



Guernsey County Senior Citizens Center, Inc.

*"Serving Senior Citizens Throughout Guernsey County for Over 48 Years"*



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March 13, 2020

**PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT**

**FOR IMMEDIATE PRESS RELEASE**

**Due to Governor DeWine's COVID-19 Safety Measures Guernsey County Senior Citizens Center Will Close Congregate Dining Sites & Cancel All Senior Center Sponsored Activities Until Further Notice Beginning Effective Monday, March 16<sup>th</sup>**

*CAMBRIDGE, OH (March 13, 2020)*— The following is a public service announcement from the Board of Directors & Administration of Guernsey County Senior Citizens Center, Inc. & Meals on Wheels Guernsey County:

Guernsey County Senior Citizens Center, Inc. and Meals on Wheels Guernsey County are very concerned about what a significant outbreak of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in Guernsey County could mean for the vulnerable senior citizens we serve. We are closely monitoring information and resources being shared by the experts in disease control and are putting prevention and response plans into place. We follow health officials recommended steps to protect against Coronavirus similarly to how we prevent the spread of other illnesses.

We know the critical importance of preparation in times like this and understand the delicate balance between panic and public preparedness. Effective Monday, March 16, 2020, we will be implementing new safety precautions and program modifications for the public health benefit of both our clients and our staff.

Senior citizens and our employees remain our top priority and concern. It is our hope healthcare professionals will find a way to soon end this epidemic, but in the meantime, we will do our best to keep everyone informed and not cause unnecessary alarm.

As with many illnesses, we know that older adults face higher risks of contracting COVID-19 and/or experiencing complications, particularly if they have underlying health conditions. We also know that our congregate, home-delivered, homemaking, social & recreational activities, and transportation services – serve as an invaluable lifeline of support to Guernsey County's most vulnerable older adults, the majority of whom have multiple chronic conditions and take three or more medications daily. At a time when seniors are struggling with hunger and one in four lives alone, we cannot allow the threat of COVID-19 to prevent seniors from accessing critical senior-based services, further increasing hunger or isolation among this at-risk population.

Please know that our decision to temporarily suspend and modify our services is not a decision that we made lightly nor was it made without close consultation from health and government officials. Although our decision has not been an easy one, we do feel responsible to do our part to help reduce the spread of COVID-19 and to protect our community's most vulnerable population from this virus and assist in help to keep senior citizens more safe.

