

MAKING SURE OLDER ADULTS ARE WELL

Wellness is not just taking care of one part of ourselves, it is a balanced approach based on the choices we make to ensure we are looking after our bodies and minds. With August being National Wellness Month, NYC Aging remains committed to ensuring older adults can make the decisions that are best for them so they can continue to live in their communities.

But for many older adults, being able to access the resources they need to make healthy decisions is becoming harder. This month we released the latest issue paper from the Service Needs Assessment, *What The Data Demands: Findings from Older New Yorkers' Financial Security*, where we learned that over 40% of older adults reported trouble paying at least one regular bill. The report also revealed that older adults with any affordability issues are significantly more likely to be socially isolated, lonely, have mental health needs, sensory and/or physical impairments, and report discrimination or elder abuse.

On top of this data, the recent federal cuts to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and increased costs for their prescription drugs that were included in H.R.1, will have a significant impact on older adults' ability to remain healthy. This calls for action on several fronts.

First, we launched the month-long Pop-Up Produce



initiative, hosting distribution events across all five boroughs where 24,000 bags of fresh fruits and vegetables are being given out to older adults for free. The initiative will run through August and you can find the closest one to you by visiting our website.

Of course, those 60 years and over can visit an older adult center all year long and eat a healthy meal. They can also enhance wellness goals by participating in a fitness class, or other programs such as arts, music, ping-pong or gardening, that not only keep our minds strong but also reduce social isolation and mental stress.

NYC Aging's Health Insurance Information Counseling and Assistance Program (HIICAP) is also

available for older adults who need help finding insurance plans that they can afford, and navigating Medicare coverage issues. Residents can speak with a trained HIICAP representative by calling Aging Connect at 212-AGING-NYC (212-244-6469).

A notable finding from our affordability research was that older adults who had attended an older adult center in the last year are less likely to report food insecurity than those who have not. That is just one statistic that shows how vital a role the programs we and our partners across the city provide, that are helping older adults continue to live independently.

No matter what your wellness goals may be, NYC Aging has a program that can help you achieve them. I look forward to seeing you all at one of our older adult centers eating a great meal, working out, receiving information about health insurance and accessing other critical resources and information, and enjoying the communities you helped to build.



*NYC Department for the Aging
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