



FOCUS

MARCH 2026



Medicare Advantage Open Enrollment Ends March 31

From January 1, 2026 – March 31, 2026, if you are enrolled in a Medicare Advantage Plan, you can switch to a different Medicare Advantage Plan or switch to Original Medicare (and join a separate Medicare drug plan) once during this time. Your coverage will start the first day of the month after you ask to join the plan.

What can I do?

- If you are in a Medicare Advantage Plan (with or without drug coverage), you can switch to another Medicare Advantage Plan (with or without drug coverage).
- You can drop your Medicare Advantage Plan and return to Original Medicare. You will also be able to join a separate Medicare drug plan.

What can't I do?

- Switch from Original Medicare to a Medicare Advantage Plan.
- Join a Medicare drug plan if you are in Original Medicare.

- Switch from one Medicare drug plan to another if you are in Original Medicare.

Note: You can only switch plans once during this period.

If you need assistance changing your Medicare Advantage Plan during the Medicare Advantage Open Enrollment, you can find help locally at the McDowell Senior Center in Marion or the A.C. Bud Hogan Community Center in Old Fort. We request that you fill out and return a SHIIP Medicare Program Assistance & Information Contact Form available at the reception desk at both sites and our SHIIP counselors will contact you for an appointment.

You can also get help from North Carolina SHIIP, the Seniors' Health Insurance Information Program, by calling 1-855-408-1212, Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Or you can call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227) 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to find out more about your coverage options. TTY users should call 1-877-486-2048.

Additionally, visit www.medicare.gov and login into your Medicare account to compare your current coverage with all of the options available in your area and you can enroll in a new Medicare Advantage Plan or switch to a stand-alone drug plan if you decide to make a change.



McDowell Parkinson's Support Group (MPSG)

On Monday March 9, 2026 from 12:30pm -2:30pm we will have a community lunch and social hour at Las Salsas Restaurant located at 2474 Hwy. 226 S. Marion NC 28752

All adults with Parkinson's or Parkinsonism and their caregivers are welcome, but for this meeting, we ask that you pre-register no later than Thursday March 5 at the front desk of the McDowell Senior Center to ensure your reservation.

For questions please contact the Senior Center at 828-659-0821

These meetings are social gatherings of conversations with the presenters and persons that have Parkinson's Disease and their caregivers.

Daylight Saving Time 2026 begins on the second Sunday in March in most areas of the US. In 2026, we will "spring forward" one hour on **Sunday, March 8, 2026**. At 2 a.m. on this date, the time will spring forward to become 3 a.m.



Southern Gospel Riverboat Cruise

with The McDowell Seniors

Thursday, May 14th

We invite you to join us for a delightful two-hour cruise on the famed Tennessee River aboard the "Star of Knoxville" an authentic "Paddle Wheeler" Riverboat - featuring a delicious buffet lunch and the best entertainment ever!

**The Inspirations Quartet from
Bryson City, NC**



The most exciting and most popular Southern Gospel group in the country! They'll be singing all the great songs made famous by this legendary quartet and lots of new songs you'll love. Four young men and a piano on a mission to spread the gospel in Song!

The Chuck Wagon Gang



Probably the most recognized name in gospel music, the "Gang" has been singing and traveling since they originated in Fort Worth, Texas in 1936! They'll be singing "Church in the Wildwood" and other favorites...

Our tour will include roundtrip motorcoach transportation (by late model motorcoach), delightful riverboat cruise, delicious buffet lunch and inspiring gospel music by these two groups. Add to this a stop at the Russell Stover Candy Outlet Store & Buc-ee's in Pigeon Forge. We know you'll love this tour!

**Special Price per person
Only \$149.00**

For more information or reservation
contact Brenda Monosso at 828-659-0832

Travel arrangement by Toney Tours LLC Bostic, NC 28018



Spelling Bee: Choose the correct spelling of these commonly misspelled words.