**Effective Monday, March 16, 2020 the following safety precautions will be implemented:**

- **We will continue to provide all home delivered meal, transportation, and homemaking services and we will continue to accept new clients as of this time.** *Future program modifications and changes may be required for us to remain in compliance with local and state health directives and executive orders. We pledge to continue to keep the public informed of any further program changes we may have to make.*
- **All Congregate Dining Sites (including the main Senior Center, located at 1022 Carlisle Avenue, Cambridge) will be closed for group dining until further notice beginning Monday, March 16, 2020.**
- **Should you be a senior in need of a meal, “Grab & Go” lunches will be made available to eligible clients on a “drive-thru” pick-up basis at the Senior Center and at the following senior dining satellite sites beginning on Monday, March 16, 2020 from 11:30 am-12:30 am;**
  - Stop Nine Senior Center, Southgate Road, Byesville, OH, Monday-Friday, 11:30 am-12:30 pm
  - Cumberland United Methodist Church, Main Street, Cumberland, OH-Tuesdays & Fridays, 11:30 am-12:30 pm
  - Freeport Masonic Lodge, Londonderry, OH-Mondays & Thursdays, 11:30 am-12:30 pm
  - Pleasant City United Methodist Church, Main Street, Pleasant City, OH-Mondays & Thursdays, 11:30 am-12:30 pm.
  - Cambridge Heights Apartments—Current clients will begin receiving home delivered meals.
  - Golden Sixties (Thursdays)—Current attendees are welcomed to request “Grab & Go” meals.
  - Admission and indoor group dining at all Guernsey County Senior Citizens Center, Inc. hosted senior dining sites will not be permitted until further notice.
- **All Guernsey County Senior Citizens Center hosted and sponsored activities, including, but not limited to, daily fun bingo, one-day trips, exercise and dance classes, tai chi, pickle ball, which are held at the main Senior Center or at any of our satellite site locations are all canceled until further notice.**
- **Election Day Voting; AARP Income Tax Preparation Services; Food Commodities Pick Up and other independently sponsored activities taking place inside of the senior center will remain available and continue as planned at this time.** *Please contact us prior to visiting the senior center by calling (740) 439-6681 if you have any questions regarding whether or not an activity will or will not take place or occur.*
- **We plan to conduct Wellness phone calls for any senior citizens that need a little extra socialization.** Please feel free to call us at (740) 439-6681; toll-free 1-866-534-2349 if you need to chat or compassionately listen.
- **All Guernsey County Senior Center staff has increased the frequency of sanitizing their work areas and public areas with disinfectant which has the necessary compounds designated by the EPA to “kill” Human Coronavirus. This includes disinfecting agency owned vehicles.**
- **Beginning Monday, March 16, 2020 we will be limiting access inside of organization for non-essential visitors. All Senior Center operated facilities and satellites will be closed and off-limits until further notice to:**
  - Clients, visitors, delivery personnel, and employees with colds, flu like symptoms, a cough, shortness of breath or low-grade fevers.
  - Individuals that have recently traveled outside of the United States, traveled on a cruise ship, or within an active COVID 19 impacted area.
- **All employees and limited visitors will be health checked (temperature) prior to gaining access to the Senior Center’s main location until further notice.**
- **List of other upcoming event cancelations:**
  - March 19<sup>th</sup>-Monthly Senior Dinner (Canceled)
  - March 31<sup>st</sup>-Byesville Monthly Senior Dinner (Canceled)
  - March for Meals Champions Week (Canceled)
- **All clients currently receiving in-home or transportation services with colds, flu like symptoms, a cough, shortness of breath or low-grade fevers should cancel service and/or self-quarantine and please stay home.**

- **We continue to work and identify additional means to help senior citizens through the social isolation they may experience in the coming days and weeks as well as prioritize services for individuals most in need.**
- **Guernsey County Senior Citizens employees may be temporarily diverted to assist in other departments on an “as needed” basis until temporary program and health and safety implemented plans are lifted.**
- **ALL CURRENT HOME DELIVERED MEAL CLIENTS WILL CONTINUE TO RECEIVE MEALS AT THIS TIME.**
  - We please ask that if a Meals on Wheels client is sick or ill to **please notify us in advance—prior to your scheduled meal delivery.**
  - If meal delivery service is suspended at any time, we please ask clients to utilize the emergency meals that have already been provided to them.
  - If a Meals on Wheels client wishes to limit or curtail their meal service, frozen meals can be delivered once or twice per week in the place of a hot meal delivered daily.
  - Meals on Wheels employees who deliver home delivered meals will temporarily not be entering your homes unless absolutely necessary to make their deliveries.
  - Meals on Wheels staff have been instructed to keep at least a 6 ft distance from all clients when delivering meals.
  - Meals on Wheels employees have been instructed to routinely disinfect electronic tablets and stylus pens that receive human contact or touch when signing for services.
  - In order to assure that the client is well (wellness check) our staff will make visual contact or at a minimum voice interaction through the door with home delivered meal recipients.
  - Meals on Wheels clients will be asked to have a table/surface near or inside their door, on their porch, or in their garage for meals to be placed upon during the home meal delivery process to limit hand to hand contact.
  - We will continue to accept new eligible Meals on Wheels—home delivered meal clients and recipients.
  - For additional Meals on Wheels information, please call Hollia Husk, Susie Stuebe, or Lynn Grimm at (740) 439-5717.
- **ALL CURRENT HOMEMAKING & PASSPORT CLIENTS WILL CONTINUE TO RECEIVE IN-HOME CARE AT THIS TIME.**
  - We please ask that if a client that receives our Homemaking or PASSPORT services is sick or ill to **please notify us in advance—prior to the arrival of your in-home healthcare aide.**
  - Homemaking staff will be equipped with temple thermometers and alcohol swabs for sanitizing and cleaning these devices. Homemakers will begin checking each clients’ temperature prior to entering the clients home and/or verify the Homemakers own temperature if requested, prior to entering a client’s home.
  - Homemaking employees have been instructed to routinely disinfect electronic tablets and stylus pens that may receive human contact or touch.
  - If your home health aide would report off work we will contact you and do our best to make arrangements for you to receive services with another aide and/or may need to modify your schedule.
  - We would like to assure you that we are being pro-active to keep our clients and employees safe. Our staff will be using disinfectant products to clean areas of your home and personal products used in your homes. This includes all "high touch" surfaces. Examples include; counter tops, table tops, door knobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, phones, key boards, tablets, handrails, walkers, canes, bed linens, remote controls, light switches, refrigerator handles, bedside night stands & tables, and much more...
  - The Center for Disease Control recommends if you do not feel well to please stay home and avoid contact with other people who are sick. They also recommend that you have an extra supply of food, water, and medication on hand.
  - For clients with limited mobility, are bed ridden, or have restrictive movement, or in case your caregiver cannot come into your home, please have a backup plan in place if you are confined to your home for any prolonged length of time. You will need someone to help you if we cannot--- back-up care and assistance may be provided by a nearby family, friend, neighbor or relative.

