



Maryland Philanthropy Network Aging Coordination and Response to COVID-19

Wednesday, March 18, 2020

11:30 AM

Jim Macgill, Jr., Assistant Commissioner of Program Development and Evaluation, Baltimore City Health Department's Division of Aging

Jim talked about mixed messaging around who can access free meals. He clarified that Eating Together provides meals to those living in senior apartment buildings (there are about 30 buildings around the city). The meals are for current Eating Together participants and residents of these buildings only. If the general public tries to go to these buildings, they will not let them in for security reasons. Jim shared that existing participants should get in touch via senior citizen centers. It is Those who are not regular participants, call Maryland Access Point. The best option for the general public is to call Maryland Access Point: 410-396-CARE (2273). The call-center is open and operates 24/7 through its partnership with 211-United Way. There is a food access map link on the BCHD website showing the nutrition sites throughout Baltimore with new information being updated daily.

Those who are 60 and over must have an emergency back-up plan. This includes having enough food for two weeks, having medications on-hand or provision for them to be delivered, and having an emergency contact (family member) who is in the Baltimore-area within an hour away who, ideally is in the Baltimore-area.

Heang Tan, Deputy Commissioner, Baltimore City Health Department's Division of Aging

Things have been evolving so quickly at the Health Department that the presentation they had worked on a couple days ago is no longer relevant. The Health Department is pushing out their communication plan through a series of executive orders. Heang shared that the main priority is on surveillance, testing, and containment.

As of March 18th, there were 85 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Maryland. Five of those cases were in Baltimore City and three of those five were folks 60 years old or over. The Health Department has been working closely with residential and senior housing sites.

Heang reviewed clinical characteristics of COVID-19, guidance for those most vulnerable and BCHD's response actions. Public health messaging will really be the force that keeps everyone safe. In addition, senior centers are closed for programs, evictions are halted, tax sale procedures are postponed, and parking tickets are suspended. If folks have additional city-related asks, this is something BCHD can help with.

Discussion Q & A

- Question on how to do home case management. BCHD has ceased home visits but it depends. We have screening questions we can share. The best thing to do is to call ahead and check if they've traveled. Check if anyone in the home is sick or if they are sick. Provide most of work telephonically, if possible. Heang will also share resources for in-home providers
- Question about Hospital preparedness -Meeting with hospitals on a daily basis. But wants to see if Dr. Choo can speak directly to that
- Trying to identify one-point person who is coordinating supplies and deliveries to senior buildings right now. A sub-group is now required to focus specifically on older adults for delivery (work group is being developed)
- Heang reminded folks that social distancing for older adults is going to save lives at this point. That said, there are long-term effects of social distancing. The Health Department does not have systems in place to think through some of the needed responses. She recognizes that nonprofit partners can lead some of these efforts to address the needs.
- Question about vetting volunteers: United Way, Business Volunteers and Baltimore Untapped have experience working with volunteers. They can be an organizing force for volunteers. [Click here for information.](#)
- Question about guidance for grocery shopping: Encourage the use of delivery services. Giant opens special hours for Seniors and Citizens with Compromised Immune Systems. [Click here for more information.](#)
- Acknowledging uptick in fraud during this time – Report fraud to Attorney General Frosh's hotline. Will add something specifically to the FAQ re: fraud.
- Evictions: The Baltimore sheriff's office will stop evicting people from their homes while schools are closed due to concerns about the coronavirus. [Click here to read more.](#)
- Mayor Young announced that he'd instructed the Department of Finance to pause the City's annual tax sale process.
- The Maryland Department of Aging has the Senior Call Check program, a free resource to MD residents over 65+ and recommends all seniors use the program as a resource during the COVID-19 global pandemic (attachment with information about the program was sent to the Aging Affinity group). Senior Call Check phone lines are open M-F 8 am-5 pm and Saturday 9 am-3 pm. During these hours, seniors can call toll-free 1-866-50-CHECK (1-866-502-0560) and register. Registration and information is available online at aging.maryland.gov.

Additional resources and FAQs will be up on website soon:

<https://health.baltimorecity.gov/coronavirus/information-older-adults-and-caregivers>