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# Senior Voice

A publication of Older Persons  
Action Group, Inc. Free

Serving Alaskans 50+ Since 1978

Volume 45, Number 4 April 2022

**Senior transportation  
is on the comeback  
in the Interior.**

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**New regulations  
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**How and why to  
preserve your  
digital legacy.**

– page 23

2021  
National Mature  
Media Awards  
Winner

## SPRING CLEANING

*Foma Khokhlov and his father Alexander "Sasha" Khokhlov pick up debris near Taku Lake in Anchorage during the 2021 Creek Cleanup. Sponsored by the Anchorage Waterways Council, the annual cleanup returns this year from May 12-24. Read about the council and its mission of stewardship on page 16.*

*Photo courtesy Keith Baxter/MSI Communications*







# How can we make Anchorage more age-friendly?

Age Smart forum, April 12  
Senior Voice Staff

“Age Smart – Let’s Talk”, the series of forums sponsored by AARP Alaska, Older Persons Action Group and the Anchorage Senior Activity Center, returns April, from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. Events are currently

held virtually on the internet, using Zoom. This month’s presentation is from AARP Alaska, focusing on making Anchorage an “Age Friendly” city. Learn about what seniors are saying they need as they age in the city, and ideas for improvements in ways that will benefit se-

niors and the community at large. The “Age Smart – Let’s Talk” series is a monthly forum on a topic of interest and importance to Alaskans who want to be thoughtful about how to make good choices as they grow older. The series is developed to provide working age adults

with information necessary to plan and fulfill a secure, healthy and satisfying life after 60 (all ages are welcome). Each month the series highlights a particular topic with a variety of formats, including issue experts, panel discussions, interactive presentations, and plenty of time for

questions. Admission is free and open to everyone. Presentation begins at 6:30. To sign up, go to AARP’s event page at <https://aarp.cventevents.com/ASAPR2022>.

## Prices are growing faster than Social Security benefits

Editor’s note: This press statement was received March 15, 2022.  
The Senior Citizens League

A new survey by The Senior Citizens League (TSLC) indicates that even after receiving the highest Social Security cost of living adjustment (COLA) in 40 years, seniors report they are worse off than before. The majority of Social Security recipients say their monthly expenditures from January 2021 to January of 2022 grew far more than the amount the COLA-boosted benefits. The COLA increase of 5.9 percent raised average Social Security benefits by \$92 per month. But 73 percent of survey respondents who receive Social Security said their household expenses increased by at least \$96 per month in 2021. Nearly half of all survey participants, 48 percent reported that expenditures had increased by more than \$144 per month. “Inflation has burned through consumer buying power during this period,” says Mary Johnson, a Social

Security and Medicare policy analyst for The Senior Citizens League. Johnson, who studies how inflation impacts the buying power of Social Security benefits, says that inflation has continued to spiral upward since the 2022 COLA was announced last October, creating an unusually high benefit shortfall of almost 2 percent. “By January 2022, the annual COLA was already falling behind the rate of inflation,” Johnson says. The December consumer price index (CPI) data indicates that the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W), which is used to calculate the Social Security COLA, was 7.8% through December 2021. “That’s 1.9 percentage point higher than the 5.9% COLA that beneficiaries actually received in January,” Johnson points out. When inflation rises faster than Social Security income, retired and disabled beneficiaries experience a loss in buying power. For example, the average retiree benefit of \$1,564.00

***Inflation has continued to spiral upward since the 2022 COLA was announced last October, creating an unusually high benefit shortfall of almost 2 percent.***

in 2021, increased by 5.9 percent to \$1,656.30 per month in January — an increase of \$92.30 per month. But with December inflation of 7.8 percent, that benefit level would have needed to increase by \$122 to \$1,686.00 just to keep up. “Thus, the 5.9 percent COLA already leaves average retirees with a shortfall of about \$30 per month, due to inflation through the end of last year,” Johnson says. To calculate the amount of shortfall you are experiencing, multiply your gross Social Security benefit (the amount before deductions) in 2021, by 1.078 to determine the amount a benefit would have had to increase to match the December level of inflation. Then subtract the gross amount of your actual Social Security benefit for 2022. The difference

is the benefit shortfall. (The gross Social Security benefit information can be found in the “Your New Benefit Amount” letter that the Social Security Administration sent out in December of last year.) How long will inflation continue? Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell is expected to start financial actions this month to bring down inflation, but even so, inflation will take time to turn around. “This is especially the case since gas and other oil products are likely to remain high,” Johnson

says. “Older consumers are looking for relief from the non-stop price hikes. Retired and disabled Social Security beneficiaries know that a COLA that does not keep up with rising costs forces them to spend more from savings, can force them to borrow, and leads to a loss of Social Security income over the course of a retirement that is never remedied,” Johnson says. The Senior Citizens League is working for legislation that would boost Social Security benefits by about \$30 per month for all recipients to help make up for the COLA shortfall. The Senior Citizens League is a Washington, D.C.-based senior advocacy organization. For details, visit <http://www.SeniorsLeague.org>.

## Correction

Our March 2022 edition story “Clinical trial clinics in Alaska aim to cure colon cancer” contained several

errors. Senior Epidemiologist Diana Redwood works at the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium, not Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation (YKHC). The study mentioned in the

story is in collaboration with YKHC and is not open to enrollment in other parts of the state. The study is intended to increase the number of people getting screened for colon cancer.

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# Myths and facts about health research

National Hispanic Council  
on Aging

One of the reasons health research is important is to study the effectiveness and safety of a medicine. Some drugs may work in clinical trials but may not work in the field due to factors such as race, ethnicity, age, gender and more. Even though we know the importance of health research, we often ask ourselves questions such as, “Why should I be part of health research? What are potential outcomes of my participation? Will I be making a difference?” The truth is that health research aims to find better ways to prevent and treat disease. Health research is an important way to help improve the care and treatment of people worldwide.

An example of a health research initiative is “All of Us”, a research program from the National Institutes of Health, which aims to help speed up health research. People who join this program will share information about their health, habits and environment. By looking for patterns, researchers may learn more about what affects people’s health and, in the future, find treatments or prevention strategies for diseases.

However, due to the huge amount of misinformation, many people are unaware of the benefits of health research and are even afraid to take part in this important effort.

Can you tell the difference between myths and facts about health research? Learn the facts about health research and the All of Us Research Program.

**Myth:** The race or ethnicity of research participants doesn’t matter because medicine affects everyone the same way.

**Fact:** Everyone’s body processes medicines differently, and health care shouldn’t be one-size-fits-all. According to the Office of Minority Health, Hispanic adults are 70% more likely than non-Hispanic white adults to be diagnosed with diabetes and are 1.2 times more likely to be obese. This shows how

**Due to the huge amount of misinformation, many people are unaware of the benefits of health research and are even afraid to take part in this important effort.**

different our community’s health experiences are from other groups.

**Myth:** There are enough people involved in health research, I don’t need to participate.

**Fact:** While Hispanics represent almost 19% of the population in the United States, less than 5% participate in clinical trials. We need more of the Hispanic community to participate. When more people participate, researchers have a fuller picture of the health of the community.

**Myth:** I will be a guinea pig.

**Fact:** There are many strict guidelines around clinical trials, and you must give consent (your agreement) before you participate. If you join the All of Us Research Program, participants are considered partners. With All of Us, participants shape the program with their input and get back information about themselves.

**Myth:** Being part of health research has had no benefit at all.

**Fact:** Health research helps researchers find the best ways for people to stay healthy and create better treatments. Participating in health research can improve the health of your community and future generations, but the All of Us Research Program also has specific benefits for you. You can get back information about your health, including genetics and DNA. These results may include things like ancestry (where your family comes from), traits (like whether you can digest milk), whether you have a higher risk of developing some conditions, and how your body may respond to certain medications. This can help you make more informed decisions about your health.

**Myth:** My health data

and personal information will be shared with other government agencies.

**Fact:** Here are some facts about the All of Us Research Program:

- ▶ The program doesn’t ask what your citizenship or immigration status is.
- ▶ They cannot share your information with other government agencies.
- ▶ Joining the program will not affect your immigration status.
- ▶ Your medical or personal information will never be shared with a future employer.
- ▶ Legally, All of Us can’t

give away your information to anyone outside of the program.

- ▶ Information shared with the program is not admissible in a court of law, which means it cannot be used against you in a legal setting.

**Myth:** Healthy people don’t need to be a part of health research. Only very sick people join medical studies.

**Fact:** With the All of Us Research Program, you can participate in health research no matter how many or what kind of health conditions you have.

Enrollment in All of Us is open to all eligible adults (18 and older) who live in the United States. People of every race, ethnicity, sex, gender, and sexual orientation are welcome. You can be healthy or have health issues.

**Myth:** I need health insurance to participate in medical research.

**Fact:** You don’t need health insurance to join All of Us because it is a research program, not medical care.

Joining the All of Us Research Program offers a

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# COVID update: Masks, tests, cancer patients

By JOHN C. SCHIESZER

For Senior Voice

## Masks facts and Fiction

The issue of wearing a mask is different for older adults who have several medical conditions they are managing. It is not a matter of choice but of necessity. Now, scientists have a better idea of what masks can and cannot do during the current wave of the pandemic. An international research team developed a new theoretical model to better assess the risks of spreading viruses such as COVID-19, with and without a face mask. The results show how the standard ‘safe’ distance of 6 feet does not always apply but varies greatly depending on a range of environmental factors. The current recommendations and understanding around the transmission

**The study revealed that a person talking without a face mask can spread infected droplets three feet away. Should the same person cough, the drops can be spread up to nine feet. If the person sneezes, the spread distance can be up to 21 feet.**

of respiratory infectious diseases are often based on a diagram developed by the American scientist William Firth Wells in 1934. However, this model lacks sophistication and does not account for the true complexity of transmission. Researchers developed a more advanced model to show that it is possible to more efficiently calculate the direct risk of spreading COVID infection. The new model incorporates a number of factors, such as interpersonal distance, temperature, humidity levels, viral load and type of exhalation. The researchers were able to demon-

strate how these risks change with and without a face mask. The study revealed that a person talking without a face mask can spread infected droplets three feet away. Should the same person cough, the drops can be spread up to nine feet. If the person sneezes, the spread distance can be up to 21 feet. However, using a face mask, the risk of spreading the infection decreases significantly. “If you wear a surgical mask, the risk of infection is reduced to such an extent that it is practically negligible, even if you’re only standing one meter

(3.2 feet) away from an infected person,” explained study investigator Gaetano Sardina, who is an associate professor of Fluid Mechanics at the Department of Mechanics and Maritime Sciences at Chalmers University of Technology in Sweden. **Just a saliva sample and a light** A team of researchers now has come up with a low-cost, portable, non-invasive device that uses light and saliva to test COVID-19 patients in less than 30 minutes. The results have shown that the device can detect very low concentrations of SARS-CoV-2 with a sensitivity of 91.2% and a specificity of 90%, similar to that of PCR but as fast as an antigen test. The team developed a flow virometer, a device that uses light to detect

the concentration of the virus in a liquid. The device uses a couple of drops of saliva and fluorescent light markers. When saliva is collected from the saliva of a patient’s mouth, it is added to a solution that contains fluorescent antibodies. If the saliva contains any presence of viral particles, the fluorescent antibodies will attach to the virus. In less than one minute, a reading is rendered. The team carried out a blind test with 54 samples and were able to confirm 31 cases out of 34 positives with only three false negatives. In addition, they measured 3,834 viral copies per milliliter, which is at least three orders of magnitude lower than that of commercially available rapid antigen tests.

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# April health fairs, services around the state

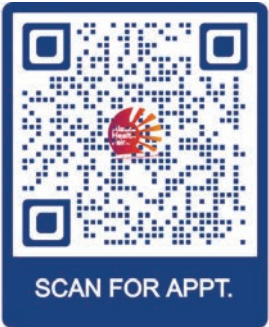
By SHARON PHILLIPS

Alaska Health Fair, Inc.