1. accommodate, accomodate, accomodate
2. seperate, separate
3. neice, niece
4. perseverance, perserverance, perseverance
5. occurance, occurrence

Answers are on the back page.



THE BUZZ OF OLD FORT

The activities at the AC Bud Hogan Community Center are a lot of fun and entertaining. If you have been thinking of joining a new activity or class, you are more than welcome to join us. We also celebrated together on Friday, February 13th with a Valentines Day party. Thanks to all who helped make it happen.

We have had several members that have been in the hospital or had procedures this month. Please remember Donald Shuford, Jo Shuman, Cathy Herron, and Paul Howard. Also, Jean Davis's daughter-in-law, Amy Davis, had surgery and Eddie and Robin Bingham's daughter has been sick. We are still missing many of you that haven't been here and hope you can be back with us soon. We are thankful and care for everyone that attends here and we do miss you when you aren't here.

Our hearts go out to the family of Sue Glover. Sue was a long time member and advocate of the AC Bud Hogan Community Center. Also, we mourn the loss of Nancy Owens who was on our Home Delivered Meals Program. They will be missed.

By Cheryl Woody & Carey Woody

Guess the Definition

verdure

1. false teeth
2. clear coat paint
3. greenery

Answer is on the back page.



MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
<p>2 Turkey Hot Dog w/Chili Cole Slaw Sliced Peaches Diced Potatoes Brownie</p>	<p>3 Chicken Pot Pie w/Vegetables Cucumber, Tomato, Onion Vinaigrette Creamed Potatoes Biscuit Applesauce * No congregate meals at Marion center today.</p>	<p>4 Baked Spaghetti w/Meat Sauce & Cheese Tossed Salad Buttered Peas Garlic Knot Lemon Pudding</p>	<p>5 Pork Loin Steamed Cabbage Cold Spiced Applesauce Black Eyed Peas Corn Bread Cookie</p>	<p>6 Baked Rosemary Chicken Broccoli Florets Cold Peaches Rice Pilaf Biscuit Cake</p>
<p>9 Taco Delight w/Ground Beef, Onion, Lettuce, Tomato, Salsa & Rice Tortilla Chips Cold Peaches</p>	<p>10 Beer Battered Fish Peas & Carrots Au Gratin Potatoes Corn Bread Fruit Cocktail</p>	<p>11 Sloppy Joes w/Meat Sandwich Cole Slaw Baby Bakers Banana</p>	<p>12 Chicken Tenders Tossed Salad Baby Lima Beans Roll Baked Sliced Apples</p>	<p>13 Sliced Roast Beef w/Gravy Steamed Carrots Fresh Orange Mashed Potatoes Roll Cookie</p>
<p>16 Cheeseburger Tomato & Lettuce Baked Beans Apple Juice Baked Potato Chips Pudding</p>	<p>17 BBQ Chicken Breast Fillet Steamed Carrots Corn Biscuit Tropical Fruit Salad</p>	<p>18 Pinto Beans Turnip Greens Diced Potatoes Cornbread Strawberry Shortcake</p>	<p>19 Country Style Steak w/Gravy Green Beans Creamed Potatoes Biscuit Orange Juice Cookie</p>	<p>20 Grilled Chicken Breast Carrots Pineapple Tidbits Rice Pilaf Roll Yogurt</p>
<p>23 Breaded Chicken Breast Fillet Sandwich Lettuce, Tomato, Pickles Parsley Potato Peach Cobbler</p>	<p>24 Salisbury Steak w/Gravy Corn Mashed Potatoes Biscuit Fruit Cup</p>	<p>25 Sliced Ham Green Beans Apple Juice Sweet Potatoes Roll Jell-O</p>	<p>26 Chicken Marina over Pasta Tossed Salad Garlic Knot Hot Sliced Apples</p>	<p>27 Chili w/Beans Green Peas Cole Slaw Corn Bread Pineapple Chunks</p>
<p>30 Baked Italian Chicken California Mix Buttered Noodles Biscuit Strawberry Pineapple Mallow</p>	<p>31 Cheese Tortellini Soup w/Italian Sausage Cesear Salad Juice Garlic Knot Lemon Pudding</p>	<p><u>Dining Room Notice</u> In order to be sure you will be served lunch, please register by 12:00 pm the day before you want to eat. Thank you.</p>	<p><u>Nutrition Site</u> <u>Beverages</u> Whole / Skim Milk Tea Coffee</p>   	<p>Menu items are subject to change due to availability * Cong.- Congregate * HDM - Home Delivered Meals</p>

