



4 Valley Mill Road
Holyoke, MA 01040
413.538.9020

wmeldercare.org
info@wmeldercare.org

STAY SAFE FOR THE HOLIDAYS

Why You Should Stay Up to Date with Your COVID-19 Vaccines



Getting vaccinated and boosted greatly reduces your risk of severe illness, hospitalization, and death.



COVID-19 vaccines, including boosters, are effective against known variants, including Omicron.



All COVID-19 vaccines currently approved or authorized in the U.S. are proven to be safe.



FIND A VACCINE NEAR YOU: WWW.VACCINES.GOV

Protect yourself and your loved ones in time for the holiday! As families prepare to celebrate holiday traditions and make new memories, we're encouraging eligible members of the community to get vaccinated today!

You can utilize the CDC's COVID-19 Booster Tool online to help you keep track of when you need your next shot. To access the tool, visit CDC.gov, and scroll down the page until you find the "Find Out When You Can Get Your Booster" section. From there, plug in information about your age, if you're immunocompromised, the type of vaccine received, and more. From there, you'll know when to get your next booster. You can also access the most up-to-date list of local vaccination sites, some now offering a \$75 gift card for those getting vaccinated, by visiting Mass.Gov.

WestMass ElderCare is a private, non-profit agency founded in 1974 and is funded in part by grants and contracts from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs. We are part of a network of Aging Services Access Points and Area Agencies on Aging.



WESTMASS CONNECTS

NEWS, SUPPORT & STORIES

FALL 2022 EDITION

In Gratitude

We all have much to be grateful for this Holiday Season. As we wind down 2022, we celebrate having found new hope and joy in rediscovering what we do best this year: working together, in person, to uplift and support older adults, persons with disabilities, and caregivers.

As we reflect on the gifts of this past year, we deeply appreciate the teamwork and partnerships which were created and strengthened within our professional networks. In 2022, there has been more collaboration than ever as all organizations have returned to more "normal" operations and in-person work. For WMEC, 2022 was marked by rebuilding our programs and services, reuniting our team, and rekindling connections with colleagues. The relief of being able to regularly meet in person again – with one another, and most importantly, with our consumers – has been immense. WMEC's client-facing staff across programs continued what they do best – teaming up with our direct care partners to ensure that our consumers and their caregivers receive high-quality, person-centered care and support in their homes.

With many COVID restrictions lifted this year, our staff was once again out in the community, making a difference in these meaningful ways:

- WMEC launched a new Caregiver Support Group at the South Hadley Council on Aging.
- In-person dining services resumed with the launch of WMEC's Community Table Program.
- WMEC's Options Counseling and Community Resources staff tabled at several health fairs.
- Free, in-person Healthy Living Program workshops resumed at community sites.
- Innovative Nutrition Education opportunities were offered both virtually and in-person to Community Table patrons and home-delivered meal recipients.
- The Rainbow Social Club resumed in-person monthly gatherings, enjoying meals and enriching discussions for older adults in the LGBTQ+ community.

While we celebrate these milestones, much work remains ahead of us to meet the needs of our community's most vulnerable during this continued public health emergency. In this season of giving, please express your gratitude and support for WMEC by donating online at www.wmeldercare.org/donate-now or using the enclosed envelope to mail your gift today. Your continued support enables us to continue to invest in our staff, our greatest resource, so they are empowered to carry out our **mission to preserve the dignity, independence, and quality of life of older adults and persons with disabilities desiring to remain within their own community.**

As we head into 2023, we will continue to be here every day for those who need services and support, and are enormously grateful to our staff, volunteers, and partners who make it all possible.

With gratitude for your support for WMEC this year and every year,

Roseann Martoccia

Roseann Martoccia
Executive Director



A YEAR OF SUCCESS, SUPPORT, AND PARTNERSHIPS FOR WESTMASS ELDERCARE

Through our services, programs, and partnerships with community organizations, we have continued the work we firmly believe in, rooted in the principles of self-determination, independence, dignity, and choice for older adults and people with disabilities. We've provided vital, life-saving community resources, such as home-delivered meals, senior care options, personal care management, and outreach, to thousands of individuals in need.

With the help and support of our incredible staff, devoted community partners, and generous donors, we made an indelible impact, including:

2,007 individuals could maintain a safe, clean-living space thanks to WMEC homemakers.

2,343 individuals were given home-delivered nutritious meals and community table programs that provided daily socialization, and safety checks.

12,236 call responses were made by WMEC Community Resource Specialists.

137 older adults received free legal help to eliminate barriers to housing, public benefits, and other community services.

183 caregivers received vital respite care services.

780 home-bound, low-income elders were delivered fresh, local fruits and vegetables through our partnership with USDA Farmers Market Programs.

With the end of the year quickly approaching, we're asking you to consider supporting WMEC in your end-of-year giving. Donors help support everything WMEC does, from funding our Meals on Wheels delivery to supporting our Rainbow Social Club programs and allowing older adults to connect through our Latino restaurant dining services. Without the generosity of donors and volunteers such as yourself, we can help elder adults live independent, healthy, and long lives! Learn more on how to donate online now: wmeldercare.org/donate

ANNUAL MEETING

In November, WMEC's Board of Directors and Management Team met for the agency's 2022 Annual Meeting, celebrating 48 incredible years of service. The Annual Meeting gives us an opportunity each year to reflect on the past to create a plan for WMEC's future. All of us at WMEC are thankful to all who contributed to another fantastic year of caring for caregivers, supporting mental wellness, providing vital community resources, and more. Through the help and community of WMEC, lives are changed for the better. Those who missed the meeting or want to review WMEC's year-to-date accomplishments can access the 2022 Annual Report by visiting wmeldercare.org/annual-report



Helene Florio, President WMEC Board of Directors & Roseann Martoccia, Executive Director

VOLUNTEER

Help older adults continue to maintain a healthy and well-nourished life! Volunteer in our Meals on Wheels program and help us deliver vital, nutritious meals to homebound elders and individuals with disabilities. Meals on Wheels volunteers are key members of WMEC's Nutrition Department, providing essential meals and creating community connections.

Volunteer schedules are flexible with one to two-hour shifts, one to five days a week. Check out all of our volunteer opportunities here:

wmeldercare.org/volunteer



"Volunteers and Staff loading produce bags for delivery to consumers."

SUPPORT ELDERS THIS SEASON

The end of the year is fast approaching! As we prepare for the holiday season, we ask you to consider supporting WMEC in your end-of-year giving. Donors help support everything WMEC does, from funding our Meals on Wheels delivery to supporting our Rainbow Social Club programs and allowing older adults to connect through our Latino restaurant dining services. Without the generosity of donors and volunteers, we can help elder adults live independent, healthy, and long lives!

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Krystyna Galipeau and Ginger Cruickshank, celebrating 15 and 45 years of service, respectively

GIVING BACK

Chicopee resident and long-time WMEC supporter Dianna Sibley always finds a way to give back. A former driver from WMEC's Meals on Wheels program, Dianna knits blankets, hats, and mittens to deliver to program participants. For more than a decade, even from a distance, she has helped older adults feel warm, comfortable, and safe. This year, Dianna carried on her tradition, again donating various warm winter items to be distributed by Meals on Wheels drivers at WMEC. We want to thank Dianna for her generosity, giving spirit, and commitment to helping our community!



Dianna Sibley
WMEC Supporter