April is a busy month for all Alaskans. Many of you are getting excited to be able to gather in outside groups for lots of fresh air and sunshine, hiking, biking, walking (with no ice cleats), camping, recreation, sports and other healthy activities. Alaska Health Fair and the State of Alaska Department of Health and Social Services are teaming up for your health. We are pleased to offer free A1C screenings for those who qualify, while supplies last, and free resources on diabetes and prediabetes and a free membership

in the Omada Health online program that you can claim today. This provides a dedicated health coach and care team to talk with on diet and exercise, along with interactive weekly lessons and smart devices, all delivered to your door, and more. To receive Omada Health membership free of charge visit their website, click on “Check eligibility” and enter your Alaska zip code when in the form – <https://go.omada-health.com/alaska>. Give us a call for more information or visit [www.alaskahealthfair.org](http://www.alaskahealthfair.org). Take time to review current events and updated schedules on the website. All

event dates are posted under specific Alaska regions – Southcentral, Southeast, Northern region. Scan our QR code to easily access the website and make a convenient appointment. If you don’t have a smart phone to scan our QR code, go to our website and scroll to the lower half of the main page. Find the community you are interested in, pick



the city/date, select that line’s “Make Appointment” button and schedule your time. You’ll quickly receive a confirmation from notifications@calendly.com, and subsequent reminders, with the ability to change or cancel. If you experience difficulties, call our offices for assistance: Anchorage 907-278-0234, Fairbanks 907-374-6853 and Juneau 907-723-5100. **April health fair dates:** April 2 Fairbanks, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. April 9 Seward, 8 a.m. to noon April 22 Soldotna, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

April 23 Soldotna, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. April 23 Willow, 8 a.m. to noon April 30 Salcha, 8 to 11 a.m. Anchorage Office blood tests available; dates/times vary monthly Fairbanks Office blood tests available; dates/times vary monthly During these difficult times, we know that taking care of your health needs can be challenging. Take time to take care of yourself, as it is up to you to meet your personal health needs. Sharon Phillips is the Alaska Health Fair, Inc. Tanana Valley/Northern Region program director.

# How to manage when grieving returns

By KAREN CASANOVAS

For Senior Voice

Q: It’s been several months since my loved one passed away. I have been through the stages of grief and have finally reached acceptance. But then – out of nowhere – I find myself plunged back



into the depths of sadness. What could be causing this? A: It might be that you are experiencing reawakened grief. This is a phenomenon that can occur after a death when certain triggers cause a person to relive the loss. If you are struggling with reawakened grief, it is important

to remember that this is a normal response to loss and you are not alone. One of the most difficult things about this reoccurrence is that it can seem like you are grieving all over again. You might experience the same intense emotions, such as sadness, guilt, lone-

liness and fear. These feelings can be extremely overwhelming and may cause withdrawal from usual activities. Sadness on anniversary death dates or the date of the funeral can be extremely difficult. These times can

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## Alzheimer's disease and hearing loss



By **DONNA R. DEMARCO**

Accurate Hearing Systems

Part three of three.

Numerous studies have linked untreated hearing loss to a wide range of physical and emotional conditions, including impaired memory and ability to learn new tasks, reduced alertness, increased risk to personal safety, irritability, negativism, anger, fatigue, tension, stress, depression and diminished psychological and overall health.

Accurate Hearing is urging caregivers of people with Alzheimer's to also address their own hearing health—recognizing the negative impact that untreated

hearing loss can have on their own quality of life and emotional well-being. Caregivers can determine if they need a comprehensive hearing check by a hearing professional by taking a free, quick and confidential online hearing test at [www.accuratehearingsystems.com](http://www.accuratehearingsystems.com).

An estimated 5 million Americans are living with Alzheimer's, and they are supported by more than 15 million caregivers.

For information about the 10 Warning Signs of Alzheimer's disease, early detection and diagnosis, contact the Alzheimer's Association toll-free helpline at 800-272-3900 or visit [www.alz.org/10signs](http://www.alz.org/10signs).

Accurate Hearing offers free hearing tests. Call for an appointment, 907-644-6004.

Donna R DeMarco, AAS, BC-HIS, Tinnitus Care Provider, International Hearing Society certified.



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## Medicare and preventive care

By **SEAN McPHILAMY**

Alaska Medicare  
Information Office

Preventive care is the care you receive to prevent illness, detect medical conditions and keep healthy. A service is considered preventive if you have no prior symptoms of the disease. In contrast, diagnostic services address symptoms or conditions that you already have. Today we will discuss how Medicare covers preventive care.

Medicare Part B covers many preventive services, such as screenings, vaccines, and counseling. A list of these services is available at: <https://www.medicare.gov/coverage/preventive-screening-services>. If you have a question about whether Medicare covers your test or preventive service, you can visit [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov), review your copy of the 2022 "Medicare & You" handbook, or download the "Medicare What's Covered" app.

You should pay nothing for most preventive services so long as you see a provider who accepts Medicare assignment under Original Medicare. In some cases, you may be charged copays for services you receive that are related to your preventive service, even if Medicare pays for 100% of the cost of the preventive service itself.

During your preventive visit, your provider may discover and need to investigate or treat a new or existing problem. This additional service may be diagnostic or involve treatment. Medicare covers diagnostic and treatment

services differently than preventive services, and you may be charged coinsurances or copays.

Medicare covers one 'Welcome to Medicare' preventive visit in your first year of having Medicare Part B, then one Annual Wellness visit per year after that, with zero cost-sharing. Keep in mind that these visits are not head-to-toe physicals. During the Welcome to Medicare visit, your provider will review your medical and social history as well as your health status and risk factors. Your provider will then give you resources related to your risk factors and health needs and will give you a checklist or written plan with information about other preventive services you may need. Annual Wellness visits, which Medicare will cover once you have had Part B for 12 months, are yearly appointments with your primary care provider to create or update a personalized prevention plan. This plan can help prevent illness based on your current health and risk factors. For both kinds of preventive visits, be prepared with information about your medical history, family history, the providers you see, durable medical equipment you use, and medications you take.

You pay nothing for most preventive services if you see a provider who accepts assignment under Original Medicare. These providers accept Medicare's approved amount as payment in full. For preventive services that

**You should pay nothing for most preventive services so long as you see a provider who accepts Medicare assignment under Original Medicare. In some cases, you may be charged copays for services you receive that are related to your preventive service, even if Medicare pays for 100% of the cost of the preventive service itself.**

Medicare covers at 100%, you owe no deductible or coinsurance when you see a provider who accepts assignment. And if you receive services that do have a cost, these providers cannot charge you more than the Medicare-approved deductible and coinsurance.

If you see other types of providers, such as one who is out-of-network or one who does not accept assignment, then charges may apply to preventive care services that otherwise would not have cost you anything.

### Check for fraud, errors

You can detect errors or fraudulent charges by carefully reviewing your health care statements from Medicare. If you think you were charged for a preventive service and should not have been, contact your health care provider first.

Claim summaries and

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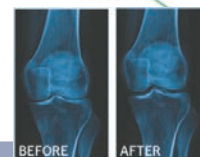
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# Big changes will affect SNAP (Food Stamps) and Medicaid

By EVA KHADJINOVA

Alaska Legal Services

The approaching spring is bringing changes not only to Alaskan landscapes, but also to the public benefits many elderly and disabled Alaskans receive. Some of these changes have already occurred, creating substantial impact on the benefits' recipients. Others will take place with the end of the public health emergency, currently anticipated in mid-April.

## More people are entitled to SNAP (Food Stamps) than those currently receiving the benefit

Many elderly and disabled live with their relatives, which, in turn, has a substantial impact on their ability to receive SNAP benefits, more commonly known as Food Stamps. Generally, if the individuals live together and customarily purchase food and prepare meals together, all

***The court decision will have a sizable positive impact on the most vulnerable Alaskans - elderly and disabled. It means that many more of the vulnerable Alaskans may be entitled to SNAP, even though they are currently not receiving it. It also may mean a substantially higher amount of SNAP to the current recipients.***

of their incomes are considered for SNAP eligibility and amount. If, however, a person is 60 or over and unable to purchase food and prepare meals because of disability, that person should be considered separately in making SNAP eligibility decisions.

For example, if an elderly and disabled person lives with their adult child, only the disabled person's income should be considered for SNAP purposes to determine the disabled person's eligibility. Recently, the Superior Court in Juneau broadened what "unable to purchase food and prepare meals" means. The court noted that nothing in the law indicates an intent to restrict the benefits to the most severely

disabled individuals. The court concluded that a disabled person who participates in shopping and meal preparation with others' assistance is not necessarily able to do these tasks on their own and, therefore, their income should be counted separately from those who live with them. This decision created a substantial shift in the way the State Division of Public Assistance has historically interpreted the provision regarding ability to prepare meals. The decision will have a sizable positive impact on the most vulnerable Alaskans - elderly and disabled. It means that many more of the vulnerable Alaskans may be entitled to SNAP, even though they are current-

ly not receiving it. It also may mean a substantially higher amount of SNAP to the current recipients.

## Medicaid: What does the end of the Public Health Emergency mean to recipients?

The anticipated end-date for federally-declared public health emergency is currently set for mid-April. During the public health emergency, virtually all Medicaid terminations have been suspended. Thus, irrespective of whether a person suddenly started to get more income or received even very sizable resources, they were still receiving Medicaid benefits during the public health emergency. With the emergency coming to

an end, it is anticipated that the agency will start re-determining eligibility for Medicaid, which could result in a significant number of people's benefits being terminated. This, in turn, could have an enormous impact on the most vulnerable.

For example, if you started to receive pension or survivor benefits for a spouse that passed away during the pandemic, your income may have increased beyond the Medicaid eligibility limits, and your benefits may be terminated following the lift of the public health emergency. Similarly, if you suddenly came into an inheritance or to a lawsuit settlement during the pandemic and your benefits were not affected during pandemic, this may change soon. In many cases, especially when there is a change in income, these terminations can be avoided. We, at

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# New research on Parkinson's, prostate cancer, benefits of pets

By JOHN SCHIESZER

Medical Minutes

## Hidden brain benefits come with pet ownership

Owning a pet, like a dog or cat, especially for five years or longer, may be linked to slower cognitive decline in older adults, according to a new study. In fact, having a dog for more than 10 years may have important brain benefits.

"Prior studies have suggested that the human-animal bond may have health benefits like decreasing blood pressure and stress," said study author Dr. Tiffany Braley with the University of Michigan Medical Center in Ann Arbor. "Our results suggest pet ownership may also be protective against cognitive decline."

The study included 1,369 older adults (average age of 65) who had normal cognitive skills at the start of the study. A total of 53% owned pets, and 32% were long-term pet owners, defined as those who owned pets for five years or more.

Researchers used data from the Health and Retirement Study, a large study of Medicare beneficiaries. In that study, people were given multiple cognitive tests. Researchers used those cognitive tests to develop a composite cognitive score for each person, ranging from zero to 27. The composite score included common tests of subtraction, numeric counting and word recall. Researchers used participants' composite cognitive scores and estimated the associations between years of pet ownership and cognitive function.

Over six years, cognitive scores decreased at a slower rate in pet owners. This difference was strongest among long-term pet owners. Taking into account other factors known to affect cognitive function, the study showed that



long-term pet owners, on average, had a cognitive composite score that was 1.2 points higher at six years compared to non-pet owners.

"As stress can negatively affect cognitive function, the potential stress-buffering effects of pet ownership could provide a plausible reason for our findings," said Dr. Braley. "A companion animal can also increase physical activity, which could benefit cognitive health. That said, more research is needed to confirm our results and identify underlying mechanisms for this association."

## Sniffing out Parkinson's disease

Scientists have been trying to build devices that could diagnose Parkinson's disease (PD) through odor compounds on the skin. Now, researchers have developed a portable, artificially intelligent olfactory system, or "e-nose," that has the potential to diagnose the disease in a doctor's office.

Parkinson's disease causes motor symptoms, such as tremors, rigidity and trouble walking, as well as non-motor symptoms, including depression and dementia. Although there's no cure, early diagnosis and treatment can improve one's quality of life, relieve symptoms and prolong survival.

Currently, the disease isn't identified until

next page please



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Research

from page 8

patients develop motor symptoms, and by that time they’ve already experienced irreversible neuron loss. Recently, scientists discovered that individuals with Parkinson’s disease secrete increased sebum (an oily substance produced by the skin’s sebaceous glands). Individuals with Parkinson’s disease also have increased production of yeast, enzymes and hormones, which combine to produce certain odors.