MARCH 2026
MCDOWELL COUNTY SENIOR CENTER

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
2	3	4	5	6
9:30-10:30 Line Dance 10:30-11:30 Chair Exercise 12:30-3:45 Card Playing 1:00 Drum Circle	9:30-10:30 J.A.M. Exercise 10:30-11:30 Bible Study 10:30-11:30 Chair Exercise 1:00-3:00 Art Class <u>Evening Classes</u> 5:30-7:45 Chess Club 6:00-7:00 Beginner Line Dance	9:00 Yoga 9:00-12:00 Quilting 10:30-11:30 Chair Exercise 12:30-3:45 Card Playing 1:00-3:00 Anything Goes Gathering	9:00-10:00 Crochet Class 10:30-11:30 Chair Exercise	10:30-11:30 Chair Exercise
9	10	11	12	13
9:30-10:30 Line Dance 10:30-11:30 Chair Exercise 12:30-3:45 Card Playing	9:30-10:30 J.A.M. Exercise 10:30-11:30 Bible Study 10:30-11:30 Chair Exercise 1:00-3:00 Art Class <u>Evening Classes</u> 5:15-7:00 TAPS Care Group 5:30-7:45 Chess Club 6:00-7:00 Beginner Line	9:00 Yoga 9:00-12:00 Quilting 10:30-11:30 Chair Exercise 12:30-3:45 Card Playing 1:00-3:00 Anything Goes Gathering 1:30-2:30 Vaya <u>Health Training</u>	9:00-10:00 Crochet Class 10:15 BINGO 10:30-11:30 Chair Exercise	10:30-11:30 Chair Exercise
16	17	18	19	20
9:30-10:30 Line Dance 10:30-11:30 Chair Exercise 12:30-3:45 Card Playing 1:00 Drum Circle	9:30-10:30 J.A.M. Exercise 10:30-11:30 Bible Study 10:30-11:30 Chair Exercise 1:00-3:00 Art Class <u>Evening Classes</u> 5:30-7:45 Chess Club 6:00-7:00 Beginner Line Dance	9:00 Yoga 9:00-12:00 Quilting 10:30-11:30 Chair Exercise 12:30-3:45 Card Playing 1:00-3:00 Anything Goes Gathering	9:00-10:00 Crochet Class 10:30-11:30 Chair Exercise 1:30 Medicare 101- The Basics	9:30-11:30 Craft Class 9:30-11:30 Chair Exercise
23	24	25	26	27
9:30-10:30 Line Dance 10:30-11:30 Chair Exercise 12:30-3:45 Card Playing	9:30-10:30 J.A.M. Exercise 10:30-11:30 Bible Study 10:30-11:30 Chair Exercise 1:00-3:00 Art Class <u>Evening Classes</u> 5:30-7:45 Chess Club 6:00-7:00 Beginner Line Dance	9:00 Yoga 9:00-12:00 Quilting 10:30-11:30 Chair Exercise 12:30-3:45 Card Playing 1:00-3:00 Anything Goes Gathering	9:00-10:00 Crochet Class 10:15 BINGO 10:30-11:30 Chair Exercise 1:00-2:30 Dementia Support Group	10:30-11:30 Chair Exercise 10:00-11:30 Variety Hour
30	31			
9:30-10:30 Line Dance 10:30-11:30 Chair Exercise 12:30-3:45 Card Playing	9:30-10:30 J.A.M. Exercise 10:30-11:30 Bible Study 10:30-11:30 Chair Exercise 1:00-3:00 Art Class <u>Evening Classes</u> 5:30-7:45 Chess Club 6:00-7:00 Beginner Line Dance			



Webinar Schedule 2026 Eastern Region

To Register:

Go to Vayahealth.com/Calendar
Click on desired class to register.

