

# Beaver County Office on Aging COVID-19 Task Force Newsletter Volume 10, June 17, 2020

## UPMC-Beaver Crisis Office Moves to Beaver Falls

UPMC-Beaver Crisis has moved and is now located in the Beaver County Human Service Building, 1020 8<sup>th</sup> Ave., Suite 136, Beaver Falls. Their phone number is 724-371-8060. Phone support is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Telehealth services are available from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. seven days a week. Walk-in service is available from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday. If walking in, ask the deputy sheriff at the desk in the main hallway for assistance. Mobile services are available from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday.

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## U.S. Rep. Lamb's Local Office Will Reopen

U.S. Rep. Conor Lamb's 17<sup>th</sup> District office, located at 3468 Brodhead Road, Suite 1, Monaca, will reopen to constituents June 22. Appointments are not required but encouraged. Visitors must wear masks. To schedule a meeting for assistance about federal issues, call the Beaver County office at 724-206-4860. Staff is available to assist with:

- Social Security Administration (SSA)
- Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)
- Internal Revenue Service (IRS)
- Medicare
- United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)
- Customs and Border Protection (CBP)
- U.S. Postal Service (USPS)
- Department of State (DoS)

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## Food Assistance Availability

The Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank serves 11 counties across Southwestern Pennsylvania. It offers application assistance for SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program), formerly known as Food Stamps. Call 833-822-7627 or visit [www.pittsburghfoodbank.org/snap](http://www.pittsburghfoodbank.org/snap) to leave your contact information.

Here are some additional food resources that may be helpful to you:

### Food Pantry Locator:

<https://www.pittsburghfoodbank.org/get-help/locator/>

### Produce to People Calendar:

<https://www.pittsburghfoodbank.org/what-we-do/food-to-people/produce-people-p2p/>

### Senior Box Program: *(Must be age 60 or over)*

<https://www.pittsburghfoodbank.org/what-we-do/food-to-people/senior-boxes/>

### SNAP INCOME GUIDELINES:

Your household monthly income must fall below these numbers in order to apply. Monthly Income Guidelines Before Deductions

Household Size	Age 59 and Under	Age 60 and older or Disabled
1	\$ 1,666	\$ 2,082
2	\$ 2,256	\$ 2,820
3	\$ 2,845	\$ 3,556
4	\$ 3,434	\$ 4,292
Each additional Member	\$ 590	\$ 738

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## **PA Turnpike Cashless, All-Electronic Tolling Will Be Permanent**

The Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission has announced that the cashless, all-electronic tolling (AET) system instituted in March to minimize the spread of the COVID-19 virus will become permanent. Customers will move through the toll plaza lanes at posted speeds without stopping. Their tolls will be assessed via E-ZPass, or a PA Turnpike TOLL BY PLATE invoice will be sent in the mail. The commission was planning to transition fully to cashless tolling in early 2022 but moved up the date because of COVID-19 and the necessary mitigation efforts.

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## **Guidance Provided That Stimulus Payments Belong to Consumers Living In Long-Term Care Facilities, Not the Facilities Where They Live**

As Pennsylvanians continue to receive federal stimulus payments as part of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, the Pennsylvania departments of Aging, Human Services (DHS) and Insurance remind consumers living in long-term care facilities that these checks belong to them, not the facilities where they live.

“We have received complaints from residents of long-term care facilities being told that their federal stimulus checks count as income that must be surrendered, in part or in whole, to pay for services. Residents should know that this is not true,” said Pennsylvania State Long-Term Care (LTC) Ombudsman Margaret Barajas of the Pennsylvania Department of Aging. “The stimulus checks were issued with the expectation that they would be used to stimulate the economy, not to settle up past debt. The State Ombudsman is committed to advocating for and resolving these issues for older adults, case-by-case.”

The Department of Human Services has issued guidance for how economic impact payments affect the eligibility of those living in long-term care for Pennsylvania's Medicaid program, Medical Assistance (MA). This guidance directs that the economic payment is not considered income for the purposes of MA eligibility. The portion of the economic impact payments that are spent within 12 months of receipt is also considered an excluded resource for MA eligibility. There should be no change to a resident's monthly charges in their contract due to this payment. Residents may direct their concerns or complaints to the Assisted Living Complaint Hotline at 877-401-8835.

The Department of Aging and DHS are working closely together to make sure that people who live in long-term care facilities are aware of their rights to this economic payment. Any resident of a facility who is concerned that their payment is in jeopardy should reach out to the Pennsylvania State Long-Term Care Ombudsman right away."

People who are single with an income below \$12,200 or married with an income below \$24,400, that do not receive Social Security or SSI and did not file their taxes in 2018 or 2019 can submit a non-filers form any time until the end of calendar year 2020 and receive their stimulus check.

