

## What's New in the World of Aging?



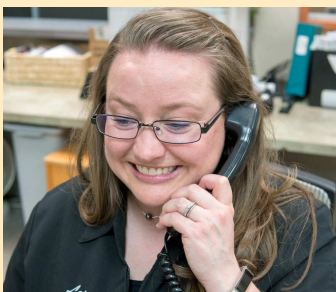
What's new? So much! Things have been busy at O3A, and we're excited to share updates with you about our projects. We'll also give you updates on other things happening around the country that affect older adults and adults with disabilities. Now that we're officially in a post-pandemic phase, we have to re-evaluate and sometimes reimagine how best to deliver services.

Read on for the latest, and let us know what you think.

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**Are you looking for services for older adults and caregivers?  
Call us or stop by!**

**Clallam County:**

Forks Office (360) 374-9496

Sequim Office (360) 452-3221

**Grays Harbor County:**

Aberdeen Office (360) 532-0520

**Jefferson County:**

Port Townsend Office (360) 385-2552

**Pacific County:**

Long Beach (360) 642-3634

Raymond (360) 942-2177

Or visit our website: [www.O3A.org](http://www.O3A.org)

**Medicare Set to Negotiate First Group of Drug Prices**

There was some very good news for Medicare recipients in August: The Biden administration announced the first ten medications that will be subject to price negotiations.



They are Eliquis, Jardiance, Xarelto, Januvia, Farxiga, Entresto, Enbrel, Imbruvica and Stelara, in addition to Fiasp and some other insulins.

According to a CNN report, “Medicare enrollees paid a total of \$3.4 billion in out-of-pocket costs last year, according to the Department of Health and Human Services. Those who didn’t receive additional financial assistance shelled out as much as \$6,500 on average.” (cnn.com, 8/29/2023)

It’s part of the Inflation Reduction Act passed last year. Another provision of the Act caps insulin costs at \$35 per month for Medicare enrollees. The new drug prices will be negotiated in the coming year and will take effect in 2026, unless the drug industry manages to stop it.

Pharmaceutical companies—which charge up to three times as much for some drugs sold in the US versus the exact same drugs sold elsewhere—are challenging the legislation. For many older adults, the high cost of medications means skipping doses or going without other essentials, like food, in order to pay for critical drugs.



## O3A's ElliQ Project Makes the National News

NPR's radio show, Here and Now, recently shared the story of our pilot project with ElliQ, the companion robot, featuring one of our participants, Jan Worrell.

Jan has found companionship and ways to connect with more people in her life through her ElliQ. Having the device, as well as a new PERS (Personal Emergency Response System, or life alert button), is even helping her stay in her own home longer because she feels safer and less lonely.

Listen to the story here:

<https://www.wbur.org/hereandnow/2023/09/01/companion-ai-robots>

## Additional ElliQ Project Openings

We currently have room for up to four more participants in our pilot project. Participants are given an ElliQ, free of charge, for one year to evaluate whether it helps reduce loneliness and improves health and wellness. Early results are very positive, both for our project and other projects happening nationally, with up to 95% reporting a reduction in loneliness.

Participants must be age 60+, live alone or spend most of their day alone, and have no major difficulty with speech, hearing, vision, or cognition that would interfere with using the ElliQ.

To see ElliQ in action, please visit [elliq.com](https://elliq.com).

If you're interested in being considered for an ElliQ, please contact Michelle Fogus at [michelle.fogus@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:michelle.fogus@dshs.wa.gov).

## WELLNESS CORNER: Exercise

### Pickleball is Sweeping the Country. Is it Really a Sport for Everyone?

If you've been paying attention to the news and social media lately, you've seen countless stories about the explosion in pickleball. If you're a person of a certain age who grew up in Washington, you probably remember playing it in gym class—albeit with wooden paddles. The game was invented on Bainbridge Island and enjoyed a moment with local PE teachers before more or less fading away until the last few years, when it returned with a



vengeance and new, high-tech fiberglass paddles, pricey shoes, and its share of controversy.

The controversy is usually centered on one of three things. Miffed tennis players, who are seeing their courts converted to pickleball courts, are protesting. Neighbors of some outdoor courts are upset by the noise, likening the sound of whiffle balls hitting those fancy paddles to gunshots. And then there are the injuries.

