

IMPERIAL COUNTY AREA AGENCY ON AGING

PRESS RELEASE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Imperial County Area Agency on Aging's Announces Plans to comply with public health recommendations to mitigate COVID-19 Risk For Senior Population

The health and wellness of our service participants, employees, and community are of utmost importance. That is why the Imperial County Area Agency on Aging (AAA) is working in conjunction with state and local officials to help put in place a plan to help keep our seniors, employees and community healthy and informed, as the Coronavirus (COVID-19) impact progresses.

In order to comply with federal, state, and local guidelines and reduce the risk to senior participants, AAA has closed all Senior Nutrition Congregate Sites for dining until further notice. However, meals will continue to be provided at the sites for seniors to pick up and take home. The AAA's goal is to make sure seniors receive their daily meal, which is essential to their health and well-being, while following the recommendations from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and local public health officials in regards to COVID-19. If a senior, age 60 or more, is interested in picking up a meal at a site near them, they are asked to contact Catholic Charities, the Senior Nutrition Provider, to reserve a meal at 760.353.2748 at least one day in advance. In Home Delivered Services will continue as scheduled.

The following AAA service providers have modified their mode of operation to comply with health recommendations: Elder, Law & Advocacy, our legal assistance and HICAP services provider, has closed their doors to the public and will provide services remotely via telephone and email. You can reach them at 760-353-0223. The Imperial County Public Health Department's Senior Health Services Program has cancelled all outreach and community education events. However, the Medication Management program for individuals age 60 and older is still available. Please contact them at 442-265-1444 for an appointment.

In the meantime, the AAA is proactively working with all local city officials to determine the city's plans to mitigate risks to their senior populations and is prepared to provide guidance and support as needed. The AAA is also working directly with local Senior Apartments to determine any needs they may be experiencing due to the impact of the Coronavirus (COVID-19). The AAA has also started working with the Imperial Valley Food Bank (IVFB) to start working on a plan to provide USDA Commodities to seniors needing food. If a senior is in need of assistance, please have them contact the AAA's office at 442-265-7030 or toll-free at 800-510-2020.

The AAA's Long Term Care Ombudsman, Karla Flores, has been working diligently with the skilled nursing facilities (SNF) as well as the residential care facilities for the elderly (RCFE) to determine their current status and any needs to protect the health and safety of residents, staff, and public. California Department of Public Health (CDPH) released on March 11, 2020, new guidelines for limiting the transmission of COVID-19 in long-term care facilities requiring them to temporarily modify their facility visitation policies in accordance with Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and CDC. No visitations are

currently allowed for SNF; some exceptions may apply for end of life situations only. RCFE have implemented screening and other more stringent visitation guidelines. If you have any concerns or questions regarding a loved one who resides in any of these facilities, please contact the LTC Ombudsman office at 442.265.7032.

The Imperial County Area Agency on Aging offers a variety of services for seniors, age 60 or more, throughout the Imperial Valley. These services include congregate meals, transportation to designated congregate sites, home delivered meals, respite care, legal advice, and much more. If you need additional information regarding any of the services provided by our agency or additional information on what is being done to comply with COVID-19 guidelines, please contact our office by calling 442-265-7030 or toll-free at 1-800-510-2020. If you are experiencing a crisis or additional stress related to the current situation, please contact the local Imperial County Behavioral Health Access line at 1-800-817-5292 or 442-265-1525.

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