

Upcoming Events

NARCOG Board Meeting
DATE: Feb. 3 at 10 a.m.
LOCATION: NARCOG Board Room - Decatur

Caregivers Connect
DATE: Feb. 16 at 10:30 a.m.
LOCATION: NARCOG Board Room - Decatur
DATE: Feb. 23 at 10:30 a.m.
LOCATION: Nesmith Park Apartments - Cullman

Agency Contacts

Tennille Harkins
Director
tennille.harkins@adss.alabama.gov

Julie Campbell
ADRC/SHIP Coordinator
julie.campbell@adss.alabama.gov

Dana Dobson
AL CARES Coordinator
dana.dobson@adss.alabama.gov

Ronette Gravitt
Nutrition Coordinator
ronette.gravitt@adss.alabama.gov

Daffney Harris
SCSEP Coordinator
daffney.harris@adss.alabama.gov

Chasity Johnson
Alabama Ombudsman
chasity.johnson@adss.alabama.gov

Stephanie King
SeniorRX Coordinator
stephanie.king@adss.alabama.gov

Deborah Wilson
Medicaid Waiver Division Mgr.
deborah.wilson@adss.alabama.gov

ON THE WEB

www.narco.org

SOCIAL MEDIA

facebook.com/narcoal

Senior farmers market vouchers available

Spring is on the horizon, and the local farmers markets will begin to open in a few months.

This also means applications are being accepted for the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program

(SFMNP).

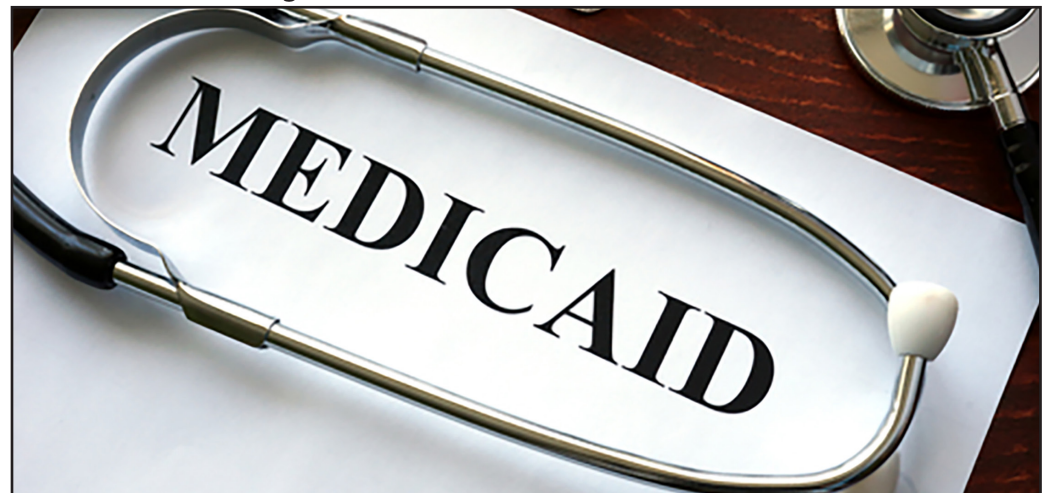
"Most seniors just refer to the SFMNP as the vegetable voucher program," said Ronette Gravitt, Nutrition Coordinator for the North Central Alabama Regional Council

of Governments (NARCOG).

"This is a popular program among our seniors. It's something they look forward to every year."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

Medicaid Waiver Program



Continuing to grow

NARCOG Medicaid Waiver program adding spots in 2022

The NARCOG Medicaid Waiver Program continues to grow.

Currently, the NARCOG Medicaid Waiver Program serves 496

elderly and/or disabled individuals in the Region. Medicaid recently released additional slots throughout the state, which will allow NARCOG to increase its case count.

The program's purpose is to allow elderly and/or disabled individuals who otherwise would require care in a nursing home to remain

in the community. To be eligible for the program, individuals must have full Medicaid benefits or be Medicaid eligible through the institutional deeming process, be at risk of nursing home placement, and meet both medical and financial requirements.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

SHIP Program helps residents save \$1.2 million

The Medicare open enrollment period has come to an end, and the North Central Alabama Regional Council of Governments (NARCOG) State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP)

helped almost 2,000 Region residents save money.

Medicare open enrollment began on October 15 and closed on December 7. During that period, NARCOG SHIP counsel-

ors in Cullman, Lawrence and Morgan counties served 1,938 individuals.

The estimated monetary value saved totaled \$1,249,946.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Robby Cantrell | Executive Director

North Central Alabama Regional Council of Governments | PO Box C • 216 Jackson St. SE • Decatur, AL 35602

256-355-4515 | robby.cantrell@adss.alabama.gov

NARCOG offers health and wellness programs

It's a new year, which means many people are focused on improving their personal health and well-being.

