BEE·INTELLIGENCER

in•tel•li•gen•cer: n. One who conveys news or information
The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, 4th ed.

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Review Medicare options



(Feature Impact photo)

(Feature Impact) Medicare Open Enrollment is your opportunity to give your Medicare plan a check-up. Plans change every year, and now is the time to check if a new plan could be better for you.

If you have Medicare, taking the time to review your coverage options each fall is one of the most important health decisions you can make.

Give Your Medicare Plan a Check-up

- Check your coverage. Ensure your preferred doctors, prescriptions and preferred pharmacies are covered.
- Check your costs. Look at premiums, deductibles, copays and other out-of-pocket costs.
- Check for changes. See what will be different in your plan for the coming year.
- Check your options. Compare plans side by side based on the prescriptions you take. Find the right plan for your health needs and your budget. Make sure your drugs are covered.

Now is the one time you can make changes to your health and prescription drug plans and find a plan that's better for you. Medicare Open Enrollment is your opportunity to review and compare options and take control of your expenditures and coverage.

Medicare plans change annually and so does your health. What worked for you last year may be different than what will work best this year. A review of your options can help you secure a plan best fit to your current lifestyle and health needs – while potentially saving you hundreds of dollars on out-of-pocket costs.

For instance, a person with Medicare compared drug plans to find the best costs and coverage for their prescriptions, including a blood thinner and a common cholesterol medication. Using medicare.gov, they found the yearly cost for a Medicare drug plan and these prescriptions ranged from $1,356 to 2,965. By choosing the lowest-cost plan, they saved more than $1,600 while keeping their essential medications covered.

For all your Open Enrollment needs, Medicare.gov is your official source. It's the trusted resource to help you navigate Open Enrollment, allowing you to explore and compare every available Medicare health and drug plan available in your area. If you prefer speaking with someone directly, call 1-800-MEDICARE to connect with a team of experts who are available 24/7 to help you review your options and answer any questions about your Medicare coverage.

To get started, just go to Medicare.gov and click on "Find Plans Now." For the best shopping experience, log in or create a Medicare account. You can easily compare plan costs, side by side, based on the medications you take. Make sure the plan you choose covers your prescription drugs and your doctors.

If you miss the Dec. 7 deadline, you may need to wait a full year before you can make any changes to your coverage. That's why getting started early is important. Make sure you give yourself enough time to review and compare your options. You'll want to consider factors like costs, benefits and prescription drug plans.

Medicare Open Enrollment is the perfect time to plan for the future and prioritize your health. Making sure you have a health plan that can support you in your wellness journey is critical, so don't wait. Start reviewing your Medicare plan options today at Medicare.gov.

Stay vigilant against Medicare fraud, especially during Medicare Open Enrollment. Scammers take advantage of this time of year; they may pretend to be from Medicare or an insurance company in order to steal your personal information.

Remember that Medicare will never contact you unsolicited. If someone you do not know calls, texts or emails you about Medicare, simply hang up or delete the message. By staying alert, you can help stop fraud before it starts.

If you suspect Medicare fraud, report it immediately to Medicare at Medicare.gov/fraud or at 1-800-MEDICARE. As always, remember to never give out your Medicare Number, Social Security Number or financial information to anyone you don't know.

Information provided by the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services.

Tree planting guidance

(Feature Impact) Fall is the perfect season to celebrate trees as they transform the world into vibrant shades of red, orange, green and gold. You can do more than just admire existing trees – because in many areas, fall is also an ideal time to plant new ones.

While spring is often seen as peak planting season, experts say cooler weather and autumn rains provide ideal conditions for seedlings to retain moisture and establish their root systems gradually before winter dormancy, improving their future ability to adjust to summer heat and drier conditions.

According to the Arbor Day Foundation, planting trees offers many benefits for the planet, wildlife and humans alike. From an environmental perspective, they help filter air and water, remove pollutants from the soil, slow storm surge and nurture biodiversity. Plus, access to nature can reduce stress and increase opportunities for outdoor recreation, improving overall health and well-being in your community.

This autumn, use these expert tips from Eric North, program manager of urban forestry and ISA-certified arborist at the Arbor Day Foundation, to plan your fall tree planting and add a few new hues to your local landscapes.

Choose the Right Tree

Setting your trees up for success starts with choosing the right species. Before ordering seedlings, take time to identify species that are well-suited to your local climate, soil conditions and planting site. Also consider the tree's mature height and how far the canopy will spread - it won't stay small forever, so make sure you can give it space to grow.

Think About Timing

Although you can technically plant trees until the soil is too frozen to dig a hole, it's best to schedule your fall tree planting at least six weeks before the ground freezes so the seedlings have time to adapt before winter. If you're unable to plant your trees immediately after getting them, you can store them in a cool, dry place, making sure the roots stay damp, for up to five days before putting them in the ground.

