In The Loop with Laurie

Communities are shutting down with the goal of stopping the spread of coronavirus. According to the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC), the coronavirus spreads through close contact (defined as within six feet) with infected individuals; if you eliminate that close contact through social distancing, you slow the spread of the virus.

The CDC recommends social distancing as a way to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, now that the virus is circulating within communities. Previously, when the virus was being brought in by travelers, testing and isolating those travelers was thought to help contain it. Now, the best way to limit the spread of coronavirus, public health experts suggest, is by canceling events and staying home as much as we can.

SEMAAA is taking this advice seriously, for the safety and well-being of our employees, individuals served, and area communities. Staff are working remotely and the SEMAAA office will be closed to the public beginning on March 23, 2020. Staff can be reached by email. The phone system will be transferred and answered by staff from a remote location. Meetings and outreach will be structured as phone or video calls.

We will continue to assess our status based on current Minnesota Department of Health and CDC guidelines and direction from the Minnesota Board on Aging.

I am overwhelmed by the level of community collaboration. The Rochester Nonprofit Consortium is organizing a COVID-19 Nonprofit Sector Response Daily Check-in to mobilize essential community services. The commitment of the entire community is essential to keep these services running. The engagement of City, County, nonprofits, and other key leadership is essential in supporting all residents to receive valuable support and resources.

The 2020 Census is launching as of April 1, 2020. One item of note is that this will be the first time an on-line response will be available as an option. This may help increase the response rate! It’s important that every Minnesotan is counted as federal funding is distributed based on these numbers which impacts our state, counties and communities directly.

Congratulations to SEMAAA Board member Marie Hlava! Marie received an award from Pine Island Mayor Rod Steele in “Special Recognition” of her outstanding work in the area of dementia awareness through the Remember Project, Memory Café and many other service projects that truly make her a pillar of the Pine Island community.

Finding Ways to Engage at Every Age,
Laurie
Impact of COVID-19 On Senior Programming

We’ve all had to make some changes in our lives at this point in an attempt to reduce the likelihood of contracting COVID-19 or spreading it inadvertently. With seniors being in one of the demographics likely to have more challenges with this virus we are taking precautions and doing what we can to minimize unnecessary interactions. This does impact some of the services available to seniors in our region but we know it is temporary and creative ways to deliver services are being considered when possible. We have been following the MN Department of Health recommendations in regard to this and are taking additional precautions when it makes sense. Here are a few trusted links if you wish to learn more about COVID-19 and stay in tune with the situation.

https://www.cdc.gov/ -Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/index.html -MN Department of Health
https://order.store.mayoclinic.com/hl/COVID19 - You will need to enter your email address to receive this free publication.

Updates from Senior Providers in SE MN Due to COVID-19

- **SEMCAC** will continue its Meals on Wheels (MOW) delivery but meals will be placed on your outside steps or porch. Volunteers will call to let you know the meal has been delivered. In the event that the MN Department of Health issues a limited contact order or there are multiple cases in SE MN or there are not enough volunteers to deliver meals, SEMCAC will provide a 14 day box of shelf stable meals to all MOW’s clients. In addition, all congregate dining sites are now offering take out meals. You will need to come pick it up but cannot eat at the site. This will limit the daily exposure to someone dropping off a meal or people gathering together to eat but still provide the needed food that many seniors rely on. They are still offering both medical and non-medical rides, as long as they have volunteer drivers. Access and Assistance staff continue to connect with seniors via phone and provide support. Contact SEMCAC if you have questions-507-864-8228.

- **Family Service Rochester** (FSR) is operating a “car hop drive up” in lieu of their usual Senior Café dining program. Rather than eating in the building you will need to drive up under the awning and they will bring your meal to you in a carry out container. This is available Monday-Friday at noon. Please call and let them know the number of meals you would like before 2:00 pm the day before. The cost is still $4.00 per meal or $3.50 with a punch card. At this time they are not offering housekeeping. All clients that were receiving services will be contacted directly regarding change that impact services they are receiving. Call 507-287-2010 if you have questions about services.
- **Mower County Senior Center** has suspended the use of the building and many of the programs are adjusting to minimize social interactions. Dining will change to curb side pick-up as of March 23rd. Some rides will still continue, however if you are sick please do not request a ride. Regular doctor appointments and dialysis will be given priority. Drivers will be cleaning vehicles between riders. No face-to-face appointments, all information and caregiver access assistance will be done over the phone. As of now housekeeping and snow removal will continue as long as there are volunteers and staff available. Please contact the MCSC if you have questions or can help in anyway-507-433-2370.