Chinese researchers developed a fast, easy to use, portable and inexpensive system to diagnose Parkinson’s disease through smell, making it suitable for point-of-care testing. The researchers developed an e-nose and machine learning algorithms. The team collected sebum samples from 31 Parkinson’s patients and 32 healthy individuals by swabbing their upper backs with gauze. They analyzed volatile organic compounds emanating from the gauze with the e-nose, finding three odor compounds (octanal, hexyl acetate and perillaldehyde) that were significantly different between the two groups.

Ultrasound scan can help diagnose prostate cancer

An ultrasound scan can be used to detect cases of prostate cancer, according to a new study by researchers at Imperial College London, University College London and Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust. The team found that a new type of ultrasound scan can diagnose most prostate cancer cases with good accuracy.

In a clinical trial involving 370 men, the ultrasound scans missed only 4.3% more clinically important prostate cancer cases (cancer that should be treated rather than monitored) compared to magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scans currently used to detect prostate cancer.

MRI scans are expensive and time-consuming. The team believes that an ultrasound scan could be used as a first test in a community healthcare setting. The researchers also

hope it may be safely used in combination with MRI scans to maximize cancer detection.

The study, which was published in Lancet Oncology, points out that prostate cancer develops slowly and symptoms such as blood in the urine do not appear until the disease has developed. It usually affects men over 50 and often men with a family

history of the disease.

“MRI scans are one of the tests we use to diagnose prostate cancer. Although effective, these scans are expensive, take up to 40 minutes to perform and are not easily available to all. Also, there are some patients who are unable to have MRI scans such as those with hip replacements or claustrophobia fears,” said lead study

investigator Dr. Hashim Ahmed, who is the chair of Urology at Imperial College London, England.

Prostate cancer is the most common non-skin cancer in America and 1 in 8 men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer in his lifetime in the United States. Although only about 1 in 451 men under age 50 will be diagnosed, the rate shoots up to 1 in 55 for

ages 50 to 59. It continues to climb, with 1 in 20 for ages 60 to 69, and 1 in 12 for men 70 and older, according to the Prostate Cancer Foundation.

John Schieszer is an award-winning national journalist and radio and podcast broadcaster of The Medical Minute. He can be reached at medicalminutes@gmail.com.

Medicare

continued from page 6

medical bills can be confusing, so it is usually a good idea to ask your provider questions before reporting activity as potentially fraudulent. For example, you can call your doctor’s office and ask, “Can you explain why I was billed this amount for

this service?” Additionally, some providers are not familiar with the full list of Medicare-covered preventive services, and they may have made a simple mistake from their lack of knowledge about the benefits. If you alert them to an error, the billing office should be able to correct it.

If you still believe you have experienced potential fraud or abuse, or if you have additional questions

about this, you can contact our office and speak with one of our certified counselors who are trained as part of the nationwide Senior Medicare Patrol, or SMP, to help you prevent, detect and report health care fraud, errors and abuse.

For answers to any Medicare related questions, please feel free to contact the State of Alaska’s Medicare Information

Office at 800-478-6065 or 907-269-3680; our office is also known as the State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP), the Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) and the Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers (MIPPA) program.

Sean McPhilamy is a volunteer and Certified Medicare Counselor at the Alaska Medicare Information Office.

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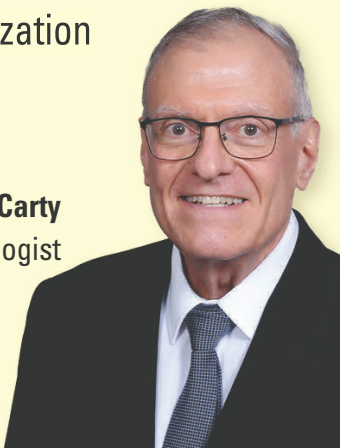
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## COVID

continued from page 5

### Responses to COVID-19 vaccines found in cancer patients on immunotherapy

Great news to report during the current wave of the pandemic: Among patients with solid tumors, those receiving immunotherapy have a more durable immune response to COVID-19 vaccination.

A new study showed less durable responses for patients with cancer receiving chemotherapy or targeted therapy. The results were presented at the ASCO Genitourinary Cancers Symposium 2022. For this study, researchers evaluated the immune response to COVID-19 vaccination in 61 patients with solid tumors who were receiving anticancer therapies.

The most common tumor types were kidney (19 patients), breast (16 patients), bladder (7 patients) and lung (7 patients). The types of anticancer therapy received included chemotherapy (29 patients), immunotherapy (19 patients) and targeted therapy (13 patients).

Most patients received the AstraZeneca vaccine (36 patients), followed by the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine (23 patients) and the Moderna vaccine (1 patient). A second vaccine dose was administered within 12 weeks of the first dose and followed by a third booster dose.

Blood samples were collected at four time points (before the second dose, at 14–36 days after the second dose, at 36–63 days after the second dose, and within 30 days of the third dose). Between the first and second time points, there was a significant difference in the proportion of patients achieving a maximum antibody response for both the immunotherapy and targeted therapy groups, but the difference was not significant for the chemotherapy group.

Before the second dose, a maximum response was seen in 21% of patients in the immunotherapy group, 15% in the targeted therapy group, and 24% in the chemotherapy group. At 14–36 days after the second dose, a maximum response was seen in 83% of patients in the immunotherapy group, 69% in the targeted therapy group, and 54% in the chemotherapy group.

Within 30 days of a third dose, a maximum response was seen in 93% of patients in the immunotherapy and chemotherapy groups and 100% of patients in the targeted therapy group.

“Immunologic response to COVID-19 vaccination is dependent on the type of systemic anticancer therapy,” the researchers concluded. “The third booster vaccine dose appears particularly relevant for chemotherapy patients, compared to those receiving immune therapy or targeted therapies. COVID-19 shielding guidelines and booster dose guidance should be tailored according to treatment group.”

## Networking for Anchorage, Mat-Su area providers

Interested in learning more about businesses and agencies providing senior services in the Anchorage and Mat-Su area? Want to get the word out about your own service? The monthly Service Providers Breakfast, sponsored by Older Persons Action Group, Inc., is an opportunity for all the above. Informal, early and free, the monthly event

currently meets virtually online via Zoom. The April meeting is April 13, hosted by AARP Alaska. Begins at 8 a.m.

RSVP by calling Older Persons Action Group, Inc. for more information on these events or to be added to our e-mail reminder and Zoom invitation list, 276-1059.

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# Death, taxes and advance care planning

By SARAH PYPE

Hospice of Anchorage

It was Benjamin Franklin who wrote, “In this world, nothing can be said to be certain except death and taxes.” And this April is no different. As Tax Day nears, Americans are preparing their IRS filings, just as they do every year. But what about that other certainty, death? April is Advance Care Planning Month and the 16th is National Healthcare Decisions Day. This year, Hospice of Anchorage wants to encourage all Alaskans to consider not only their taxes, but also their death.

Death and disability sometimes arrive sudden-

ly, but often they arrive slowly, with small impairments popping up along the way and accumulating over time. As the body ages, adapting to change becomes key to having a good life and ultimately, a good death. Part of this adaptation includes abandoning shame and accepting help, and this too is a process. It invites us to face the reality of death and reflect on what the rest of life should look and feel like.

Often advance care planning is focused on the completion of advanced directives such as living wills or durable power of attorney documents. And about 30 percent of Americans have completed advanced

directives. However, people are more than just medical and legal decisions and documents. Advance care planning is a process, not a singular event. Ongoing conversations about beliefs, values, concerns, and preferences regarding not just death but end of life should be shared. Research has shown that often, advance care planning is a reaction to a health scare, and there is often increased distress in both the person and family, making decisions more difficult and less likely to be followed. In reality, advance care planning is more fruitful when it is a proactive process of communicating wishes and desires around physical,

emotional, mental and spiritual caretaking at the end of life.

What is a good death? Have you ever considered your own death and your wishes around how you want to die? Have you communicated them to your loved ones? This April, take time to think and reflect upon your wishes for comfort, your desired quality of life, where you want to die and who you want to be with. Think beyond life saving measures and allocating your belongings in your will. Engage in a caring conversation with those you love about how you want to live and die.

Hospice of Anchorage is here to welcome you and your loved ones to consider advance care planning. Please stop by our resource center and chat with one of our staff to start the process. We have free books that offer practical guides on end-of-life planning, advanced directive documents, life review and legacy projects, and more. It’s never too early to start considering what you value most and how you can continue to hold those things close as you live life and face death.

*Sarah Pype is a Master of Social Work Intern at Hospice of Anchorage.*

## Myths

continued from page 4

variety of benefits that will contribute to your health and the health of the entire

community. If you’re interested in being part of All of Us, log on to the All of Us website at <https://www.joinallofus.org/together> or call 844-842-2855.

This article originally appeared on the National

Hispanic Council on Aging (NHCOA) blog. It is being reprinted in Senior Voice as part of an ongoing series by the Diverse Elders Coalition, focusing on different demographic groups in the senior population.

## Send us your letters

Send letters to the editor to Senior Voice, 3340 Arctic Blvd., #106, Anchorage AK 99503. Maximum length is 250 words. Senior Voice reserves the right to edit for content and length. Space may be made available for longer opinion piece essays up to 400 words. Contact the managing editor at [editor@seniorvoicealaska.com](mailto:editor@seniorvoicealaska.com) to discuss this. Copy deadline is the 15th of the month prior to publication.

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# Grieving

continued from page 5

be a reminder of everything you have lost. Make sure to take care of yourself on these days - have some sort of distraction in place so you can take your mind off your sadness for a little while. Suggested examples could be reading a book, watching a TV show, or even something as simple as going outside to take a walk. You may need to take time off work, or you might need to spend time with family and friends. Do whatever you need to do to make it through those tough days.

The guilt of wishing you could have done more to have helped them, or feeling like you didn't do enough, can be crushing. It is important to remember that everyone grieves differently. Just because you don't think you are grieving "properly," it doesn't mean that there is something wrong with you. Grief is a process and

takes time. Allow yourself to grieve in a way that feels right for you.

Beginning new traditions can be helpful in keeping loneliness at bay. If you used to spend holidays with your loved one, for example, starting a new holiday tradition can help fill the void their absence has left. This could be something like gathering with friends or taking a trip to visit relatives.

It is also important not to bottle up your emotions or push them away. Sadness, anger, fear and loneliness are all normal parts of the grieving process. Allow yourself to feel these things, and don't be afraid to cry when you need to.

## Know there are ways to cope

Just because you are grieving it doesn't mean that you have to forget about the good memories.

In fact, remembering happy times can be a helpful coping mechanism. It can remind you that your loved one was capable of happiness and that you will be able to feel happiness again too.

Find a hobby or activity that you can throw yourself into. When confronted with reawakened grief, it can be helpful to have something to focus on that isn't sadness personified. Doing things that make you feel invigorated and keep you busy can help take your mind off the loss.

Surround yourself with others who can support you. It is important to talk with someone who understands and relates to what you are experiencing. This could be family, friends or even a therapist. If you don't have anybody in your life who fits this description, there are hotlines and online forums where

you can find support from others. These people can help you through the tough times and remind you that you are not alone.

There is no set time-limit for experiencing grief. Just because it's been a year or even several years since your loved one died, it doesn't mean that you shouldn't still be grieving. Grief is a process and everybody deals with it in their own way and on their own timeline.

## Summarized tips for dealing with reawakened grief

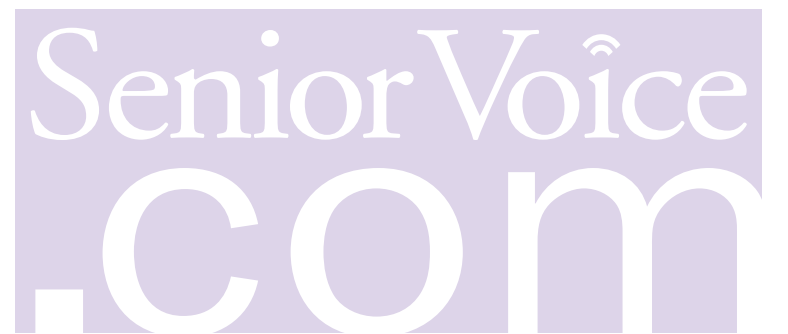
- Identify your triggers. Once you know what is causing your grief to be reawakened, manage your awareness and find ways to cope with these triggers.
- Allow yourself to grieve.