For More Information:

Email: jeffrey.dula-brown@vayahealth.com
Or call: 828-225-2785 ext. 3346

Date	Time	Topic
March 13,2026	10:00am-11:00am	Brain Health in Aging
March 13, 2026	11:15am-12:15pm	Feeding the Mind: Nutrition in Dementia
March 17 ,2026	1:30pm-2:30pm	Brain Health in Aging
March 17, 2026	2:45pm-3:45pm	Feeding the Mind: Nutrition in Dementia
April 10, 2026	10:00am-11:00am	Not as Prescribed: Effects of Medication Misuse
April 10, 2026	11:15am-12:15pm	Opportunities to Help During Crisis
April 21, 2026	1:30pm-2:30pm	Not as Prescribed: Effects of Medication Misuse
April 21, 2026	2:45pm-3:45pm	Opportunities to Help During Crisis

Vaya Health Trainings 2026 Eastern Region

Open to the Public



Location:

McDowell Senior Center
100 Spaulding Road, Marion, NC 28752
Held the 2nd Wednesday of each month

To Register:

Go to Vayahealth.com/Calendar or
call the McDowell Senior Center at **828-659-0821**

Vaya Health's HEART serves: Alexander, Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Buncombe, Caldwell, Cherokee, Clay, Graham, Harnett, Haywood, Henderson, Jackson, Johnston, Macon, Madison, McDowell, Mecklenburg, Mitchell, Polk, Rowan, Swain, Transylvania, Wake, Watauga, Wilkes, and Yancey counties.

Date	Time	Date	Time
Mar 11	(1:30pm-2:30pm)	April 8	(1:30pm-2:30pm)
<p>Brain Health in Aging</p> <p>With focus on maintaining brain health as we age, participants will learn about normal cognitive aging, risk factors for decline, and strategies to support brain health through lifestyle choices like nutrition, exercise, and mental stimulation. Practical tips for caregivers and healthcare professionals will be provided to enhance the cognitive well-being of older adults.</p>		<p>Feeding the Mind: Nutrition in Dementia</p> <p>This training highlights the role of nutrition in supporting individuals with dementia. Participants will learn how diet affects cognitive function and discover practical strategies for meal planning, feeding techniques, and addressing common challenges in dementia care.</p>	

Hosted by the McDowell Senior Center in partnership with the Vaya Health Education and Aging Resource Team. All HEART trainings are free and accredited through the NC Division of Health Service Regulation which awards one contact hour for each hour of training.

