

PREPARE NOW FOR YOUR FUTURE

As we get older, it is only natural to start thinking about what we need to continue living active, healthy lifestyles, close to our family and friends. With October being Long-Term Care Planning Month, it is a perfect opportunity to start educating yourself about the programs and services available that will help ensure you are prepared for the next chapter in your life.

One of the biggest questions people have as they get older is related to health insurance. Recent federal cuts and changes to Medicaid have made this question more confusing for older people, but NYC Aging is here to help find the best answers for you.

For nearly 40 years, our Health Insurance Information, Counseling and Assistance Program (HIICAP) has been helping New Yorkers understand their Medicaid options and to sign them up for plans that they can afford. Whether it is about prescription drugs, savings programs or supplemental programs, our trained professionals can answer your questions. With Open Enrollment quickly approaching, HIICAP is hosting a Medicare Advantage Panel Series throughout the month, in every borough. Attendees can meet with staff and hear about the options that are available to meet their needs. You can visit our website for information on sites within your borough.

However, health insurance is only one part of the equation. There are other areas people need to think about to continue living in their communities. That is where NYC Aging's In-Home services program comes in. Through this program, Case Managers assess an older adult's needs and determine their eligibility for



supports such as home-delivered meals, benefits and entitlements, nutrition counseling, and home care such as bathing and dressing, along with counseling on numerous long-term issues.

Long-term care is not just about taking care of our physical needs, but our mental and emotional well-being as well. Chronic loneliness and a lack of social connection have been compared to smoking an equivalent of 15 packs of cigarettes a day. That is why NYC Aging's Friendly Visiting program is designed to reduce social isolation among older adults. Participants are paired with a volunteer who spends time with them either in-person or over the phone, and they get to know one another through activities or even just having a conversation. Many times, real friendships develop once they realize how much they have in common. More importantly, it allows people who are becoming older to stay socially connected to

their communities, while maintaining an active personal connection.

There are also other programs to support mental health and well-being. Our Geriatric Mental Health Program provides individual, group, family, or couples counseling, in many different languages. We also have a Volunteer Program where residents can take part in special initiatives the agency organizes, provide help at an older adult center, fair or food pantry. These opportunities are not just a way to stay socially engaged, but are also meaningful ways to give back, making them even more impactful.

No matter what borough you live in, the support you need for your long-term care is available. The staff at one of our 300-plus older adult centers across the city can help you learn more these opportunities. You can find the closest one to you by visiting our website - nyc.gov/aging - or call our hotline, Aging Connect, at 212-AGING-NYC (212-244-6469) to speak with a live representative.

So for Long-Term Care Planning Month, I encourage all New Yorkers to take the steps necessary to prepare for our futures, allowing us to live the high quality of life we deserve, with dignity and joy as we age-in-place in the communities we love and prefer.



NYC Department for the Aging
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