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## PRIORITIZING WELLNESS: APRIL IS STRESS AWARENESS MONTH

As we step into a season of renewal and growth, I want to take a moment to remind each and every one of you about the importance of prioritizing our well-being, particularly in the face of stress. April is Stress Awareness Month, providing us with an opportunity to reflect on how we manage stress in our lives and support each other in maintaining balance and resilience.

In today's fast-paced world, it's all too easy to become overwhelmed by the demands of work, family, and personal responsibilities. However, by raising awareness about stress and its impact, we can take proactive steps to minimize its effects and foster a healthier, more supportive work environment.

Here at the Town of Bloomfield, we recognize that our employees are our most valuable asset, and your health and well-being are paramount. That's why we're committed to providing resources, support, and initiatives to help you manage stress effectively and thrive both personally and professionally.

In this Spring edition, we encourage each of you to prioritize self-care and reach out for support when needed. Whether it's taking short breaks throughout the day, practicing deep breathing exercises, or engaging in activities that bring you joy and relaxation, remember that your well-being matters.

Let's also remember to support and uplift one another during times of stress. By fostering a culture of empathy, compassion, and open communication, we can create a workplace where everyone feels valued, respected, and supported.

As we observe Stress Awareness Month, let's recommit ourselves to prioritizing wellness, both individually and collectively.

Thank you for your dedication and hard work, and let's make April a month of self-care, growth, and well-being.

### I'm So Stressed Out! Fact Sheet

A fact sheet and shareable infographic on stress from the National Institute of Mental Health. <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/so-stressed-out-fact-sheet>

### Stressed out? Your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) can help you manage your stress

Please consult with Cigna our health insurance carrier or [click this link for more information](#)

# IN FULL BLOOM - SPRINGTIME!



Hey Team,

As we welcome the arrival of April, it's impossible to ignore the signs of spring all around us.

I am delighted to share with you the latest edition of our newsletter with updates, achievements, and exciting developments within our Bloomfield family.

Springtime embodies a spirit of renewal and growth—a sentiment that resonates deeply within our community. Just as the flowers bloom and the trees regain their lush greenery, so too do we have the opportunity to cultivate new ideas, foster stronger connections, and continue our journey toward collective progress.

I am immensely proud of the resilience and dedication each of you has demonstrated, particularly over the past year. Despite the challenges we've faced, your

unwavering commitment to serving our town with integrity and compassion has not gone unnoticed. Together, we have navigated uncertainties, adapted to changing circumstances, and remained steadfast in our mission to enhance the quality of life for all residents.

As we enter this season of renewal, I encourage each of you to embrace the spirit of spring in both your professional and personal endeavors. Let us harness the energy of this transformative time to innovate, collaborate, and strive for excellence in all that we do. Whether it's embarking on new projects, fostering relationships within the community, or simply taking a moment to appreciate the beauty of our surroundings, let's approach the coming months with enthusiasm and optimism.

Your continued feedback is invaluable in shaping the culture and direction of our organization. We encourage you to share your thoughts, ideas, and suggestions to help us continue to improve and thrive together. Your voices matter, and we are committed to listening and acting upon them.

**India Rodgers, MFP, CCMO**  
**Director of Strategic Communications & Government Affairs**

## HAPPY NATIONAL ADMINISTRATIVE PROFESSIONALS DAY

**National Administrative Professionals Day is  
Wednesday, April 24, 2024.**

It is an opportunity to say **THANK YOU!** Before there was Administrative Professionals Day, there was National Secretaries Day, created in 1952. We've come a long way since then, and so has the job and celebration.

The Town of Bloomfield recognizes and celebrates the many contributions of our devoted and valued administrative professionals. Administrative professional roles are incredibly diverse and they continue to evolve, with these professionals often going above and beyond their regular duties. Given the important role many administrative staff play in assisting their departments in today's rapidly changing public sector environment, they deserve their time in the spotlight more than ever.



On behalf of the Town of Bloomfield, we want to thank each of our Administrative Professionals for all you do to support your fellow employees, department directors and the residents of Bloomfield. We see you and we are grateful for all you do!!!!

# NEW TOWN MANAGER SELECTED

*Alvin D. Schwapp, Jr. to begin duties the week of May 6*

I am pleased to announce a significant milestone in the search for a new Town Manager. After careful consideration and an extensive selection process, the Bloomfield Town Council voted and selected Alvin "Al" D. Schwapp, Jr as our new Town Manager at their Town Council meeting held on Monday, March 11, 2024.

Schwapp is currently the Director of the State of Connecticut's Intelligence Fusion Center, known as the Connecticut Intelligence Center (CTIC). In this role (1 of 80 in nation), he directs the efforts of federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement partners. Schwapp's primary responsibility is to ensure the safety and well being for residents of Connecticut through the Department of Homeland Security's counterterrorism program.