OLD FORT NUTRITION SITE

LOCATED AT 909 EAST MAIN ST., OLD FORT, NC 28762

Phone: 668-4867 MARCH 2026

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
2 8:30-3:00 Puzzles 8:30-3:00 Fitness Equipment Exercises 9:30-10:30 Crochet with Jo Shuman 12:15 Bible Study with James O'Neil	3 8:30—3:00 Puzzles 8:30—3:00 Fitness Equipment Exercises 10:30 Crafts 12:15-3:45 Card Fun & Games with Carol	4 8:30—3:00 Puzzles 8:30—3:00 Fitness Equipment Exercises 10:15 BINGO 12:00 Chair Exercise with Deb 2:00 Line Dance Class	5 8:30—3:00 Puzzles 8:30—3:00 Fitness Equipment Exercises 12:00 Chair Exercise with Deb	6 8:30—3:00 Puzzles 8:30—3:00 Fitness Equipment Exercises
9 8:30-3:00 Puzzles 8:30-3:00 Fitness Equipment Exercises 9:30-10:30 Crochet with Jo Shuman 12:15 Bible Study with James O'Neil	10 8:30—3:00 Puzzles 8:30—3:00 Fitness Equipment Exercises 10:30 Crafts 12:15-3:45 Card Fun & Games with Carol	11 8:30—3:00 Puzzles 8:30—3:00 Fitness Equipment Exercises 10:15 BINGO 12:00 Chair Exercise with Deb 2:00 Line Dance Class	12 8:30—3:00 Puzzles 8:30—3:00 Fitness Equipment Exercises 12:00 Chair Exercise with Deb	13 8:30—3:00 Puzzles 8:30—3:00 Fitness Equipment Exercises
16 8:30-3:00 Puzzles 8:30-3:00 Fitness Equipment Exercises 9:30-10:30 Crochet with Jo Shuman 12:15 Bible Study with James O'Neil	17 8:30—3:00 Puzzles 8:30—3:00 Fitness Equipment Exercises 10:30 Crafts 12:15-3:45 Card Fun & Games with Carol	18 8:30—3:00 Puzzles 8:30—3:00 Fitness Equipment Exercises 10:15 BINGO 12:00 Chair Exercise with Deb 2:00 Line Dance Class	19 8:30—3:00 Puzzles 8:30—3:00 Fitness Equipment Exercises 12:00 Chair Exercise with Deb	20 8:30—3:00 Puzzles 8:30—3:00 Fitness Equipment Exercises
23 8:30-3:00 Puzzles 8:30-3:00 Fitness Equipment Exercises 9:30-10:30 Crochet with Jo Shuman 12:15 Bible Study with James O'Neil	24 8:30—3:00 Puzzles 8:30—3:00 Fitness Equipment Exercises 10:30 Crafts 12:15-3:45 Card Fun & Games with Carol	25 8:30—3:00 Puzzles 8:30—3:00 Fitness Equipment Exercises 10:15 BINGO 12:00 Chair Exercise with Deb 2:00 Line Dance Class	26 8:30—3:00 Puzzles 8:30—3:00 Fitness Equipment Exercises 12:00 Chair Exercise with Deb	27 8:30—3:00 Puzzles 8:30—3:00 Fitness Equipment Exercises
30 8:30-3:00 Puzzles 8:30-3:00 Fitness Equipment Exercises 9:30-10:30 Crochet with Jo Shuman 12:15 Bible Study with James O'Neil	31 8:30—3:00 Puzzles 8:30—3:00 Fitness Equipment Exercises 10:30 Crafts 12:15-3:45 Card Fun & Games with Carol			



VETERAN NEWS AND NOTES

VA Moves to Speed Delivery of Survivors Benefits

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs today announced [a new regulation](#) that will lead to faster decisions and quicker payments for certain types of survivors' claims.

Previously, VA was required to address claims for [Dependency and Indemnity Compensation](#) and [Survivors Pension](#) separately, resulting in a longer claims process, as a formal decision was required for both benefits.

With this change, effective Feb. 23, VA will pay the higher of the two benefits, which is generally DIC — without delaying the process to develop the lesser benefit.

“This commonsense change streamlines the survivors claims process, reduces administrative burdens, and delivers quicker decisions to beneficiaries during challenging times,” said **VA Secretary Doug Collins**.

DIC is a tax-free monthly monetary benefit paid to eligible surviving spouses, children and parents of a service member who died in the line of duty or Veterans who died from service-connected injuries or illnesses. Survivors Pension offers tax-free monthly payments to qualified surviving spouses and unmarried dependent children of wartime Veterans who meet certain income and net worth limits set by Congress.

In most instances, DIC provides a greater economic benefit than Survivors Pension. This is not the

case if all the following conditions are met:

- The claimant is the Veteran's surviving spouse,
- Has no dependents,
- Is residing in a nursing home,
- Has applied for or is currently receiving Medicaid.