Don't try to push your emotions away. It is important to allow yourself to feel what you are feeling.

► Seek professional help if needed. If you are struggling to cope, it might be helpful to talk to a coach or therapist who can provide guidance.

It is possible to get through reawakened grief with the help of family, friends and other support systems. Just take things one day at a time and be patient with yourself. You will eventually start to feel better.

Karen Casanovas is a professional healthy aging coach in Alaska. Contact her at [info@karencasanovas.com](mailto:info@karencasanovas.com) or through her website at <http://www.karencasanovas.com>.



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Transportation

continued from page 3

Senior Center and it offers nutrition, transportation and support services. “We provide both congregate and home delivered meals Monday, Wednesday and Friday of each week. Transportation is provided to and from the meals, as well as to the local post office, store, and local clinic on those days,” said Moyle. Once a week, the Nenana Senior Center schedules trips to Fairbanks for shopping and medical appointments. Recreational trips, such as going to restaurants for meals are also scheduled at clients’ requests if funding allows. It also coordinates the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) for the Fairbanks Food Bank. Food boxes can be picked up at the center on the last Friday of each month. Nenana Senior Center also has a fee agent on site and can assist with Division of Public Assistance appli-

*Many transportation services in much of the state were cut back or eliminated. Now, as the pandemic is winding down, ride services are returning.*

cations, walking individuals through the process of applying for financial assistance. Appointments are required. “Support services include, but are not limited to, helping clients apply for any programs they may be eligible to receive. Resource and referral services are available,” said Moyle, who has been the center’s director since 2005. Moyle said there are no seasonal differences in delivery of services. The meal schedule stays the same all year round. However, the center provides more bus trips in the warmer months when the roads are clear and the weather permits. In March, a bus trip was offered to Clear Sky Lodge for dinner. Other planned trips include the Hilltop, and the Pagoda restaurant in North Pole this spring. With help from grants from the Dept. of Transportation and Golden Valley Electric Association

(GVEA), the center recently purchased a new agency bus that seats 12 with an additional two seats for wheelchairs, Moyle said. She said GVEA is to be commended for its continued support of the center and the services it provides to Nenana and the surrounding area. “For those of our people who do not drive at any time of the year, they all express appreciation for the available services that allow them to get to the local post office, to meals, and to the local clinic.” The center has been delivering services for 44 years and it is rebounding well after this latest wave of COVID-19, Moyle said. “Our services are client directed. The members of our board of directors attend the senior center regularly, volunteer, and are readily available to the members. During the pandemic, we reduced the

number of clients on bus trips to allow more social distancing and continue to do so at this time.” **State level support** The state Division of Senior and Disabilities Services (DSDS) partners with several organizations and helps with a variety of transportation services. It funds transportation services for senior centers and municipalities that are serving seniors and people with disabilities. “Most providers shut down their transportation services almost entirely during the pandemic,” said DSDS Director John Lee. “They then adapted to social distancing recommendations by transporting fewer or even single people at a time in their buses and vans.” Lee said transportation services are critical to older adults in all of Alaska. A significant percentage of older adults cannot avail themselves of basic services without transportation. They cannot go to the grocery store or the post

office or the pharmacy and all that entails for daily living. Lee said they cannot get medical care or meals at the senior center, and even worse they cannot continue to be active in their communities. “The Older Americans Act has been funding transportation services since at least 2003. The demand for transportation is increasing. The number of older adults is growing, and they are remaining active and in their communities longer. They may not want to drive at night or in inclement weather, but they still need to get around in their communities,” said Lee. Further, he said the populations are growing in suburban communities where there are no organized or funded transportation systems. However, the COVID pandemic brought additional funding to many providers to help them upgrade their vehicle fleets. It is hoped that many transportation systems now will be reconstructed and improve over the six to 12 months.



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The State of Alaska, Division of Senior and Disabilities Services, administers the ADRC grant in partnership with the 6 regional sites. For more on the ADRC grant program, contact an ADRC Program Manager at 907-465-4798 or 1-800-478-9996.





# Handwritten treasure may require translation

By **MARALEY MCMICHAEL**  
Senior Voice Correspondent

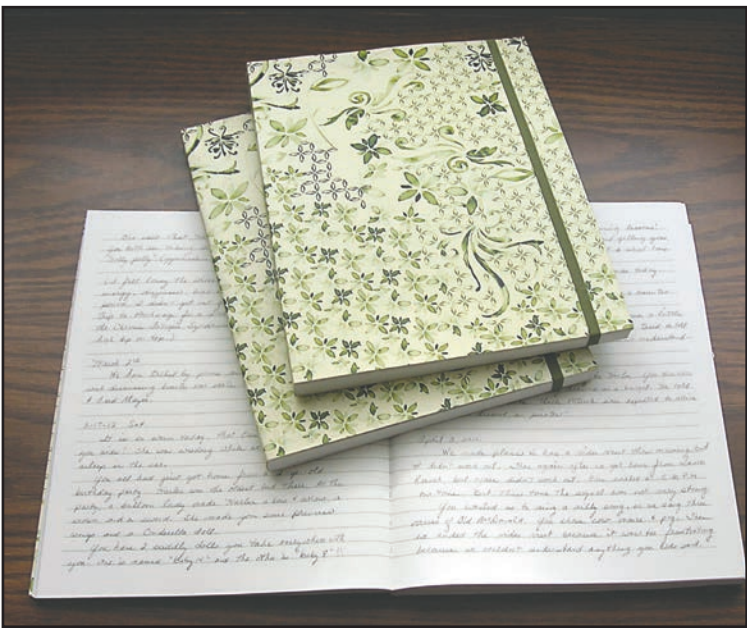
I became alarmed when what I thought could become treasured gifts to my grandchildren might turn into indecipherable codes

when they turn 18 or graduate from high school. My husband and I have never lived in the same state as our grandchildren, but for five years in their young lives, we were able to spend a month each fall

funny things they say, personality traits, etc. Usually it's in the form of dated, hurried, sloppy cursive handwritten notes. Then I transfer the information into their journals at a later date, several entries at a time. Because of a major health issue when Harlen was two years old, I once got six months behind, but eventually caught up.

At the beginning of this project, I never even considered printing. Cursive is my natural handwriting and so much faster. But, I did determine to use my best handwriting so they wouldn't have trouble reading them and I also chose to use a lead pencil for neater corrections.

My daughter actually supplied the seed for this project years ago when she gave me a beautiful brown leather journal. It was so special, I really didn't want to spoil it with my messy handwriting. When she called to say that she was expecting a son, I knew immediately where to record that wonderful news. I am now writing in a third brown leather book for Harlen.



**Maraley McMichael started this journal in 2009 for her granddaughter, Amelia. All entries are in cursive handwriting – but will Amelia's generation be able to read cursive?**



**Author Maraley McMichael started this handwritten journal for her grandson in 2006, planning to present it to him as a gift when he turns 18.**

Maraley McMichael photos

by the time they received them. Back in 2013, it was called to my attention three times in less than a week that cursive handwriting was on the way to becoming obsolete. Since before each grandchild was born – Harlen in 2006 and Amelia in 2009 – I have kept a journal for them. Written in cursive. The plan is to give these diaries to them

and spring with them while living nearby as snowbirds in our travel trailer in an RV park. Through the years there have also been phone calls, internet Skype visits, and many in-person visits both in Colorado and Alaska. For their journals, I write down the important events: First tooth, first steps, first haircut, first day of school,

When we learned about Harlen's new little brother or sister to be, I started taking notes, but decided to wait until the baby was born before buying another special journal. When I went to the bookstore to pick out something special for Amelia, I chose a beautiful green vegetation print -- and I purchased five of them, so I wouldn't run out if they were discontinued. Part of my reason for this project was that as a

parent of young children years ago, I felt certain I would remember all those special events. But, after three children and many memories later, the details were lost. Back in 2013, I began hearing stories from friends about younger people not being able to read their cursive notes, and news stories about cursive being phased out

next page please

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Art of the North Galleries photo by Oscar Avellanada-Cruz





Handwritten

from page 14

from being taught in public schools. The thought struck me: What if my grandkids can't read their journals? What a revolting development. Cursive handwriting has been around for hundreds of years, so why does it have to change during the exact generation that will affect my grandchildren?

Having learned from experience about inaccessible secret language, I had no intention of giving a gift that needed decoding. In the early 1990s, I came across a letter I'd written in high school to my boyfriend (who later became my husband). But I had written it in shorthand and after 20 years of nonuse, I couldn't read it. At the time, I volunteered at Pioneer Peak Elementary School. When I noticed the administrative secretary using shorthand, I asked her if she would transcribe my letter for me.

She was agreeable and set up a time after the school day was over.

I was certainly curious, but also a little nervous as to the personal nature of the contents, wondering if I would be embarrassed. I waited while she silently read and typed the shorthand. When she handed me a typewritten page, I asked about her fee. No charge! Thanks again Linda Myers-Steele. In the car in the school parking lot, I quickly read the transcription. So much for a secret love letter; the contents were quite benign.

All the hullabaloo in 2013 made me think that by 2024 when my grandson turns 18, he may need help from a friend like Myers-Steele to translate his journal. I even considered switching to print for my entries, but I figured it would be easier to teach my grandkids cursive.

My daughter did not know these journals existed for years. At first, I didn't want to tell her about them, because I didn't know if I

could actually be diligent enough to keep up with such a huge commitment. Then I decided not to tell her, so it could be a surprise, along with her kids. However, she accidentally learned about them in 2017 when she stayed at my home and saw a label on a box in my office. My fears were put to rest when I learned that the elementary charter school her kids attended taught cursive.

Harlen turned 16 last month. As far as I know, he and Amelia do not know about the journals. Now, I think age 18 may still be too young for my gift to be appreciated. I have two years to decide.

*Maraley McMichael is a lifelong Alaskan currently residing in Palmer. Email her at maraleymcmichael@gmail.com.*

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Rambles

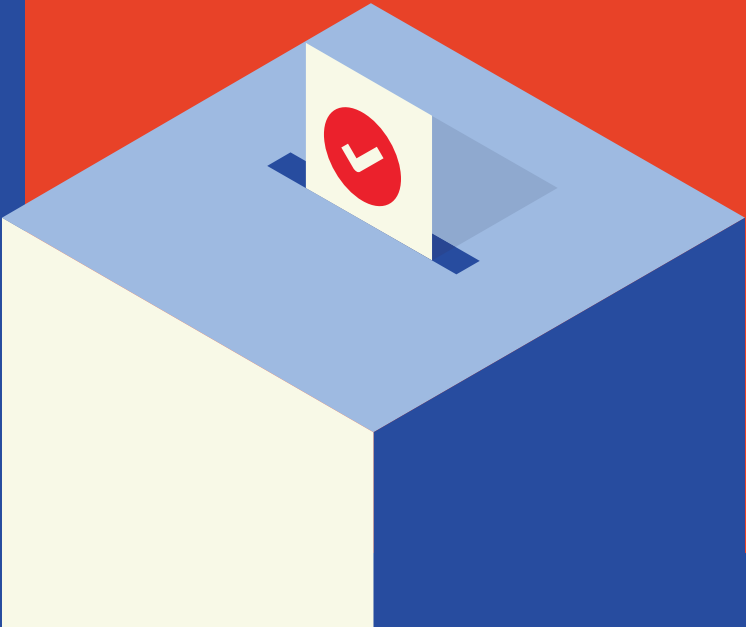
News from the Grapevine

**Assistive Technologies of Alaska (ATLA)** will hold a Virtual Expo on April 20 and 21, from 9 a.m. to noon each day. The online event will feature a variety of sessions focusing on technology that promotes inclusiveness and empowerment, with expert presenters. Real-time captioning, interpreting, and electronic copies of materials in advance can be provided. For information and registration (required), visit [www.atlaak.org/home/at-virtual-expo](http://www.atlaak.org/home/at-virtual-expo) or email **Tori Gin-gras** at [tori@atlaak.org](mailto:tori@atlaak.org). The event is free ... **Kodiak Senior Center** will host a **special luncheon** to salute all local **80 year olds** on April 27. This event was postponed from its usual time on Valentine's Day. All people 80 and older will receive a free lunch and there will be a slew of door prizes. Call for more information, 907-486-6181 ... Also in **Kodiak**, the **Social Security Administration** will begin videoconferences at the **Kodiak Job Service** offices starting April 12, and continuing on the second and fourth Tuesday each month, 9 to 11:45 a.m. Bring your Social Security questions for free help from an expert. No appointment necessary, but sign-in is required and wait times may vary. Call the **Kodiak Senior Center** for more information, 907-486-6181. The Anchorage Social Security office number is 1-866-7w72-3081 ... **Movie Wednesdays** continue at **Soldotna Senior Center**, with a classic movie and popcorn each Wednesday, 1 p.m. Call for details, 907-262-2322

page 16 please

Alaska, our voting process will look a little different this year.

