Sandoval County Senior Program Administration

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Health and Wellness	2 - 3
Nutrition	3 - 5
Staying Active	5 - 7
Volunteer Services	7 - 10
Menu	11

CENTER LOCATION	November 2026

Sandoval County Senior Program
1500 Idalia Rd., Bldg. D
PO Box 40
Bernalillo, NM 87004

Phone: 505-867-7535
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Hours of Operation:
Monday – Friday
8:00 am to 5:00 pm

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All Sites individualize their newsletters to their local area information, activities calendars and games.

Sustaining the Caregiver: Essential Strategies for Health and Burnout Prevention

Prioritizing caregiver health and wellness is a medical necessity, as the immense physical and emotional demands of supporting a loved one put caregivers at an exceptionally high risk for chronic illness, depression, and severe burnout. While providing care can be deeply rewarding, it frequently serves as a compounding lifestyle stressor. Millions of individuals function as an invisible backbone to the healthcare system, yet they consistently neglect their own preventive care. To maintain quality of care, caregivers must protect their own well-being first

The Hidden Toll of Caregiver Burden

Caregiving frequently leads to "role strain" or "caregiver burden," which clinical guidelines recognize as a significant public health threat. Juggling daily assistance with career responsibilities and personal life triggers chronic physiological stress responses.

The physical and emotional indicators of severe stress include:

• Sleep Deprivation: Struggling to fall asleep or experiencing frequently interrupted sleep patterns.

• Preventive Neglect: Postponing personal medical appointments and skipping essential screenings.

• Physical Exhaustion: Experiencing recurring body aches, frequent illnesses, or unexpected weight changes.

• Emotional Withdrawal: Feeling persistent anger, isolation, frustration, or severe anxiety

Critical Self-Care Interventions

To counteract these health risks, caregivers must shift from a mindset of absolute self-sacrifice to one of sustainable preservation. Small, deliberate changes to daily habits can significantly mitigate chronic stress.

• Activate Relaxation: Use the Harvard Health Caregiver Self-Care Guide advice to engage the parasympathetic nervous system through deep breathing methods (such as inhaling for 5 counts, holding for 5, and exhaling for 5).

• Protect Core Nutrition: Avoid relying heavily on ultra-processed convenience foods or alcohol, which ultimately worsen fatigue and mood stability.

• Schedule Movement: Incorporate brief, regular windows of physical activity to lower cortisol levels and build cardiovascular stamina.

• Enforce Sleep Hygiene: Work with primary physicians to resolve chronic insomnia, ensuring the body has time to recuperate overnight

Building a Community Support Network

No single individual can handle complex care needs indefinitely without a structural backup plan. True wellness requires activating external resources to share the responsibility.

• Utilize Local Agencies: Reach out to local Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) or Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRC) to access subsidized community services, transportation support, and respite options.

• Join Support Groups: Connect with peers through organizations like the Family Caregiver Alliance to share navigating strategies, reduce emotional isolation, and learn problem-solving techniques.

• Delegate Small Tasks: Maintain a concrete list of specific chores—such as grocery pickup, meal preparation, or yard work—so that when neighbors or friends offer help, you can instantly assign a specific task.

• Consult Medical Teams: Openly inform your own doctor about your caregiving role. This allows them to monitor you more closely for signs of clinical anxiety or depression.

Nutrition

Managing diabetes through nutrition is not about strict deprivation; it is a personalized strategy to stabilize blood sugar, manage weight, and protect heart health. Because everyone's metabolism, lifestyle, and tastes differ, there is no single "diabetes diet". Instead, evidence-based frameworks allow individuals to work with their healthcare teams to design a meal plan that is both sustainable and effective.

Core Principles of Diabetes Nutrition

The foundation of an effective diabetes meal plan rests on controlling portions, choosing nutrient-dense whole foods, and understanding how different macronutrients affect your body:

• Smart Carbohydrate Selection: Carbohydrates have the most direct impact on blood glucose levels. Prioritize complex, fiber-rich carbohydrates—such as oats, quinoa, beans, and lentils—which digest slowly and prevent sharp blood sugar spikes. Minimize refined grains and added sugars.

• Lean and Plant-Based Proteins: Incorporate chicken, turkey, fish, tofu, and legumes. For individuals managing concurrent health concerns like gout, focusing on plant proteins and moderate poultry while minimizing high-purine red meats serves a dual therapeutic purpose.