If all these criteria are met, Survivors Pension — rather than DIC — will be awarded, and the DIC claim will not be further developed.

For more information, contact the VA benefits hotline at 800-827-1000.



The McDowell Senior Center Dementia Support Group at the McDowell Senior Center will meet on Thursday, March 26 from 1:00-2:30 in the front conference room at the McDowell Senior Center.

In March, the group will explore caregiver support programs, including respite services available to caregivers. Several grant-funded programs can provide much-needed relief, giving caregivers a break from the daily responsibility of caring for a loved one.

These meetings are for the caregivers, families, and friends of individuals with dementia.

The Dementia Support Group provides a safe, empathetic space for individuals affected by dementia to find guidance, comfort, and connection. If you would like to attend, you can just show up at the meeting or you can RSVP by calling Weyland Prebor at 828-659-0823.



What is Medicare?

Come join us for a special program at the McDowell Senior Center on Thursday, March 19, at 1:30pm entitled Medicare 101-The Basics. This special program will feature guest speaker Billie Lister, the Western Regional Manager for the North Carolina Seniors' Health and Insurance Program.

This presentation is for anyone currently on Medicare, getting ready to start on Medicare, or who has an interest in learning how this program works. Topics covered will include the various parts of Medicare including hospital coverage, physician coverage, Medicare Advantage plans, and prescription drug plans. Other topics include supplemental insurance, ways to save on insurance and prescription costs, preventive health services, Medicare fraud and the Medicare.gov website. You will also find out about help locally that can help you make your Medicare decisions.

Registration is not required to attend the meeting on March 19 but if you would like to be pre-register, please contact Weyland Prebor, McDowell County SHIIP Coordinator at the McDowell Senior Center by phone at 828-659-0823 or by email at wprebor@mcdowellseniorcenter.org



MARCH



BIRTHDAYS

MARION

Ronnie Butler 2
 Dani El Garvin 5
 Lori Parks 6
 Patsy Renfro 11
 Marilyn Collins 12
 Nellie Randolph 20
 Larry Clark 21
 Russell Davenport 21
 Michael Hayduk 23

Frederick Pennell 25
 Linda Davenport 29



OLD FORT

Joel Byrd 5
 Arthur Volz 5
 June Wilson 14
 Christine Reynolds 19
 Sheila O'Neil 26
 Phyllis King 29
 Terry Wilson 29

MCDOWELL COUNTY SENIOR CENTER

100 Spaulding Road
 Marion N.C. 28752

Phone: 828-659-0821

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2026 McDowell County Senior Games



Early Bird Breakfast

March 6th 8:30am-9:30am

(Breakfast is for registering Senior Games participants)

Sign-Up for Breakfast at
 The Senior Center - (828)659-0821

Early Bird Registration Dates

March 6th – 13th

Registration Time

9:00am – 2:30pm "Only"

Let's Make this Year's
 Senior Games the
BEST EVER!



- Adults who are turning 50 by December 31, 2026, and older
- Participants must register by 2:30 pm on March 13th to get the early bird price of \$10.00
- After March 13th registration fee will be \$12.00 (*Deadline to register is April 2nd*)
- Half Price Registration Fee for New Participants to Senior Games, (must see Brenda Monosso for this fee)
- Please tell your friends, neighbors, and relatives. Our goal this year is to have 125+ participants registered for McDowell County Senior Games.

Deadline to register for

McDowell Senior Games April 2nd, 2026



Scan this QR code with a scan reader on a phone or tablet to instantly get to the McDowell County Senior Center website.

Let's Get Crafty

with Teresa

No supplies needed

March 20th

9:30am-11:30am



Space is limited to the first 12 people to sign up at the Front Desk.

For more information see Brenda Monosso.

Spelling Bee Answers:

1. accommodate
2. separate
3. niece
4. perseverance
5. occurrence

Guess the Definition Answer

3. greenery