Learn about ranked choice voting and how to make your voice heard in our new election system.



Find more information and upcoming events at [www.aarp.org/akvotes](http://www.aarp.org/akvotes) or text "AKVotes" to 22777





# Rambles

News from the Grapevine

continued from page 15

... Also in **Soldotna**, the **senior center** is hosting an Easter Dinner on Friday, April 15 at noon. The event will include an **Easter Bonnet Parade**, with prizes awarded. Show off your bonnet, enjoy live entertainment and help yourself to a turkey dinner with dressing, mashed potatoes, green beans and Jell-O cake. Sign yourself up, being sure to add any guests, by noon on April 13 ... **Anchorage Senior Activity Center** continues to loan out **free tablet devices** to seniors, an excellent option for those who do not already have a computer or access to the internet. The TCL TAB Pro 5G tablets are 9.75" tall by 6.2" wide, have full high definition screens and access to the internet, and the Zoom meeting app is already installed. Tablet training is available. Call Julie McFarland for more information at 907-770-2009 or email [programs@anchoragecenter.org](mailto:programs@anchoragecenter.org) to make an appointment ... Creative writers in **Seward** are encouraged to submit their stories for possible inclusion in the upcoming publication, "**Seward Unleashed Volume 3: Water and Wonder**". Entries can include fiction, non-fiction, poems and black and white illustrations. Submissions are limited to 2,000 words, or 10 pages double-spaced. Or two illustrations or poems per person, submitted by email as a Word doc. Help is available with editing – email your draft by April 30 to **Sean Ulman** at [seanulman@gmail.com](mailto:seanulman@gmail.com) for questions and clarity. All entries are due, at the same email address, by May 31.

Rambles is compiled from senior center newsletters, websites, newspapers and reader tips from around the state. Email your Rambles items to [editor@seniorvoice-alaska.com](mailto:editor@seniorvoice-alaska.com).

# Council is devoted to health of waterways

By **CHERIE NORTON**

For Senior Voice

Have you ever wondered who organizes Creek Cleanup? Perhaps you have seen people taking water samples along local creeks and tried to figure out what they were doing. Have you been concerned about something along a creek and wondered who to contact? Are you curious about who is behind all those Scoop the Poop messages? The answer is the Anchorage Waterways Council (AWC), and it's been doing all this and more for nearly 40 years.

AWC was established in 1985 by a group of citizens and officials who were very concerned about local creeks that were rife with raw sewage. Its mission has been to foster and maintain the health of those waterways. Even though it's a small nonprofit, AWC manages to respond to a multitude of challenges that impact the quality of Anchorage's well-loved creeks and lakes. Very few

large urban areas can boast about having easy access to prize-winning salmon derbies in their downtown as well as nature trails that wind through neighborhoods along spawning salmon habitat. And yet,

outreach. Since 2008, AWC has worked with thousands of young people in hands-on classes along creeks where water bugs are collected and identified and stream measurements are taken. Since 1998, AWC



Volunteers receive instructions before heading out to pick up trash during last year's Anchorage Waterways Council annual Creek Cleanup.

Photo courtesy Keith Baxter/MSI Communications

it's this close proximity that also imperils the health of waterways. The primary problem stems from urban stormwater runoff that carries a witch's brew of dog poop, vehicle drips, garden chemicals, ice melt and traction products, litter and other pollutants.

Stewardship of Anchorage's great riparian resources is AWC's primary goal, which is achieved through education and

has trained more than 200 citizen monitors who go out monthly to collect and analyze water samples at over 35 locations. An estimated 25,000 citizens have participated in AWC's past Creek Cleanups, which have removed over 50 tons of trash and debris since 1985. Seven years ago, AWC created monofilament recycling bins that were

next page please



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Anchorage Opera receives operating support from the Atwood Foundation, the Richard L. and Diane M. Block Foundation, and from the Municipality of Anchorage. Anchorage Opera is supported in part by an American Rescue Plan Act grant from the National Endowment for the Arts to support general operating expenses in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, a grant from the Alaska State Council on the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts, a grant from the Kumin Foundation, as well as from many generous individuals and corporate community leaders. Our Guest Artists' Fitness Sponsor is The Alaska Club. Our Official Airline Sponsor is Alaska Airlines. Anchorage Opera is a member of OPERA America.

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These statements have NOT been evaluated by the FDA.





# Zoom conference updates on senior bills

Senior Voice Staff

Keep track of senior-related bills, budget decisions and other issues by attending the Alaska Commission on Aging Legislative Teleconferences. Available by toll-free call-in, the teleconferences provide a convenient forum for seniors and advocates across Alaska to share information about issues and specific bills of concern, including Medicaid, state budget and funding, senior assistance, retirement, Pioneer Homes and more.

Zoom conferences are scheduled every Thursday

through the remainder of the session: April 7, 14 and 21. Note, the start time has been changed to 3 p.m. (ends at 4:30 p.m.)

Draft agendas will be available to print from the state Notices website at <https://aws.state.ak.us/OnlinePublicNotices/>. The website will also have the Zoom address and phone numbers (for non-computer attendees).

Individuals who require special accommodations to participate should contact Lesley Thompson at 907-465-4793 at least two days prior to teleconferences.

# Waterways

from page 16

placed at local fishing spots to reduce the impact of fishing line and debris on birds and wildlife.

One of AWC’s primary programs is Scoop the Poop, because pet waste that is not cleaned up has human and pet health consequences from fecal coliform bacteria. Every creek and major lake (University, Campbell and Westchester Lagoon) in the Anchorage bowl is listed as an impaired waterbody by the EPA due to fecal coliform. It is only through education and compliance that there is any hope of removing this status.

AWC is highly reliant on residents to be its “eyes on the creeks”. This vigilance is often the only means of learning about issues of concern that would otherwise never be known. These issues range from

the illegal dumping of trash or illegal substances into creeks to setback encroachments. If you see something that is disturbing, it can be reported at [www.anchoragecreeks.org/report-an-issue](http://www.anchoragecreeks.org/report-an-issue).

All of these programs are dependent on funding from memberships, donations, grants and contracts as well as the time given by Anchorage’s great volunteers and working board. We are proud of the work that has been accomplished despite limited resources. If you care about Anchorage’s creeks and lakes, please consider becoming a member and also volunteering. A perfect opportunity is coming up. Our 38th Creek Cleanup is between May 12 and May 24. All information is on our website at [www.anchoragecreeks.org](http://www.anchoragecreeks.org).

Cherie Northon has been the executive director of AWC since 2010. Contact her at [Cherie@anchoragecreeks.org](mailto:Cherie@anchoragecreeks.org).

## Senior Voice Calendar of Events is now online!

Submit your events at [seniorvoice.com](http://seniorvoice.com) and click on the “Calendar” tab. It’s free!

# Calendar of Events

Editor’s note: Due to COVID-19 safety concerns and restrictions, all events are subject to change or cancellation. Confirm before attending.

**April 1 Wasilla** Vinyasa flow yoga class each Friday at Wasilla Senior Center. Call for information, 907-206-8807

**April 4-10 Juneau** 47th Annual Alaska Folk Festival. Concerts, dancing, workshops, performances, signature events like the Coffee and Jam, Songwriter Showcase, more. Note, many events may be canceled due to COVID. [www.akfolkfest.org](http://www.akfolkfest.org)

**April 4 Homer** Knitting circle at the Homer Public Library, every Monday from 1:30 to 4:30 p.m. Stop by to look for ideas or solutions or to work on your projects in a friendly environment. Call Homer Senior Center for information, 907-235-7655

**April 7 Chugiak** Chugiak-Eagle River Senior Center offers assistance via Vietnam Veterans of America on Thursdays, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Call for information, 907-688-2619

**April 8 Statewide** Alaska Farmers Markets Association virtual summit, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Theme is “Gather and Grow”. National speakers, skills workshops, networking, annual meeting, more. Event is free but registration is required. Visit [www.alaskafarmersmarkets.org](http://www.alaskafarmersmarkets.org) and click the “Events & Trainings” tab.

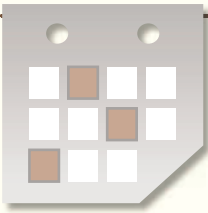
**April 14 Valdez** Valdez Senior Center annual board of directors meeting, 1:30 p.m. Held via teleconference, public welcome. Election results will be announced, along with other board and membership business. Call for dial-in and passcode numbers. 907-835-5032

**April 15 Nationwide** Tax day

**April 22-May 8 Wrangell** Stikine River Birding Festival at the Nolan Center. Events are spread out over several weekends and include presentations and talks, storytime sessions, outdoor events, boat trips, movies, photo contests and more. More information and an updated schedule of events at [www.wrangell.com/birdingfestival/birding-festival-schedule](http://www.wrangell.com/birdingfestival/birding-festival-schedule)

**April 23-24 Wasilla** Mat-Su Home Builders Annual Spring Home Show at the Menard Sports Center, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. See, learn about and buy the latest home products and services from more than 100 local vendors. Food trucks available. Tickets \$5. Free to children under 12, active military and older than 65. [www.matsuhomeshow.com](http://www.matsuhomeshow.com)

**April 25 Soldotna** Soldotna Senior Center board of directors monthly meeting, 1 p.m. New ideas are always welcome. Teleconference is available. Call for information, 907-262-2322



## Send us your calendar items

Send to: Senior Voice, 3340 Arctic Blvd., Suite 106, Anchorage AK 99503  
[editor@seniorvoicealaska.com](mailto:editor@seniorvoicealaska.com)  
Deadline for May edition is April 15.

# SENIOR APARTMENTS

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# Howard Rock's burning light lives on

By LAUREL DOWNING BILL  
Senior Voice Correspondent

In 1911, near the village of Tikigaq, Howard Rock's shaman grandmother predicted he would become a great man. More than 50 years later, the prophecy came true. Rock, small in stature, did indeed become a giant among men.

Raised in the traditional Eskimo way, Rock learned to hunt with his father and embraced his culture. But he also had a foot in the western world.

Like many Native children of the time, Rock had to leave his village at the age of 15 to continue his education past the eighth grade. He studied at White Mountain Vocational School near Nome, where he became interested in sketching and oil painting.

Rock traveled to Medford, Ore., when he was 22 and served as an apprentice to Belgian artist Max Siemes. He later studied art at the University of Washington.

When World War II erupted, Howard joined the U.S. Army and was sent to North Africa to serve as a radio operator. He returned to Seattle at the end of the war and worked as a jewelry designer for the next several years before returning to Alaska in 1961 for a vacation.

While visiting his family in Point Hope, Rock learned his relatives and friends were worried about a U.S. government plan to detonate a nuclear blast and create a harbor in the Arctic for shipping minerals and other goods from northwest Alaska. Members of the Atomic Energy Commission thought an underwater nuclear explosion at the mouth of Ogotoruk Creek near Cape Thompson was an ideal place to test the peaceful use of atomic power.

"There were attempts to lull us, the people of Noatak, Kivalina and Point Hope," Rock later told author and historian Lael Morgan in an article titled "Tundra Times: A Survival Story," which appeared in the Alicia Patterson Fund Newsletter dated July 15, 1972.

