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**FINANCIAL AND LEGAL PLANNING**

# Helpful tips for securing your family's financial future

By Courtney Diener-Stokes  
For MediaNews Group

If you're age 50 to 55 and are starting to think about mapping out your future from a financial and estate planning perspective, now is an ideal time to begin taking action if you want to get ahead of the game.

If you've missed that window of opportunity and are now eyeing retirement, it's not too late, but you'll be approaching some important life decisions with a greater sense of urgency.

Dorko Wealth and Estate Planning in Wyomissing, Berks County, covers all the bases needed to secure someone's future. Jeffrey Dorko handles estates and estate planning, while his wife, Cheryl, and their son Samuel are financial advisors. The Dorkos have been advising families for a combined 55 years.

If you're curious about the best strategy to begin getting your ducks in a row, Cheryl Dorko suggested starting with the basics.

"The biggest thing even before finances is to see Jeff or another attorney to get an estate plan," she said, adding you will need to appoint a power of attorney who would ideally be your spouse or child.

The next step would be to consider securing your financial assets with the help of a financial advisor like Cheryl, who handles clients with investment and non-investment assets over \$1 million, or Samuel, who handles clients with over \$100,000 in assets.

"It's really good to have the lawyer and the financial advisor working back and forth so they're on the same page," she said.

At Dorko Wealth and Estate Planning, their financial advice is

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

**What:** Dorko Wealth and Estate Planning  
**Address:** 999 Berkshire Blvd., Wyomissing, Berks County  
**Phone:** 610- 957-0018  
**Website:** www.jeffdorko.com

centered on goal-based planning. "Many are worried about running out of money," she said. "The goal-based planning can help alleviate any anxiety centered on out-living their money."

Dorko shared some of the most important things to consider when navigating your future.

**Plan before you think it's time to plan**

Dorko typically works with people who are ready to get serious about their financial situation.

"That's who I help the most, those who come to me when they're retiring," she said. "That's when they decide to get serious."

However, according to Dorko, it's better to take a proactive approach.

"If you can do it at age 50 or 55 you can have a much more successful plan if you start early enough," she said.

**Take someone with you**

If you are 70 and over, according to Dorko, it's ideal to take a spouse or other loved one with you to your financial planning consultation or meeting.

"Whether a spouse or an adult child they might want to have someone with them before they think it's necessary," she said.

Dorko said it can give your family and loved ones the confidence

that you are not making decisions that might not be in your best interest, and that they can trust that the advisor is recommending what is in your best interest.

They can also serve as a support system from an emotional perspective..

"A lot of people with finances decide things based on emotion," she said. "Money is a real trigger, and it can help to have someone with them."

**Plan for eventualities**

An aspect of legal planning that Dorko finds clients often don't realize are different eventualities that she said should be considered with proper planning. This is taking into consideration all of the things that could happen and considering ways in which you can be prepared.

"One of those things is long-term care," Dorko said. "So often people come in and they say, 'Well I'm not going into a facility,' but that's not realistic."

According to Dorko, everyone has a good chance of needing assistance with either nursing home care or assisted living.

"Many don't even want to think about it," she said. "Many say they will wait until they get sick, but that doesn't work because you no longer qualify for insurance because of health issues."

Instead, the best time to get long-term care insurance is well before you might need it.

"If someone is aged 50 and very healthy then that would be the ideal time," she said. "Many want to get it when it's too late."

If you're wondering why you should bother paying for all of those years of extra insurance, Dorko makes a convincing point.



COURTESY OF DORKO WEALTH AND ESTATE PLANNING

The family-owned firm of Dorko Wealth and Estate Planning includes, from left, Samuel J. Dorko, financial advisor; Jamie Sullivan, paralegal; Cheryl D. Dorko, financial advisor; and Jeffrey F. Dorko, attorney.



COURTESY OF COTTONBRO

It's ideal to secure your financial future well before retirement.

"When we run the numbers we can see if you're starting at age 50 the numbers are lower and in the end you're spending less," she said.

**Beyond the numbers**

Many families have been with the Dorkos' firm for over 25 years and coaching, and counseling them is part of the job.

"You get invested," she said. "When there is a retirement, or a parent is going into a nursing home, or a loved one dies, we are

the first person they call and say, 'What do I do?'"

While Dorko is used to dealing with such situations, many of her clients are experiencing life-changing events such as these for the first time.