He is also a 30+ year military veteran and a combat veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Schwapp is presently on active duty as a Colonel assigned to the U.S. Army Forces Command, Fort Liberty, NC. Schwapp's military career includes numerous command and deputy command assignments where he managed budgets which exceeded \$1 billion and had daily oversight of over 2600 soldiers and Department of Defense civilians. Schwapp retired from the Bloomfield Police Department in 2011, reaching the rank of Lieutenant where he commanded all three divisions within the department. Schwapp also has experience in education serving as a Director for the Capital Region Education Council. Schwapp has a master degree in strategic studies from the U.S. Army War College, a master's degree



in management from Johns Hopkins University, a bachelor's degree in industrial technology from Central Connecticut State University, and an associate's degree in mechanical engineering technology from Hartford State Technical College. Schwapp holds a Top Secret – SCI clearance.

As we embark on this new chapter, we are confident that Mr. Schwapp, Jr. will work tirelessly to address the challenges and opportunities facing our town and will serve as a dedicated steward of our community's interests. Please join me in welcoming him back to Bloomfield, his hometown, and offering him our full support as he assumes his new role beginning on Monday, May 6, 2024.

## Calendar of Events



April Fool's Day – April 1

Tax Day – April 15

National Admin. Prof. Day – April 24

April Paydays – April 11 & April 25

### SAVE THE DATE

There will be a mandatory scheduled training session on Security Awareness on April 10th at 10 am.

This will be a virtual training; a link will be sent to all employees, and we are hoping majority of the employees will be able to attend. The council chambers room for a hybrid session for those who don't have access to computers.

This training is mandatory for all employees, even those who do not have access to a Town's computers. This training will be beneficial for everyone on a professional and personal level.

## WORK ANNIVERSARIES

NAME	YEARS OF SERVICE	DEPARTMENT
Matthew Bangs	4/26/2021 – 3 years	Police
John Barrett	4/3/14 – 10 years	Police
Michael Castonguay	4/4/05 – 19 years	Public Works
Christopher Ceglia	4/24/23 – 1 year	Facilities
Christopher Collins	4/4/11 – 13 years	Police
Jonathan Colman	4/24/23 – 1 year	Planning
Nicole Downs	4/1/11 – 13 years	Police
David Frank	4/4/05 – 9 years	Public Works
Chrystal Gibbs	4/8/13 – 11 years	Police
Gabrielle Head	4/12/21 – 3 years	Police
Yvette Huyghue-Pannell	4/10/85 – 39 years	Senior Services
Matthew Mace	4/6/09 – 15 years	Leisure
Mark Mitchell	4/1/06 – 18 years	Leisure
Elaine Perez	4/18/11 – 13 years	Finance
Lionel Rodriguez	4/14/08 – 16 years	Police
George Simonian	4/9/08 – 16 years	Senior Services
LaTonya Tubbs	4/7/03 – 20 years	Police

# NEW HIRES



**Kathleen Matczak**  
Kitchen Aide  
Senior Services

Please welcome Kathleen Matczak to her new role in the Senior Service Department as a Kitchen Aide. She was selected from nine candidates who interviewed for the position. Kathleen brings over 15 years of experience serving the senior community as a Certified Nurse's Aide. She is a graduate of Bloomfield High School and completed her training and certification as a Nurse's Aide with Hughes Health and Rehabilitation.



**Ruben Arroyo**  
Custodian  
Public Works

Ruben has joined the Public Works Department as a Custodian as of March 18, 2024. He was selected from five candidates who interviewed for the position. Ruben has over 10 years of custodial experience and takes pride in a job well done. He is a graduate of Hartford High School.



# CONGRATULATIONS ON 20 YEARS OF NATIONAL ACCREDITATION!

The Bloomfield Senior Center (Marilyn Michaelson Senior Center) celebrating 20 years of accreditation from the National Institute of Senior Centers (NISC) and the National Council on Aging (NCOA)! Through this program, the NISC/NCOA recognizes Senior Centers nationwide that demonstrate leadership, community collaboration, and success across nine operational standards ranging from facility amenities to program planning and administration.

We would like to take a moment to express our sincere gratitude to the employees of the Bloomfield Senior Center, for all the incredible work you do day in and day out. Your dedication to our seniors and your unwavering commitment to providing them with care, companionship, and support truly make a world of difference.

Each interaction you have, every smile you share, and all the little things you do behind the scenes contribute to creating a warm and welcoming environment that our seniors cherish. Your efforts not only brighten their

days but also leave a lasting impact on their lives and the community as a whole.

**Accredited by**  
National Institute of  
Senior Centers

In the midst of challenges and uncertainties, you consistently rise to the occasion with compassion, empathy, and professionalism. Your hard work does not go unnoticed, and we want to assure you that it is deeply appreciated by everyone who walks through our doors.