"We were wheedled with rewards of acclaim from science and the peoples of the world if we would agree to go along with 'Project Chariot.'"

But with Rock's help, the people of the region protested and chose to protect their way of life and heritage instead. Eskimo leaders from 20 villages met in the fall of 1961 to discuss strategy. They called the meeting "Inupiat Paitot," which means "The People's Heritage."

Environmental studies began to show that fallout from radiation after test blasts contaminated lichen, which caribou eat, and it



Tundra Times editor Howard Rock, left, and journalist Tom Snapp, center, show visitor Theodore Hetzel the tools of their new trade, including printer's type blocks and plates, in the 1960s.  
Courtesy University of Alaska Fairbanks

was finding its way into humans who consumed the caribou. With opposition growing ever stronger,

the AEC backed down and shelved the idea in 1962. In October that year, the Arctic

Slope Native Association asked Rock to start the Tundra Times with Fairbanks journalist Tom Snap. Through the newspaper, the Point Hope Eskimo changed the way many Native people saw themselves by actively encouraging them to have pride and respect for their heritage and cultures – and to fight for them.

"He was the most soft-spoken man," said journalist Tom Richards, who worked at the Tundra Times from 1968 to 1974. "But he had tremendous impact with just a few words."

After taking on the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission to prevent the Arctic atomic test project, Rock used the Tundra Times to fight the federal government on behalf of Aleuts virtually enslaved in the Pribilofs.

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## Time Out

### Across

- 1 Sizable sandwich
- 5 Large South African antelope
- 9 One of the Beverly Hillbillies
- 12 Crockett's last stand
- 14 Hitches
- 16 Prefix with lateral
- 17 It might be buried for a long stretch
- 19 Sellout indicator
- 20 Interruption in time
- 21 Our sun
- 22 Smidgen
- 23 Phi \_\_\_\_ Kappa
- 26 Time to retire?
- 30 Out of whack
- 32 Message in a bottle?
- 33 Abbr. on a French envelope
- 34 Canyon feature
- 35 Wild goat
- 37 Son of Leah
- 39 Hot time in Québec
- 40 Make stuff up
- 41 Herd of seals
- 42 Nancy Drew's beau
- 45 Pinochle combo
- 47 Rum-soaked cake
- 48 Colorado Indian
- 49 Piano piece
- 50 Heifer
- 51 Kind of finish
- 53 Timepiece part
- 57 Oktoberfest serving
- 58 Cigar residue
- 59 Spoon-bender Geller
- 60 Scorecard number
- 62 Hula hoop?
- 63 Boss's platitude, maybe
- 69 Cambodian coin

### Down

- 1 Sombrero, e.g.
- 2 Actor Wallach
- 3 Zodiac animal
- 4 Zs, to the Greeks
- 5 Recipe amt.
- 6 Switch settings
- 7 Timely intermissions?
- 8 Ice house
- 9 Procrastinator's reply
- 10 Infuriate
- 11 Electron tube
- 13 Wood sorrel
- 15 Order to a broker
- 18 Abbr. in car ads
- 23 Uncovered
- 24 Discharge
- 25 Jules Verne's way about town?
- 27 Words said with a nod
- 28 Plague
- 29 Auto reg. place
- 31 Window ledge
- 36 Bridge call
- 37 Court ploy
- 38 Dutch treat
- 41 Chess piece
- 43 Suffix with towel
- 44 Big game
- 46 It may need stroking
- 47 Vamp's accessory
- 49 Tend to, as a bad lawn
- 50 What a grandfather clock does
- 52 Overseas
- 53 Chip dip
- 54 Wacko
- 55 Plumbing problem
- 56 Baseball stats
- 61 Hi-fi component
- 64 Fast no more
- 65 Kind of agent
- 66 Actress Vardalos
- 67 Cricket wicket
- 68 "You bet!"

Crossword answers on page 26





# Western script enticed Don Murray back to the big screen

By NICK THOMAS  
*Tinseltown Talks*

Joe Cornet never initially considered now 92-year-old Don Murray for a role in his 2021 western film “Promise.”

“I wanted an iconic actor for one of the roles and approached two other veteran western stars, but for one reason or another neither worked out,” said Cornet, from Los Angeles, who wrote, directed, and co-produced the almost two-hour-long western drama.

Already acquainted with Murray’s son, Cornet explained his dilemma to the younger Murray who proposed a simple solution: “Why don’t you get dad?”

“So, I sent Don the script but wasn’t really expecting to hear from him – I just didn’t think he would do it,” explained Cornet. “However, he called the following day to say he loved the story, calling it a classic, and asked when the shooting started.”

Murray’s previous big-screen appearances had been a pair of 2001 films two decades earlier, but he



Don Murray and Marilyn Monroe in “Bus Stop”.  
*Twentieth Century Fox photo*

required little convincing to dude-up in cowboy gear for Cornet’s film, which depicts a desperate search for lost gold and lost love, both linked to the Civil War.

“It has elements of the classic western but it’s also not cliché-bound,” said Murray from his home in Santa Barbara. “It was just a great concept, very imaginative with good writing.”

Murray, on set for a week to shoot his scenes at a Southern Californian ranch, “was a gem,” according to Cornet. “He has three large, important scenes, two with me.

He added a lot of quirks and nuances to create an interesting character.” Currently available on Amazon Prime, “Promise” was entered in Tucson’s Wild Bunch Film Festival last October, receiving 11 awards including Best Picture.

Don Murray is no stranger to award ceremonies, having been nominated for a Best Supporting Actor Oscar for his first film role in 1956’s “Bus Stop,” co-starring Marilyn Monroe.

“It was a total surprise, I couldn’t believe it,” said Murray of his reaction



Joe Cornet, left, and Don Murray on the set of “Promise”.  
*Photo provided by Joe Cornet*

when learning that the film’s director, Josh Logan, insisted the producers cast him as a rambunctious cowboy alongside the notoriously difficult Monroe.

“I was aware of her reputation, but didn’t let that bother me,” recalled Murray. “I didn’t pay any attention to what people thought of her. I was just involved with the work and working with her, which was a great experience. She was very supportive of me and we got along well, no problems ever.”

Murray also remembers Logan going to great lengths to put Monroe at ease. “He was always very supportive and made her feel comfortable,” he said. “He was very positive and didn’t criticize what she was doing.”

After “Bus Stop,” Murray went on to work in

numerous TV shows and appeared in some 40 films, often tackling challenging roles that portrayed compelling characters. He appeared in several westerns and believes the genre, though far less common today, can still attract audiences.

“There’s always the classic theme of the western but there’s also room for creative changes in the screenplay, giving a better sense of western reality,” he says. “(Joe) actually took advantage of that and created a classic piece all its own and I was very proud to be part of it.”

Nick Thomas teaches at Auburn University at Montgomery, in Alabama, and has written features, columns, and interviews for numerous magazines and newspapers. See [www.tinseltowntalks.com](http://www.tinseltowntalks.com).



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Additional information is available at:  
[www.alsc-law.org](http://www.alsc-law.org)

\*Funded by State of Alaska Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Senior and Disabilities Services. Preference for seniors in social and economic need.



continued from page 7

Alaska Legal Services are gearing up for the anticipated influx of people with Medicaid terminations. If you think you may be in such a situation, please do not wait till the last moment to seek help, as there are proactive steps you can take now to avoid losing your benefits.

### Medicaid restrictions under new Care Management regulations

There has been a substantial change in the way the State Division of Health Care Services (Division) assesses Medicaid recipients' use of medical services to restrict their access to medical care, called Care Management. Generally, if a person is placed in Care Management, the person can only access a set general provider and pharmacy chosen by the division, which is unlikely to be their current primary provider and pharmacy.

Care Management has always been a rather murky area. Starting January 2021, this became even more obscure. Generally, Medicaid recipients have a free choice of their medical providers and pharmacies. Yet, under certain circumstances, Medicaid allows restriction of that choice - Care Management. Here are some of the examples of what currently may trigger Care Management: during a period of three consecutive months, receiving prescription drugs from three or more pharmacy locations; or during a period of three consecutive months, using a medical item or service with a frequency that exceeds two standard deviations from average. Prior to January 2021, in all cases triggering Care Management, the division had to do a clinical review of the recipient's medical history. Only if this review resulted in a determination that the use was not medically necessary could the division place the recipient in Care Management and only up to 12 months.

The new regulations, effective January 2021, have dispensed with the individualized clinical review for individuals falling

into certain categories. Moreover, the Care Management restrictions can now go on for up to 36 months. In practical terms, what these changes seem to mean is that under some circumstances Medicaid recipients could face notice of restrictions based simply on a computer-generated algorithm regardless of whether the use in their particular circumstance was medically necessary.

All of the Medicaid recipients should know that the division must provide proper notice to the recipient explaining why the restriction is appropriate before it places the restriction. Division's mere citations to the regulations that authorize Care Management do not qualify as proper notice. Rather, the notice must provide a meaningful explanation of what exactly did the recipient do to warrant the restriction. Improper notice and medical necessity are just some of the basis on which the proposed restriction could be challenged at a fair hearing.

Over a year has passed since the new regulations became effective allowing division's collection of sufficient statistical data to start issuing notices. Given this, Alaska Legal Services Corporation anticipates that more and more Medicaid recipients will be placed in Care Management in the very near future. If you or your loved one received such a notice, know that you have the right to ask for a fair hearing to challenge the restriction. The fair hearing must generally be requested within 30 days of the notice. As Care Management will likely result in your inability to access your primary doctor or pharmacy for up to three years, timely requesting a fair hearing may be paramount.

We encourage everyone who needs legal assistance with SNAP or Medicaid to contact us and apply for our services - we provide free legal help to those who need it most. Our statewide intake line is 1-888-478-2572.

*Eva Khadjinova is a Senior Services Attorney for Alaska Legal Services Corporation.*

# When to expect your Social Security checks

By JIM MILLER

Savvy Senior

**Dear Savvy Senior:** I am planning to retire and apply for my Social Security benefits in July. When can I expect my first check, and is direct deposit my only option for receiving my monthly payment? -- Almost 62

**Dear Almost:** Generally, Social Security retirement benefits, as well as disability and survivor benefits, are paid in the month after the month they are due. So, if you want to start receiving your Social Security benefits in July, your July benefits will be distributed in August.

The day of the month you receive your benefit payment, however, will depend on your birthdate.

Here's the schedule of when you can expect to receive your monthly check.

If you were born on the:

- 1st through the 10th: Expect your check to be deposited on the second Wednesday of each month.
- 11th through the 20th: Expect your check to be deposited on the third Wednesday of each month.
- 21st through the 31st: Expect your check to be deposited on the fourth Wednesday of each month.

There are, however, a few exceptions to this schedule. For example, if the day your Social Security check is supposed to be deposited happens to be a holiday, your check will be deposited the previous day. And, if you are receiving both Social Security benefits and SSI payments, your

Social Security check will be deposited on the third day of the month.

You should also know that for Social Security beneficiaries who started receiving benefits before 1997, their Social Security checks are paid on the third day of the month.

To get a complete schedule of 2022 payment dates, visit [www.SSA.gov/pubs/EN-05-10031-2022.pdf](http://www.SSA.gov/pubs/EN-05-10031-2022.pdf).

### Receiving options

There are two ways you can receive your Social Security benefits. Most beneficiaries choose direct deposit into their bank or credit union account because it's simple, safe and secure. But if you don't want this option, or you

next page please

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## Checks

from page 20

don't have a bank account that your payments can be deposited into, you can get a Direct Express Debit MasterCard and have your benefits deposited into your card's account.

This card can then be used to get cash from ATMs, banks or credit union tellers, pay bills online and over the phone, make purchases at stores or locations that accept Debit MasterCard and get cash back when you make those purchases, and purchase money orders at the U.S. Post Office. The money you spend or withdraw is automatically deducted from your account. And you can check your balance any time by phone, online or at ATMs.

There's also no cost to sign up for the card, no monthly fees and no overdraft charges. There are, however, some small fees for optional services you need to be aware of, like multiple ATM withdrawals. Currently, cardholders get one free ATM withdrawal per month, but additional monthly withdrawals cost 85 cents each not including a surcharge if you use a non-network ATM. To learn more, visit [www.USDirectExpress.com](http://www.USDirectExpress.com) or call 800-333-1795.