• Heart-Healthy Fats: Managing diabetes also means managing cardiovascular risk. Incorporate monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats from sources like avocados, nuts, seeds, and olive oil, while keeping saturated and trans fats to a minimum.

• Sodium Management: Keep daily sodium intake under 2,300 mg to protect blood pressure and kidney function.

Practical Food Selection: The Diabetes Plate Method

For a simple, visual approach to portion control without meticulous tracking, the American Diabetes Association (ADA) recommends the Diabetes Plate Method using a standard 9-inch dinner plate:

1. Fill Half Your Plate with Non-Starchy Vegetables: Spinach, broccoli, cabbage, tomatoes, peppers, and green beans provide essential vitamins and fiber with minimal impact on blood sugar.

2. Fill One-Quarter with Lean Protein: This helps maintain muscle mass and promotes satiety.

3. Fill One-Quarter with Quality Carbohydrates: This includes whole grains, starchy vegetables (like potatoes or peas), or fruit.

4. Choose Water or Zero-Calorie Drinks: Avoid juices and sugary sodas, which rapidly elevate blood glucose.

Scientifically Validated Dietary Patterns

Depending on personal preferences and clinical goals, several structured eating patterns have shown significant success in clinical studies:

• Mediterranean-Style: Emphasizes plant foods, fresh fish, and olive oil while limiting red meat. It is highly effective for improving insulin sensitivity and protecting heart health.

• Plant-Based (Vegetarian/Vegan): High in fiber and antioxidants. Research suggests that whole-food, plant-based diets can improve insulin sensitivity and lower the risk of type 2 diabetes complications.

• Low-Carbohydrate: Restricting carbohydrates to 26–45% of daily calories (or very low-carb at <26%) can significantly reduce A1C levels and triglyceride markers, though long-term adherence is key.

• DASH Diet: Originally designed to lower blood pressure, this pattern focuses on vegetables, fruits, whole grains, and low-fat dairy while reducing sodium.

Next Steps for Long-Term Management

For the best clinical outcomes—including potential A1C reductions of up to 1.9%—individuals should seek a referral for Medical Nutrition Therapy (MNT) with a Registered Dietitian (RD) or join a Diabetes Self-Management Education and Support (DSMES) program. Personalized plans can safely factor in specific caloric deficits for weight loss, medication or insulin timing, and individual lifestyle variables.

Staying Active

Moving with Purpose: A Safe Guide to Staying Active with Pulmonary Hypertension

For many years, patients diagnosed with pulmonary hypertension (PH) were routinely told to avoid physical exertion out of caution. However, medical consensus has shifted dramatically. Clinical studies, including research from Stanford Medicine, demonstrate that tailored, low-to-moderate physical activity can significantly improve endurance, boost quadriceps muscle mass, reduce fatigue, and dramatically elevate overall quality of life.

When approached safely under medical guidance, exercise trains the heart to manage adrenaline surges and breaks the cycle of worsening deconditioning. Here is how you can safely keep your body moving while managing PH.

🛑 The Golden Rule: Medical Clearance First

Before starting any new routine, you must consult your PH specialist or care team. Every cardiopulmonary system responds differently to physical exertion. Your medical team can help establish target heart rate limits, identify supplemental oxygen needs, or refer you to a structured, supervised pulmonary rehabilitation program. Supervised rehab is widely considered the safest environment to build an activity foundation, as respiratory therapists track your vitals in real time.

🤸 The Best Types of Low-Impact Exercise

The goal of exercising with PH is steady, gentle movement that elevates your heart rate gradually rather than sharply. High-intensity interval training (HIIT), competitive sports, and heavy weightlifting should generally be avoided because they place sudden, heavy strain on the heart and lungs. Instead, focus on these low-impact modalities:

• Low-Impact Cardio: Walking, recumbent cycling, stationary biking, and water aerobics keep the blood circulating without overtaxing your system. Using an upright stationary bike at home is an excellent option if you need to stay close to a fixed oxygen supply.

• Light Resistance Training: Building muscle support helps your body utilize oxygen more efficiently. Focus on low-load resistance using very light weights (1 to 5 pounds), light resistance bands, or simple bodyweight movements like seated leg extensions.

• Gentle Yoga and Chair Exercises: Structured routines—such as the PHA Exercise Series—incorporate seated stretching, spinal twists, and mild movements that maintain flexibility and strength without exhaustion.

