

Champion Your Health to Celebrate Older Americans Month

Every May, the Office on Aging and Independence (OAI) celebrates Older Americans Month (OAM) to recognize older Americans' contributions to our community, highlight healthy aging trends and reaffirm our commitment to serve the needs of older adults in Howard County.



The 2026 OAM theme, "Champion Your Health," focuses on prevention, wellness, and personal responsibility as cornerstones of healthy aging. It encourages older adults to take an active role in their health — advocating for themselves, accessing preventive care and making informed decisions that support independence.

"Championing your health is about making daily choices that support your body and mind," said Ofelia Ross Ott, OAI administrator. "Small, consistent actions — from preventive care to staying socially connected — can help older adults maintain their health and independence as they age."

As the Area Agency on Aging, OAI is a trusted source of information in Howard County, providing programs and services to help residents take charge of their health, including:

- Medicare counseling through the State Health Insurance Program (SHIP), empowering individuals to make informed healthcare coverage decisions
- Nutrition programs and education, including congregate and home-delivered meals that support overall health and reduce isolation
- Evidence-based health promotion programs like Living Well, focused on chronic disease self-management, fall prevention, and overall wellness

Physical activity and social engagement are key to healthy aging, and OAI's fitness classes and 50+ center programs provide accessible opportunities to stay active, connected, and independent. OAI also offers screenings, education, and support related to cognitive health, helping individuals and families better understand memory changes and access dementia-friendly resources.

"Through partnerships and community initiatives, OAI is advancing an age-friendly community where older adults can thrive," says Ofelia. "This Older Americans Month, we encourage all residents to 'champion their health' by staying informed, staying active and connecting with local resources that support aging well." Learn more at www.howardcountymd.gov/aging.

From the desk of Calvin Ball, Howard County Executive



Just last month, Howard County joined the Dementia Friendly America Network, which is a network of government agencies, clinical providers, community-based organizations and individuals living with dementia and their care partners to build a more inclusive and supportive community.

Out of nearly 20,000 municipalities and more than 3,000 counties in the U.S., only about 400 communities are part of the Dementia Friendly America Network. This allows us to expand access to direct services, community programming, professional training, and strategic partnerships.

In addition to dementia-related services already offered through the Howard County Office on Aging and Independence (OAI), the plan enhances navigation tools, educational materials, and access to screenings and resources. It also establishes a Dementia Advisory Committee and a programming continuum designed to support residents in early-, mid-, and late-stage dementia, while strengthening connections to caregiver supports and respite options.

Providing stronger support for those touched by dementia is just one more way we are enhancing life for our older residents. Since we launched our Age-Friendly Initiative in 2019, we have offered state-of-the-art facilities for continual learning, physical movement, social events and more.

The Howard County Office on Aging and Independence will coordinate and implement the initiative, and leading planning, implementation, and sustainability efforts in alignment with the County's Age-Friendly Action Plan 2025–2029.

For more information about Howard County's Dementia Friendly initiative, please contact the Howard County OAI at 410-313-6537.

SAVE THE DATE

JUNE 16, 10 A.M. - NOON



World Elder Abuse Awareness Day
Building Strong Support for Elders

Awareness, Action and Financial Safety

A World Elder Abuse Awareness Day Event

Visit bit.ly/HoCo-WEAADFORUM for more information.



Presented by
Howard County
Office on Aging and Independence



Sponsored by
AARP

May Events at Howard County 50+ Centers

Tech Device Donation Drive

Bain 50+ Center and Elkridge 50+ Center

May 11 – 15, Center Hours

Donations of used technology devices (working or not) will be refurbished by PCs for People and redistributed to Maryland residents or properly recycled to keep them out of landfills. A list of accepted donations is available at centers. Contact Malarie Burgess at 410-313-6542 or mburgess@howardcountymd.gov with questions.



Clay Pots for Mother's Day - DIY Craft

Elkridge 50+ Center

May 14, 1:30 – 2:30 p.m. | #A05554.701

Transform simple clay pots into beautiful Mother's Day decorations using colorful tissue paper and plant a succulent— perfect for brightening up any windowsill or gifting to someone special. Cost: \$5. Call 410-313-5192 to register.

Older Americans Month Celebration: MusAlliance

Bain 50+ Center

May 19, 11 a.m. – noon | #A01736.700

Join us for a performance by the dynamic string duo of guitarist Anna Kusner and domra/mandolinist Peter Omelchenko as they bring rich international experience to their interpretations of classical, folk, and world music.

World Bee Day! Native Bees in your Backyard

Bain 50+ Center

May 20, 11 a.m. – noon | #A01942.700

Did you know there are over 400 native bees in Maryland? Sit back and sip tea with honey as you learn how to identify which of these species are pollinating the flowers in your backyard.

Soothing Energy Workshop

Elkridge 50+ Center

May 29, 10 a.m. – noon | #A05665.702

Learn basic techniques from Reiki and Healing Touch and explore how these gentle energies can soothe, calm, relax, and help relieve pain. Learn how balance and health can be supported using your hands, mind, and spirit. Call 410-313-5192 to register.

Preventing Elder Financial Exploitation

Glenwood 50+ Center

June 9, 11 a.m. – 1 p.m. | #A03732.701

Victims of financial exploitation and scams find it hard to get back on track financially – especially older adults. Join MakingChange to learn how scams work, tactics scammers use to obtain your personal information and what you can do to keep your identity secure.

Alzheimer's Education Series

Ellicott City Fitness Center

May 7, 14 & 21, 1 – 3 p.m. | #A20670.600

In this three-part educational series on Alzheimer's Disease and related Dementias learn how to maintain a healthy brain and body; discover the 10 warning signs of Alzheimer's Disease; and gain a better understanding of an Alzheimer's and Dementia diagnosis.

An Epic Adventure: Get more out of MyChart

Glenwood 50+ Center

May 12, 1 – 2 p.m. | #A03627.707

Explore technologies that enable patients to directly access their MyChart medical records without endless clicks, and learn how to use those technologies to gain more insights about your health.

Back Pain and Pain Management

Bain 50+ Center

May 12, 11 a.m. – noon | #A01111.700

Join Dr. Morrison and Lydia Nemirovsky of SPMS Consulting as they discuss back pain education and lifestyle strategies to manage it without medication or invasive procedures. Free screenings following the presentation.

The Preakness Stakes Past and Present

East Columbia 50+ Center

May 13, 2 – 3 p.m. | #A04664.700

Join Eleanor Albert of the Maryland Horse Foundation for an insider's look at the Preakness Stakes, with highlights from recent races, Preakness history and traditions, and a collection of rarely seen photos that capture the spirit of race day.



9830 Patuxent Woods Drive, Columbia, MD 21046
410-313-6410 (VOICE/RELAY) • www.howardcountymd.gov/aging

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CALLING ALL JOBSEEKERS AGE 50+

Register today!

Howard County, MD
Virtual 50+ Employment EXPO
(via Zoom)
Thursday, May 7, 2026
10 a.m. - 3 p.m.

- Morning workshops to help you with your job search
- Meet area employers in the afternoon
- Be one of our success stories!

Free registration is required:
HowardExpo.AccessJCA.org

Howard County Office on Aging and Independence | JCA Jewish Council for the Aging