

**GCS recognizes South Carolina Department on Aging as its “Organization of the Month”**

Government and Community Services (GCS) is a proactive outreach arm of the County. GCS focuses on facilitating improved community outreach, administration of government services, and the resolution of community issues. GCS recognizes an “Organization of the Month” that exemplifies the importance of supporting the community and assisting in getting resources to those most in need.

*This month*, GCS recognizes *South Carolina Department on Aging* and its mission to ensure seniors in SC live healthy lives while promoting independence and “aging in place.” From funding an Elder Care Trust fund to the establishment of a *Healthy Connections Prime Advocate*, SCDOA is there to help our community’s most experienced residents maintain a healthy and fulfilling quality of life.

South Carolina Department on Aging has been the main advocate for seniors since its inception and relies on its 10 Area Agencies on Aging within the State. Through the establishment of its *Healthy Connections Prime Advocate* network, seniors are able to obtain the services of trained individuals who can navigate questions about health care billing to referring seniors to services available to them under public and private health insurance providers.

Referring resources and assisting with seniors’ individual needs lies at the very heart of what SCDOA does. Through its *Get Care SC* directory, seniors and everyday residents can locate services and access resources in a centralized database depending on their needs and where they live. Assisting seniors and their loved ones with their needs affects all of us and enhancing quality of life is a priority that is of paramount importance, particularly as our population ages.

SCDOA is actively involved in mitigating the spread of COVID-19 and ensuring seniors can order COVID tests that can be delivered to them. For more information on how to order COVID testing kits, citizens can call the Central Midlands Area Agency on Aging at 803-376-5390 or visit the USPS website at <https://special.usps.com/testkits>.

SCDOA offers a Vulnerable Adult Guardian ad Litem (VAGAL) program for volunteers to assist residents 18 and above who have mental and/or physical impairments. For more information on how to apply to be a VAGAL volunteer, please contact Mary Buskey, Manager of Volunteer Recruitment and Retention, at 803-734-9884 or [mbuskey@aging.sc.gov](mailto:mbuskey@aging.sc.gov). Applications must be submitted by April 12 online at [www.aging.sc.gov/vagal](http://www.aging.sc.gov/vagal).

For more information on the *Get Care SC* toolkit, please visit <https://www.getcaresc.com/>. Residents can also call toll free at 1-800-868-9095.

For more information on the *Healthy Connections Prime Advocate* program, please contact Courtney Simmons, Healthy Connections Prime Ombudsman, at 803-734-9937 or 1-844-477-4632 or by email at [csimmons@aging.sc.gov](mailto:csimmons@aging.sc.gov). For a list of programs and initiatives SCDOA provides including *Healthy Connections Prime*, please visit the website <https://aging.sc.gov/programs-and-initiatives>.

Residents can also contact SCDOA’s main office at 1-800-868-9095 and the local office at (803)-734-9900. The main website can be reached at <https://aging.sc.gov/>.