



Fall 2022 / Issue No. 42

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atHome

Helping Seniors Live Independently



Member Spotlight: Kathy Schongar

By Deanna Mullins, Member Service Coordinator

Monadnock at Home member Kathy Schongar and her husband Larry moved to New Hampshire about 19 years ago from Avon, NY. At the time, they realized their house in NY was too big and they needed to find a home with one-story. With their son Bill living in Mason, NH he and their daughter Jennifer helped them find their home in Peterborough. Kathy is a retired English teacher who likes writing poetry and has always enjoyed Robert Frost's poetry. When they found their current home, Kathy's daughter Jennifer said it was perfect because it had a birch tree in the front yard, a nod to Robert Frost's work.

Kathy does not recall where she first

heard about Monadnock at Home, but she knew at the time that she and Larry were going to be needing more help. With Larry's increasing health issues they were not going to be able to continue doing all of the things they would normally do on their own. Kathy realized she was going to have to take on more of the things that Larry used to do and she hoped she could get help with the house, to free her up for all the other things. When they first joined, MaH connected Kathy with a "jack of all trades" service provider who was able to help with many of the things they needed for the house. He fixed things, painted the house, replaced windows,

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Kathy Schongar *Continued from page 1*

etc. Kathy shared, “the idea of a vetted list of providers is very comforting, so you don’t feel like you are picking a name out of the Yellow Pages.”

As with many MaH members, Kathy found her needs changing over time. After the loss of her beloved Larry in 2019, Kathy found herself living alone again. Kathy and Larry had always enjoyed doing so many things together. She had lived by herself when Larry was away in the Navy, but this time was very different, Kathy explained. At the start of the pandemic, her daughter Jennifer was living in NYC and Kathy invited her to come live with her in NH. Their time together reinforced to Kathy how important it is to have social interactions. “The social aspect of Monadnock at Home—having the phone calls, looking forward to the Zooms, ice cream at Kimball Farm, or other types of get togethers has really helped!” During the pandemic, Kathy also found her church helpful in keeping people connected. Reflecting back to that time, Kathy expressed how important it is to talk with peers. The un-

structured nature of the MaH monthly call made a big difference to her then and continues to today. “People can feel free to talk about whatever they want and sometimes you just need that,” she shared. Kathy enjoys the camaraderie of the social call and says, “Everybody comes to it from different experiences and they have different questions and they have different answers for your questions and it gives you options, you don’t feel like you have to figure everything out all by yourself.

“One of the things that Monadnock at Home did was keeping us up to date on the COVID information—where to go, when to do it, how to do it, offering rides—you just made it easier for people to make the decisions or accomplish the things they were trying to accomplish. And you kept updating us too, and we felt as though you were really giving us accurate, up-to-date information and trying new ways to help people.” Kathy says Monadnock at Home is “Good for fun things, good for health things, good for help things!”

As you can see, Kathy is an active

member of MaH and her church. She also loves spending time with her family and traveling and reminiscing about past experiences with loved ones. Her favorite trip taken with her husband Larry was to England where they saw the Globe Theatre being built, based on the original Globe (Shakespeare’s theater) and two years later they went back for their anniversary. The theater was built and they got to see a Shakespearean play performed in it, which Kathy says was wonderful! Most recently, her children, Bill and Jennifer, treated their family of five, including Kathy and Bill’s two sons, Daniel and Thomas, to a wonderful trip to Hawaii in celebration of Kathy’s 80th birthday. Kathy said the Hawaiian people had such respect for the land. “We had a driver that took us around on the Road to Hana. There are so many waterfalls, and at the last waterfall, our driver, who was a native Hawaiian, sang a Hawaiian chant to the waterfall to thank it for allowing us all to enjoy the natural beauty. It was amazing!”

The Holiday Season and Staying Healthy

By Sandy King, Newsletter Volunteer

We are so lucky to live in New Hampshire with all of its natural beauty and change of seasons. Currently embracing autumn, we enjoy its glorious colors and begin to move our activities indoors as temperatures fall. When more of us gather inside, our chances of spreading germs increases, and here we are once again talking about COVID-19. I wish it wasn’t so, but it seems like we’re going to have to live with the presence of this virus just like we do with the flu.

The good news is that we’ve learned a lot in the past several years and have tools available to decrease the chance of being infected with either virus. Consider this article a friendly reminder to get your vaccines for both COVID-19 and the flu.

If you are on Medicare, these vaccines are free to you. You can make an appointment or simply walk in to any pharmacy in the area to get your shots. The CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) says it’s safe

to get both shots at once. Or if you prefer, you can space the shots out. Note that the COVID-19 vaccines currently available include protection against the Omicron variant.