"We want to be there to answer their questions and let them know exactly what's going to happen," she said. "This is an emotional time and with our experience and guidance we can ease their mind in navigating these challenges."



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**VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES**

# Through RSVP, corporations support the community

**RSVP**  
RSVP organizes more than 1,200 volunteers to make life better for vulnerable seniors, students, veterans as well as other nonprofits. It receives support from an array of foundations and agencies and more than 500 individual donors. And a surprisingly large cadre of 146 corporate partners provides the organization with not only funding but also volunteers and leadership.

"We are part of the community's fabric, linking volunteers with those who need their services. We're a great match for corporations who want to give back to the community they serve," said Michele Moll, RSVP's executive director.

**Numerous opportunities**

When Peoples Security Bank & Trust established a regional office in King of Prussia, it sought involvement with "a local philanthropic organization that impacted the lives and welfare of community residents," said Senior Vice President Ian Matlack, who heads the office.

Peoples Security became an RSVP sponsor in 2018. "We were impressed with the many benefits associated with a sponsorship," Matlack said, "and we were equally impressed with the numerous opportunities to get involved with RSVP as committed volunteers, due to the organization's wide range of programs."

Partnership benefits can include recognition in publications and social media, event marketing, cobranding and employee volunteer engagement.

The opportunity for employees to volunteer in the community has attracted many RSVP partners. After linking up with RSVP, Peoples Security took the lead in a book drive that

benefited Norristown Head Start preschoolers. Matlack joined RSVP's Volunteer Executive Consultants, who advise nonprofits in business essentials such as planning and fundraising. And Matlack also joined the RSVP board of directors, where he served as interim vice president.

"If you're seeking a community-oriented partner with deep roots, a moving mission that is illustrated in its expansive programs, and tangible results that have positively affected members of the community from impressionable children to senior citizens, look no further than RSVP," Matlack said.

**Volunteering with Impact**

Window replacement specialist Renewal by Andersen has adopted RSVP through its Window of Giving program. The company provides financial support and serves as title sponsor for RSVP's Golf Classic fundraiser, which will be held this year on July 19 at RiverCrest Golf Club in Phoenixville. The tournament provides companies with a variety of sponsorship opportunities.

"We're looking for ways we can help RSVP, even opportunities to do some one-time volunteering that impact the community we work and live in," said Kristin Gardner, Renewal by Andersen's general manager for Greater Philadelphia.

When the pandemic shut down RSVP's annual volunteer recognition luncheon last year, Gardner provided staff and swag for drive-through volunteer appreciation events in Delaware and Montgomery Counties.

"It was very fulfilling to see all the volunteers come by," said Steve Mermelstein, a senior project consultant for Renewal by Andersen who handed out goodie



COURTESY OF RSVP

People's Security Bank and Trust Senior Vice President Ian Matlack is a member of the RSVP Board of Directors.



COURTESY OF RSVP

Steve Mermelstein, a senior project consultant for Renewal by Andersen, handed out goodie bags at the volunteer appreciation drive-through.

bags at the appreciation drive-through. "It was inspiring that they give their time to do so much good for youth and underserved populations through tutoring, delivering meals, all sorts of great programs. It surprised me."

For major sponsors, RSVP will design volun-

teer engagement projects such as creating care packages for cancer patients, writing thank you notes to veterans and holding gently used sports equipment drives. Prior to the pandemic, Renewal by Andersen employees have read to and wrapped books for Head Start kids.



COURTESY OF RSVP

Edita Bailey, market manager for Citadel Credit Union's Harleysville and Lansdale offices, helped pack meals at Dignity Kitchen for victims of Hurricane Ida.

**Support good works**

Johnson & Johnson's 130-year-old corporate credo exhorts employees to "be good citizens — support good works and charities, better health and education." The company maintains an extensive volunteer portal. There, senior manager Gita Srinivasan spotted an opportunity to join RSVP's board of directors.

"I used to be on the board of a nonprofit in Boston," she said. "I enjoy strategy and road-mapping. Since I was invited to join the board, it's been an awesome experience. I'm blown away by the number of areas RSVP is involved in."

Srinivasan has spearheaded efforts to let more people know about the organization's programs and to attract new volunteers. And she's working on ways to help volunteers, particularly seniors, reengage after lying low during the pandemic.

At Johnson & Johnson, Srinivasan has attracted volunteers to Vello, a virtual RSVP-United Way elementary reading coach program.

