AAA Adaptations to Remote and Virtual Programming: A Brown Bag Discussion
Webinar Instructions

Audio Options
• Use your computer speakers, OR dial in using the phone number in your registration email.
• All participants are muted.

Chat Feature
• The Chat feature allows webinar attendees, the host, co-hosts and panelists to communicate for the duration of the webinar.
• You can submit questions at any time during this presentation using the Chat.
Accessibility

• Screen Reader Users: Reduce unwanted chatter
  • Request speech on demand: Insert, Spacebar, “S”

• To get our attention if you need tech assistance:
  • Raise or Lower Hand: Alt + Y
Today’s Program

• Overview of AAA involvement in remote and virtual programming and services
• Introduction to new and upcoming engAGED resources
• Presentations from three AAAs:
  • Remote Medicare and benefits counseling
  • Virtual senior center
  • Virtual evidence-based programs
• Break out into discussion rooms
• Return to main room at 3pm for debrief
Remote Programming Beyond COVID-19

• USAging poll of AAAs in June 2021
• Responses from ~110 AAAs
• Supported by funding from the Administration for Community Living
AAAs quickly pivoted services to remote and virtual delivery due to COVID-19.
Services Most Frequently Offered in a Remote Format (Virtual/Online or Telephone)

• Telephone reassurance/friendly visiting
• Benefits/health insurance counseling or enrollment assistance
• Case management
• Caregiver support
• Assessment for care planning
• Options counseling
• Evidence-based programs for older adults
• Assessment for long-term care service eligibility
Services AAAs likely to continue remotely, and why

SERVICES
• Evidence-based health promotion and caregiver support programs
• Options counseling
• Benefits counseling
• Senior center activities
• Curbside meals

REASONS
• Reach more clients
• Save time
• Client preference
• Plan for combination of remote and in-person

US Aging
Services AAAs less likely to continue remotely, and why not

SERVICES
• Assessments
• Case management
• Care transitions
• Some evidence-based programs
• Some support groups

REASONS
• State or payer regulations
• In-person delivery is better for this particular service
• Participant preference
Virtual Services
Who delivers the agency’s virtual services and programs?

- AAA staff or volunteers
- Partner with others
- Purchase content
Agency needs for virtual programming

- Devices for clients
- Mobile data service or Wi-Fi hotspots for clients
- Technology training for clients
- Additional staff to deliver programs
Contact
Traci Wilson
Director of Research
USAging
twilson@usaging.org
Overview of engAGED

- Administered by USAGing
- Funded by the Administration for Community Living
- National effort to increase social engagement of older adults, people with disabilities and their caregivers
- Identifies, develops and disseminates resources, replication tools and best practices for the Aging Network
Innovations Hub

- Database of social engagement innovations to facilitate shared learning and replication launched in July 2021

www.engagingolderadults.org/hub
Coming Soon!

• Technology booklet geared towards older adults
• OATS Manual to help enhance virtual programming
Contact engAGED

- www.engagingolderadults.org
- info@engagingolderadults.org
AAA Presenters

Lisa Sheppard, Director,
Flathead County Agency on Aging, MT

Kitty Devilbiss, Director, Home & Community Connections,
Frederick County Senior Services Division, MD

Nicole Gaither, Aging Services RN,
Middle GA Regional Commission Area Agency on Aging, GA
Virtual Medicare and Benefits Counseling in Rural Montana

Lisa Sheppard
USAgeing Webinar, September 29, 2021
Carl
The Arrival of COVID
Drastic Changes to Service Delivery

- We closed our offices to the public on March 20, 2020. Prior to that, many of our services, including all benefits counseling and Medicare Open Enrollment appointments, were done in person, as were monthly Medicare 101 classes.

  People liked coming to our offices, often dropping by with questions, for “walk-in” appointments, or just to say hi. It felt like closing doors to friends and family.

- We shifted our entire service delivery model overnight, but we also did a rapid community needs assessment over the next couple of months to help us figure out what to do next.
Community Needs Assessment
Asked and Answered

Through interviews and surveys we sought to learn how older adults were feeling, what they were concerned about, if they had basic necessities, could they access health care and in-home support, were they isolated, whether they knew where to go for accurate information, and if they had access to technology and were comfortable using it.

The Survey: 289 responses

- Online, 135
- On paper, 154
# Community Needs Assessment

## Some of What We Learned

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social isolation concerns</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loneliness</td>
<td>34%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Difficulty finding help</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Internet use for information</td>
<td>70%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Internet use for connection to others</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet use for telehealth</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet use not at all</td>
<td>18%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Fact:**

Only 57% of older adults with low incomes in the Flathead have high-speed internet.

