

The Office of Senior Services is considered the "Area Agency on Aging" better known as the AAA for Ocean County. AAAs were established under the Older American's Act of 1973 to respond to the needs of Americans age 60 and over in every local community. Our primary responsibility is to assess the needs of older adults in Ocean County and to develop and fund community based programs to meet those needs. The primary goal of all AAAs is to provide programs and services designed to keep seniors living independently and safely in their homes and communities.

#### Core Programs:

Information & Assistance Hotline – Our department has an Information & Assistance hotline that older adults, disabled residents and caregivers can call for information on programs and services available to meet them. I & A Specialists maintain and routinely update all of the resources available to older adults in Ocean County from Meals on Wheels, food shopping services, respite care, transportation, home modification programs, in-home care, legal services and much more.

State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) – Our department also administers the SHIP Program in Ocean County and has state certified SHIP counselors on staff to provide counseling on Medicare Plan options and to help Ocean County Medicare beneficiaries navigate the state health system, resolve problems and answer questions regarding Medicare. We also participate in Medicare Open Enrollment and assist residents in reviewing and comparing plans and enrolling them in the plan that best meets their needs.

Advocacy- Our department advocates for the rights of older adults on a Federal, State & Local level to educate lawmakers on the needs and concerns of older adults and for increased funding to meet those needs. We maintain a dialogue with elected and appointed officials about the needs of our senior residents, we work with legislators on proposed legislation and actions in support of older adults and their caregivers and we track bills of interest to the aging network as they move through the process on both the state and local level and provide comment when appropriate.