

Positively UC

A moment to focus on the good our team is doing every day



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MEDICARE FRAUD PREVENTION WEEK STARTS JUNE 2

Medicare fraud, errors, and abuse affect all of us—but together, we can make a difference. As trusted members of the community, we each have a role to play in protecting our neighbors and loved ones.

Here's how you can help:

- Encourage others to ask questions. Direct friends, family, and clients to a trusted source when they have Medicare concerns.
- Stay informed. Share information about the latest Medicare scams. You can find updates and resources at www.smpresource.org.
- Get involved. Consider volunteering with your local Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) to support fraud prevention efforts in our region.



6/2-6/8

**MEDICARE FRAUD
PREVENTION WEEK!**

Every action counts. By spreading awareness and staying vigilant, we can help safeguard the health and financial well-being of those we serve. If you have questions or would like to learn more, contact Tennessee SMP at 1-866-836-7677 or smp@ucdd.org.

FLIPPING THE SCRIPT ON AGING: A FIELD DAY TO REMEMBER AT THE FENTRESS COUNTY SENIOR CENTER

In honor of Older Americans Month, the senior center adopted the theme “*Flip the Script on Aging*” by organizing a vibrant field day.

This event included a variety of fun activities such as the chicken run, hula hoop challenge, balloon launch, water balloon toss, water shooter showdown, overhead pour, sponge relay, beach ball race, and paper airplane contest.

The purpose of the event was to challenge common stereotypes surrounding aging. Brimming with laughter and joy, it emphasized that every stage of life deserves celebration, showcasing older adults as lively and active contributors to the community.



DUDNEY EARNS FOLKLIFE INSTITUTE HONORS, HIGHLIGHTS COMMUNITY HERITAGE ON STATE STAGE



Mark Dudney, Dale Hollow RPO Coordinator and Historic Preservation Planner at the Upper Cumberland Development District (UCDD), is gaining recognition for his efforts to preserve and promote the cultural heritage of the region.

Recently, Dudney completed the Tennessee Folklife Institute, a prestigious five-month program jointly administered by the Tennessee Arts Commission and Humanities Tennessee. The immersive training, held at the historic Buffalo Valley School in western Putnam County, is designed to strengthen the documentation, preservation, and presentation of Tennessee’s folklife traditions.

In addition to his academic and professional development, Dudney was recently featured on the podcast Better Together with Kosta Yepifantsev, where he discussed the importance of heritage tourism and community development in Jackson County.

In an episode titled Country Common Sense, Dudney and Yepifantsev explored how local entrepreneurs have revitalized the area by embracing its deep cultural roots.

Dudney pointed to the resurgence of Granville as a tourism hub and Gainesboro’s emergence as a regional “foodie” destination as examples of how honoring the past can fuel economic growth. He emphasized that these successes are not accidental but the result of intentional leadership and community pride.

Much of the conversation centered on the lasting legacy of the late Jackson County Mayor Randy Heady. Dudney praised Heady’s leadership, noting that his vision and dedication laid the groundwork for many of the positive changes now taking place in the region.

Looking ahead, Dudney is actively involved in preparations for America 250, the nation’s 250th birthday celebration set for July 4, 2026. He views the milestone as a valuable opportunity to continue building community identity through history and civic pride.

Through both his professional work with UCDD and his public advocacy for cultural preservation, Mark Dudney continues to be a vital voice in shaping the Upper Cumberland’s future by honoring its past.

WHO WE ARE

OUR MISSION

To help the Upper Cumberland region cultivate self-sufficiency and build true wealth through innovation, collaboration, and leadership.

OUR VISION

A region abundant in resources, fostering a productive and vibrant life for the people of the Upper Cumberland.

get  plugged in.

Follow us on social media for the latest updates.



MASTERING CHALLENGING INTERACTIONS:

An Empathetic Approach to Customer Service



At UCDD and UCHRA, our dedication to serving families and individuals is central to our mission. However, we recognize that some interactions can be challenging and want to help provide you with the tools to navigate these situations with confidence and empathy.

When faced with a challenging client interaction, remember to **REACH** out:

R - Remain Calm & Receptive

- It's easy to get caught up in the heat of the moment. Instead, take a breath and consciously lower your own emotional temperature. Your calm demeanor can be contagious. Keep an open, non-defensive posture, and ensure your voice remains even and measured. This sets a stable foundation for the conversation.

E - Empathize & Echo

- The most crucial step in de-escalation is validating the client's feelings. Let them express their frustration without interruption. When they pause, acknowledge their emotions directly: *"I can hear how frustrated you are,"* or *"It sounds like you're feeling very worried about this."* Then, echo their main point back to them in your own words: *"So, if I'm understanding correctly, your primary concern is X because of Y?"* This shows you're truly listening and helps clarify their issue.

A - Ask & Assess

- Once you've acknowledged their feelings, gently shift toward understanding the core problem. Ask open-ended questions to gather more information and pinpoint the real issue. Instead of *"What's wrong?"*, try *"What can I do to help you right now?"* or *"What outcome would make this situation better for you?"* This helps you assess the actual need beyond the initial emotion.

C - Collaborate on Solutions

- Now that you both understand the situation, it's time to work together. Avoid dictating solutions. Instead, invite the client into the problem-solving process. *"Let's explore what options we have to address this,"* or *"Given what you've shared, what do you think would be the fairest way to move forward?"* Clearly explain any next steps in simple, straightforward language. Remember to set firm, but polite, boundaries if the client's behavior becomes disrespectful or abusive: *"I want to assist you, but I need you to speak to me without yelling."*

H - Hand Off & Hope

- Sometimes, a situation requires additional support. If you've tried these steps and the situation isn't improving, or if you feel unsafe, don't hesitate to hand off the interaction to a supervisor. Calmly state, *"I'm going to bring in my supervisor to help us with this,"* or *"Let me get someone who can provide further assistance."* This ensures both your safety and the client's continued path to resolution.

By applying the REACH method, you're not just reacting to a situation; you're proactively building trust and demonstrating a truly empathetic approach to service.