Paper survey responders were much more likely to be older, have a more limited income, live alone and report lower (or no) use of technology.
A New Frontier
Phone, Email, Mail, Drop-box, Website

- Filmed our Medicare 101 class and put it on our website home page for anytime viewing; made it available to all AAAs in Montana

- Developed a “virtual” benefits counseling protocol
  - Put more materials on our website for easy viewing
  - Exchange of information with clients through email or mail (with physical drop-box option at our offices)
  - Once info returned, staff call clients to set a phone appointment (to avoid “no-shows”); will make appointments at time of inquiry closer to end of Open Enrollment period
  - Staff review and prepare info in preparation for appointment; efficiency goal of 45 minutes per appointment
Send and Receive
What’s in the Packet

- **We sent** (by mail or email)
  - Cover letter describing the contents of the packet, why we were asking for specific information and the steps in the process
  - Educational materials
  - Forms: “Assessment worksheet” with questions about current plan, benefits and drug list; MyMedicare.gov registration info; client agreement for assistance and release of information
  - Pre-stamped and addressed return envelope (if mailed)

- **Clients returned** (by mail, email or physical drop-box at our office)
  - Completed forms
  - Signed agreement and release of information
Connecting with People
New Look, New Message, New Outreach Strategies

- Moved up rebranding launch
- “We get it and we’re here for you” language
- Multi-media: high visibility
  - Print ads and human interest stories
  - Radio and TV
  - Web and social media
- Engaging and expanding our network
- Flexible and responsive in real time
Surprising Results
More Connection, More Service, More Savings

3.5 times as many service hours provided

2.4 times the savings achieved for clients
The Challenge
Making It Feel Like We’re in the Room

- On the phone, in print, on the air
  - Attending to language and tone
  - Asking how we can best connect
  - Checking in more frequently for some

- Now offering Zoom for appointments and classes
  - Friendly faces and body language
  - Easier for those with difficulty hearing
  - Better able to form relationships with new clients
  - A maskless option for those at higher risk
Our New Normal
Open to the Public and Still Virtual

Public
- Not everyone has or is comfortable using technology, even the phone
- For some, coming in person feels, and may be, critical to their health and well-being

Virtual
- People love the convenience
- It’s the safest option relative to COVID
- Bad weather, parking concerns, lack of transportation, mobility limitations are other reasons to continue and improve virtual options
Helping older adults with what’s important to them by providing the services, information and resources they need to live well at every age.

Lisa Sheppard, Director
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flathead.mt.gov/aging/
Frederick County Senior Services
Virtual Senior Center
Some Advantages-

The talented staff from the four Senior Centers went to work!

Linda, Cathy, Susan
Deb, Caitlyn & Dara
Welcome to the Senior Services Division Virtual Learning Center.

These videos are available to assist Frederick County residents with information on topics of importance and interest.

[Image of various video thumbnails]
# Virtual 50+ Community Center
## October 2021 Programs & Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Split Spreads Death: Colds &amp; Flus</td>
<td>Strength &amp; Stretch S</td>
<td>10:30 Writing Family History II</td>
<td>Joy of Movement S</td>
<td>Zumba Gold S</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:30 Line Dance S</td>
<td>10:30 Zumba Gold S</td>
<td>12:30 Good News Only</td>
<td>10:30 Knit/Crochet</td>
<td>10:30 Yin Yang Yoga S</td>
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<tr>
<td>2:00 Memory Keeping: Digital Books</td>
<td>11:00 TED Talk</td>
<td>3:00 M&amp;M S</td>
<td>1:00 Line Dance S</td>
<td>1:00 Prince of Pop</td>
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<tr>
<td>2:30 Bookshelf Book Club: The Last Bookshop in London by Madeline</td>
<td>1:30 Zumba Gold S</td>
<td>2:00 Public Art Walk @ Creekside entrance of Delaplaine Art Center</td>
<td>1:00 Line Dance S</td>
<td>Andy Warhol Museum S</td>
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<tr>
<td>Martin</td>
<td>3:30 Drawing Class</td>
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<td>3:30 Craft &amp; Conversation: Fall Leaf Impressions</td>
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<td>2:45 Floor Yoga S</td>
<td>7:00 Fun &amp; Games</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Noon - Groceries for Seniors</td>
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<tr>
<td>New to Medicare Workshop</td>
<td>Strength &amp; Stretch S</td>
<td>Nutrition: Aging Gracefully</td>
<td>Joy of Movement S</td>
<td>Frederick Senior Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:15 Film Club: Field of Dreams</td>
<td>10:30 Morning Flow Yoga S</td>
<td>10:30 Writing Family History II</td>
<td>10:30 Morning Flow Yoga S</td>
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<td>1:00 Line Dance S</td>
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<tr>
<td>2:45 Floor Yoga S</td>
<td>3:30 Drawing Class</td>
<td>7:00 Yoga Nadra S (2nd Wed only)</td>
<td>2:30 Good Stories Book Club: A Fall of Marigolds by Susan Meissner</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:15 Film Club: Ghost &amp; Mrs. Mui</td>
<td>9:00 Strength &amp; Stretch S</td>
<td>9:00 Art Appreciation: A Celebration of Autumn S</td>
<td>9:00 Joy of Movement S</td>
<td>Zumba Gold S</td>
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<td>3:30 Drawing Class</td>
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<td>2:30 Murder &amp; Mayhem</td>
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<td>10:30 Cultural Adventures Aboard</td>
<td>5:00 Strength &amp; Stretch S</td>
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<td>2:45 Floor Yoga S</td>
<td>7:00 Kitchen Kapers: Carrot Cake</td>
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*You must pre-register for all programs. Programs with an “$” have a fee. Programs are subject to change.*

