

# Ontario County Office for the Aging

## Newsletter & COVID-19 Resource Guide

### *From the desk of the Director*

The COVID-19 pandemic has certainly taken over our lives. I know it is hard to think of anything else. Your generation has lived through some difficult times including the great depression and World Wars. You are a resilient generation!

Older adults and those with underlying health conditions have been told that they should stay home as much as possible. I know that many of you feel very isolated and frustrated but we will get through this together!

I wanted you to know that OFA is still here and working to help older adults stay safe and make sure their basic needs are met. Our offices are closed to the public right now, but all our staff are still working and providing services, remotely and most of our services are available by telephone.

In this newsletter I am providing information about COVID-19 and local resources that may be of help to you. Information does change so check the Office for the Aging website, the Ontario County Public Health Website or call our NY Connects helpline at 585-396-4047.

### **Know the Symptoms**

The CDC has updated the list of COVID-19 symptoms. The updated list of symptoms includes cough, shortness of breath, or at least two of the following:

- fever
- chills or repeated shaking with chills
- muscle pain
- headache
- sore throat
- new loss of taste or smell

## Stop the Spread

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues there are still important ways that you can help stop the spread. The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed, which means to stay home as much as possible. If you must go out, be sure to practice social distancing, leaving 6 feet between you and any person you come in contact with.

Other ways to help prevent the spread of this illness include:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water,
- Cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze,
- **You must wear a face-covering or mask when you go out,**
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily,
- Call your doctor if you think you're experiencing symptoms.

Visit [Coronavirus.gov](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus) for more information and frequently asked questions.

## Guidance on Face Masks

**COVID-19 AND THE USE OF CLOTH FACE COVERINGS:** Recent studies have shown that significant portions of individuals infected with the virus are asymptomatic. Asymptomatic individuals, even if they eventually develop symptoms, can transmit the virus to others before showing symptoms. This means that the virus can spread between people in close proximity — for example, speaking, coughing, or sneezing — even if those people are not exhibiting symptoms at the time. Considering this new evidence, the Governor has directed the public to wear face coverings in public settings, where social distancing measures are difficult to maintain (e.g., grocery stores and pharmacies), especially in areas of significant community transmission.

It is important to emphasize that maintaining social distancing, by staying at least 6 feet apart when in public and staying home whenever possible, is critical

to slow the spread of the virus, even if wearing a face covering. While face coverings may not prevent the wearer from becoming infected, they might help slow spread from people who have the virus and are unaware.

Cloth face coverings fashioned from household items or made at home from common materials at low-cost are recommended. Surgical masks and N-95 respirators are critical supplies that must continue to be reserved for healthcare workers and other first responders.

When wearing cloth face coverings:

- Make sure that they fit snugly and cover your nose and mouth.
- Be changed frequently and laundered when they are soiled or wet.
- Not become complacent with other protective measures.
- Do not touch the cloth covering or face.
- Continue to be vigilant with thorough and frequent hand washing by using soap and water, or alcohol-based hand sanitizer of 60%+ alcohol.
- Practice respiratory etiquette and cover your coughs or sneezes.
- Practice social distancing – even when wearing masks.
- Stay home and help flatten the curve!

The Office for the Aging has masks to distribute to older adults. Call our office to obtain one.

Visit NYSDOH COVID-19 webpage for more information at

<https://www.ny.gov/coronavirus>

## Stimulus Checks

Individuals receiving Social Security retirement, SSDI, survivors benefits, SSI, Railroad Retirement benefits or VA Compensation and Pension benefits in 2019 are eligible to receive a \$1,200 check and do not need to contact the IRS or any other agency. You are not required to file a tax return or any other form. The IRS will use the information from your 2019 benefits to generate a Payment to you if you did not file tax returns in 2018 or 2019. You will receive your Payment as a direct deposit or by mail, just as you would normally receive your federal benefits.

