

# Hinsdale/Peru COA Newsletter

## March 1, 2021 Volume 3 No 1

*Hinsdale/Peru Council on Aging*  
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*It is the Mission of the Hinsdale/Peru Council on Aging to encourage participation, to provide services available to seniors and to promote activities that will enhance their quality of life.*

### **A Letter from the Hinsdale/Peru COA Board Members:**



Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it has been just shy of a year that we have been unable to hold functions for the seniors of our community. We have missed seeing our friends, especially those who regularly attended the monthly luncheons. The Super Senior Birthday Party and the popular Christmas Party had to be cancelled. ***But, let it be known you have all been in our thoughts!***

We hope you have made it through the past year (and tough winter) safe and sound, as well as relatively sane. Our thoughts go out to all who have struggled with COVID-19 or had a loved one who has been affected by the disease. We have all dealt with the loneliness and worry that has accompanied the pandemic and the special precautions we have been asked to follow by the CDC.

The Board looks forward to being able to resume its monthly meetings so we can begin planning some social functions for our seniors. In the meantime, Cathy Spinney has remained busy helping seniors navigate the confusing maze of Medicare. Marion Tinney has resumed her knitting/crocheting group via Zoom, a video communications program used to chat with others while viewing each other on their respective computer screens.

Unfortunately, there have been no COA functions, since March 2020, to report in the newsletter; but we have continued to mail/email the Quarterly COA Newsletter with, what we hope are, articles of interest to seniors.

Meanwhile, keep your calendar handy and start counting down the days to the First Day of Spring.



**Have a Happy St. Patrick's Day!!**



### **INSIDE**

- Holiday Contest Winners
- Circuit Breaker Tax Refund Available
- Peru Town Website
- Fuel Assistance
- Seniors 65+ Eligible for COVID-19 Vaccine

***Get helpful information about doctors, hospitals, and health care services in your area on the [Medicare.gov](https://www.Medicare.gov) website.***

***See contact information, directions, and quality ratings for:***

- Doctors & other providers
- Hospitals
- Local nursing homes
- Hospice & home health agencies
- Dialysis facilities
- Inpatient rehabilitation centers & long-term care hospitals

***Witty Words of Wisdom:*** *When everything's coming your way, you're in the wrong lane.*

*"This newsletter is paid for, in part, by the Executive Office of Elder Affairs"*



\***The Holiday Hunt Contest** had 19 winners out of 37 who guessed the correct amount of smiley faces hidden in the December Newsletter! Congratulations to those who counted 26 smileys. Your \$25 gift certificate to Ozzie's is in the mail. Enjoy!

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**The Hinsdale Knit and Crochet Group**, led by Marion Tinney, has been meeting for about 6 years. The members make hats, mittens and prayer shawls that are donated locally. The group has been unable to meet since March, 2020 due to COVID-19.

Marion recently learned how to do Zoom meetings and the group has been meeting since mid-December. It has been a learning experience for everyone. The members are now able to share projects, tips and socialize.

All are welcome to join. Contact Marion at [mariontinney@gmail.com](mailto:mariontinney@gmail.com) and leave your name & email address. She will then send you a Zoom meeting invitation and help you get started with Zoom.



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**\$\$ REFUNDABLE TAX CREDIT \$\$**

*“CIRCUIT BREAKER TAX CREDIT FOR SENIORS”*



If you own or rent residential property and your real estate tax, along with water and sewer dept. charges, exceed 10% of your income for the year, you are eligible for a refundable tax credit. To be eligible you must be 65 years of age before January 1, 2021, own or rent a home or apartment in Massachusetts and occupy it as your principal residence.

If you do not normally file a state return because you don't owe any state taxes, you still can take advantage of this tax break by filing a Form One plus the Schedule CB. You do not need to file a Federal Income Tax Form since this is a Massachusetts State Refund. For more info you can go to Mass Dept. of Revenue website, [www.mass.gov/dor](http://www.mass.gov/dor), where you can download forms and instructions. If you have any questions, call Cathy Spinney 413-655-2929.

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**Text Scams Directed at Customers of Registry of Motor Vehicles**

Several states have experienced customers receiving unsolicited text messages from numbers claiming to be other state government agencies with links or information about REAL ID and updating their licenses. **These messages are SPAM -- customers should not click on the link and should DELETE the message.**

*Should you experience or hear from customers regarding this or any other associated scam related to RMV services, please report them to the FBI's Scam and Safety Office at [857-386-2000](tel:857-386-2000).*

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**Thank you to all seniors who have signed up to receive the COA Quarterly Newsletter by email.** If you are interested in adding your name to the list, please provide your name & email address by emailing [coa@hinsdalema.gov](mailto:coa@hinsdalema.gov). (Note: You will need to add this email to your address book or it may end up in your Junk Folder.)