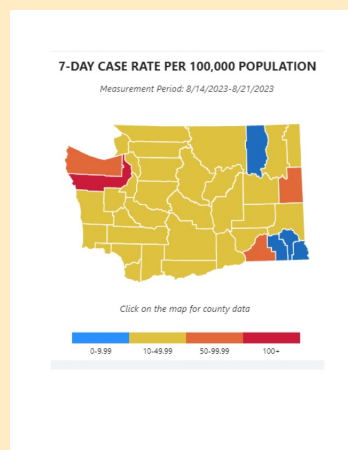
Pickleball is billed as a sport for (almost) everyone, from kids to older adults. With its smaller courts, compared to tennis, and its more genteel ethic that discourages aggressive play, it's better suited to those with more limited mobility. Usually played as a doubles sport, each player covers only a relatively small area, minimizing the need to run and lunge.

Nevertheless, some of those many pickleball stories focus on the increase in injuries. Although injuries occur in every age group, they are generally more frequent among older adults—who account for 86% of ER visits, according to a recent CBS story (7/23/2023), with the most frequent injuries being strains, sprains, and fractures. Older adults are more prone to those injuries, particularly if they're out of shape.

So if you're thinking about taking to the court, do it thoughtfully: warm up, stretch, start slow, know your limits. It can be a great way to get some exercise and socialize if you live near a pickleball court—and these days, most people do.

Learn more about pickleball at Silver Sneakers:

<https://www.silversneakers.com/blog/curious-about-pickleball-heres-how-to-get-started/>



## WELLNESS CORNER: COVID-19 Update

Jefferson and Clallam Counties have seen a recent surge in COVID cases. Overall, the rate has been relatively stable most of this year, but new variants continue to emerge.

A new booster is expected to be available in mid- to late September. The CDC will issue recommendations once it's approved, but they are likely to recommend it for people over 65 and those with chronic conditions and suppressed immunity,

as well as pregnant people. In the meantime, those people may want to consider masking in crowded indoor places, especially in areas where cases are high right now.

For updated information about COVID in Washington, please visit <https://doh.wa.gov/emergencies/covid-19/data-dashboard>. For other information, please visit the CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) website at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>.



## The MAV (Mobile Assistance Van) is Now Serving Clallam, Jefferson, Grays Harbor and Pacific Counties

**Mobile unit delivers food and resource connection to 18 sites**

This summer, the MAV expanded into the west end of Jefferson and Clallam Counties, serving six locations there each month. The van delivers food and provides information and assistance connecting to a wide range of resources, from SNAP benefits to in-home care to utility assistance and much more. The new locations include Queets, Forks, Clallam Bay, Neah Bay, LaPush, and Lower Elwha Klallam tribe. With the new locations, the MAV is serving about 850 people a month, most in remote or outlying areas of our service region. To see the MAV's schedule, please visit [o3a.org/mav](http://o3a.org/mav).



The MAV was introduced to a national audience in July at the US Aging conference in Salt Lake City. Michelle Fogus with O3A and Jeff Moyer with the North Beach Senior Center, which operates the vans, presented to about 50 people from around the country. Most of those in attendance were also serving rural areas and were interested in whether they could replicate the MAV to provide services in their own communities.

We're also thrilled to share a **new video** about the MAV! See it in action and hear from staff and guests about why we believe the MAV is a great fit for our area and how it impacts the people we serve. Watch it here: <https://youtu.be/O9YEJVuuO6M>.

Finally, we wanted to thank the WA State Legislature for their allocation of state Hunger Relief Funds to address the drop in food benefit amounts when the Public Health Emergency ended. This additional funding was an enormous boon to our nutrition programs and allowed us to purchase over \$130,000 worth of shelf-stable food, most of which went to the MAV, with the remainder assisting some homebound seniors who receive home food delivery. O3A also received funds for congregate and home-delivered meals, which are services we contract for.



### Medicare Open Enrollment Starts October 15th Free Assistance Available

The annual open enrollment period for Medicare runs from October 15th through December 7th. During this period, you can make changes to your Medicare coverage.