Don't Dig Too Deep

A tree planted too deep may develop root and trunk problems that can affect its long-term health. Instead of digging deep, go wide to encourage roots to spread outward. Dig a hole roughly 3-4 times wider than the root system but no deeper than the root itself. When you put the tree in the hole, the root flare (where the trunk meets the roots) should sit level with the soil or slightly above it.

Mulch with Care

Adding 2-3 inches of mulch in a layer around the base of the tree can help insulate the soil and roots, retain moisture and suppress weeds. However, be careful to keep the mulch a few inches away from the trunk itself so you don't create a "mulch volcano" that traps moisture against the bark.

Water Frequently

Cozy autumn rainstorms might share some of the workload here, but when the forecast looks clear, it's up to you to water your newly planted seedlings. Keeping the soil consistently moist allows a young tree's roots to stay hydrated and continue growing. Precise care instructions will depend on the type of tree and your location but expect to thoroughly water your trees about once a week until the ground freezes.

Protect Against Wildlife

Small trees are vulnerable to damage from local wildlife like deer and rabbits, who may chew on bark or snap fragile branches. Installing a protective fence or breathable tree guard can help safeguard trees until they're older and more capable of withstanding scavenging from hungry critters.



(Arbor Day Foundation photo)

Join the Cause with Trees

Research from the Arbor Day Foundation's Canopy Report shows most Americans want to live in neighborhoods with more trees, but only a minority report having planted a tree in the past year. However, if you're feeling inspired to plant trees in your yard this fall, the organization is ready to help.

New members who join during the nonprofit organization's fall membership drive will receive 10 free trees suitable for their region, along with clear instructions on how to plant and care for them.

Whether you're a first-time planter or a seasoned friend of the forest, you'll receive ongoing support to ensure success in your efforts to grow a greener world.

"People understand how important trees are for their communities, their health and the environment," said Dan Lambe, chief executive of the Arbor Day Foundation. "Many just need a simple way to get started. Our fall membership drive puts trees directly into people's hands and gives them the confidence to plant trees successfully."

The foundation has engaged tree planters in more than 90% of all American neighborhoods, thanks in large part to the organization's membership drives each planting season. This fall, more than 2 million new trees are expected to be distributed.

To sign up and choose your 10 free trees, visit Arborday.org/GetTrees, where you can also find additional advice on tree planting, care and more.

Library Highlights

This column features highlights for the Middlebury, Southbury and Woodbury libraries.

Middlebury

Donations needed

Donate new or like new items for the Annual Kid's Holiday Gift Shop. Donations accepted from November 2 to 21. Suggested donations include; puzzles, games, toys, housewares, candles, jewelry, accessories, gift bags, tissue paper, etc. Donations can be dropped off at the Information Desk during library hours.

Adult book discussion

The Adult Book Discussion group will meet Wednesday, November 4, at 1 p.m to discuss "Culpability" by Bruce Holsinger. New members are welcome!

Noir, neo-noir films

Tuesdays, November 3, 10, 17, and 24, at 6 p.m., celebrate Noirvember with noir and neo-noir films in the surround sound theater. Check the library calendar or call the library for specific titles.

Classic war films

Fridays, November 6, 13, and 20, at 1 p.m., enjoy a classic war films in the surround sound theater. Check the library calendar or call the library for specific titles.

Watercolors

Relax and learn with other watercolor enthusiasts at a drop-in Adult Watercolor program on Mondays, November 2, 9, 16. 23. and 30, from 10:30 a.m. to 12 p.m. All levels are welcome. Bring your own supplies or use some provided by the Library.

Creativebug

Thursday, November 19, at 11 a.m. join Crafting Hour with Melissa and enjoy a cozy morning of crafting as you learn how to make traditional paper party crackers – those charming little bundles filled with surprises, silly jokes, and festive paper crowns. Registration is required.

Virtual programs

- Tuesday, November 3, at 2 p.m., watch the virtual live talk, "Reclaiming Your Inner Wisdom: Sacred Indigenous Teachings" with Indigenous medicine woman, spiritual mentor, and bestselling author Asha Frost. She will explore her groundbreaking book, "You Are the Medicine: 13 Moons of Indigenous Wisdom, Ancestral Connection, and Animal Spirit Guidance."
- Thursday, November 12, at 2 p.m., watch the live virtual talk, "Fire, Passion, and Heritage: Native American and Mexican Cooking" with Next Level Chef Winner and Creator of Indigenous Fusion Cuisine Chef Pyet DeSpain. Prepare your palate for a vibrant culinary journey.
- Thursday, November 19, at 7 p.m., join a live virtual talk "Epic Worlds and Celestial Prophecies: Exploring the Between Earth and Sky Trilogy" with New York Times bestselling and Hugo Award–winning Fantasy author Rebecca Roanhorse.