**The Social Security Administration recommends that you apply for benefits three months before you want to start receiving checks. This will give you enough time to make sure you have all the needed information to complete the application.**

### When and how to apply

The Social Security Administration recommends that you apply for benefits three months before you want to start receiving checks. This will give you enough time to make sure you have all the needed information to complete the application. See [www.SSA.gov/hlp/isba/10/isba-checklist.pdf](http://www.SSA.gov/hlp/isba/10/isba-checklist.pdf) for a checklist of what you'll need.

You can apply for your Social Security benefits online at [www.SSA.gov](http://www.SSA.gov), by phone at 800-772-1213, or in person at your local Social Security office – call first to make an appointment.

Send your senior questions to: Savvy Senior, P.O. Box 5443, Norman, OK 73070, or visit [SavvySenior.org](http://SavvySenior.org). Jim Miller is a contributor to the NBC Today show and author of "The Savvy Senior" book.

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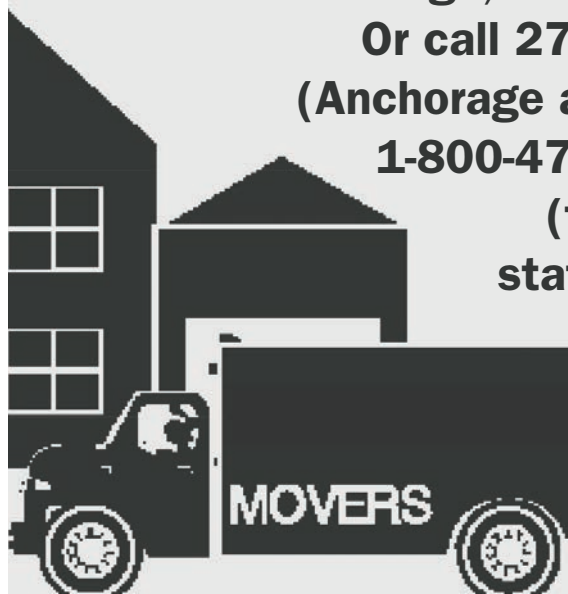
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# Exploding the biggest myth about wills

By KENNETH KIRK

For Senior Voice

People believe a lot of things that aren't actually true. Butter doesn't help a burn. Your hair and fingernails don't continue to grow after you die. Sarah Palin didn't say she could see Russia from her house. In estate planning, the biggest myth is that having a will avoids probate.

I don't know how many times I have looked at the astonished face of someone in my office when I tell them there would have to be a probate case, even though they have a perfectly good will. Many people, having been told they need to have their last will and testament in place, make the mistaken leap to the conclusion that their heirs won't have to go through probate if they have a will. But it ain't so.

Let's take a step back. What is probate? It is a court case, held after a person dies, to oversee distribution of their assets. It is not, by any stretch of the imagination, an ideal process. Probates cost money; it is theoretically possible



to do one without a lawyer, but very difficult. It can run many thousands, or even tens of thousands, of dollars to get through the whole thing. It takes time; there are built-in delays in the process, so even in a simple uncontested probate you are typically looking at a year or more to get done. It is also easy for a disgruntled creditor or heir to hold things up. And it's all done in the public record for anyone to see. Why would you need a probate? If you do, it's because you have assets that require a judge's order to collect and distribute. For instance, if you own your home and don't have a surviving spouse or record a transfer-on-death deed, no title company is

going to let your heirs sell the property unless a judge signs an order officially appointing somebody as the executor. Or it may be an account that doesn't have a designated beneficiary, or a life insurance payout if the person you listed to get the money dies before you. One of the phone calls I hate to get is from someone saying "the bank is telling me I need something called letters testamentary. Is that something you can get for me? I need it this week if possible." No, sorry. Letters testamentary means a full-scale probate case has to commence. I hate to be the bearer of bad news. So what good is a will? It doesn't avoid the probate, granted, but it guides the probate. When someone files an application for probate, the judge looks at whether that is the person nominated to be executor in the will. If it is, no problem, the judge signs the order. If not, or if there is no will, either all the potential heirs have to agree to that person serving as executor, or the judge has to set a hearing to decide who should be the executor.

Incidentally, one of the most important parts of the will is the statement that the executor can serve without posting a surety bond. Having to post a bond is expensive and can further delay the process. But if you don't have a will, all the heirs have to agree to waive that requirement. Either that, or you have to pay a pretty penny to a bonding company. The final distribution is also important. If the will says who gets the assets, that simplifies things tremendously. If there is no will, well... there is a statute which says who gets what (it's called the intestacy law) but it isn't always commonsensical. For instance, if your husband or wife dies and you don't have children, part of the estate will be shared with his or her parents. Yeah, the parents of the deceased sometimes get a share, even when there is a surviving spouse. And if you die with a surviving spouse and also have kids, whether it all goes to the spouse depends on whether either of you had children from prior relationships.

Oh, and that kid who is estranged from the family? The one with the drug problem who you haven't seen in 20 years? He's entitled to a full share of the estate. But only if you don't have a will. So a will doesn't avoid probate. A living trust can do that, although in many cases just having beneficiaries designated on assets can be sufficient. But a will doesn't avoid probate. A will guides the probate, so it can go more smoothly, and can go in the direction you want. It's usually a good idea to avoid probate, but if you don't do that, at least have a will – properly drafted and executed – in place. As bad as probate is, probate without a will is worse. And for those of you still thinking about the first paragraph, it was Tina Fey who said that, on Saturday Night Live. Kenneth Kirk is an Anchorage estate planning lawyer. Nothing in this article should be taken as legal advice for a specific situation; for specific advice you should consult a professional who can take all the facts into account. Really, would I lie to you?



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# How and why to preserve your digital legacy

By **BOB DELAURENTIS**

Senior Wire

Imagine losing access to your phone and all the data you ever created. If that thought scares you, read on.

The terms “Digital Legacy” and “Digital Inheritance” describe what happens to digital information created by someone who is deceased.

Buried beneath the tech-speak is a very simple idea: your digital information contains precious family photos, important PDFs, vital passwords, social network identities, and perhaps much more.

As more records exist only in digital form, those records may be stored on devices that relatives may not know how to access.

Moreover, every software update further blurs the line between where data is actually stored — either on-device or online.

Many people may have already unknowingly created a situation where their personal data will be lost when they die.

Leaving behind the password to your phone is a good first step, but it is not enough. With a little careful planning, you can secure your accounts, and make it much easier for family members to preserve your digital legacy.

Let’s take a look at three of the most used services: Apple, Facebook and Google.

Apple’s Digital Legacy program is very new. It seems polished, but I would not be surprised if you encounter a few rough edges. It also does not have many options.

If one of your devices has the latest software update (iPhone/iPad 15.2., Mac 12.1.), you will be able to designate up to five people in your contacts list as Legacy Contacts.

When you choose a contact, the device will generate a code to give the designee. By using that code along with a copy of a death certificate, your designee can request access to your account. From there, they will be able to retrieve any valuable data or delete the account.

The entire process is a

bit easier to set up if your designee is also an Apple user, but that is not a requirement. Nevertheless, I recommend finding someone who already knows iCloud if at all possible. Otherwise, leave instructions on how to retrieve the most important data.

To find out more about the scope and requirements for Apple’s Legacy program, visit [support.apple.com/en-us/HT208510](https://support.apple.com/en-us/HT208510).

Facebook is a bit easier to set up because everything is stored online and can be accessed from just about any device. However, Facebook also allows an account to be converted into a memorial, which enables your digital presence to remain online long after you have passed.

Your first step is to visit Facebook Settings & Privacy > Settings > General > Memorialization Settings.

From this page, you can choose another Facebook user to take charge of your account. The page will explain the available options. They include deleting the account and managing any activity that occurs after your last post. You should contact your designee beforehand because Facebook will confirm the setting with the designee right away.

Google’s legacy settings are known as the Inactive Account Manager. This tool has been around for years, and it has a number of options. For example, it can be set up to activate under a number of different circumstances.

Within your Google account settings, search for “inactive” to reveal the Inactive Account Manager, or select Data & Privacy, and scroll down to find the item named, “Make a Plan for Your Digital Legacy.”

Click the Start button, and the Inactive Account Manager will step you through a number of decisions on how and when you wish Google to take actions on your behalf.

Control over your email account is especially important, because most password recovery tools require an email password

to reset. You should consider your email account as a sort of indirect master key to your digital assets. Keep that in mind when telling Google when to grant access to your account.

Apple, Facebook, and Google probably cover the largest group of important accounts for most people, but they are only a starting place.

Not every service has legacy settings, but, at

the very least, you should leave behind a list of your accounts, passwords, and a brief overview of what they contain. If you are the person who set up your home network, be sure to include info on base station passwords and service providers. Pay special care with accounts with backup services like Backblaze, storage lockers like Dropbox, and any other social networks such as Twitter

and Instagram. Also, leave special instructions for any accounts that use two-factor authentication.

Data inheritance can be a complex topic. Hopefully this article will help get you started. You can learn more at [digitallegacyassociation.org](https://digitallegacyassociation.org).

Bob has been writing about technology for over three decades. He can be contacted at [techtalk@bobdel.com](mailto:techtalk@bobdel.com).

## Kenneth Kirk, Attorney

**Attorney and Estate Planner  
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It may be that all you need is a simple will. But that won’t protect you from probate. Probate is an expensive, lengthy procedure. If there are disputes within the family or with creditors, it magnifies them. If you want to disinherit anyone, it is much more difficult in probate. The process can drag on for years and cost tens of thousands of dollars. And it all plays out in public, in a court file anyone can see.

A Living Trust is, for most people, a better way to leave your estate. It is a loving gift to your family, and preserves more of the assets you worked for and saved.

Find out if a living trust would be a good option for you.  
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# COVID restrictions lift and travelers are raring to go

By **DIMITRA LAVRAKAS**

Senior Voice Travel  
Correspondent

The planes and ships want you back — desperately. But only you can decide if you feel safe enough to go.

I ping-ponged back and forth from Alaska to the east coast three times

and the people who've kept us flying for more than 80 years."

You can realize significant discounts and perks with this program.

Members enjoy exclusive benefits when traveling to, from, or within the state of Alaska on Alaska Airlines. You just have to be an Alaska state resident

Alaskans haul a lot of stuff around. With Freight for Less, Club 49 members can ship up to 100 pounds in up to two 35-gallon totes or sturdy shipping containers that do not exceed 20"x30"x15" at each for \$49 (plus tax). Shipping is only for within the state of Alaska. Oversized, unpackaged or hazardous materials may not be shipped. For cargo shipping details including allowable contents, go to [www.alaskaair.com](http://www.alaskaair.com).

Freight for less shipments can be made Monday through Saturday during cargo operation hours. Freight offices across Alaska have limited hours on Sundays and accept only Priority and Gold Streak shipments.

While we all look wistfully back to the time when Alaska Air offered three tickets for our PFDs, in mid-March they offered one-way prices for as low as \$89: Anchorage to Fairbanks for \$88; Anchorage to Seattle for \$99; Fairbanks to Seattle for \$149; Anchorage to Las Vegas for \$162; or Juneau to Seattle for \$149. Prices change by date so make sure you check out the schedule for the cheapest time to travel.

## Sail in the lap of luxury

Cruise lines took a big economic hit over the last three years. They're practically giving away seats now.

For Skagway, beginning



Three ships berthed in Skagway sparkle in the evening.

April 26, there will be one to four ships in the harbor every day until October 19 and the fall storms that swoop in and curtail the season. Even Disney ships are coming back.

And Juneau will see as many as six ships at a time. However, Juneauites reportedly are beginning to tire of the cruise ship economy that lightens their property taxes, and want to see less ships.

For Alaskans this may be the time to gather up the family and grab some discounts out of Seattle and see the Alaska you've never had the chance to explore. Cruising is one way to sample locations and you can come back independently for a deeper look.

Norwegian Cruise Lines offers a discounted \$249 per person fare (35 percent off) that includes a free open bar, free specialty dining, free excursions, free WiFi, with stops in Victoria and Ketchikan. Or \$399 per person from

Seward to Icy Strait Point, Juneau, Skagway, Ketchikan, and finally, Vancouver. Take the Alaska Railroad to Seward and fly back from Vancouver.