🫁 Master Your Breathing Technique

Proper breathing mechanics protect your heart from sudden blood pressure spikes.

• Avoid Breath-Holding: Holding your breath during exertion (Valsalva maneuver) compromises your oxygenation and strains your thoracic cavity. Always exhale during the hardest part of a movement.

• Pursed-Lip and Diaphragmatic Breathing: Purposefully inhale deeply through your nose and execute prolonged, controlled exhales through your mouth. This rhythm slows down your breathing rate and optimizes gas exchange in the lungs.

⚠️ Essential Safety Practices & Warning Signs

To maintain absolute safety while exercising at home or in a gym, build these habits into every single session:

• Use the "Talk Test": You should always be able to carry on a conversation while exercising. If you are too breathless to speak, slow down or stop.

• Monitor Vitals: Keep a portable pulse oximeter handy to track your heart rate and blood oxygen saturation (SpO_2). As a general rule, aim to keep your oxygen levels above 90% during activity, or follow the specific limits set by your physician.

• Never Exercise Alone: Always work out with a partner, family member, or buddy who knows your condition and can assist if needed.

• Extend Warmups and Cooldowns: Give your cardiovascular system ample time to transition into and out of activity.

• Know When to Stop: Immediately halt all activity if you experience lightheadedness, dizziness, chest pain, palpitations, or pronounced shortness of breath. If shortness of breath does not resolve after five minutes of rest, or if symptoms worsen, seek emergency medical care immediately.

Volunteer

November RSVP Newsletter – Season of Gratitude

Hello RSVP Volunteers, Welcome to November! As we enter this season of gratitude, I want to take a moment to recognize and appreciate the incredible work each of you continues to do across Sandoval County. Your dedication, compassion, and commitment to service truly make a difference every single day.

A Season of Thanks November is the perfect time to reflect on the impact you've made. Whether you're helping at senior centers, supporting meal sites, creating warm items of comfort, assisting community organizations, or simply offering a friendly smile, your service brings warmth and support to so many people. We are deeply grateful for you.

September Service Hours We are thrilled to share that our RSVP volunteers logged over 1,965 volunteer hours in the month of September! This is an amazing accomplishment and truly reflects your dedication to serving our community. Thank you for giving so generously of your time.

Timesheet Reminder Please remember to submit your October timesheets by November 1st so reimbursements can be processed in a timely manner. If you ever need help with timesheets or have questions, just let me know—I'm always happy to assist.

Outreach & Recruitment If you know someone age 55 or older who may enjoy volunteering with RSVP, feel free to send them our way. Personal referrals continue to be our strongest recruitment tool, and your support helps us grow our volunteer family.

As we head into the holiday season, I hope you take time to enjoy the cozy moments, the company of loved ones, and the spirit of gratitude all around us.

Thank you again for everything you do. RSVP is truly better because of you!

Warm regards, Amy Foster Senior Services Coordinator Sandoval County Senior Volunteer Programs

Name:_____ Date:_____

Thanksgiving Word Search



The Thanksgiving preparations are underway, but a few festive words have scattered in the puzzle! Can you search in all directions? Circle each word as you find it and cross it off the list to complete the holiday fun!

G A T H E R I N G K M N R T Q M K M
C T Y G G T A B L E F M E N T D R L
W S R N K R T S H K C U B P I E S M
R A C Q M U A A H G H T M R K J Q N
P E K O R P R T C A B U E V V X F N
U F F K R V B R I T R A V B J S N C
M S E M E N A Y R T P I O J G K G O
P Y M S G N B A L O U Z N N V T R R
K N T A B N D R T I E D I G N H A N
I V Q E Y I I A E D M S E K B A V U
N W R D T J T K A A S A F M B N Y C
P R G I N O S R P E D P F K T K G O
Y V O K E D A N L A X M I V Y F K P
C N L S N P Q B G F N Q Q L T U C I
Z K J E S R E V O T F E L R G L M A
V H I T R L C E L E B R A T E R T R
T R S E V I T A L E R X R E N N I D
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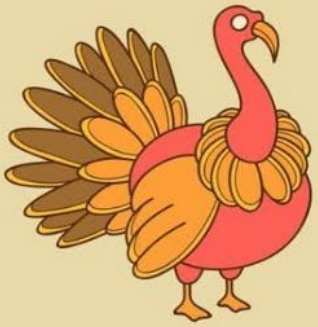
THANKFUL
TRADITION
TURKEY
YAMS
RELATIVES
SHARING
STUFFING
TABLE