## The Office for the Aging Can Help You With:

Although many of our staff is working from home we are still providing most of regular services and more:

**Home Delivered Meals:** Any one age 60 or older can call for a home delivered meal, either hot or frozen, from our Meals on Wheels program during the COVID emergency. We have relaxed our eligibility requirements and all you have to do is call us and we will set it up.

Our Meals on Wheels staff and volunteers are required to wear face masks and gloves while delivering your meal. They are also practicing social distancing.

Although we have closed our congregate meal programs, (aka Community Dining), we have a Grab n Go site at the Spa Apartments in Clifton Springs and at Lyceum Heights in Geneva. You must be a resident of those apartment buildings to participate. Former participants of other congregate meal sites can get a home delivered meal, if they desire.

**Grocery Shopping:** We will help you set up an Instacart account or we will use our account to order groceries for you to be delivered. The stores that use Instacart are Wegmans, Aldi, Tops, CVS and Petco. Walmart has pick-up services and we can help you order on-line if needed. You will be required to have a credit card to make on-line purchases.

**Volunteer Shopper:** If the delivery services above do not meet your needs we can also send a volunteer to help you with grocery shopping.

**NY Connects Helpline** - Call 585-396-4047 for help connecting to all kinds of resources. If you have a question or problem, call us.

**Friendly Visitor Caller:** Many people can feel very isolated and alone during this time of quarantine. We have many volunteers available to make friendly visiting calls to you that can help pass the time or lift your spirits.

**Face Masks:** OFA has a supply of face masks to distribute. Call 585-396-4040 or 396-4047

**Food Boxes:** We have boxes of shelf stable food from Food Link available for home delivery for free (first come, first serve).

**Toilet Paper and other hygiene supplies:** We still have some available for delivery to your house (first come, first serve).

**Health Insurance Counseling:** We are still providing health insurance counseling on Medicare, Medicare supplement or Advantage plans, Medicaid, MSP over the telephone or over the web.

**Medicare 101 Workshops:** Are being offered by webinar or telephone conference.

**EISEP:** Home care services for middle income older adult and case management is still available. A comprehensive assessment is conducted over the telephone. This service is for frail older adults struggling to perform activities of daily living. A financial assessment is also required as there may be a cost share required for the home care services.

**Caregiver** counseling and support are still being offered by phone. There are many on-line services available from the Alzheimer's Association or the Finger Lakes Caregiver Institute for caregivers of those with dementia. Call NY Connects for information.

**Tai Chi:** We are offering a class on-line through Zoom. Call OFA for details.

## Grocery, Food & Pharmacy Delivery or Pick-Up Options

Most restaurants are open for delivery or curbside pick-up. Call your favorite restaurants to make sure.

**Instacart** – Services multiple stores including Wegmans, Tops, Aldi, and CVS depending on the geographic area. There are delivery and service fees. Ordering is all done on-line. Call OFA for help if you are not computer savvy or don't have a computer. <https://www.instacart.com/>

**Aldi** delivery is through Instacart <https://www.instacart.com/canandaigua-ny/aldi>

**Tops** delivery is through Instacart <https://www.instacart.com/geneva-ny/tops-markets> or <https://www.instacart.com/canandaigua-ny/tops-markets>

**Wegmans** delivery and curbside pick up is through Instacart <https://www.instacart.com/canandaigua-ny/wegmans> or <https://www.instacart.com/geneva-ny/wegmans>

**Walmart Pickup:** Canandaigua and Geneva Store, through on-line ordering only. <https://grocery.walmart.com/>

Note: Delivery and pick-up services are experiencing significant delays which mean you may need to schedule your delivery or pick-up several days in advance.

See a more extensive list of grocery stores, pharmacies and food pantry delivery services on the OFA Website: <http://www.co.ontario.ny.us/aging>

## Tips for Staying Connected While Social Distancing

Social distancing does not mean social isolation, and even a potentially deadly virus should not force us to be alone. Now, more than ever, people need to find smart ways to stay connected.