Through another RSVP program, Julian Mathis, a J&J finance manager, began mentoring a third-grader in December, though COVID put that activity on hold.

"It's a great opportunity learn what's going on at that age and to share things you've been able to learn," he said.

Mathis said he hopes to resume volunteering later this year.

Linda Mueller, a retired Johnson & Johnson employee, has been an RSVP volunteer for 13 years. Most recently, she has been tutoring first-graders at the Cole Manor Elementary School in Norristown.

"Volunteering with RSVP has been both easy and rewarding," she said. "I love helping students reach their

RSVP » PAGE 3



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PHOENIXVILLE

# Chester County native entertains seniors at Woodbridge Place



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Residents and staff of Woodbridge Place dance to the sounds of CR Gruver.

For MediaNews Group

The residents of Woodbridge Place in East Pike-land Township, Chester County, recently were treated to a performance highlighting the history of New Orleans music, hosted by keyboardist CR Gruver.

A Chester County native himself, Gruver took time away from his Northeast-ern tour to prepare an en-gaging program focused on the music he performs with his band, The New Orleans Suspects. He was delighted to

share his passion with the seniors of the Phoenixville-area landmark in an hour-long concert that allowed personal and memory care residents to immerse them-selves for another day in the Mardi Gras way.

Although now a local to the Metairie community in Louisiana, Gruver has not forgotten his roots and the town that has supported his path to success.

Gruver, a 1988 graduate of Conestoga High School in Tredyffrin Township, is a professional full-time musi-cian living in New Orleans.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

**Above:** Residents of Woodbridge Place enjoy a concert by pianist CR Gruver.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

**At right:** Musician CR Gruver entertains residents of Woodbridge Place.

## RSVP

FROM PAGE 2

potential. RSVP is a very professional organization that strives to help the community in every way possible. The staff has been very supportive.”

### Feeling connected

The remnants of Hurricane Ida last September spawned tornadoes and flooding that left hundreds of area residents living in hotels for weeks. Often unable to cook there, they received meals from Dignity Kitchen of Norristown, an enterprise of the YWCA Tri-County Area. The Y asked RSVP to provide vol-unteers to pack the meals, and RSVP turned to corpo-rate sponsor Citadel Credit Union for help.

“It really makes you appreciate what others are going through,” said Edita Bailey, the market manager



COURTESY OF RSVP

Gita Srinivasan of Johnson & Johnson is a member of the RSVP board of directors.

for Citadel’s Harleysville and Lansdale offices. “What Dignity Kitchen does is amazing. It makes you feel connected to the commu-nity to be a little part of that. Insurance settlements take so long, and their houses were unlivable.”

Bailey said Citadel sponsors and volunteers through RSVP because “our purpose is to build a brighter future for our members and community. So we’re proud to support organizations like

RSVP that have an impact in Montgomery County and enhance the local quality of life.”

“It was a great experi-ence,” said Jessica DiDo-nato, market manager for Citadel’s East and West Norriton offices. “They were very appreciative. We look for opportunities to give back to the communities where we operate and allot specific hours for employees to volunteer. Our philoso-phy is people helping peo-ple, especially within our own communities.”

To explore volunteer op-portunities that fit your in-terests and schedule, visit [rsvpmc.org](http://rsvpmc.org) or call 610-834-1040 ext.123. For informa-tion on corporate part-nerships, contact RSVP’s de-velopment manager, Lydia Messinger, [lydiam@rsvpmc.org](mailto:lydiam@rsvpmc.org), 610-834-1040, ext. 124. For information on volunteering, visit [rsvpmc.org](http://rsvpmc.org), email [volunteer123@rsvpmc.org](mailto:volunteer123@rsvpmc.org) or call 610-834-1040, ext. 123.



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SPOT OF T

# Contemplating some mental meandering

By Terry Alburger

Have you ever stopped in mid-thought and wondered, "How did I get here?"

It's fun to try and follow your thought process back to what you originally were contemplating — it's like retracing your steps to find something you lost. And for me, this is a daily jaunt!

For instance, the other day, I picked up my phone to order something on Amazon. A simple task, right? But as I picked up my phone, I saw that I had a weather alert. So of course, I clicked it. Tornado warning ... in Oklahoma. Okay, I probably don't have to worry.

