

“Gold Alert” Law OK’d

New York will soon join 29 other states in providing a new tool to address the increasing problem of adults who have Alzheimer’s disease, dementia or other cognitive disabilities, who wander from their homes and become “missing.” This year, we enacted a new law that creates a statewide alert system for missing vulnerable adults called Gold Alert that is similar to the Amber Alert system currently used in certain cases involving missing children.

On June 13th, the Missing Vulnerable Adult Gold Alert bill, A.676-B, was passed by the Assembly with my support. Three days later it was passed by the Senate, and it was signed into law by the Governor on July 25th.

Gold Alert will require a response within 24 hours of an adult being identified and reported as missing. It will utilize media, transportation outlets, local law enforcement officials and those in neighboring states, and appropriate Web sites to locate the lost individual. In addition, law enforcement agencies will conduct training and education for all personnel regarding the recognition and management of missing vulnerable adults.

When individuals with a mental or physical disability go missing there is a serious risk of injury to themselves or others, exposure to harsh weather conditions or a medical emergency—especially if they require daily medications. Locating these individuals in a timely manner is crucial and Gold Alert will be an invaluable tool in addressing this problem.

60 Plus!

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***Helpful Information from
Assemblyman Robin Schimminger***

Summer 2011

Dear Friend,

So far, 2011 has been a year of challenge and change in Albany. Even so, one thing has remained constant, my commitment to serve our seniors who have been the backbone and strength of our community. With that in mind, I wanted to update you on several issues that may impact you or those close to you.

If you have any questions or comments on these or any other matters, please feel free to contact my office at 873-2540.

Sincerely yours,





Property Tax Cap Enacted

For all too long, New Yorkers have paid some of the highest property taxes in the nation. To address this issue, we in the State Legislature enacted a property tax cap that was signed into law by the Governor. The tax cap will apply to property taxes collected by towns, cities, villages, counties and school districts beginning in 2012.

Under the new law, property tax increases will be capped at 2 percent or the rate of inflation, whichever is less. The cap includes several safeguards and limited exceptions to ensure that unforeseen events or disasters do not infringe on the delivery of critical services. Local legislative bodies can override the cap with a 60 percent vote of that body, and a school tax cap can be overridden by a 60 percent vote on the school budget.

Protecting Against Medicare and Medicaid Fraud and Abuse

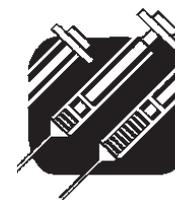
Ten cents of every dollar spent on Medicare and Medicaid is lost to fraud and abuse. That dime adds up to billions of dollars each year and impacts seniors who rely on Medicare as their primary source of health insurance coverage and Medicaid which is often the primary payer of nursing home and long-term care costs.

To combat this problem, New York State has partnered with the federal government to form the Senior Medicare/Medicaid Patrol Program (SMP). SMP is not another bureaucracy, but a grassroots effort that relies on seniors to help detect and report billing errors and scams that eat away at Medicare/Medicaid health care dollars. Existing resources are used to investigate complaints and concerns about one's health care plan or provider that are called into New York's SMP toll-free hotline at 1-877-678-4697.

Every senior can help fight against health care fraud. First, protect your Medicare/Medicaid number. Do not give it to strangers or callers who promote "free" services, and be leery of slick television ads and infomercials that sell medical equipment, supplies or health insurance that you do not need or at prices that are too good to be true.

Second, review your Medicare Summary Notice (MSN), your Part D Explanation of Benefits (EOB) and your other health care billing notices to ensure that you are not billed for goods and services not provided, for patient visits that did not take place, or for items or services that have already been paid. If you spot a problem, contact your health care provider. If the problem is not corrected, call the SMP toll-free hotline listed above.

The money spent on fraud not only drives up the cost of care and insurance premiums, but also compromises the quality of the care you, and those you know, receive.



Seasonal Flu Shot Clinics Scheduled

Seasonal flu is a contagious respiratory illness that occurs every year, most often during the winter and early spring. It most severely affects individuals 65 years of age and older, therefore every year a new vaccine is made available to help prevent seasonal flu.

This fall, I will once again be sponsoring a series of seasonal flu shot clinics in conjunction with the Visiting Nursing Association. While shots for seasonal flu are recommended for people of every age, health care professionals strongly suggest vaccinations for individuals 65 years of age or older; persons being treated for chronic conditions such as diabetes, anemia, asthma, heart and lung disease; those with weakened immune systems; and caregivers who provide care to at-risk patients.

Appointments are necessary in order to ensure that seniors do not have to stand in long lines, to schedule staff efficiently, and to order adequate supplies of serum. Each site will be open from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. To schedule an appointment for one of the following sites, please contact my office at 873-2540.

Thursday, September 15th – Brighton Community Church, 1225 Brighton Road, Town of Tonawanda

Monday, September 19th – Knights of Columbus 755 Erie Avenue, North Tonawanda

Flu shots are \$35 each; however, they are free for those insured under Medicare-Part B, Independent Health Encompass 65, Blue Cross/Blue Shield Senior Blue or Univera Senior Choice upon presentation of one's insurance card.