



## TRI-COUNTY OFFICE ON AGING COVID-19 RESPONSE

The Tri-County Office on Aging (TCOA) is sensitive to the evolving nature of the Coronavirus/ COVID-19 situation. TCOA's priority is to keep all volunteers, staff, clients, and program participants safe while making every effort to continue in-office operations and services to clients.

As such, TCOA is following advice from public health officials who recommend that people (especially older adults and individuals with chronic health conditions) avoid group settings and practice other social distancing practices to minimize in person contact.

Currently TCOA's main office remains open with limited onsite staff, and the remainder are working remotely, so clients may reach a voicemail rather than a live staff member for initial inquiries. Calls and correspondence are being returned promptly.

TCOA is still accepting applications for volunteers at [www.tcoa.org/volunteer/](http://www.tcoa.org/volunteer/). Tasks and assignments may vary for a period of time, but all background checks and screening protocols are still in place.

The following is a summary of program modifications, effective **March 20, 2020**:

### Nutrition

- Effective Monday 3/16/20 and until further notice, the Congregate Senior Dining sites will be closed. Arrangements are being made to provide food to clients. *A drive up distribution process will launch on Wednesday, March 18 at designated locations to expand the reach. Individuals must contact Tasha Stetler at 517-887-1393 to reserve a meal.*
- Effective Monday, 3/16/20 and until further notice, Meals on Wheels home delivered meals clients will see a change in the delivery process but will not experience a decrease in the number of meals. Generally clients will receive one week's worth of frozen and/or shelf stable meals delivered at one time, rather than the typical Monday-Friday delivery. Clients (and/or their emergency contacts) are being contacted directly with information about these changes. Safety precautions are being taken by volunteers to minimize personal contact with clients. Questions can be directed to the individual Meals on Wheels Offices or to Carl Buonodono at 517-887-1394.
  - Greater Lansing Area Meals on Wheels (service area: Lansing, East Lansing, Haslett & Okemos) Ph: 517-887-1460
  - Rural Ingham Meals on Wheels (service Area: Holt, Mason, Williamston, Webberville, Stockbridge, Leslie, Dansville and Onondaga) Ph: 517-676-2775
  - Clinton County Meals on Wheels Ph: 989-224-3600 or 1-888-224-3030
  - Eaton County Meals on Wheels Ph: 517-541-2330
- TCOA is working with community partners to increase the frequency of wellness check

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or “friendly reassurance” calls to clients, especially in light of social isolation concerns.

### **Project Choices and Care Management**

- Effective Monday 3/16/20 and until further notice, TCOA is suspending all in-home visits to clients in order to minimize their potential exposure to the virus. TCOA staff will maintain regular phone contact with clients. Clients with higher needs will be contacted more frequently.
- Client referrals will be tracked and contacted, but no new intake assessments will be initiated.
- There is a 24/365 after hours answering service available to clients as well as the public.
- As noted above, TCOA is working with community partners to increase the frequency of wellness check or “friendly reassurance” calls to clients.

### **Medicare/Medicaid Assistance Program (MMAAP) and AARP Tax Assistance**

- The MMAAP supervisor and volunteers will be working remotely and will be monitoring calls to the program. No in person consultations will occur.
- The AARP Tax Assistance program, sponsored by the AARP Tax Aide Foundation with a location at TCOA, has been suspended nationally. It is not known at this time whether tax-aide services will again be available this Spring. *As of March 20, 2020, the IRS has extended the filing deadline to July 15.*

### **Education and Outreach**

- TCOA staff remain available to provide general information and assistance about local programs and services of benefit to older adults, their families and caregivers. Callers may have to leave messages but will be contacted within one business day.
- TCOA is temporarily suspending local [evidence-based health and wellness programs](#) that are currently underway, through May. For those workshops scheduled to begin in June or later, we will continue to take registrations and will keep participants informed of any changes.
- Education presentations (census, elder abuse prevention, Medicaid/Medicare, etc.) are temporarily suspended.

Please contact Tammy Lemmer, Community Relations Director, if our office can be of assistance to you.

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