However, once I'm on the weather page, I wonder what the forecast is for this week? (click) I'll just turn on the TV for a minute and see what the Weather Channel is saying. (click) Ok, no special bulletins or announcements. Looks like my local forecast calls for some snow tomorrow. Hmmm, do I have enough ice melt? I believe I do. I got it last time I went to the store.

The store ...they also had Easter candy on sale, so I picked that up as well for the grandkids. I'm all set for Easter. When does Easter fall this year? Hmmm, let me just look at my calendar. Oh, it's late this year. April 17. Right around my granddaughter's birthday. Wonder what the theme is for her party this year — will I be making the cake? Let's look at some 11-year-old birthday cake ideas. (click on Pinterest) Love making the grandkids' cakes!

After a good 15 minutes or so lost in Pinterest-land, I remembered that I still had not ordered what I needed on Amazon. So off I went, back to my main



PIXABAY

Sometimes you need to retrace your thoughts just as you might need to retrace your steps to find something.

screen. "Oh, look, someone texted me... might be important... oh, just a political text." (delete) But while I'm here, I should probably text the kids to say hello. Just take a minute..."

Twenty minutes later, after engaging in three conversations at the same time, I closed out of messages.

"Wait! I have not yet played my daily Wordle!" (click) Another 10 minutes passed, while I figured out the tough word for the day. Ah, victory! Whew!

(Ding) Oh, look, a new Facebook notification! Let's just see who's doing what? (click) Between new posts and looking at my "Memories," which is equivalent to "On This Day in the History of My Life," I finally closed the app

about 20 minutes later. I started to get up from the couch but realized that the tables in the family room were dusty. I had a few minutes, let me just dust "real quick," just these three tables. And the entertainment center. And the mantle. And the desk. And my treadmill. The treadmill...it's been a while since I used it. OK, let me just do a quick mile.

Forty-five minutes later, with a quick mile under my belt, and having watched the end of whatever inane show was on the TV to keep my attention while I ran, I was ready to get back to business. Amazon! I still had not ordered my Amazon!

As I attempted to get there, my phone rang. Hmm, a call from Florida. I don't know anyone

in Florida. Must be a junk call. I let that go to voicemail. But I sure do love Florida! It wasn't long ago we had a mini-Disney vacation with four of the grandkids. So much fun!

Gee, I wonder what they are doing now? They live so far away, in the Midwest. I don't get to see them too much. But I hope they are OK out there. You know, there is a tornado warning in Oklahoma! I guess I would have heard if it had moved to their neighborhood.

I sure do miss that area, I have not been there since a short trip in spring of 2021. Might be time for a road trip. Gas prices are really high, though. Maybe I'll wait. I hope things improve soon. Maybe it's time for a quick prayer for the people of Ukraine

and for peace. (pause for a prayer) Amen. Can't pray that enough.

Road trip. Yes, that's what I was thinking about. Well, for now, guess we'll have to stick to FaceTime. Thank goodness for FaceTime. Hey, I wonder if my kids are home? I'll just call real quick ... (click) (ring, ring, ring...) I'll try again later.

Now, what was I going to do? Oh, yes, Amazon! Maybe I should check the product information on this purchase first. What reviews are out there? What are the people saying? How does it hold up with daily use? Now, what was it I was going to order?

(Woof!) My puppy had awakened from her nap and wanted to play. (sigh) OK, let's go. After a good

20 minutes of fetch and soccer, she picked up her ratty, tattered rope and wanted to play tug of war. I grabbed an end and started pulling.

I suddenly realized "That's it!" I set out to order her a new rope with which to play, because hers was destroyed by a young Labrador's gnawing! I'd gone full circle, spent the day in mental meandering, lost in connected thoughts, much like a giant Connect the Dots game!

If someone can invent a mental GPS to keep my thoughts from wandering, let me know. For now, I will just enjoy the randomness that is my way of thinking and go order a dog toy. If you want me, I'll be... who knows?

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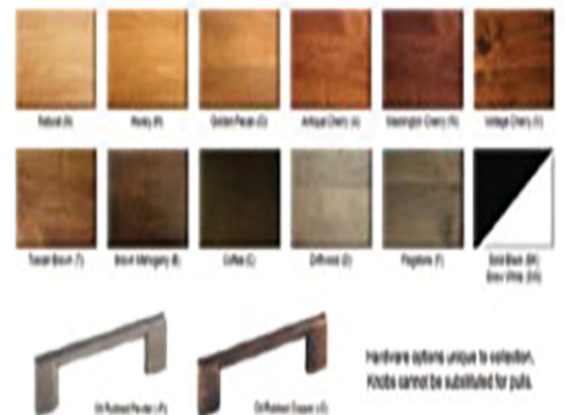
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HEALTH

# Staying healthy during National Nutrition Month

By Shelley Kanther

In March, communities and organizations across the United States observe National Nutrition Month. This annual campaign was created by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics to teach others about making informed food choices and promote healthy eating habits.