- **Winona Friendship Center** is cancelling all programs, (activities, volunteering, Active Wellness Center) of the Friendship Center in an effort of conducting business with an abundance of caution. This will be in effect until at least Friday, March 27, but will be based on City of Winona management, County Health, State of Minnesota Department of Health recommendations. Staff currently will be working, if you want to register or ask questions by phone. Information and assistance will work with clients via phone and see if there are ways they can continue to offer chore and other services creatively so please call if you have a need. You may call and speak to Laura or Malia with any business or questions you may have, 507-454-5212. We will not be opening the doors to the Center for the general public or membership.

- **Neighbors in Action** is committed to the health and safety of our clients, our volunteers, and our staff. We are taking every precautionary measure to prevent exposure to Covid-19. We recognize that those we serve are the people who are at the highest risk of severe symptoms and potentially death if affected. We also realize that many people rely on our services to obtain necessary food and supplies. With this in mind, we are contacting all clients who receive regular services from Neighbors in Action. We are educating them about the risks and allowing them to opt out of service immediately if they choose. We will continue to provide services this week to ensure our clients have the necessary resources to stay well during the quarantine period. As of Monday, March 23rd our staff will only be providing essential services that are necessary for health and safety. This will include shopping for groceries, medical and personal care products, and other necessary items. We will also provide laundry or cleaning only in situations where it is necessary for personal safety. Transportation will be provided for necessary medical appointments only and we will strongly encourage all clients to stay home and avoid exposure to this very contagious illness. Our staff will be calling their assigned clients at least weekly to check-in and reassure them. We will also be available to take phone calls and get supplies for those in need but the main office in La Crescent will be closed to the public. We will also be happy to assist people to get home delivered meals from our mobile meals providers if needed. Please call 507-895-8123 for updates or questions.

- **Senior Resources of Freeborn County** has postponed the Tai Ji Quan class and the Living Well with Chronic Conditions classes that were scheduled. Our transportation program is still going, however our ability to provide rides may be impacted if we have fewer volunteer drivers willing to drive in the future as things evolve. Currently our Respite and Chore programs are operating but with smaller numbers right now. Please call 507-377-7433 with any questions about programming and services.
Three Rivers Community Action will continue its Meals on Wheels (MOW) delivery but meals will be placed on your outside steps or set right inside your front door if it’s open. Volunteers will call to let you know the meal has been delivered. In the event that the MN Department of Health issues a limited contact order or there are multiple cases in SE MN or there are not enough volunteers to deliver meals, Three Rivers will provide a 14 day box of shelf stable meals to all MOW’s clients. Three Rivers has closed its doors to the public as of March 18th at all locations. No face-to-face appointments, all Access Assistance and needs assessments will be done over the phone. Staff is also calling all HDM/CGA clients every day to do check-ins with emotional support and following up with any needs they identify.

Assisted transportation is still available however there are new seating arrangement protocols in place at this time. Please call Three Rivers if you need assistance or have questions—507-316-0610.

