



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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VALLEY PROGRAM FOR AGING SERVICES RESPONSE TO COVID-19

Harrisonburg, Va. - As part of our mission to empower older adults, Valley Program for Aging Services (VPAS) is implementing a number of new strategies to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in our community.

- Effective Wednesday March 18, 2020 all VPAS Senior Centers and VPAS' Lexington Café will be closed.
- Senior Center members will be evaluated for need of in home meal delivery.
- Meals on Wheels delivery will continue with modifications to include health screening of volunteers. A contingency meal delivery plan is in place in the event volunteers are not available or meals can't be delivered on a daily basis.
- A telephone checking program will be implemented in the event that meals are not delivered on a daily basis.
- Senior center staff will have their duties reassigned to meet the current needs of meal delivery and wellness calls.
- Senior transportation will continue with modifications to include increased sanitization of transport vehicles and health screenings of both volunteers and transportation clients prior to service delivery.
- No in-home assessments will be made until April 1. Visits at that time will be modified to include health screening of the client and household members and will support *new clients only*. VPAS case managers will be available to respond to questions and conduct client reassessments by phone.
- Homemaker services will continue as long as service providers are available. VPAS case managers will consult with clients to develop contingency plans should we need to postpone this service.
- Medicare counseling will continue by telephone appointments only.
- Health and wellness workshops will be postponed until April 1 and will be re-evaluated at that time.
- Caregivers Community Network has stopped all student visits due to JMU's transition to distant learning.
- Staff, volunteers, and service recipients are being provided with educational material on COVID-19, proper hand washing, and tips for keeping themselves and others healthy.

VPAS services boost the overall health and well-being of thousands of older adults in our community and provide support that significantly reduces social isolation - a major challenge for this population. We will continue ongoing evaluation to weigh the benefits of continued service against potential risks of disease exposure. Specifically, we will continue operations as modified until we have a health department-directed closing, staff illness prevents us from being able to operate, or the situation warrants otherwise.

Service updates and guidance for older adults and their caregivers are available on our website at vpas.info as well as by phone: 540-615-5341.

VPAS empowers adults 60 years and over with the resources and opportunities they need to lead engaged lives. With information and referral services, Medicare counseling, senior transportation, recreational programming, meal delivery, and homemaker services available throughout five counties in the Shenandoah Valley, VPAS has been serving older adults and their families for more than 45 years.

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