Many home care organizations such as Griswold Home Care offer services that help older adults live comfortable and fulfilling lives, including meal preparation that promotes a healthy lifestyle.

We're happy to share some tips from the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics on how older adults can improve their well-being by focusing on flavorful but nutritious meals.

### Make half your plate fruits and vegetables

Eat a variety of different colored vegetables, including ones that are dark-green, red and orange. Beans, peas and lentils are also good options when choosing vegetables to include in your meal.

Although fresh vegetables are ideal, frozen and canned vegetables are still healthy options. Look for reduced sodium or no-salt-added on the label.

Adding fruit to meals, snacks or as dessert is also a great way to get the nutrition you need. Choose fruits that are dried, frozen or canned in water or 100% juice, as well as fresh fruits.

### Make at least half your grains whole

Choose breads, cereals, crackers and noodles made with 100% whole grains. Whole grain corn tortillas, brown rice, bulgur, millet, amaranth and oats all count as whole grains, too.

Also, look for fiber-rich



BIGSTOCK

cereals to help stay regular and cereals that are fortified with vitamin B12, which is a nutrient that decreases in absorption as we age or due to some medications.

### Switch to fat-free or low-fat milk, yogurt and cheese

Older adults need more calcium and vitamin D to help keep bones healthy. Include three servings of fat-free or low-fat milk, yogurt, or cheese each day.

For those who are lactose intolerant, try lactose-free milk or a calcium-fortified soy beverage.

### Vary your protein choices

Choose a wide-ranging menu for enjoyable dining experiences and eat a variety of foods from the protein group each week. In addition to lean meat, make sure to include poultry, eggs, seafood, nuts, beans, peas and lentils when planning your meals.

Spread your protein intake throughout the day by including a protein source with meals and snacks.

### Limit sodium, saturated fat and added sugars

Although your body needs a small amount of sodium to work properly, too much sodium is bad for your health and can lead to increased blood pressure, making you at risk

for heart disease or stroke. Compare sodium in the foods you buy and choose those with lower amounts. Adding spices or herbs to season food without adding salt can also lower sodium intake.

Switch from solid fats to oils when preparing foods, and make major sources of saturated fats occasional choices, not everyday foods. Examples of foods to limit include desserts, fried foods, pizza and processed meats like sausages and hot dogs.

Choose fruit for dessert more often in place of processed treats with added sugars.

### Stay well-hydrated

Drinking plenty of water throughout your day will

help you prevent dehydration and promote good digestion. Water intake can have other positive impacts on our health, such as with the kidney, skin, brain, and more.

### Enjoy your food, but be mindful of portion sizes

As we age, many of us need fewer calories. Keep this in mind when considering portion sizes. Using smaller plates, bowls and glasses can change how you visualize the amount of food you have.

### Cook more often at home, where you are in control of what's in your food

Some studies suggest that people who cook more often, rather than get take-out, have an overall healthier diet.

When you order take-out, look for dishes that include vegetables, fruits and whole grains, along with lean protein. When portions are too large, share a meal or save half for later.

### Consult a registered dietitian or nutritionist if you have special dietary needs

Speaking with a registered dietitian or nutritionist offers evidenced-based, easy-to-understand nutrition and general health information specific to your needs. They can help ensure you're getting the most out of the foods you can eat, rather than focusing on what you need to avoid.

Nothing is more important to your health than what you put into your body. Making healthy informed choices leads to a more enjoyable life, now and for years to come.

**ABOUT GRISWOLD HOME CARE** With 168 locations in 29 states, Griswold Home Care is one of the country's top home care companies, delivering compassionate care 24/7 to its clients. Its purpose is to give people the help they need to live in the place they love. Through this purpose, Griswold Home Care helps adults maintain quality of life despite advanced age or onset of illness through services including companion care, home services, personal care, and respite care. Founded by the late Jean Griswold in 1982, the company has maintained its founder's profound sense of empathy for older and disabled adults and those living with chronic conditions. For more information, visit [www.griswoldhomecare.com](http://www.griswoldhomecare.com) or call 215.402.0200.



