month of December, staff members spoke with **363** people who were interested in obtaining information and assistance, SENIOR CHOICES services or advocacy. Our staff enrolled **40** new clients and disenrolled **31** clients,, bringing our total to **788** clients at month's end. The Council served **1157** clients in 2009.

### **CHANGES IN PROVIDER FEES FOR 2010**

As usual this time of year, we have new rates for some of the service providers through SENIOR CHOICES for 2010. This means that some service costs will increase slightly effective January 2010 and will be reflected on the bill you receive in February. If you have any questions about your bill, please feel free to contact your Care Consultant at (740) 363-6677 or 800-994-2255.

### **CANDID CAREGIVER WORKSHOPS**

The Council for Older Adults provides monthly opportunities for caregivers to learn, grow, and gather support from each other. Presentations are provided by various members of our community and focus on a host of topics. Future workshops include:

February 9: **Long Term Care: Are We There Yet?**, presented by Pat Goff of Willow Brook Christian Communities

March 9: **Anything Goes**, a free forum to discuss whatever caregiver issues or concerns are on your mind

April 13: **Communication and Challenging Behaviors**, presented by Shelly Wesner of the Alzheimer's Association

Workshops will be held in the large conference room at the Center for Older Adults, 800 Cheshire Rd., Delaware from 9:30 -11:30 a.m. Please feel free to bring a friend! To register, please RSVP to Jen Spicer at (740) 203-2377.

### **NEED TRANSPORTATION?**

Do you have an upcoming medical appointment but don't want to drive in the snow or ice? The Council for Older Adults Transportation Program can provide necessary (non-emergency) transportation for older adults and/or caregivers. Volunteers provide a door-through-door service, accompany a rider to and from an appointment or event, and can stay during the appointment if needed. Transportation is limited to Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. through 5 p.m. and depends upon the availability of a volunteer. A two-week notice is appreciated in order to accommodate as many requests as possible. If you are interested in this free program, please call the Council at (740) 363-6677 and ask to speak to your Care Consultant.

### **TAX TIME AGAIN!**

In February, AARP Tax-Aide Coordinator Richard Hauenstein and several IRS trained tax counselors will start preparing taxes for those 60 years of age and older. AARP's Tax-Aide is a free annual program brought to you by your local AARP chapter and Council for Older Adults. The program makes tax assistance available to older adults in Delaware County. Local AARP volunteers have successfully completed a rigorous training program, which is offered in cooperation with the Internal Revenue Service. All volunteer counselors have been specifically trained to prepare returns for older adults. This service is provided by appointment only. **The Council for Older Adults will begin accepting appointments after February 1, 2010. Please call the Council after February 1 at (740) 363-6677 or (800) 994-2255.**

## SENIOR CHOICES SERVICES

Please remember that if you have any problems with the services you are receiving, contact your Care Consultant immediately so we can help intervene and resolve the problem. You can reach your Care Consultant at (740) 363-6677.

## SNOW REMOVAL

Winter has arrived and once again the Council for Older Adults will provide snow shoveling service for seniors over the age of 60 who live in Delaware County. Local teens in need of community projects will be assisted by an adult supervisor to complete these chores. Please do not call ahead of time for snow shoveling, call only when you have snow covering your walks or driveways. If you or someone you know could use this free service, please give us a call at (740) 363-6677 or (800) 994-2255.

## HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (HEAP)

The Ohio Department of Development (ODOD) offers several programs to help low-income residents pay their utility bills and improve the heating efficiency of their homes. Households are eligible for HEAP assistance if their income is at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty guidelines, an increase from the previous level of 175 percent. Applications are available at the Council office, 800 Cheshire Rd, Delaware. **Please mail completed applications to: Office of Community Services/Home Energy Assistance Program, P.O. Box 1240, Columbus, OH 43216.**

## FOOD AND NUTRITIONAL SERVICES

When there is inclement weather, the Meals on Wheels program will monitor this and road conditions to make a decision about closing the program. Periodically throughout the winter months, we will deliver shelf stable emergency packs of food for you to keep on your shelves for use in the event of an emergency or one of these closings. We will announce the closing on our telephone voicemail (740) 203-2432 or (740) 203-2433, on all 3 local television stations, NBC channel 4, WBNS channel 10, WSYX channel 6, radio station 610 WTVN and 5 other area radio stations. Anytime we close, your Care Consultant will attempt to contact you by phone to check on your ability to get food.

## MEDICARE ADVANTAGE PLAN OPEN ENROLLMENT

Now that open enrollment for Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage is over, you may have an additional opportunity to enroll into a Medicare Health plan, sometimes referred to as a Medicare Advantage Plan. January 1 to March 31 is open-enrollment for Medicare Advantage plans and you may make a change from your current Medicare Advantage plan, or if you are currently enrolled in original Medicare you have an opportunity to enroll into a Medicare Advantage Plan.

According to the Medicare Modernization Act of 2003, Medicare Advantage (MA) gives most Medicare enrollees the opportunity to join either a managed care plan or a non-managed care plan. Companies that sponsor such plans have a contract with a federal agency, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). All Medicare Advantage plans must offer at least the same basic benefits as original Medicare. As with original Medicare, the individual must pay the Part B premiums.

If you would like a comparison report of various Medicare Advantage plan options that may be available to you, please call the Council for Older Adults and ask to speak with the insurance specialist.

