

Coronavirus Preparedness Plan

Longfellow/Seward Healthy Seniors

Information about the Coronavirus (COVID-19) and its impact are changing daily. At Longfellow/Seward Healthy Seniors we are trying to stay abreast of the situation. We will be following recommendations from the Center for Disease Control (CDC), the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH), and local public health officials. During this time our work to help seniors live independently will not stop; we will just be doing it differently when possible. We will suspend certain activities to promote social distancing and to avoid groups of people meeting together. On a day-to-day basis, we will be reevaluating how to provide help while keeping the people we serve and volunteers safe. Please review our updates by checking our website at www.LShealthyseniors.org or by calling our office at 612-729-5799.

At this point our office is open, although that may change in the near future. Our office is located in the U.S. Bank building. The bank has temporarily reduced their operating hours to 9:30 am to 4:00 pm. As a consequence of this, we've reduced our office hours accordingly and decided to be open to the public Monday to Thursday only. Our office will temporarily be closed on Fridays. We will practice social distancing in the office and in our contact with clients as much as possible.

CDC advises canceling gatherings of ten or more people where the majority of participants are at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19. So, we have suspended all group activities including our Senior Social/Health Talks, Nurse Is In Clinics, diabetes support groups, Tai Chi classes and art classes, as well as in-home nurse visits through April 6. We will reevaluate at that time. We have also decided to cancel our Annual Italian Dinner event that was scheduled for April 23. Hopefully we will be able to reschedule the event sometime this fall. We will follow CDC and MDH guidelines for postponing or cancelling events.

We recommend that everyone follow the CDC recommendations for everyday preventive measures:

- Stay home when you are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with your hands.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue, then throw it in the trash can.
- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds; especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Routinely clean frequently touched surfaces and objects.

The CDC has identified that the people at higher risk for COVID-19 are older adults and people who have chronic medical conditions like heart disease, diabetes and lung disease. People at higher risk should:

- Stay home as much as possible to reduce the risk of being exposed.
- Stock up on supplies, including extra food, medications, pet supplies and other household provisions, in the event they need to spend two weeks at home.
- Take precautions to keep at least 6 feet of space between themselves and others.
- When out in public, keep away from others who are sick, limit close contact and wash hands often.
- Avoid crowds as much as possible.
- Avoid any non-essential travel.

We're working on developing alternative ways to deliver services to individuals when possible. We want the seniors we serve to feel supported, but to do it in a way that minimizes physical contact. We will be using social distancing as much as possible (individuals are separated by at least 6' and have no physical touch.)

Friendly Visitor Volunteer Services:

We will be changing the Friendly Visitor volunteer services from in-person to phone calls and emails only.

- If possible, increase the number of phone visits while not visiting in-person so it feels like extra attention instead of less.
- During the phone visit ask how they are doing and if there is help that is needed - to get an assessment of the situation without the visual cue of seeing the person.
- If a client expresses concerns or needing help to a volunteer, the volunteer should contact our office so staff can follow up.
- Volunteers should be creative and think of ways to help the person they visit not feel left on their own. Volunteers could mention a time when they will be calling next, or, if the client sounds particularly low, call again in a few days (or contact our office so staff can follow up).
- The Volunteer & Service Coordinator will survey current Healthy Seniors' volunteers to see if they would be willing to start or expand their calling to include other seniors in the community who may need a check-in call.

Volunteer Transportation:

We will also be changing the way we provide rides to seniors and how our transportation volunteers interact with the seniors they serve. Some other metro programs like ours are stopping volunteer transportation. We plan to continue transportation services for now, and will place priority on absolutely essential appointments (mostly medical appointments).