“The Insurance Department is alarmed by complaints from Pennsylvanians questioning a facility’s right to a resident’s federal stimulus check,” said Commissioner Jessica Altman. “We are dedicated to making sure all

Pennsylvanians are aware that the Federal Trade Commission has made very clear that stimulus income should not be considered a 'resource' in federal benefit programs and that nursing homes and assisted living facilities may not seize stimulus payments from residents simply because they are on Medicaid."

"Our job at the Department of Aging is to protect the safety and well-being of older adults and to empower them to live as independently as possible," said Aging Secretary Robert Torres. "Part of that involves making sure older adults, whatever their living situation, know their rights and where they can turn to for help and information. The federal government has made it clear that these stimulus payments should go directly to the individual whose name is on the check. If an older adult or their loved one has concerns, they should seek help."

Consumers with concerns should call the Pennsylvania Attorney General's Office at 800-441-2555. But if they need some extra help preparing to make their complaint, the Department of Aging's LTC State Ombudsman is happy to offer support. The number to call for help is 717-783-8975.

The LTC Ombudsman recently launched a new statewide resource called Virtual Family Council, which offers families a chance to connect with a local ombudsman and other experts to ask questions and discuss protocols, rights and procedures for their loved ones in long-term care facilities. The meetings are held weekly and do not address specific issues regarding a resident or a facility. Learn more about the LTC ombudsman and various programs offered by the Pennsylvania Department of Aging [here](#).

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## **Be Aware Of Fraudulent Emails, Text Messages and Phone Calls**

Fraudsters are using malicious email, text messages and telephone scams designed to steal tax refunds and government stimulus checks being distributed to eligible individuals. Do not fall for common scams.

**Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Checks:** No business or service can get your check faster. No third party is being used by the IRS to hold or sort checks. Funds are issued directly from the IRS to you via direct deposit or U.S. Postal Service mail. Stimulus checks are based on how you filed your 2018 or 2019 income taxes. The IRS will not ask for PINs, passwords or confidential access information for credit cards or bank account over the phone or email.

**Phone Scams:** Scammers may pose as IRS agents or bank employees to request sensitive information or to ask you to verify sensitive information, such as bank account credentials and Social Security numbers. Let all incoming calls from unknown numbers or callers go to voice mail. Confirm any request with the alleged organization/business. Use a known phone number or one published on the organization's official website.

**Email and Text Message Scams:** Emails or text messages may tempt you to click on a link to infect your device with malware or call a fake number promising urgent news about your stimulus check or asking you to share personal or banking information. These cyber attacks, known as phishing, are sometimes created to look like official bank correspondence. Do not click on links or open attachments. Confirm the message is from a trusted source using a known phone number.

Information from PNC Bank

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## **Beaver County Radio Has Multiple Church Services Available on Sundays**

Beaver County Radio includes 1230 AM WBVP, 1460 AM WMBA, 99.3 FM and Beaver County Radio live stream has a large line up of church services on the air as churches are closed during the Coronavirus pandemic.

Sunday starts with Sounds of Faith, an inspirational segment of worship and praise music from 7 a.m. to 9 a.m. It is followed live Mass from St. Monica Catholic Church in Chippewa Township at 9 a.m. At 10 a.m., a recorded broadcast

from First Presbyterian Church in Rochester, features Rev. Lee Bittner along with special music by Mike Neely. Pastor Jan Davis from Central United Methodist Church, Beaver Falls, will engage listeners with a recorded sermon. At noon, Senior Pastor Cliff Reynolds of Word Alive Church in Ellwood City, will have a recorded message. A live broadcast from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. will be aired from New Galilee Church of the Nazarene featuring Pastor Andy Russell speaking from the “drive in church” pulpit. You can pull up, park and tune the car radio to any of the Beaver County Radio stations to hear his Sunday message. Pastor Rod Smith from Mountain Ministries presents his recorded message, Good News from the Mountain, at 7 p.m. on Wednesdays.

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### **Older Adult Protective Services**

If you feel an older adult is being abused, neglected, or exploited, call Older Adult Protective Services at 724-775-1786. The hotline is open 24 hours a day.

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### **Ombudsman Service is Available**

The Beaver County Office on Aging Ombudsmen are working full time, at home, and are available to accept calls and handle any complaints or questions related to nursing facility and personal care home resident rights and problem resolution. We will return your call by the end of the next business day. Ombudsman calls are considered and treated with highest confidentiality.

To contact the Ombudsman program you may: email [Ombudsman@BCOA.US](mailto:Ombudsman@BCOA.US); call the Ombudsman direct phone line 724-480-8589; or call the Office on Aging main phone 724-847-2262, identify your call as an Ombudsman issue, with no details, as these calls are highly confidential and leave your name and phone number only.

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