

E-mail: Linda.Schofield@cga.ct.gov

Home: (860) 651-8739

Capitol: 1-860-240-8547

Phone:

Hartford, CT 06106-1591

Legislative Office Building, Room 4044

*Capitol News*  
**Linda Schofield**  
*State Representative*



Dear Friend,

I hope this newsletter finds you and your family in good health and in good spirits.

There are many programs available to help seniors in a variety of ways. In recent conversations with older adults in Simsbury, I realize that many do not know about programs like ConnPACE or property tax relief.

I hope this summary of programs is helpful to you. Please feel free to contact me at my office or at home with any concerns you may have.

Thank you!

Best Wishes, *Linda Schofield*

**PENSION ASSISTANCE**

The New England Pension Assistance Project from the University of Massachusetts in Boston will assist you with:

- individual counseling and assistance.
- negotiating layers of bureaucracy.
- locating pension funds.
- explaining the benefits and rights under your pension plan.
- supplying referrals to attorneys.
- supplying a listing of financial advisers.
- providing speakers on pension issues.

This service has obtained millions of dollars for its clients and is absolutely free for low- and middle-income seniors. Call **1-888-425-6067** toll-free or e-mail [npln@umb.edu](mailto:npln@umb.edu) for more information.

**CIRCUIT BREAKER PROGRAM**

The Elderly and Disabled Homeowners' Tax Relief Program (known as the Circuit Breaker Program) provides a 10% to 50% state-reimbursed property tax reduction, depending on income, for low-income elderly and disabled homeowners. To qualify, an elderly person must be at least age 65 and have an income below specified levels. Income limits for the program are adjusted annually to reflect Social Security benefit increases. The size of the credit a person receives depends on his income.

Contact Simsbury's Tax Assessors Office at **(860) 658-3251** to find out if you qualify, and feel free to call my office if you need any assistance.

**HOME HEATING ASSISTANCE**

Contact the local Operation Fuel bank for assistance in applying for state and federal fuel assistance. If you do not qualify, Operation Fuel in most cases can still give assistance.

contact is:

Dorothy Clark  
Gifts of Love  
P.O. Box 463  
Avon, CT 06001  
(860) 676-2323

**CONSUMER PROTECTION**

Find out how you can be best prepared to avoid becoming a victim of scams. Every month, Connecticut's Attorney General Richard Blumenthal issues a monthly newsletter called "The Senior Advocate." If you have an immediate consumer problem, there is also a hotline seniors can call. To report a problem or to receive the monthly newsletter, call **(860) 808-5318** Monday through Friday.

## HANDICAPPED ACCESSIBILITY LOANS

The Corporation for Independent Living and the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) have joined together for "Loans for Accessibility," a statewide, low-interest program that provides financial assistance so that eligible families and individuals can modify their existing homes to accommodate residents with physical disabilities.

Typically, the funding is awarded to people who need ramps, roll-in showers and other basic accommodations. This program allows seniors to stay in their homes and maintain their quality of life. Because people who are physically disabled often have low or moderate incomes as well as unusually high medical expenses, they are frequently unable to afford market-rate construction loans. Program loans range from \$1,000 to \$20,000.

For information about the Loans for Accessibility program, call the Corporation for Independent Living at **(860) 563-6011**.

## FREE PASSES TO STATE PARKS

The Charter Oak Pass provides access to the State Parks and Forests and is available free to Connecticut residents age 65 or older. The free pass provides all day access to all Connecticut state parks and forest recreation areas. Send a legible photocopy of your current Connecticut drivers license or other legal proof of age and residency to: DEP Charter Oak Pass, State Parks Division, 79 Elm Street, Hartford, CT 06106-5127. Or call **(860) 424-3200** to find locations where it can be locally obtained.

## CONNPACE ELIGIBILITY

ConnPACE provides qualifying seniors with help paying for prescription drugs. ConnPACE supplements what is available from the Medicare Part D program.

For single people, the income limit is \$23,100. For couples, the income limit is \$31,100.

### Eligibility

- You must be either 65 or older or over 18 years of age with a disability.
- In most cases, you may not have another insurance plan that covers your prescriptions.

Enrollment is \$30 per year. Participants pay \$16.25 for each prescription.

Call **1-800-423-5026** for an application or for more information.

## HOME HEALTH CARE

Get the assistance you need, possibly without having to leave home. The Connecticut Home Care Program for Elders (CHCPE) can help provide you with people who can assist you with day-to-day tasks, meals-on-wheels, health care aides, and other services. In order to qualify, you must be age 65 or older, meet income requirements, and go through a screening process. To find out more information, call the Connecticut Department of Social Services Alternate Care Unit toll-free at **1-800-445-5394** between 8:30 am and 4:30 pm Monday through Friday.

Info Line.....	2-1-1
Medicare Hotline.....	1-800-633-4227
Long-Term Care Insurance Information.....	(203)234-8566
Commission on Aging .....	(860)424-5360
Medicare Advocacy .....	1-800-262-4414
Medicare Legal Assistance.....	1-800-633-4227
Consumer Protection.....	1-800-638-2772

## HEALTH INSURANCE "CHOICES"

Do you have the health insurance plan that works best for you? The CHOICES program offers free counseling to seniors age 60 or older and disabled persons about the benefits of Medicare, Medicaid, HMOs, and other health plans. The program also provides information about various programs such as home care, financial assistance, legal assistance, and transportation. This program even provides preliminary screening for several state programs. Visit the North Central Connecticut Agency on Aging at 2 Hartford Sq., West-Suite 101, Hartford or call **(860) 724-6443** to find out what CHOICES you have.

## 211 INFOLINE

There are many programs available in the state that cover many needs. Calling INFOLINE will help you with the information you need 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Utility service, legal assistance, mental health, health insurance, and information on how to access just about any benefit provided by the government and Connecticut businesses are available. All you have to do is dial **211** on your phone. You will get access to information on 4,000 health and human service providers, 13,000 sites, and more than 39,000 service-sites. You can also visit [www.infoline.org](http://www.infoline.org).