HUDSON COUNTY OFFICE ON AGING
AND OFFICE ON DISABILITY SERVICES
COVID-19 UPDATE
MARCH 27, 2020
With regards to the COVID-19 virus, the Office on Aging and Office of Disability Services has deemed nutrition and certified home health aide services to be most critical to seniors and individuals with disabilities. We have been in regular contact with our provider network and have asked for their plans should the virus spread throughout the community. Please see below for plans we have received as of March 27, 2020:

**Nutrition**

*Borough of East Newark*

- Provide additional education to employees in dealing with the virus, as guided by the CDC.
- Calling all seniors to assess their needs for food, supplies, etc.
- Team of volunteers making delivers to vulnerable seniors.
- Working with local authorities should a senior declare they are symptomatic.

*City of Jersey City*

- Provide additional education to employees in dealing with the virus, as guided by the CDC.
- Congregate meal locations have begun allowing consumers to pick up meals and take them home to avoid large gatherings.
- The protocol for in-home six-month assessments has been modified to initially include a phone call asking health related questions pertinent to the virus.
- Should a consumer disclose symptoms, or if it is determined as a result of telephone interviews, the consumer will be urged to contact their health care provider and stay in their homes.
- If a confirmed positive case arises, the congregate site will close immediately for proper sanitation and for a proper investigation to be conducted.
- All congregate sites will be closed by March 18, 2020. Sites will offer “to-go” meals or enroll consumers on the home delivered meal program.

*City of Bayonne*

- Provide additional education to employees in dealing with the virus, as guided by the CDC.
- Provide congregate and home delivered meal consumers with non-perishable canned goods as well as meats and vegetables.
- Should a consumer disclose symptoms, or if it is determined as a result of telephone interviews, the consumer will be urged to contact their health care provider and stay in their homes.
- If a confirmed positive case arises, the congregate site will close immediately for proper sanitation and for a proper investigation to be conducted.
- All sites are closed and will provide “to-go” meals or enroll consumers on the home delivered meal program.

*Town of Harrison*

- Provide additional education to employees in dealing with the virus, as guided by the CDC.
• Firemen and OEM personnel have been designated as emergency meals on wheels drivers.
• Water, non-perishable items and complete meals have been ordered for the senior center.
• Heater meals have also been ordered.
• Public health nurse held a seminar at the senior center to discuss procedures for preventing the spread of germs and the virus and rules to follow should seniors feel sick.
• Should a consumer disclose symptoms, or if it is determined as a result of telephone interviews, the consumer will be urged to contact their health care provider and stay in their homes.
• If a confirmed positive case arises, the congregate site will close immediately for proper sanitation and for a proper investigation to be conducted.
• Senior center is closed and will provide meals for seniors to pick up and take home. All interested consumers will be transferred to the home delivered meal program.

North Hudson Regional Council of Mayors
• Provide additional education to employees in dealing with the virus, as guided by the CDC.
• Congregate meal locations have begun allowing consumers to pick up meals and take them home to avoid large gatherings.
• Meal provider (Nu-Way) is prepared to send frozen meals or sandwiches in the event congregate sites close.
• Home delivered meals will continue to be delivered with frozen meals.
• Hoboken senior center closed, and all congregate consumers have been transferred to the home delivered meal program.
• Weehawken senior center closed for all social activities; however, the nutrition program remains open.
• Should a consumer disclose symptoms, or if it is determined as a result of telephone interviews, the consumer will be urged to contact their health care provider and stay in their homes.
• If a confirmed positive case arises, the congregate site will close immediately for proper sanitation and for a proper investigation to be conducted.
• All sites closed and providing “to-go” meals or enrolling consumers on the home delivered meal program.

Town of Secaucus
• Provide additional education to employees in dealing with the virus, as guided by the CDC.
• Contacted local restaurants for emergency meal provisions.
• Should a consumer disclose symptoms, or if it is determined as a result of telephone interviews, the consumer will be urged to contact their health care provider and stay in their homes.
• If a confirmed positive case arises, the congregate site will close immediately for proper sanitation and for a proper investigation to be conducted.
• Site closed and providing home delivered meals to all consumers.