So, as we navigate the month ahead, please remember to take pride in all that you do and know that your contributions are valued beyond measure. Keep up the great work, knowing that you are making a difference in the lives of our seniors and bringing joy to our community.

Thank you for your continued dedication and commitment to excellence.

## Recipe Corner

### Fried Deviled Eggs

*This fried deviled egg recipe takes the fan-favorite appetizer to a whole new level. As recipe tester Julia Levy says, "I'm a huge deviled egg fan, and I never thought they were missing anything until I tried them CRISPY!"*

#### Ingredients

- canola oil, for frying
- 6 large hard boiled eggs
- 3 tablespoons mayonnaise (such as Duke's)
- 2 teaspoons finely chopped dill pickle relish
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 3/4 teaspoon kosher salt, divided
- 1/2 cup all-purpose flour
- 2 large eggs, beaten
- 1 cup panko (Japanese-style bread crumbs)
- 1/4 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/8 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- chopped fresh chives and paprika
- hot sauce, for serving

#### Instructions

- Heat 1 1/2 inches of oil in a large Dutch oven or heavy-bottomed pot to 360 degrees F (180 degrees C) over medium-high.
- While oil is heating, cut hard-cooked eggs in half lengthwise, carefully remove yolks, and place in a small bowl. Using a fork, mash together yolks, mayonnaise, relish, Dijon, black pepper, and 1/2 teaspoon of the salt until smooth and combined. Transfer to a piping bag or zip-top plastic bag. Set aside until ready to use.
- Place flour in a small bowl. In another bowl, place beaten eggs. In a third bowl, mix together panko bread crumbs, Parmesan cheese, garlic powder, cayenne, and remaining 1/4 teaspoon salt. Dredge each egg white half in flour, gently shaking to remove excess flour before dipping it in the beaten eggs. Lift egg white half from beaten egg and allow it to drip until excess liquid has fallen off. Finally, dredge in



panko bread crumb mixture. Set aside on a clean plate. Simmer and cook until the veggies are tender (about 20-30 minutes).

- Working in 2 batches, fry coated egg whites in hot oil until golden brown, about 30 seconds to 1 minute, adjusting heat as needed to maintain at least 360 degrees F (180 degrees C). Transfer to a paper towel-lined plate.
- Pipe egg yolk mixture evenly (about 1 tablespoon each) into center divet in fried eggs. Garnish with chives and paprika. Serve warm with hot sauce.

*Have a recipe you want to share with your fellow co-workers? Send it to Brian Wolff at [bwolff@bloomfieldct.gov](mailto:bwolff@bloomfieldct.gov)*

## SPRING WELLNESS TIPS

With spring in full swing, we want to share some tips and resources for maintaining physical and mental wellness. This could include outdoor activities, healthy recipes, stress-relief techniques, and reminders about upcoming wellness events.

As spring breathes new life into the world around us, it's the perfect time to rejuvenate our minds, bodies, and spirits. Here are some spring wellness tips to help you embrace the season with vitality and positivity:



- 1. Get Moving Outdoors:** Take advantage of the longer days and warmer weather by spending more time outdoors. Whether it's going for a walk, jog, bike ride, or simply enjoying sometime in the park, being in nature can boost your mood and energy levels.
- 2. Embrace Seasonal Foods:** Spring brings an abundance of fresh fruits and vegetables. Incorporate more seasonal produce like strawberries, asparagus, spinach, and peas into your meals to add variety and nourishment to your diet.
- 3. Stay Hydrated:** As temperatures rise, it's essential to stay hydrated. Keep a water bottle with you throughout the day and aim to drink plenty of fluids, especially if you're spending time outdoors or being physically active.
- 4. Spring Cleaning for Mental Clarity:** Use the energy of spring to declutter your living space and create a sense of order. A clean and organized environment can promote mental clarity and reduce stress, allowing you to focus more on your well-being.
- 5. Practice Mindfulness Outdoors:** Take time to appreciate the beauty of nature around you. Practice mindfulness techniques such as deep breathing, meditation, or simply being present in the moment while enjoying the sights, sounds, and smells of spring.
- 6. Prioritize Sleep:** With the change in daylight hours, it's important to maintain a consistent sleep schedule. Aim for 7-9 hours of quality sleep each night to support overall health and well-being.
- 7. Protect Your Skin:** As you spend more time outdoors, don't forget to protect your skin from the sun's harmful rays. Wear sunscreen with at least SPF 30, cover exposed skin with clothing or hats, and seek shade during peak sun hours.
- 8. Set Spring Goals:** Take this opportunity to set new goals for yourself. Whether it's improving your fitness, trying new hobbies, or focusing on personal growth, having something to work towards can bring a sense of purpose and motivation.