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SENIOR LIVING

# Future residents of 501 at Mattison in Montgomery County meet



COURTESY OF 501 AT MATTISON ESTATE

Anne Dunnington and Berne Siergiej attended a party at the 501 at Mattison Estate's sales center in Ambler, Montgomery County, to meet their future neighbors.

For MediaNews Group

With construction coming along right on schedule at the 501 at Mattison Estate in Ambler, Montgomery County, around 20 future residents gathered to celebrate and meet each other at a recent party in the SageLife senior living community's sales center.

The 501 will offer extensive amenities, including an indoor pool, fitness center, bar and lounge areas, theater, gardens, a dog wash and dog run, art studio, indoor and outdoor dining venues, courtyards with fire pits, a putting green and covered parking, all on an 8-acre campus next to the famous Lindenwold Castle.

There will be 250 apartments, with multiple floor plans to choose from, offering independent retirement living, assisted living and memory care.

The 501 joins other SageLife communities in the Philadelphia area, including Plush Mills in Nether Providence Township, Delaware County; Daylesford Crossing in Tryedyffrin Township, Chester County; Kyffin Grove in Horsham Township, Montgomery County; and Echo Lake in Tryedyffrin Township, Chester County.

The 501 at Mattison Estate's decorated models just opened for tours (by appointment only).

To learn more and schedule an appointment, visit [www.sagelife.com/mattison-estate](http://www.sagelife.com/mattison-estate).



COURTESY OF 501 AT MATTISON ESTATE

Future 501 at Mattison Estate residents Anita Danforth-Dargie, left, Carol Strack, second from left, Betty Lou Arthmire, center, and Rosemary Samtmann, right, enjoyed a party at the SageLife senior living community's sales center in Ambler, Montgomery County. They were joined by Samtmann's sister, Paula, second from right.

Construction at the 501 at Mattison Estate is on track. All structural elements are in place and progress is now being made on the community's interior spaces.



COURTESY OF 501 AT MATTISON ESTATE

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## TECHNOLOGY

## Senior use of smartphones, computers and iPads is on the rise

By John Grimaldi

It turns out that you can teach an old dog new tricks. Just look at how America's seniors have adopted cell-phones, computers and laptops. Middle age children of today's seniors may soon start complaining that their moms and dads are spending too much time online and on their iPhones, says Rebecca Weber, CEO of the Association of Mature American Citizens.

She notes that the 50-plus set has been adopting technology at a steady rate for years, but the COVID pandemic has sped things up. A Pew Research study, she points out, shows that 73% of the 50-to-64 set and 45% of Americans 65 and older

are familiar with and use social media sites.

Meanwhile, the Info-comm Media Development Authority tells us that a 2016 survey of seniors 75 and older showed that just 11% of them were using smartphones, and the same survey conducted in 2020 showed that senior smartphone usage had skyrocketed to 60%.

The same survey showed that only 8% of 75-plus seniors were familiar with and used the internet in 2016, and by 2020 46% of super seniors were regularly online.

A lot of research has been conducted regarding the how's and why's of technology adoption among the elderly, according to the Journal of Geriatric Mental Health.

They show that, "once their initial resistance of

learning new technology was overcome, enjoying the experience of using the mobile phone motivated them to use the device.

"Other contributory factors were heightened self-esteem when they could perform certain chores by themselves such as paying bills or buying groceries or navigating around, and feeling secure (because of various safety measures available on the cellphone), as well as more realistic, goal-directed outcomes such as information retrieval and communication.

"In addition, social influence or subjective norm in the theory of reasoned action research also influenced the use of mobile phones.

Other studies have identified different possible mo-

tivators for senior mobile phone use, including social influence, safety, security, autonomy, relatedness, and usefulness."

Tiffany Esshaki, who writes for C&G Newspapers, reports that older folks have been slowly but surely embracing the fruits of technology. and the pandemic helped speed things up for savvy seniors.

Tiffany cites Molly McElroy, 70, of Auburn Hills, Mich.

"If you, like me, are a senior, which makes you a high risk for COVID-19, (social media) is how you carry on," McElroy said. "You're already limited at some level by age, driving less at night, and now you're isolated. Or are you? Thanks to my hobbies — indolence and the

Internet — I hardly feel impacted at all."