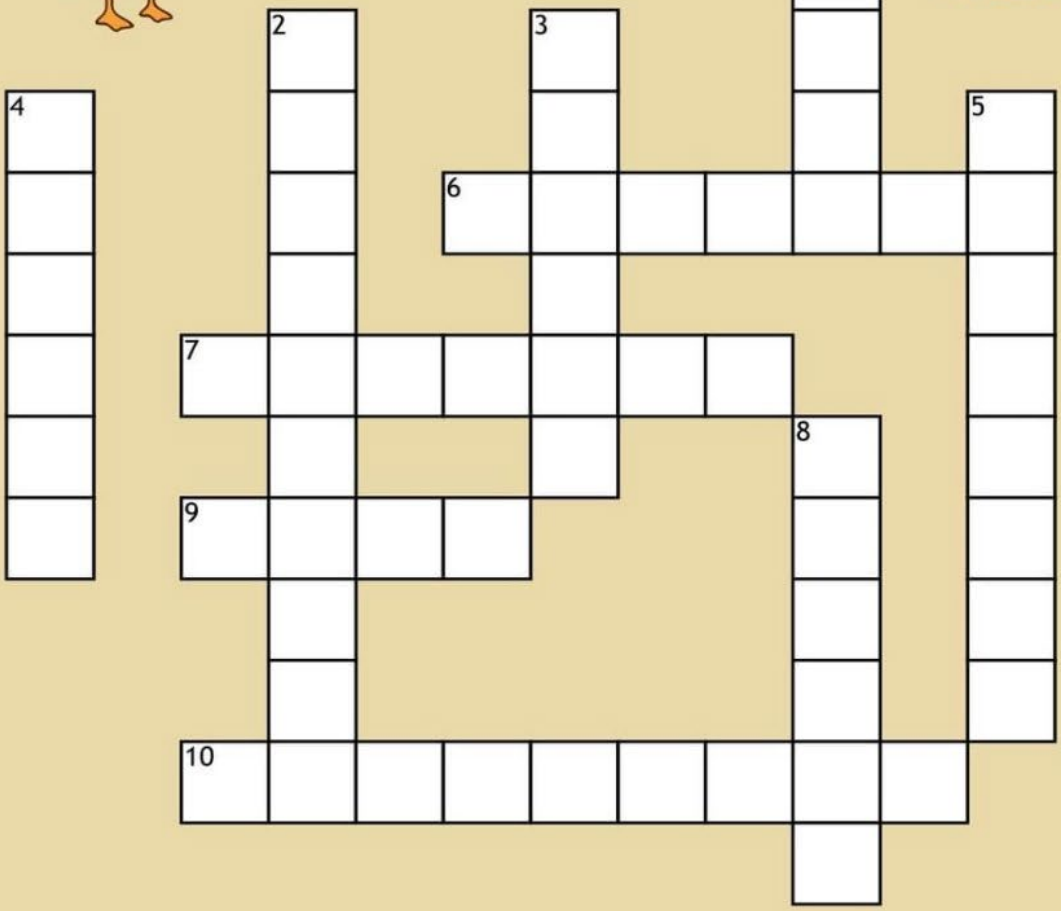
AUTUMN
BLESSINGS
CELEBRATE
CORNBREAD
CORNUCOPIA
CRANBERRY
DINNER
FAMILY
FEAST
FRIENDS
GATHERING
GRATITUDE
GRAVY
HARVEST
LEFTOVERS
NAPKIN
NOVEMBER
PARADE
PIES
PILGRIM
POTATOES
PUMPKIN

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Thanksgiving!







Across

6. Gathering crops

7. Orange fruit you can carve or make pie with

9. Candy, Pop, or on the cob

10. Ship the pilgrims sailed on

Down

1. A long journey usually traveling by sea

2. A symbol of plenty

3. Give _____ for all you have.

4. Native American

5. Dried bread and seasonging you can put inside a turkey when you cook it

8. Bird you eat at Thanksgiving





November Birthdays

Evelyn Arnold
Tracy Barela
Pamela Becknell
Terri Bocanegra
Loretta Gurule
Joyce Hagan
Theresa James
Ida Liebert
Heidi Moya
Dennis Sanchez
Lupe Shendo
Stella Stiver
Carrie Taraddei