By incorporating these spring wellness tips into your routine, you can embrace the season with vitality, positivity, and a renewed sense of well-being. Enjoy the beauty of spring and prioritize your health and happiness!



# EARTH DAY INITIATIVES IN THE WORKPLACE

April is home to Earth Day, highlighting eco-friendly practices within the workplace.

1. **Reduce Paper Usage:** Encourage employees to go paperless whenever possible. Use digital communication methods, such as emails or online platforms, for memos, reports, and other documents. Set printers to default to double-sided printing to reduce paper waste.
2. **Waste Reduction Initiatives:** Encourage the use of reusable products instead of single-use items. Provide reusable water bottles, coffee mugs, and utensils to employees, and discourage the use of disposable plastics and Styrofoam.

By implementing these Earth Day initiatives, workplaces can engage employees in meaningful actions to promote sustainability, reduce environmental impact, and contribute to a healthier planet.



## Town of Bloomfield COVID-19 Policy

Effective March 1, 2024, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) released new recommendations for anyone with COVID-19 to follow the same protocols for respiratory viruses and are no longer recommending a minimum five-day isolation period.

In agreement with the revised guidelines, the Town of Bloomfield is implementing updated protocols for COVID-19. The Town may revise this policy at any time and will be ready to implement other strategies and policies to protect our staff from COVID-19 while ensuring continuity of operations.

1. All employees, regardless of vaccination status, must stay home if they are feeling sick or have any symptom the CDC has identified with COVID-19 (heavy cough, shortness of breath, fever, chills, muscle or body aches, sore throat, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea). Employees who appear to have symptoms upon arrival at work or who become sick during the day will be sent home.
2. **Employees who have COVID-19 must stay home until they have been fever-free without medication for at least 24 hours, or their symptoms have been improving for 24 hours (for example, when their cough or shortness of breath have improved). They must continue to wear a well-fitting surgical mask around others for an additional 5 days upon return, as some people remain contagious after this period.**
3. If there is a circumstance wherein an employee is required to quarantine based on CDC or Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) guidance, the employee must use accrued leave. **Working from home while on quarantine will be only allowed by exception, for a specific limited time subject to the availability of remote work and with the written concurrence of the Department Head and the TM's office. Human Resources must be notified when employees are working from home.**
4. This policy covers all non-work related leave and does not replace our Worker's Compensation policies and procedures.
5. Please contact the Human Resources Department with any questions.

# TRANSITIONING TO DIGITAL ID CARDS



## Frequently Asked Questions

### Q: Why is Cigna transitioning to digital ID cards?

- Many of our customers already access their ID cards through [myCigna.com](#)® and the [myCigna® app](#). Both the website and app offer convenient, timely access to ID cards, as well as many other features to help customers manage their health and savings.
- Digital ID cards will allow customers to access their plan coverage information more easily, and they are more conveniently available when needed.
- Real-time communication channels, including [myCigna.com](#) and the [myCigna app](#), are key to putting your health care information in the palm of your hands.

### Q: Does the availability of digital ID cards depend on my state of residence?

- Yes. Some states have mandates that prohibit digital medical, dental or vision ID cards.\* Colorado, Texas, Minnesota, New York, Florida and Georgia have certain exclusions. Customers residing in these states may continue to receive physical ID cards in the mail depending on their plan type. Even if your state requires we send a printed card, your digital card is always available for you to access on [myCigna.com](#).

### Q: Will I use one digital ID card for all benefits (medical, behavioral, dental, vision, etc.), or will I have multiple digital ID cards?

- The current ID card experience is not changing. Digital ID cards are available for medical with separate digital ID cards for vision and dental.

### Q: Is Cigna able to email or mail a copy of the digital ID cards to me upon my enrollment?

- To protect customer protected health information (PHI) and avoid fraud, Cigna will never email or text digital ID card images. However, customers can securely log on to [myCigna.com](#) or the [myCigna app](#) and share their own ID card images if they so choose.

### Q: Will I still be able to request physical ID cards?

- Yes. Customers can request physical medical ID cards through [myCigna.com](#) and the [myCigna app](#), through their employer (via the Cigna employer portal), or by calling Cigna Customer Service at **1.800.997.1654** and following the prompts.

### Q: How do I use digital ID cards?

- Customers will use their digital ID cards in the same way they use their physical ID cards.
- Doctors, specialists, labs, hospitals, pharmacies and other medical facilities will have different ways of processing digital ID cards. Customers can share the digital ID card image on a phone screen at the provider office, relay the data verbally over the phone to preregister for their appointment, or securely email the digital card image directly to the provider office from [myCigna.com](#) or the [myCigna app](#). Many providers are also using their own patient portals where customers can upload an image of their card.
- Customers can also print a copy of their ID card and share it with the provider office.



Offered by Cigna Health and Life Insurance Company, Connecticut General Life Insurance Company, or their affiliates.