Ageists will tell you that the elderly are not capable of navigating the intricate pathways of computer and smartphone communication. It's not true.

In a scholarly paper by Morgan Van Vleck, a Masters Research Fellow in Aging at Harvey A. Friedman Center for Aging at Washington University, St. Louis, argues that the use of social media and technology by seniors is a welcoming development.

"The growing intergenerational nature of social media has been beneficial in allowing a place for people to build relationships based on common interests rather than age," he said. "The future of social media is an intergen-

erational one, with the aging population only set to increase. Instead of viewing a growing social media use among older adults as the death of these sites, it should be viewed as an avenue for possibility that arises when everyone is given a platform."

*The 2.4 million member Association of Mature American Citizens, www.amac.us, is a vibrant, vital senior advocacy organization that takes its marching orders from its members. AMAC Action is a nonprofit, non-partisan organization representing the membership in our nation's capital and in local congressional districts throughout the country.*

## HEALTH

## Advances in medicine help seniors live better, longer

By John Grimaldi

Advancements in medicine are making life better and longer for senior citizens.

## Vaccines

"Over the past two decades, widespread interest in RNA-based technologies (Ribonucleic acid) for developing prophylactic and therapeutic vaccines has increased. Interest heightened during preclinical and clinical trials, which revealed mRNA vaccines provide a safe and long-lasting immune response in humans," according to a new report from the Cleveland Clinic.

It notes that the COVID pandemic helped speed up the process of designing and producing virus-specific vaccines. Think about it. A COVID vaccine was developed, produced, approved and deployed to combat the deadly disease that was upending



WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

A vial of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine.

our world in a year's time. It took researchers some 23 years, from 1930 to 1953, to produce the polio vaccine.

The Cleveland Clinic analysis concluded that RNA-based technology "has the potential to be used to eliminate some of healthcare's most challenging diseases quickly and efficiently. While the technology is not new, covid-19 unlocked the power of mRNA vaccines, and we are entering a new frontier in fighting disease."

## Prostate cancer

Meanwhile, the older men get, the more likely they are to develop prostate cancer. The National Institutes of Health says "prostate cancer is the most common malignancy among elderly men and is the second leading malignancy in the Western world. The incidence of prostate cancer has steadily increased over the last decade. Between 2000 and 2050, the number of men over 65 years is expected to increase 4-fold worldwide."

The Cleveland Clinic says that early detection is the key to successfully dealing with prostate cancer, and that new imaging technology has been developed that offers faster, more dependable scanning. It's called PMSA PET, short for prostate-specific membrane antigen position emission tomography.

"Experts anticipate the PET-tracer procedure will

soon become the new standard of care for detecting prostate cancer metastasis," the Cleveland Clinic said.

## Diabetes

Finally, about 10% of the U.S. population suffers from diabetes.

For those lucky enough to be diabetes free and who don't have a friend or family member with the disease, here's how the Centers for Disease Control CDC describes the disease: "Diabetes is a chronic health condition that affects how your body turns food into energy. Most people's bodies naturally produce the hormone insulin, which helps convert sugars from the food we eat into energy that the body can use or store for later. When you have diabetes, your body either doesn't make insulin or doesn't use its insulin well, causing your blood sugar to rise. High blood sugar levels can cause serious health problems over time."

Dealing with the disease requires self-discipline, the ability to stick to a specific diet and adherence to a specific regimen of medical treatment. Most people with type 2 diabetes inject themselves with insulin once a day. In some cases, they might need two shots a day, says the American Diabetes Association.

However, a new drug, Tirzepatide, is a once-a-week injectable designed to control blood sugar for those suffering from type 2 diabetes. According to the pharmacists at GoodRx, it's the first in a new class of medications. It's produced by Eli Lilly, which has high hopes that Tirzepatide will achieve FDA approval; the drug is currently in phase 3 clinical trials, the results of which are said to have been positive.

## Conclusion

The pandemic played havoc with life span statistics. Americans were living

longer and better consistently until the COVID outbreak. The life expectancy in 1946 when the first baby boomers were born stood at 64.4 years for men and 69.4 for women. Seven decades later, in 2016, men were living to 71-plus years and women were living to 81.1 years.

A recent study conducted by the Social Security Administration reports that by 2050 men will live to be 80 years old on average and women will live to be 85-plus thanks to modern medicine.

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