Jewish Federation of Northern New Jersey
• Provide additional education to employees in dealing with the virus, as guided by the CDC.
• Increasing the number of emergency meals provided to consumers to three (3) from two (2).
• Ordering additional shelf-stable meals.
• Volunteers being contacted to fill in as emergency meals on wheels drivers.
• Should a consumer disclose symptoms, or if it is determined as a result of telephone interviews, the consumer will be urged to contact their health care provider and stay in their homes.
• If a confirmed positive case arises, the congregate site will close immediately for proper sanitation and for a proper investigation to be conducted.

In addition, as it relates to senior nutrition, the State Division of Aging Services has contracted with an emergency meal provider. The vendor will provide shelf-stable meals in packages of six (6) to the most vulnerable seniors via FedEx delivery. Hudson County has obtained a list of the most vulnerable seniors currently receiving home delivered and congregate meals throughout the county and submitted that list to the State. The State will order the meals in the coming days and will confirm a delivery date with the Hudson County Office on Aging. Provider agencies will contact seniors to make them aware of the delivery and follow up to ensure that the meals were received.

Further, The Office on Aging has contacted home delivered meal providers inquiring about the need for additional drivers and/or vehicles. Home delivered meal providers have also been forwarded CDC fliers to be sent to home delivered meal consumers and posted at congregate sites.

***Update as of 3/17/20: All senior congregate locations across the county will be closed by March 18, 2020. Additionally, the Office on Aging and Office of Disability Services has gathered phone numbers for the most vulnerable individuals that are served, and County staff will begin making wellness phone calls. A script will be given to all staff along with a spreadsheet to record all phone calls and outcomes.

***Update as of 3/24/20: Wellness calls are being made by staff to roughly 1,300 seniors across the county that have been identified as vulnerable. Reoccurring concerns seem to be ability to obtain grocery items and medications.

***Update as of 3/27/20: Alternative nutrition options, both private and non-profit, have been identified throughout Jersey City, and we are connecting vulnerable seniors to additional meals and grocery delivery. We continue to search for similar alternatives throughout the rest of the county. Providers continue to deliver additional meals for seniors in case of emergency or potential difficulty of delivering in the future. If anyone reads this that may be able to provide alternative nutrition options, please call the Office on Aging at 201.369.4313.
Certified Home Health Aide

Armas Homecare

• Provide additional education to employees in dealing with the virus, as guided by the CDC.
• Provide education to consumers and their caregivers related to the virus and personal hygiene.

Priority Nursing Services

• Provide additional education to employees in dealing with the virus, as guided by the CDC.
• Provide education to consumers and their caregivers related to the virus and personal hygiene.
• Take consumers temperature immediately upon entering the household.
• Develop a protocol for contacting health care professional should a consumer disclose symptoms.
• Contact consumer prior to visiting household, asking health related questions specific to the virus.
• Require home health aides to check in with the agency and confirm they are healthy and can make home visits each day.

Visiting Homemaker Services

• Provide additional education to employees in dealing with the virus, as guided by the CDC.
• Provide education to consumers and their caregivers related to the virus and personal hygiene.
• Develop a protocol for contacting health care professional should a consumer disclose symptoms.
• Contact consumer prior to visiting household, asking health related questions specific to the virus.
• While services are being provided, limit the number of visitors to the consumers household and encourage clients and caregivers to limit contact with non-essential visitors as much as possible.

The Office on Aging receives regular updates from State and local government partners and shares the information with the above-mentioned providers, as well as our entire provider network. As plans may evolve, providers are to update the Office on aging weekly.

***Update as of 3/17/20:*** Although all care management face-to-face visits have been suspended by the State, certified home health aide services continue to visit seniors in their homes.
***Update as of 3/27/20:*** Office on Aging has placed an order for personal protective equipment (PPE) for all home health aide agencies. Priority was placed on nitrile gloves and ear loop masks. The State has deemed home health aide services as essential and this may be one of the only services, outside of those on the front line of the virus, that continue to provide close contact with individuals. It is of high importance that home health aides possess the necessary equipment when entering seniors’ homes.