*Website: [www.FrederickCountyMD.gov/Virtual50](http://www.FrederickCountyMD.gov/Virtual50)  
Email: VirtualSeniorCenter@FrederickCountyMD.gov*
Benefits:

- Convenience
- Reduces Isolation
- Structure
- Value

I am grateful every day for the many programs being offered virtually by your office. I have experienced no loneliness or boredom throughout the last year and a half. I have been entertained, engaged, and active, thanks to you and your staff.

-MaryAnne
Challenges

- Technology
- Marketing
- Organization during remote working conditions

I can’t hear you. Your mic is off.
Our commitment to the future

- Virtual Senior Center remains a permanent addition to our service offerings
- Integration of online activities with in-person center offerings
- Tablet loan program
- Volunteer opportunities to support older adults with limited tech skills
Provide holistic services for healthy aging
A holistic approach: mind, body, spirit
Holistic life living experiences for adults
Holistic life living experiences our goal
Cultivating new experiences upon life’s highway
Facilitators of new chapters in lives
Zoom classes keep seniors from loneliness
Mature friendly adults of great friendships
A COVID survival lifeline for seniors

6 Word Stories
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Frederick County Senior Services  
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MIDDLE GEORGIA REGIONAL COMMISSION

AREA AGENCY ON AGING

NICOLE GAITHER, RN-BSN
HEALTH & WELLNESS COORDINATOR
PLANNING AND SERVICE AREA

• The Middle Georgia Regional Commission Area Agency on Aging planning and service region includes the following counties:

  Baldwin    Peach
  Crawford   Pulaski
  Houston    Putnam
  Jones      Twiggs
  Macon-Bibb Wilkinson
  Monroe
HEALTH & WELLNESS PROGRAMS

Life enriching programs that are:

- Based on nationally recognized programs
- Proven effective
- Local connections
- Focused on individuals’ needs
DISEASE SELF-MANAGEMENT

• These 6-week programs provide tools and techniques needed to better identify problematic symptoms; develop action plans; improve communication; and solve problems while building new skills.
CAREGIVER SUPPORT

• These programs give caregivers tools to avoid burnout and ensure they are taking important steps to take care of their own well-being, including tips on promoting self-care behavior, managing emotions, and using available community resources.
FALLS RISK AWARENESS AND PREVENTION

• These 8-week programs teach strategies to reduce the risk of falling; provide simple exercises to increase strength and balance; and incorporate subtle principles to shift fall-risk behaviors into positive actions.
WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED…

Start where they are.  
Collaboration is key.

Pivot when necessary.  
It's okay not to be okay.
CONTACT INFORMATION

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Breakout Rooms

• Random assignment to Zoom breakout rooms
• Your opportunity to connect and brainstorm with peers
• Use of video is encouraged but not required
• Start with *brief* introductions – your name, role, agency and location
• You set the agenda! Here are some questions to kick off the conversation:
  • What is your agency currently focused on for remote or virtual programs?
  • What resources have been useful, that haven’t been mentioned yet?
  • What do you need, going forward, to support your remote or virtual work?
Thank you for attending today’s webinar!

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