**Reach out to family and friends:** Stay in touch with the people close to you, especially those who are social distancing too. Call them or write an email or a good old-fashioned letter.

**Learn the new technology:** FaceTime, Zoom, Skype, Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat and lots more. All sorts of online options exist to talk with family and friends. And you don't have to be tech-savvy. Doing the basics is easy, and for most people, fun. If setting up an account is daunting, ask a neighbor, grandchild, or friend for help and a quick tutorial.

Go to the OATS (Older Adults Technology Services) website to see a list of activities, classes.

<https://oats.org/blog-post/statement-on-coronavirus/>

Senior Planet has various activities on-line like a chair yoga class on Zoom.

<https://seniorplanet.org/get-involved/online/>

**Stay active in the community from home:** It may sound counterintuitive. How can you remain a part of the community if the goal is to separate from the community? But maybe there's a remote option. Many organizations — political parties, faith-based groups, nonprofits — rely on volunteers to make phone calls. You can do that clearly community-based activity right at home.

**Go on a news diet:** Stay informed, know what's going on but don't get locked into endlessly watching "breaking news" on the 24-hour news channels. Typically, not much changes hour to hour. But enduring the repetitious pummeling from TV all day long can bring needless anxiety. Watch a news update in the morning, then check in again at night. Don't stay with it all evening — 30 minutes or an hour is plenty.

**Friendly Visitor Program:** The Office for the Aging has volunteers who will "visit" with you on the phone.

**Get Outside:** Walk in your neighborhood or local park, do yard work or plant a garden.

**Driveway Visits:** Have a friend drive over to your house and stay in their car while you talk to them from 6 feet away.

## Watch Out for COVID – 19 Scams

As the number of people and communities affected by the COVID-19 pandemic grows, so do the scams associated with it. Scammers use public health emergencies as opportunities for new fraud schemes, and because older adults are at greater risk for serious illness from COVID-19, they may target older populations. There is currently no FDA-approved vaccine for COVID-19 and although there may be treatments for symptoms, there is no “cure.” However, scammers often use fear-based tactics to convince people that a vaccine or cure is now being offered. It’s also important to remember that although the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other public health officials may contact you if they believe you may have been exposed to the virus, they will not need to ask you for insurance or financial information.

### **Types of Scams:**

- Watch for emails claiming to be the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) or experts saying they have information about COVID-19, Coronavirus or SARS-CoV-2. For the most up-to-date information about the Coronavirus, visit the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO).
- Ignore online offers for vaccinations. There currently are no vaccines, pills, potions, lozenges or other prescription or over-the-counter products available to treat or cure COVID-19 (coronavirus) on-line or in stores.
- Several companies have begun selling teas, essential oils and colloidal silver, with promises they will prevent or cure the coronavirus. The FTC has indicated there is no evidence to back up these claims, and the FDA has stated there are no approved products to prevent or treat COVID-19. Recently, six companies received warnings from the FTC and FDA, including:
  - Vital Silver
  - Aromatherapy Ltd.
  - N-ergetics
  - Vivify Holistic Clinic
  - Herbal Amy LLC
  - The Jim Baker Show

- The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is alerting the public about fraud schemes related to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). Scammers are offering COVID -19 tests to Medicare beneficiaries in exchange for personal details including Medicare information. However, the services are unapproved and illegitimate. Fraudsters are targeting beneficiaries in a number of ways including telemarketing calls, social media platforms, and door-to-door visits. If Medicare denies the claim for an unapproved test, the beneficiary could be responsible for the cost.