If you combine this trip with Alaska Airlines one-way fares, you win big.

Alaskans would greatly enjoy Icy Strait Point, Alaska's only privately owned cruise ship destination. Thirty-five miles west of Juneau in Hoonah, its cruise line visitors come off Royal Caribbean, Celebrity, Norwegian Cruise Lines, Holland America, Princess, Oceania and Regent Seven Seas.

In 1912, the Hoonah Packing Company built the first cannery and it changed hands several times before the Icy Strait Salmon Company purchased it in 1932. After a fire destroyed the town on June 14, 1944, many residents made the cannery their home while the city was rebuilt.

*next page please*



The famous Alaska Airlines salmon plane before takeoff.

Photos by Dimitra Lavrakas

between late summer and winter last year. I wore my mask, disinfected my hands with a spray I carried, wash my hands, and tried not to touch things like doorknobs and railings. I am still alive.

Airlines and cruise ships are flinging discounts about madly and maybe if you feel you can go out safely, it might be time to catch a bargain.

## For Alaskans only

Only Alaskans, and that includes snowbirds, can sign up for a free Alaska Airlines Club 49 mileage plan program. The company says it's their way to show "gratitude to the state that gave us our name

and Mileage Plan member.

Note that children under age 13 cannot be enrolled online. Call 1-800-654-5669 (TTY: dial 711 for relay services) between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. Pacific Time, Monday through Friday, or between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Pacific Time, Saturday.

Club 49 members and all passengers on the same reservation can check two bags for free when traveling to or from Alaska.

You will receive two Travel Now discounts per year, good for 30 percent off one-way travel in a refundable Y-Class fare to, from or within Alaska on Alaska, but it must be booked within four days of departure.

that residents can only access a road out through Canada or for whom a Canadian city is the closest place to shop, go to for medical services.

But wait, there might be a catch. Travelers arriving to Canada from any country, who qualify as fully vaccinated, may need to take a COVID-19 molecular test on arrival if selected for mandatory random testing, according to a March 17, 2022 press release from the Public Health Agency of Canada.

Travelers selected for mandatory random testing are not required to quarantine while awaiting their test result.

For partially or unvaccinated travelers who are currently allowed to travel to Canada, pre-entry testing requirements are not changing. Unless otherwise exempt, all travelers five years of age or older who do not qualify as fully vaccinated must continue to provide proof of an accepted type of pre-entry COVID-19 test result:

- ▶ a valid negative antigen test, administered or observed by an accredited lab or testing provider, taken outside of Canada no more than one day before their initially scheduled flight departure time or their arrival at the land border or marine port of entry; or
- ▶ a valid negative molecular test taken no more than 72 hours before their initially scheduled flight departure time or their arrival at the land border or marine port of entry; or
- ▶ a previous positive molecular test taken at least 10 calendar days and no more than 180 calendar days before their initially scheduled flight departure

time or their arrival at the land border or marine port of entry. It is important to note that positive antigen test results will not be accepted.

All travelers continue to be required to submit their mandatory information in ArriveCAN (free mobile app or website) before arriving in Canada. Travelers who arrive without completing their ArriveCAN submission may have to test on arrival and quarantine for 14 days, regardless of their vaccination status. Travelers taking a cruise or a plane must submit their information in ArriveCAN within 72 hours before boarding.

## Canada drops COVID tests You're golden if you're vaccinated - maybe

By **DIMITRA LAVRAKAS**

Senior Voice Travel  
Correspondent

On April Fool's Day, no kidding, Canada will drop the requirement that travelers entering Canada either through airports or land borders prove they have a pre-arrival COVID-19 test result. But only for those fully vaccinated.

This is a big sigh of relief for Alaskans whose towns and villages are so close to the international border





# Federal deadline for a REAL ID is next year

Start now to find and fill out documents

By DIMITRA LAVRAKAS

Senior Voice Travel  
Correspondent

Passed by Congress in 2005, the REAL ID Act enacted the 9/11 Commission’s recommendation that the federal government “set standards for

the issuance of sources of identification, such as driver’s licenses.” The Act established requirements for state-issued driver’s licenses and identification cards and prohibits federal agencies from accepting licenses and ID cards from states that do not meet the

requirements. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the deadline to obtain a Real ID has been extended to May 3, 2023. At that time, your non-compliant card will no longer be valid identification to enter federal facilities, access military bases and to board

commercial airplanes. If you do not need access to those facilities, then you may not need a REAL ID.

**Alaska asks for these**

State of Alaska law requires an applicant to provide true full name, which is the name that appears on your physical driver’s license or ID card. The Alaska DMV must electronically verify your identity, citizenship and lawful status with the issuer of the document(s). To avoid delay, make sure your documents are up to date and accurate.

In Alaska the fees for state identification cards and drivers licenses cost the regular card fees, plus a \$20 REAL ID fee.

- ▶ Driver’s license fee (\$20) + REAL ID fee (\$20) = \$40 for a REAL ID license
- ▶ Identification card fee (\$15) + REAL ID fee (\$20) = \$35 for a REAL ID identification card
- ▶ CDL fee (\$100) + REAL

ID fee (\$20) = \$120 for a REAL ID CDL

- ▶ Senior ID (\$0) + REAL ID fee (\$20) = \$20 for a senior REAL ID

Note: In Alaska you can renew your ID card up to one year prior to its expiration date. Your ID card will be valid for up to eight years expiring on your birthday or 90 days after your 21st birthday, whichever occurs first.

Additionally, you may already have another form of ID that is REAL ID compliant. These include a valid passport, a valid military ID, and some forms of tribal IDs.

**Other documents may fly**

You do not need a REAL ID to fly, although you will need a federally compliant ID. Here is the list of acceptable Transportation Security Administration identification: Driver’s

page 27 please

## Travel

from page 24

In 1996, the Huna Totem Corporation bought the cannery and created a destination that offers insight into Tlingit culture and traditions as well as cannery history.

Royal Caribbean offers 30 percent off deals on its Alaska cruises and you can also get \$50 off your cruise if you sign up for email alerts. That makes the seven-day cruise from



Seward a mere \$318 to cruise to Hubbard Glacier, Juneau, Skagway, Haines, Icy Strait Point, Ketchikan, through the Inside Passage, to Vancouver.

If you’re a mileage plan and Club 49 member you can purchase a flight out of Seattle to Anchorage for \$131 to \$164 in May.

Free food, free drinks, free scenery — you can’t go wrong.

*A cruise ship dwarfs a bicyclist on Broadway in Skagway.*

Photo by Dimitra Lavrakas



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Rock

continued from page 18

Rock, through his newspaper, unified Alaska Natives by “knowing the hearts and minds of the people,” Alaskan leaders said.

At a time when there was often disharmony around the state, Rock pushed for the formation of a statewide gathering of Natives, helping to set the stage for the first Alaska Federation of Natives convention.

“Perhaps more than anyone else, he (Rock) helped weld together the frontier state’s 55,000 Natives for their successful years-long fight to win the largest aboriginal land claims settlement in American history,” wrote Stan Patty of the Seattle Times. He added that Rock was their voice; at times about the only calm voice when crescendos of dissent threatened to tear Alaska apart after the discovery of oil on the North Slope.

Thanks in part to Rock’s activism, the fledgling AFN began demanding land and money from the federal government to settle the land claims issue. When the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act was signed into law in 1971, Rock hailed its passage as “the beginning of a great era for the Native people of Alaska.”

In 1975, Rock’s leadership was recognized with Alaska’s Man of the Year award, which he shared with U.S. Sen. Ted Stevens. That same year, the newspaper was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize for meritorious public service.

Rock died of cancer on April 20, 1976.

“I’ve never seen anybody die the way Howard died – he went in a blaze of glory,” Richards said. “His eyes had a burning light.”

A granite headstone and the rib of a giant bowhead, which typically pay tribute to a mighty hunter, mark his final resting place in the Tikigaq tundra about a mile from Point Hope. But Rock’s legacy – that of Native unity and activism – lives on.

This column features tidbits found among the writings of the late Alaska historian, Phyllis Downing Carlson. Her niece, Laurel Downing Bill, has turned many of Carlson’s stories – as well as stories from her own research – into a series of books titled “Aunt Phil’s Trunk.” Volumes One through Five, which won the 2016 gold medal for best nonfiction series from Literary Classics International and voted Best of Anchorage 2020, are available at bookstores and gift shops throughout Alaska, as well as online at www.auntphilstrunk.com and Amazon.com.

Senior Voice logo and NAMPA North American Mature Publishers Association logo with text: Proud Member, SERVING THE BOOMER & SENIOR MARKETS

Crossword answers from page 18

Grid of crossword puzzle answers: HERO, ALAMO, TIMECAPSULE, GAP, SOL, TAD, BETA, RIPE, OLD AGE, AMISS, SOS, MME, RIM, IBEX, LEVI, ETE, LIE, POD, NED, MELD, BABA, UTE, RAG, COW, MATTE, SECONDHAND, BEER, ASH, URI, PAR, LEI, TIME, ISMONEY, SEN, SPEAR, PAIN, ADE, SST, DADS

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seniorvoicealaska.com

Trinion advertisement: Feeling Frazzled About Your Parents Care? Let us help with one-to-one care and support. Preserving dignity, providing compassion and promoting respect with all COVID-19 safety protocols in place. You can become a paid family Caregiver. Call for information. TRINION Quality Care Services, Inc. Call on us 907-644-6050. Alaskan owned and operated for 15 years.

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# REAL ID

continued from page 25

licenses or other state photo identity cards issued by the Dept. of Motor Vehicles (or equivalent); U.S. passport; U.S. passport card; Dept. of Homeland Security trusted traveler cards (Global Entry, NEX-US, SENTRI, FAST); U.S. Department of Defense ID, including IDs issued to dependents; permanent resident card; border crossing card; state-issued Enhanced Driver's License; an acceptable photo ID issued by a federally recognized Tribal Nation/Indian Tribe; HSPD-12 PIV card; foreign government-issued passport; Canadian provincial driver's license or Indian and Northern Affairs Canada card; transportation worker identification credential; U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Employment Authorization Card (I-766); U.S. Merchant Mariner Credential; Veteran Health Identification Card.

## Finding the documents you need

Were you born in Alaska and need a copy of your birth certificate?

If you were born in Alaska, but don't yet have a birth certificate on file, contact the Alaska Vital Records Office at 907-465-3391 or visit the website at [www.vitalrecords.alaska.gov](http://www.vitalrecords.alaska.gov).

You will need:

- ▶ Application for Delayed Birth
- ▶ Documentary evidence that you were born in Alaska (school records, immunization records, or other similar documentation)
- ▶ Birth Certificate Order form and \$60

For a U.S. Passport or Passport card you can visit your nearest Post Office and fill out an application there or go to the U.S. Department of State website <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/passports/how-apply.html>.

For a U.S. State or Territory birth certificate, go to [www.vitalchek.com](http://www.vitalchek.com) and see if you can go through this countrywide site.

For immigration status

or citizenship documents go to <https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/document/guides/A4en.pdf>.

If you have any questions about the birth certificate request/application process, call 907-465-3391, Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Alaska Time.

## For the safety of all

For those of you who might be suspicious that REAL ID is just a way to create a national database. It is not.

REAL ID does not create a federal database of driver's license information and does not create national identification cards. REAL ID is a set of national stan-

dards for issuing licenses and identification cards. Each state continues to issue its own unique license, maintains its own records, and controls who gets access to those records and under what circumstances. The purpose of REAL ID is to make our identity documents more consistent and secure, and our country too.

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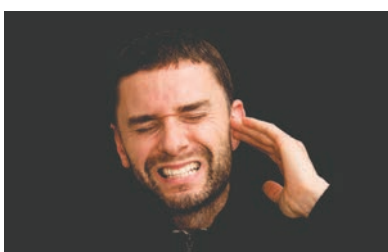
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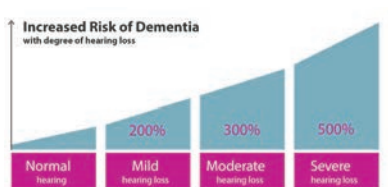
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