- **TRANSPORTATION SERVICES WILL CONTINUE TO OPERATE AS NORMAL**
  - Transportation for Guernsey County senior citizens, age 60 and older is available Monday-Friday 8:00 am-8:00 pm and on Saturdays from 8:00 am-1:00 pm.
  - We please ask that if a transportation client is sick or ill to **please notify us in advance—prior to your scheduled pick-up.**
  - To make non-medical emergency transportation reservations, please call (740) 432-3838 at least 24-48 hours prior to requiring transport.
- **COVID-19 symptoms include fever, cough, and shortness of breath. If you feel like you are developing symptoms, call your doctor or 9-1-1. If you develop emergency warning signs for COVID-19 get medical attention immediately. These include:**
  - Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
  - Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
  - New confusion or inability to arouse
  - Fever
  - Cough
  - Bluish lips or face

*\*This list is not all inclusive. Please consult your medical provider for any other symptom that is severe or concerning.*
- We need the communities and individuals to establish a “buddy” system to help ensure vulnerable, isolated, or hard-to-reach senior citizens stay connected and well informed to COVID-19-related news and services. Encourage seniors that you know to seek out a “buddy” who will check on and help care for them if they get sick.

While continuing to be a compassionate and caring community—we must be mindful and understanding of each the above listed precautions. We must all do our part to protect the older adults living in our neighborhoods and communities.

Guernsey County Senior Citizens Center, Inc. will share information, guidance and recommendations as it develops. In the meantime, you can receive real-time updates on the Coronavirus at <http://coronavirus.ohio.gov>. You can also visit the CDC website at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).

We genuinely appreciate your support. Thank you for being proactive and implementing preventative measures to limit the spreading of this virus in your home and within our communities. Thank you for your patience and understanding as we continue to quickly adapt to make senior-based programs, services, and activity modifications, updates, cancelations, and changes that we believe are truly at the heart of our mission of serving Guernsey County senior citizens for over the past 48 years. We are committed and pledged to doing our part and what’s in the best interest to keep senior citizens and our associates healthy and safe and COVID-19 virus free.

If you have any questions regarding our program cancelations or safety precautions, please do not hesitate to call us at (740) 439-6681; toll-free 1-866-534-2349; TTY (740) 439-6681.

Thank You.

Sincerely Yours In Senior Citizens’ Work,  
 Guernsey County Senior Citizens Center, Inc.-Board of Directors  
 Shon E. Gress, Executive Director/CEO  
 GUERNSEY COUNTY SENIOR CITIZENS CENTER, INC.  
 MEALS ON WHEELS GUERNSEY COUNTY