Registration is required for these virtual programs and is available on the library's website.

The Middlebury Public Library is at 30 Crest Road. The tele-phone number is 203-758-2634, and the website is middleburypubliclibrary.org.

Southbury

Laptop ConneCT

The library shares the good news that the Laptop ConneCT Program is connecting eligible Connecticut residents with laptops and related accessories through participating local public libraries. Applications will be accepted November 2, 2026 to January 2, 2027.

You are eligible to receive a laptop if you:

· Are at least 18 years old
· Have a valid library card*
· Participate in one of the following assistance programs: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Connecticut Energy Assistance Program (CEAP), Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), Medicare, or HUSKY Health (Medicaid/The Children's Health Insurance Program).

*If you don't have a library card, you can get one when you start this process. Apply by filling out the application at SouthburyLibrary.org or in person at Southbury Social Services.

Zoom Programs

Registration is required for Zoom programs. Zoom invitation links are sent via email on the day of the program. Please register at www.southburylibrary.org/events.

Early TV Comedy – Brian Rose will present "And Away We Go: A Look Back at the Early Days of Television Comedy" Tuesday, November 10, 2026, from 2 to 3:30 p.m. on Zoom and streamed to the Kingsley Room. The first decade of American TV comedy was an extraordinary period of innovation and imagination that produced a remarkable range of distinctive programming. Rose has written several books on television history and cultural programming, and conducted more than a hundred Q&A's with leading directors, actors, and writers.

Nursery Rhymes – Historian Valerie Gugala will present "Once Upon a Rhyme: The Origins of Nursery Rhymes and Fairy Tales" Thursday, November 12, 2026, from 2 to 3:30 p.m. on Zoom and streamed to the Kingsley Room, watch a virtual program about the history of nursery rhymes and fairy tales. Many of the nursery rhymes and fairy tales we know and love have surprising – and sometimes dark – histories. This lecture explores the origins of classic children's stories and rhymes, revealing their roots in historical events, political satire, and folk traditions.

Quilt Bees

The Gloria Cachion Gallery November art exhibit "The Quilt Bees: A Celebration of Machine Quilting." will showcase the artwork of The Quilt Bees from November 5 through November 28, 2026. The Quilt Bees are a group of women who share a love of quilting, creativity, and the simple joy of making something beautiful with their hands. This exhibit features a variety of machine-quilted pieces showcasing different styles, fabrics, colors, patterns, and techniques.

The Southbury Public Library is at 100 Poverty Road. The telephone number is 203-262-0626, and the website is southburylibrary.org.

Woodbury

Registration is required for the following programs. To register, visit www.woodburylibraryct.org, or call 203-263-3502.

Love triangle

In a program at the Woodbury Senior Center Wednesday, November 18, at 6 p.m., Waterbury Symphony Orchestra cultural ambassador and clarinetist Vincent de Luise and Waterbury Symphony Orchestra pianist Joseph Jacovino will present "A Love Triangle in Music." Clara Schumann, Robert Schumann and Johannes Brahms were among the great composers and pianists of the Romantic era. From the moment the 20 year-old Brahms first met the Schumanns, their lives intertwined. Robert proclaimed Johannes to be the next Beethoven, and Clara too was immediately amazed by Johannes' genius. De Luise and Jacovino will peel back the layers of this most fascinating of musical friendships with examples of their magnificent music.

Reserve a spot on the library website, www.woodburylibraryct.org, or by calling 203-263-3502.

Sit and Stitch

Want to meet your local knitters/crocheters/stitchers and find a space to sit and stitch? Come and join Lauren Palulis at the Woodbury Public Library for a Sit and Stitch every second and fourth Wednesday from 5 to 7 p.m. Bring your current project and come sit and stitch and chat with fellow fiber friends while getting to know your local fiber community. All are welcome and if you can stitch it, you can bring it to Sit and Stitch. Chat about current projects, new pattern releases, what you are excited about making, and a myriad of other topics (fiber related or otherwise). We are looking forward to stitching with you at this drop-in program. Palulis is a yarn dyer based out of Woodbury with a passion for exploring fiber types, fiber blends, dye capabilities, and collection development.

Carboni exhibit

The library will showcase mixed media works of Randy Carboni in the on library's Gallery Space during November 2026. His body of work in watercolor or oil is known for its expressive energy and emotion.

A Connecticut native currently living in Bethel, Conn., Carboni has been an active force in the regional art community such as The Weir Farm Artist Collective, SCAN, Ridgefield Guild of Artists, Sherman Art Association, Lyme Art Association and The Ridgefield Arts Council. He teaches, has done demos and workshops of his unique style of art, and has been commissioned to teach children the joy of art.

To see more library events, please look online at www.bee-news.com.