



July 31, 2020

## **Agency Covid-19 Responses Support Communities, Providers, Staff**

Among all the changes occurring over the past four months, the Agency's dedication toward continuing services and resources has remained strong and even grown in areas. An overview of adaptations for our new reality follows.

- Agency staff remain working work remotely and all clinical activity has continued unimpeded through telephone outreach. Our clinical staff contact all consumers on a regular basis to ensure their needs are met. Consumers considered as most at-risk were identified early on and their essential services prioritized for immediate and ongoing attention.
- Our Information Specialists answering the 937-223-HELP number initially experienced an increase in calls with the primary requests for home-delivered meals, wellness checks and services. This crew is providing the same assistance and information as always, including scheduling free home assessments that are currently being completed over the telephone.
- Agency staff work closely with partner organizations to ensure timely processing of paperwork for important details such as Medicaid applications. The State of Ohio has authorized multiple emergency rules allowing Area Agencies on Aging to respond in various ways such as:
  - Suspending adverse actions including dis-enrolling individuals from programs.
  - Allowing providers to deliver services in different ways, such as telephonic and in-person Adult Day Services, increasing home-delivered meals and allowing legally responsible family members to provide services.
  - Offering social work counseling over the telephone and via video conferencing.
- The Agency adapted to virtual formats provided for its wellness programming

via either telephone or Zoom. This involves the Chronic Disease, Diabetes, and Chronic Pain Healthy U workshops as well as Eat Smart, Live Strong, and the Aging Mastery Program. Information on upcoming workshops is listed [on our website](#).

The Agency's ability to work remotely is made possible through the efforts and expertise among our Information Technology, Fiscal, and Administrative staff to remotely support Agency functions.

The Agency received Ohio Department of Aging (ODA) Covid-19 emergency federal funding for meals, with Family First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) awarded to meal providers in April. This allows meal providers in our nine-county region to expand home-delivered meal service to additional older adults who have significantly limited their movements away from home due to the pandemic. In July the Agency received another emergency federal fund, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, that allows meal providers to continue emergency home-delivered meal assistance to older Ohioans.

The Agency received ODA support through multiple initiatives for supporting older Ohioans. ODA:

- launched its 1-800-ODA-CHAT line on May 13 for Ohioans age 60 and older to register for wellness calls;
- supplied personal protective items to Area Agencies on Aging throughout the state for use by providers whose staff interact directly with consumers. Our staff enlisted the help of Ahler's Catering & Nutrition Services in Vandalia to help us unload, separate and pack up the five pallets of materials into 100 PPE kits distributed to providers within our nine-county region.
- provided direction and support in creating wellness kits distributed to consumers throughout our nine-county region who receive services at home.

The Agency received a No Wrong Door Grant via the Association for Community Living and the ODA supporting two initiatives specific to coronavirus response:

- A new personal care aide training program for displaced customer service workers.
- Updates to our Agency website to include a live chat feature with our Information Specialists.

We are also pleased to have secured a second year of Dr. Kathy Stevens' work through The Dayton Foundation's Del Mar Encore Fellowship program on our Long-Term Care Workforce Crisis Initiative. While not directly related to coronavirus response, Dr. Stevens is taking the lead on the displaced worker training.

The Agency continues its commitment to improving the quality of life for older adults throughout our region with safety and health of utmost consideration. Please contact us with any questions about services and resources available to help you and your loved ones.

**937-223-HELP**

**[info4seniors.org](http://info4seniors.org)**

**800-258-7277**