- Rides for errands or grocery shopping will be suspended, but we can help clients get the essential things they need delivered (see delivery interactions).
- For volunteers who feel comfortable continuing to give rides for medical appointments, we want them to be aware of their own health status and discontinue volunteer driving if they are at higher risk from underlying conditions.
- If volunteers feel sick, if they have been exposed to illness or think they are coming down with something, or if they've had contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, then they need to refrain from providing transportation. Do they have a cough, a fever, or shortness of breath?
- Have the client sit in the back passenger side seat to provide some social distancing.
- Before and after a ride, volunteers should clean with soap and water and disinfect the parts of the car with which the client will have contact, such as door handles (inside and outside), seat belts and buckles, door frame, and the seating area. Disinfecting wipes are available at the office if volunteers don't have them. The office has limited quantities of travel size hand sanitizers for use by volunteers.
- Volunteers should not accompany clients into the clinic. This practice will help with social distancing.
- We will reevaluate our transportation services nearly daily, and will ask drivers to stop providing rides should COVID-19 become highly active in our community.
- If we are unable to provide volunteer transportation to medical appointments, we will try to assist clients in working with their health care provider to determine what they must get in for and what can be delayed or done over the phone.

Grocery/prescription medication delivery:

- We are recommending that volunteers use disposable gloves whenever possible. We have some at the office. A fresh pair of gloves should be used with each delivery. If gloves are not available due to a local shortage, use hand sanitizer before and after each delivery and wash hands with soap and water (for 20 seconds) as soon as possible.
- Volunteers should call the client ahead of time so they know when to expect the delivery. The volunteer should place items on the door step, ring the bell or knock, and step back at least 6 feet. Volunteers should minimize touching the door handle and do not go inside if it can be avoided.
- If volunteers need to bring items into the client's home, it should be done quickly and include social distancing.
- Volunteers should wash hands as soon as possible after completing a delivery.

Nursing visits, service coordination and caregiver support:

- Change to doing over the phone, instead of in person, whenever possible.
- If clients show up at the office unannounced, they should knock and a staff person will talk to them behind the glass door.

- If the staff deem it necessary and invite a client into the office, the client must be willing to practice social distancing.
- Limit the times staff go into the home to what is absolutely necessary. If a home visit is necessary, treat it similar to services for vulnerable populations in nursing homes
- Use the screening questions (above in transportation) with both staff and volunteers.
- Have staff take their temperature before going on a visit.
 - Wash hands before and after a visit, or use hand sanitizers if washing isn't an option.
 - Staff should wear disposable gloves and masks (if available).
 - Practice social distancing - stay 6' apart during the time in a client's home.

Staff health and safety:

- Practice social distancing in the office whenever possible.
- Have meetings with staff six feet apart or over the phone.
- If we have to close the office, staff will be encouraged to work from home when possible.
- At the discretion of the board of directors, we will try to conduct board meetings by conference call.
- As much as possible, an employee will wipe down common office surface areas daily with disinfecting wipes or sprays.
- Healthy Seniors will try to follow the national trend of relaxing PTO and sick time during this period. If a staff member gets COVID-19 and feels well enough to work from home, that may be an option, depending on the type of work they do.
- If an employee needs a period without working, the Executive Director or Board of Directors may determine to continue to pay their salary (as in the budget) during that period of time. Such determinations will be made if/when the situation arises.
- If an employee's hours are reduced due to suspended services and activities, the employee may possibly be eligible for unemployment compensation.
- Follow CDC everyday preventative measures:
 - Stay home when you are sick with respiratory disease symptoms.
 - Respiratory Etiquette: Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue, then throw it in the trash can.
 - Hand Hygiene: Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds; especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
 - If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with a minimum of 60% alcohol.

Resources:

The most accurate and up-to-date source of information about COVID-19 is the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) website at www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html or the MDH website at www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/index.html. For those who

don't have access to the web, the Minnesota Department of Health COVID-19 Hotline at 651-201-3920 is another resource.

-This plan was reviewed by the Executive Committee of Longfellow/Seward Healthy Seniors' Board of Directors on March 18, 2020. This document may change as recommendations from CDC and MDH change.