### **Protect Yourself:**

- Beneficiaries should be cautious of unsolicited requests for their Medicare or Medicaid numbers.
- Be suspicious of any unexpected calls or visitors offering COVID-19 tests or supplies. If your personal information is compromised, it may be used in other fraud schemes.
- Ignore offers or advertisements for COVID-19 testing or treatments on social media sites.
- A physician or other trusted healthcare provider should assess your condition and approve any requests for COVID-19 testing,
- If you suspect COVID-19 fraud, contact the National Center for Disaster Fraud Hotline 866-720-5721 or [disaster@leo.gov](mailto:disaster@leo.gov)

Government grant scams are on the rise. With the recently passed federal stimulus bill, scammers are taking advantage of homeowners of all ages by making bogus offers to secure generous grants for home repairs.

### **If you have been a victim of such a scam:**

- Report it to the New York State Attorney General's Office: 800-771-7755
- Report to the AARP Fraud Watch Network: 877-908-3360
- Report the scammer to the Better Business Bureau:
- <https://www.bbb.org/consumer-complaints/file-a-complaint/get-started>

## Important Resources

- Ontario County Office for the Aging: 585-396-4040
- NY Connects Helpline – 585-396-4047 – help with any question
- Adult Protective Services: 585-396-4060
- Health Insurance Counseling and Information (HIICAP): 585-396-4521
- Meals, Groceries, Prescription Assistance: Contact NY Connects at 585-396-4047
- Mental Health Crisis Helpline: 800-724-0461 (24/7)
- New York State Department of Health COVID-19 Hotline 888-364-3065 (24/7)
- NYS COVID-19 Emotional Support Hotline: 1-844-863-9314
- Ontario County Public Health Department: 585-396-4343 or After- Hours Emergency Line– 585-394-4560
- Introduction to Instacart :  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yFhhOXUccjI>
- The Centers for Disease Control: <https://www.cdc.gov/>

### May is Older Americans Month: “Make Your Mark”



May is Older Americans Month—a time to celebrate older adults and raise awareness of important aging issues facing communities across the country. This year's theme—Make Your Mark—was selected to encourage and celebrate the countless contributions that older adults make to our communities. Older adults are a growing and increasingly vital part of our country. The contributions they make to our communities are varied, deeply rooted, and include influential roles in this nation's economy, politics, and the arts.

In 2020 Ontario County wants to honor the contributions of older adults during this public health crisis. Many older adults continue to work and volunteer in the health care field and who deliver Meals on Wheels, assist at food pantries and provide other vital services during this pandemic.

Each year the Ontario County Office for the Aging celebrates Older American's Month by soliciting nominations from the community and by hosting a luncheon in their honor. This year we are unable to hold that gathering but want to recognize those that were nominated:

**Carole Meath** - for her work at the Light Hill Comfort Care Home and St. Benedict Parish

**Pat Sanford** –for her work with the Bristol Fire Department since 1975

**Jerry Diver** - for his work at the First Congregational Church and other numerous agencies

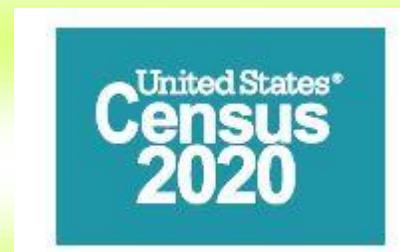
**Sherrie Winters** - for her work at Quail Summit

**Judi Stewart** – for her work as the East Bloomfield Historical society and the Pioneer Cemetery Project

I urge everyone to take time this month to celebrate and recognize the older adults and the contributions they make to the community.

### **While You Are Home - Don't Forget to Respond to the 2020 Census**

The 2020 Census has started and it's your chance to shape the future for yourself, your family and your community. Information collected in the census informs how billions of dollars in federal funding is distributed to states and communities each year. You can respond online, by phone, or by mail. Regardless of how you choose to respond, your information will be kept confidential. Visit [2020CENSUS.GOV](https://2020CENSUS.GOV) to respond to the census today. If you need help completing your 2020 Census questionnaire call toll-free 1-844-330-2020.



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**Ontario County Office for the Aging  
3019 County Complex Drive  
Canandaigua, NY 14424**