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## COVID-19 Update



***On February 10th, Governor Charlie Baker announced a new policy that will allow a caregiver, family member or companion, who brings someone aged 75 or over to a vaccination site, to receive the vaccine also. This is an effort to get more of those 75 and over to actually come to get their shots. The caregiver does not have to be eligible yet under the vaccination schedule.***

***\*\*As of February 18<sup>th</sup>, the state opened eligibility for people 65 years and older as well as those with 2 or more qualifying medical conditions.***

***The Berkshire Vaccination Collaboration*** sites also have the capacity to accommodate “companion appointments”. The new guidelines, which primarily are targeted at mass-vaccination sites, also apply to Berkshire County's three public clinics, according to local vaccine coordinators.

***The Berkshire Vaccine Collaborative*** is coordinating COVID-19 Vaccination Clinics in Berkshire County. These clinics will be held at 1) Berkshire Community College Field House in Pittsfield, 2) St. Elizabeth's Parish Center in North Adams, and 2) W.E.B. Du Bois Regional Middle School in Great Barrington. Please note: At your appointment, you will be asked to provide proof of your eligibility to be vaccinated in Phase 2.

For comprehensive and up-to-date information on the vaccination process and how to schedule vaccination appointments, please visit [www.getvaccinatedberkshires.org](http://www.getvaccinatedberkshires.org). You can also call the *Berkshire COVID Hotline* (413-449-5575) for up-to-date info on vaccination availability.

**Medicare Part B covers the COVID-19 vaccine**, so there's no cost to you. When you go to get your vaccine, make sure to bring your Medicare card, so the vaccine provider can bill Medicare.

***When scheduling your appointment***, or at the time of the appointment, you will be required to review vaccine eligibility criteria and confirm (or attest) on a “COVID-19 Massachusetts Vaccination Attestation Form” that you are eligible to receive the vaccine (e.g., you are age 75 or older).

At the time of scheduling and/or at your appointment you may be asked for the following information: 1) Your insurance card, if you have insurance. (Vaccination is free whether you have insurance or not.) 2) A Government-issued identification or license. You may get a vaccine even if you do not have a driver's license or a Social Security number.

***\*\*You will never be asked for a credit card number to make an appointment***

***\*\*Never accept a ride*** to a vaccination site with someone you are not familiar with.

***\*\*Beware of phone calls*** (scams) where the caller asks for your Medicare number. There are no new Medicare cards with “chips” being issued at this time.

***\*\*Do not give out your Medicare number to anyone who calls asking for it!!***

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***According to Andrew Badley, M.D., COVID-19 Research Task Force Chair, Mayo Clinic:*** The vaccine prevents symptomatic disease. We don't know if it prevents infection. If you are infected, but don't get sick because of the vaccine, you can still replicate the virus and transmit it to others.

***\*\*Currently, our recommendations are that if you've received the vaccine you still wear a mask, maintain social distancing, frequently wash hands and avoid gathering in large social gatherings.\*\****

**THIS IS YOUR March, 2021 QUARTERLY COA NEWSLETTER.** For up-to-date town news be sure to check out the Town of Hinsdale, Mass website [www.hinsdalemass.com](http://www.hinsdalemass.com). **Peru residents** are able to visit their informative website at [www.townofperuma.com](http://www.townofperuma.com).

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## ? DID YOU KNOW ?

**It is not too late** to apply for help with home heating bills (Includes fuel assist, heating & repair & weatherization.) Call BCAC 483-663-3014. Fuel Assistance Application Forms can be found on the BCAC website [www.bcacinc.org/fuel-assistance](http://www.bcacinc.org/fuel-assistance)

**You can receive text updates** from the Mass. governor's office by texting 888-777 and typing COVIDMA on your cell phone. Videos of all the governor's updates are available on 'You Tube'.

**Peru has an excellent town website**, [www.townofperuma.com](http://www.townofperuma.com). For up-to-date info on Town notices, etc. check it out. *You can also access back copies of the 2020 Hinsdale/Peru COA Newsletters on the website.*

**The Hinsdale Annual Town Meeting** is planned on being held Wednesday, May 12, 2021; with The Town Election the following Saturday, May 15, 2021. It has not been determined if the meeting will be held in person.

**You can sign up for the monthly newsletter** from The Hinsdale Town Administrator, Bob Graves, at [town.administrator@hinsdalema.gov](mailto:town.administrator@hinsdalema.gov).

**Older Americans (over 65) are one of the groups at greatest risk of dying in a fire?** The US Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) wants to sound the alarm by reminding our senior community to stay vigilant about fire safety. Cook with care; keep all loose clothing away from flames & ignitable sources (especially space heaters); do not smoke while drowsy; place working smoke alarms on every floor outside sleeping areas & inside bedrooms.