For seniors who are interested in creating a better quality of life, reducing pain and inflammation, increasing social interaction, improving joint function, increasing muscular strength, or just increasing their overall quality of life, the North Central Regional Council of Governments (NARCOG) Area Agency on Aging has programs that can help.

Throughout the year, NARCOG offers Arthritis Foundation Exercise Classes at different locations in the Region.

The exercise program offered in these classes can be done either sitting or standing, and participants use exercise bands and light weights.



NARCOG currently has three active exercise classes in the Region, but the Area Agency on Aging is working on additional classes in each of the Region's counties.

NARCOG also is in the process of getting a new program added to its evidence-based health and well-

ness program called "BINGO-Size." This evidence-based program combines Bingo—and prizes—with exercise that works to strengthen muscles and teach fall prevention.

NARCOG's exercise programs typically last six to eight weeks and

meet once to twice a week for an average of 45 minutes to an hour.

Individuals interested in attending a class, hosting a class with a senior group, or becoming certified to teach a class, should contact NARCOG's Stephanie King at 256-355-4515. All classes are free.

FROM PAGE 1: SHIP

"These savings allow seniors to use their money for other needs they may have," NARCOG Area Agency on Aging Director Tennille Harkins said.

Medicare open enrollment can be a complicated process. Each year, insurance plans change, along with the cost that is placed on clients.

Because of this, through the NARCOG SHIP Program, residents in the Region have access to free counseling resources to help them make an educated decision that best fits their needs."

"All services are free and unbiased," Harkins said. "Our goal is to find the plan that works best for you."

At NARCOG, the 2021 SHIP numbers were slightly up from the previous year. During the 2020 open enrollment period, the NARCOG SHIP program helped 1,782 individuals in the region save \$882,372.

FROM PAGE 1: Medicaid

The program provides in home services such as a case management, homemaking, personal care, companion, respite services and frozen meals.

NARCOG's Medicaid Waiver Program is 3-year NCQA Certified for quality and assurance, and is currently going through the renewal certification process for another three years.

Holiday cheer

A smile stretched wide across her face, Tamaya Plott stuffed holiday bags with gifts.

The packages were the product of an annual holiday drive held by the North Central Alabama Regional Council of Governments (NARCOG) Medicaid Waiver Program, collecting items of need for clients who reside in Cullman, Lawrence and Morgan counties.

This year's Be a Santa for Senior holiday drive was a success.

NARCOG collected donations



of more than 1,500 pairs of socks and 500 large-print puzzle books, along with other items of need — cleaning supplies, blankets, etc. — and distributed those throughout the Region.

NARCOG distributed extra pairs of socks that were donated to seniors who reside at long-term care facilities in the Region.

"We would like to thank ev-

eryone who donated socks and puzzle books, or gave monetary donations, to help our seniors," NARCOG Area Agency on Aging Director Tennille Harkins said. "Because of these donations, we were able to provide every client in our Medicaid Waiver Program with a Christmas present while also helping some of our senior living communities."

COMMUNITY OUTREACH



FROM PAGE 1: Farmers Market

The Alabama Farmers Market Authority opened the 2022 SFMNP application process on Friday, January 7, giving seniors who qualify for the program an opportunity to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables for local farmers markets with a voucher.

The SFMNP application is available on the Alabama Farmers Market Authority website, however, NARCOG assists local seniors who are 60 and older apply by telephone

by calling 256-355-4515 or 1-800-AGE-LINE.

Through SFMNP, eligible seniors receive a booklet containing five vouchers with a value totaling \$30 that can be used at farmers markets throughout the state. Fresh fruit, vegetables, herbs and locally harvested honey can be purchased with the vouchers.

Last year, NARCOG helped 1,381 seniors in the Region receive SFMNP vouchers.

"This is a great program that

helps provide seniors access to nutritious produce that is grown here locally by farmers in the region," NARCOG Area Agency on Aging Director Tennille Harkins said.

"The price of groceries has increased in the past few years, which has an impact on seniors who live on a fixed income. This program helps ensure qualifying seniors have a way to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables while also supporting local agriculture."

SFMNP Requirements

- \$1,772 mo. - Household of 1
- \$2,396 mo. - Household of 2
- \$3,020 mo. - Household of 3
- \$3,645 mo. - Household of 4
- \$4,269 mo. - Household of 5
- \$4,892 mo. - Household of 6

How to apply

On the web
<http://fma.alabama.gov>

By phone at NARCOG
256-355-4515