Elder Network has communicated with all clients and staff about the risks of COVID-19 and the importance of social distancing. We will follow up with clients to confirm that they understand the information and discuss if they have a plan for maintaining their needs if they are socially isolated and what they will do if they or their caregiver gets sick and must be quarantined. Visiting is still being offered, however, most of that is happening by phone with many of the facilities being shut down. Transportation is still being offered but we are working with clients to prioritize needs. With clinics minimizing non-essential medical visits, most clients are staying home unless the need is for dialysis, chemo etc. We are undertaking extra precautions for transporting clients—social distancing (e.g. 6 ft apart), wiping a car down before and after a client uses it, client sits in the back seat. We are utilizing transportation drivers to help with other things, if possible (delivering groceries and essentials) to seniors who are shut in. We are still offering companion service, but postponing non-essential services and prioritizing those services for those who have few resources to have their basic needs met. We are still helping with grocery shopping, meal preparation and errands, while taking care to minimize contact. Information and Assistance staff are contacting seniors on the phone and limiting in person visits. They are researching and collecting resources to share with seniors who are isolated. We are advising people to make a plan. For people with significant medical conditions they should contact their health provider for information. We are collecting information about needs from people who are isolated and connecting them with Elder Network volunteers or other agencies to get their needs met. Support groups will continue to take place as conference calls, or one on one coaching sessions. We are discussing frequent “check in” calling with support group members, and other self-care resources for caregivers who will now be on-duty 24/7. We have postponed our scheduled PTC workshop, but are exploring remote access options. Call 507-285-5272 for assistance.

Evidence-Based Health Promotion classes are being suspended until further notice. Leaders are working to call and inform anyone who was registered. You can also check the Juniper or WellConnect sites to get an update. If you are not sure please call the registration contact for your class to learn more.

We know this is a fluid situation and these senior services may change again. Please contact the provider directly to get the latest on service options in your area.
Census 2020

The 2020 United States census is in full swing as of April 1, 2020. The Census Bureau has counted every resident in the U.S. every ten years since 1790. This will be the first time an on-line response will be available as an option, which may help increase the response rate and is more cost effective. It’s important that every Minnesotan is counted as federal funding is distributed based on these numbers which impacts our state, counties and communities directly.

Who should be counted?
Everyone should be counted 1 time at their current place of residence. If you are filing for your household you should count anyone who is living there as of April 1st, 2020. This includes children, grandchildren, nieces and nephews or children of friends.

How and when do I complete the census forms?
Census Day is April 1st, 2020. You are invited to complete the forms on-line, by mail, or over the phone. If you do not, you will receive a series of reminders in April. If you still have not completed this form, census takers will be going door to door from late April through August to collect this information from residents who have not completed a census. Here is a link to the on-line census form- https://2020census.gov/?cid=20002:%2Bcensus:sem.ga:p:dm:en:&utm_source=sem.ga&utm_medium=p&utm_campaign=dm:en&utm_content=20002&utm_term=%2Bcensus

Why does it matter?
This Census results have direct effects to our state in numerous ways. It determines the number of seats each state has in the U.S. House of Representatives, as well as the size of voting districts for state and local governments. At this time MN is at risk of losing a congressional seat. Federal funding is allocated to local communities based on the census figures including more than $15 million to MN communities. It helps with planning for infrastructure like roads, schools, hospitals and emergency services. Lastly it helps businesses in locating factories and stores, recruiting employees and conducting market research when planning for growth and development.

We all benefit when everyone is counted! Please take the time to complete the Census now if you haven’t already!
SEMAAA welcomes new Senior Linkage Line® Specialist Abby Teply to the team! Abby graduated in December of 2019 from WSU with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology. She also minored in Statistics and Gerontology. She worked at a nursing home in the culinary department throughout high school and college and has interned in the recreation department at St. Anne of Winona, a senior health center. Abby also interned at the Winona Friendship Center where she led classes on brain health and retirement. We are happy to have Abby join our team!

SEMAAA welcomes new Community Living Specialist Sara Kohrs to the team! Sara has a BA in Health and Human Development and has most recently been working as an Occupational Therapy Assistant. She has 13 years experience in skilled nursing facilities and is passionate about helping people to live at their highest level of functioning. We are excited to have Sara on board!

**2020 SEMAAA BOARD**

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- Chris Johnson – Community Living Specialist
- Sara Kohrs-Community Living Specialist
- Jay Hall – Community Living Specialist
- Camille Bruns – Preadmission Screening Specialist
- Pam Speltz – Preadmission Screening Specialist
- Katie Shimek – Preadmission Screening Specialist
- Nicole Cummings – Preadmission Screening Specialist

Phil and Laurie getting into the St. Patrick’s Day spirit!