O3A's SHIBA program provides free, unbiased, confidential help reviewing

your current coverage and other options that best fit your needs. Contact your local O3A office (see our locations and phone numbers above) to schedule an appointment or visit <https://www.o3a.org/programs/statewide-health-insurance-advisors-shiba/>.

## High Protein Snacks for Better Health

Protein is important for good health. Check out this list of 20 protein-packed, low-calorie snacks that will keep you feeling satisfied between meals.

<https://www.health.com/healthy-high-protein-snacks-7504806>



## Keep Up on Medication Recalls

Did you know there's a website with all of the recent medication recalls? Visit <https://www.fda.gov/drugs/drug-safety-and-availability/drug-recalls> to get information about specific lots that are subject to voluntary recalls as well as medications that are withdrawn from the market.

The most recent alert at the time of this writing was for Digoxin tablets:

Date: 08/31/2023

Brand Name(s): Marlex Pharmaceuticals, Inc.

Product Description: Digoxin Tablets USP, 0.125mg and 0.25mg

Recall Reason Description: Label Mix-up

If you have any questions about whether your medication has been subject to a recall, please visit the website above or talk with your primary care provider or pharmacist.

## Have a Voice in Aging and Disability Services! Join O3A's Advisory Council

O3A's Advisory Council represents the public we serve. The AC advises leadership and staff on programs and services and engages in advocacy with the state legislature to promote the interests of older adults and adults with disabilities. The AC meets monthly (with a couple months off) virtually with an in-person option that currently rotates between Aberdeen and Sequim. If you or someone you know is interested in learning more, please contact Michelle Fogus at [michelle.fogus@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:michelle.fogus@dshs.wa.gov) or 360.538.8876.



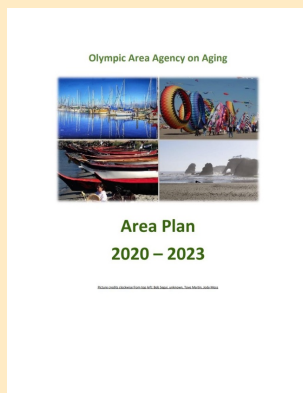
### Current openings:

- Two at-large members for Jefferson County

- Two at-large members for Pacific County
- One at-large member for Clallam County

We are also seeking one regional representative (may be from any of the four counties) for each of the following:

- Tribal rep
- Disability rep
- Minority rep
- Elected official (any elected office)



## New Area Plan in Progress; Public Hearings in October

Every four years, O3A develops a new Area Plan to guide our service delivery, including funding priorities. We solicit community input via surveys (which went out in the late spring/early summer) and public hearings. The public is invited to review the draft plan and provide input and feedback. Public hearings are currently in the process of being scheduled for

October.

Please check back soon at [o3a.org](http://o3a.org) for information about the public hearings or to request a copy of the draft Area Plan when available.

## Free Dementia Workshop in Sequim

The Dementia Journey: Communication & Behaviors workshop will be offered Saturday, October 7 from 9:00 to noon in Sequim. The workshop offers practical skills and approaches, the opportunity to ask questions, and information to take home about challenges with communication and behavior when caring for individuals with dementia.



The workshop will be facilitated by Pam Scott, former Director of Discovery Memory Care. It will be held at Trinity United Methodist Church, 100 S. Blake Avenue. Registration is strongly encouraged as seating is limited. To register, please contact Home Instead at 360.681.2511 or Pam Scott at 360.461.3402 or [KalaniLeilani333@gmail.com](mailto:KalaniLeilani333@gmail.com).

## Virtual Aging Mastery Program Starts September 18th

Build your own personal playbook for aging well! This fun, innovative program empowers you to take key steps to improve your well-being, add stability to



your life, and strengthen ties to your community. Meet new friends and provide encouragement to one another as you take the Aging Mastery journey together!

Learn about healthy eating and hydration, sleep, financial fitness, medication management, community engagement, advance planning, healthy relationships, and more.

The group will meet Mondays from September 18th through November 13th, 2:00-3:30 p.m., via Zoom. Participants must have a computer with an Internet connection. Limited spots are available. Sign-up is on a first-come first-served basis. Contact [darrelldickeson@gmail.com](mailto:darrelldickeson@gmail.com) to register.

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Thanks, and happy reading!

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