Besides vaccines, preventing the spread of COVID-19 can also be accomplished with home testing. Before you have out of town guests coming to your house for the holidays, it is not unreasonable to ask them to test themselves. Conversely, you may want to test yourself prior to visiting

Village News

By Sandra Faber, Executive Director



Happy autumn! Mother Nature has certainly put on a show for us this year! I hope you had a chance to enjoy the beauty that fall brings. Just a week after summer officially ended, we gathered one more time at Kimball Farm to not only see fellow members, but also to celebrate and thank our

wonderful volunteers. Fifteen of us gathered, enjoyed lunch or ice cream. The outing ironically wrapped up with volunteer Dwight helping a member with her GPS right on the spot! Thank you to all of our volunteers for all you do!

I'd also like to thank you for taking the time to complete the survey we sent in September. We had a 58% response, which is terrific! The survey not only helps us better serve our membership, but it also helps us report back to donors



Volunteer Dwight helps member Sonjia with her new GPS, getting her prepared for her upcoming road trip.

and grantors about the difference they make when they give to Monadnock at Home.

As I write today, I have not yet evaluated the survey data in total, but one thing caught my eye early on. I noticed that a few members checked off that they were not fully aware of the services that come with their membership. Please know that I am happy to plan a visit to your home to talk one-on-one and you

can always contact us to go over all of your many benefits. We want you to utilize your membership!

Lastly, as you know, COVID is still a consideration we all have when making decisions. We will be holding some in-person programs this fall, but we may decide to pivot to virtual if COVID conditions warrant. We will keep you informed if changes are made. I hope to see you soon and please contact us if you have questions or need assistance!



you're feeling ill with cold-like symptoms. Knowing that you have COVID-19 early on can be helpful in determining whether or not your doctor will prescribe antiviral medication.

family and friends. The good news is that Medicare continues to pay for up to 8 tests per month. All you have to do is visit your local pharmacy, show your Medicare card and ask for the tests. I just did this at a local Rite-Aid and it couldn't have been easier!

Self-testing can also be useful if

The bottom line is, just like the flu, we're getting to know the COVID-19 virus and how best to avoid or lessen the effects of infection. Let's all do our part and raise a glass of cheer to the upcoming holidays!



OUR MISSION

The Mission of Monadnock at Home is to provide seniors of the Monadnock Region with the support and practical means to live and thrive in their homes and communities.

Volunteer Appreciation



At the end of September, Monadnock at Home members gathered at Kimball Farm for lunch and ice cream. Volunteers were treated to an ice cream as a show of appreciation for all they do for our members. We shared stories of recent and past volunteer success stories, from stacking wood to delivering groceries in a pinch. There was lots of laughter and fun!

How to Make Vital Information Accessible in an Emergency

by Sandra Faber

What if you experienced a medical emergency and were unable to communicate with first responders? You are probably familiar with medical ID bracelets, which serve as a way to make medical information available in this type of scenario. But these days many of us have a smart phone, and with tech advancements, these devices can play a vital role in communicating our health history.

If you have an iPhone, then you may already be aware of the Health app—the white square app with the red heart—that came with your phone. Maybe you’ve used this app to check your step count for the day. But, this is actually one of the most important apps on your phone.

If you set up your information in your health app, emergency responders can not only access critical medical information such as known allergies, but they can also get the name and phone number of your emergency contact that you have designated.

You might be thinking, “But they won’t be able to unlock my phone!” Once you input your information on the app, you can allow the app to be accessed without unlocking your phone, while still keeping all of your other data secure.

To set this feature up on your iPhone, click the Health app. You may be automatically prompted to update your information. If not, then click on the circle in the upper right of the screen (it may contain your picture).

Under Health Details and Medical ID, you can include not only your emergency contacts, but also your birthdate, any medical conditions or allergies, your blood type, your organ



donor status, and more. Note that the emergency contact must already be in your phone contact list. If this person is not there, then go into your contact list and add them first. In the Medical ID section, you will see the section titled Emergency Access. Underneath, you will see, “Show When Locked” and “Share During Emergency Call.” To turn on the feature, move the toggle so it shows green. If you choose to turn these selections on, then emergency responders will be able to access your vital information from your phone.

Now in the event of an emergency, someone aiding you can access your vital information from the screen that prompts for your passcode. From this screen, they will select “Emergency” in the lower left corner, then “Medical ID” (again in the lower left corner), and your information will be displayed, including your emergency contact’s name and phone number. The emergency contact can be called simply by clicking the phone number.

Inputting your emergency infor-

mation into an Android phone is a little different and the process may vary depending on your device, but should be similar to the following. Under Settings or My Info, look for “Emergency.” You should see a screen where you can fill out medications, blood type, allergies, and so forth. The emergency contact may be further down on this screen or it may be in your contacts app. Android phones let you add a custom message to your lock screen. You can also put your emergency information here. This can be done under Settings and then Screen Lock Message.

Final tips: If you do not have any allergies, it is recommended that you type “none” or “no known” in that field. Lastly, always let your emergency contact know that you are using them as such, and make them aware of vital information that could save your life in an emergency situation.

If you would like some help getting this set up, give us a call. If there is a lot interest, we will hold a group tutorial.

