

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Elder Services of Berkshire County, Inc. Essential Functions Continue

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As Elder Services of Berkshire County, Inc. (Elder Services) continues to monitor the Coronavirus (COVID-19) situation closely, the health and well-being of our consumers, volunteers and employees are most important to us.

With guidance from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) and the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Elder Services is working to ensure that the essential functions our consumers rely on will continue during this rapidly evolving and unprecedented public health challenge.

What we are committed to:

- Continuing to accept new referrals for meals, in home services and other programs
- Providing home delivered meals (Meals on Wheels) and having contingency plans if our drivers are not be available to make home deliveries
- Supporting our home care providers who provide personal care, home making and home health aide services in our consumers' homes and ensuring those who enter consumers' homes are not symptomatic and have taken appropriate precautions
- Providing Information and Referral Services about Elder Services programs and services and those of other Berkshire County aging service providers
- Making SHINE contacts via telephone and mailing documents to consumers
- Making Ombudsman calls to area nursing homes in lieu of visits while ensuring serious issues are prioritized
- Ensuring that Money Management consumers have their cash allotments and, if necessary, establishing online banking or auto pay options to be able to pay consumer bills remotely
- Serving as a source of information and support to our consumers, their caregivers and families during this difficult time.

What may be different:

As our goal is to deliver the care our consumers need in a safe, effective manner, our staff will ask consumers the following questions prior to visiting or while delivering meals:

- Do you have a fever or cough or are you experiencing shortness of breath that is not related to a chronic condition, i.e., COPD, asthma?
- Have you or anyone in your household traveled in the last 14 days and, if so, to where?
- Have you or anyone in your household had contact with anyone who has or was exposed to the Coronavirus?

In instances in which consumers answer yes, we will recommend they call their doctor and offer to reschedule their appointment. Though our policy regarding meal delivery has been to hand the meal to our consumers and do a face to face well-being check, in limited special circumstances we may revert to leaving the meal in a safe location outside the door with our driver conducting a verbal wellness check.

We will keep you up to date about new developments and additional steps we will be taking to keep our consumers healthy. As always, please call Elder Services at (413) 499-0524 if you have any questions.

Some important resources for you to learn more about the Coronavirus:

- Massachusetts Department of Health www.mass.gov/2019coronavirus
- Berkshire Health Systems Coronavirus Information Hotline 1-855-262-5465
- [Mass211](#) has set up a line to support residents during the ongoing response to COVID-19. Massachusetts residents can dial 2-1-1 at any time for real-time COVID-19 information, resources and referrals in multiple languages.