2023 Medicare Open Enrollment Period

By Elise Adams, Program Manager
Monadnock ServiceLink & Community Network Team (CNT)

If you or a loved one has Medicare, the US Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), the State of NH, and your friends at Servicelink encourage you to review your current Medicare plan options during the Open Enrollment Period. You may be able to improve your coverage and/or save money.

What is the Medicare Part D Open Enrollment Period?

The Medicare Open Enrollment period is an annual event that allows Medicare beneficiaries to change or add a prescription drug plan to their Medicare benefits. People who were eligible but didn't enroll in a plan during their initial enrollment period are able to add a plan during the open enrollment period, but these individuals may pay a penalty.

Medicare Advantage plans can also be changed during this time.

The 2023 plans are available to view on Medicare.gov.

When can I make changes to my Part D plan?

- From October 15th through December 7th you can make changes to your Part D or Medicare Advantage Plan.

The coverage does not begin until January 1st.

- From January 1st through March 31st you can only go from a Medicare Advantage Plan to



another Medicare Advantage Plan or switch from a Medicare Advantage Plan to Original Medicare with a Part D.

- You CANNOT switch from a Medicare Part D plan to a Medicare Advantage Plan or from a Medicare Part plan to another Medicare Part D plan.
- If you make changes prior to January 1st then coverage will begin January 1st.
- After January 1st any changes made will not take effect until the following month.

Does everyone need to change plans?

Medicare beneficiaries are not required to make changes at this time. Plans will send notification of changes each year. If you are happy in your current plan then you can stay with that plan. The plan information will roll over and you don't have to do anything.

However, we do recommend reviewing your options if you have had a change in your medication list or are not happy with

your current plan.

You can also review your options if you aren't sure if you want to change or not.

How do I change my plan?

Medicare beneficiaries can create a MyMedicare.gov account and review their options using their personal information. This method is usually the best because it's personalized and compares your current coverage to the coverage options available. If you don't want to create an account you can open Medicare.gov and do a generic comparison using your medication list.

Another way to review your Medicare options is to meet with a Medicare counselor. Medicare counselors are also known as SHIP

counselors, and can be located at any of the ServiceLink offices in New Hampshire, or by phone at 866-634-9412. Monadnock Region residents can call Monadnock ServiceLink at 603-357-1922. If an appointment is unavailable ask your local SHIP what other options you might have.

If you don't live in New Hampshire, that is OK too. You can find your local SHIP counselor at shiphelp.org/about-medicare/regional-ship-location.

Can I change my Medicare Supplemental (Medigap) Plan during the Open Enrollment Period?

Medicare beneficiaries are able to change their supplemental plan at any time during the year. There is no open enrollment period for Medigap plans. However, if you are beyond your 6 month guaranteed issue period, then the plans can use your medical history to determine acceptance into the plan and the monthly premium.

To change your supplemental plan you can reach out to the plan directly. Contact a SHIP counselor to get a

list of supplemental options in New Hampshire.

Senior Medicare Patrol

"The Senior Medicare Patrols (SMPs) empower and assist Medicare beneficiaries, their families, and caregivers to prevent, detect, and report health care fraud, errors, and abuse through outreach, counseling, and education." (smpresource.org)

You can protect yourself by following some simple rules:

- Review your Medicare Summary Notice quarterly.
- Report suspicious activity.
- Protect your Medicare number.
- Never give your Medicare number to anyone you do not know and trust.
- Don't accept medical supplies from door-to-door salespeople.

If you detect anything out of the ordinary or experience any questionable phone calls, visits, or conversations, please call us at 866-634-9412.

Contact Monadnock ServiceLink by:

- Phone: 603-357-1922 or 866-634-9412
- Email: elyse.servicelink@nhcare-c.org
- Physical address: 25 Roxbury Street, Suite 205, 206, or 207, Keene, NH
- Mailing Address: 25 Roxbury Street Suite 106 Keene, NH 03431

Monadnock ServiceLink Aging and Disability Resource Center is a program of NH DHHS that is operated in partnership with the NH Care Collaborative, a non-profit organization focused on providing person centered, community-based care services including Choices for Independence Case Management and Veteran Directed Care Case Management. You can find more information about us online at nhcare-c.org or at servicelink.nh.gov.

Monthly Coffee Hour Update

Now that the weather is getting cooler, the MaH Member Coffee Group will meet inside at the Jaffrey Civic Center, 40 Main St., Jaffrey at 10 am on the first and third Tuesday of November and the first Tuesday of December. The group will not meet on December 20th. Due to staffing coverage at the Civic Center, the group will move (next door) to the Jaffrey Public Library for January 3rd and 17th. We will update you on February's location at a later date.

This group has grown in size and many new MaH members have joined. We encourage you to stop by and join this welcoming group for some social time! If you have questions or would like to receive updates regarding possible changes due to weather, please contact MaH at 603-371-0809.



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Why Become a MaH Member?

- You gain peace of mind.
- Your worries of living alone are eased.
- You become an active part of a bigger community.
- You gain the security of knowing you can get help on issues that arise -big or small.

Contact us to see how MaH can help you live and thrive in your home and community.

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