

New York StateWide Senior Action Council

MEMBER UPDATE

March 2020



María Alvarez

We all have to look out for each other now. And we wanted to make sure you know that StateWide is here for you.

You can call StateWide at anytime at **800-333-4374** for information as we face these challenging times together or if you need help navigating the health care system. We will be answering our phones – or you can leave a message and we'll get back to you within a day.

- **We will have information posted to our Coronavirus page on our website at nysenior.org.**
- **We will have conference calls with experts to keep you up-to-date.**
- **We will have a recorded message for updates at 518-689-1084.**

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

There is widespread community transmission of COVID-19 (Coronavirus Disease 2019). COVID-19 is a respiratory illness (which affects breathing), symptoms can range from mild, such as a sore throat, to severe, such as pneumonia. It spreads through coughing and

sneezing, and the virus may live on surfaces that people frequently touch. The virus can then be spread if someone touches their eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands.

People who are at most risk for severe illness are those who are over 50 years old and anyone with health conditions, including chronic lung disease, heart disease, diabetes, cancer or a weakened immune system. Symptoms include fever (temperature over 100.4 degrees F), cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, and sore throat.

WHAT YOU CAN DO



Wash your hands thoroughly & frequently, minimize touching your face, **keep your distance (at least six feet) from others, and stay home.**

Monitor your health more closely than usual for cold or flu symptoms.

WHAT IF I AM SICK?

If you are over 50 years old or have chronic conditions, consult your doctor. They may want to monitor you more closely. If your symptoms do not go away or get worse after three to four days, consult with your doctor. If you go out to see your doctor,

Medicare, Medicare Fraud and Patient's Rights Helpline 800-333-4374

WHAT IF I AM SICK? (CONT.)

wear a face mask if available. If possible, take a private car, sit in the back seat and roll down the window. If you have more severe symptoms, such as difficulty breathing and very high fever, go to an emergency department. **Call 911 if you need help right away.**

WHAT'S OPEN/WHAT'S CLOSED

Grocery stores, pharmacies, gas stations, post office, police/fire & medical practices will remain open. Some stores will have special hours for older shoppers only to minimize risk of transmission.

- **Restaurants & bars are closed** but may have take out and delivery services running.
- **Social Security offices are closed** to the public but still working – refer to online help or call the local office.
- **Libraries and schools are closed.** If you need help finding information and don't have an internet connection call StateWide and we'll look it up for you.
- **Evictions and Utility Shut Offs have been suspended** during the pandemic.
- **No visitors allowed at nursing homes or assisted living facilities.** Exceptions can be made for visiting a resident at end of life. Screening and limited visitation to hospital patients.
- **Congregate meals for seniors are closed.** You may be able to pick up a meal



at some locations or request home delivered meals. Call your local Office for Aging for more information.



BE SOCIAL—BUT KEEP YOUR DISTANCE

Phone calls to others are a good way of staying in touch and preventing social isolation and depression for both the caller and the receiver. Check in with others, let them know resources are available and they are not alone.

Call a friend in a nursing home or an assisted living for a friendly phone visit.

Contact friends if you use these computer based services: email, facebook, twitter or Instagram.

THERE IS SOME GOOD NEWS

- **There will be no utility service shutoffs, no evictions, and no disruption in internet and cell phone service for lack of payment.**
- If you are eligible for **unemployment benefits, there will NOT be a 7-day waiting period** for benefits.
- In general, if you're not able to pay your bills on time, contact your lenders and servicers to let them know about your situation.



Stay Safe and Be Well – You may need to be alone right now, but we can still watch out and advocate for one another, StateWide is here for you!



Who to call with your concerns? (Post on your refrigerator)

General coronavirus questions, the NYS Department of State's Coronavirus Helpline is open 24 hours.....	888-364-3065
Medicare coverage, Preventing/Reporting Fraud & Patient Rights (StateWide).....	800-333-4374
Price Gouging (State Division of Consumer Protection).....	800-697-1220
NYS Attorney General Health Care hotline.....	800-428-9071
Gas, Electric, Water, Phone & Cable TV (Service/Billing).....	800-342-3377
Need services (County Office for Aging).....	844-697-6321
Need long term care (NY Connects).....	800-342-9871
Recorded Updates (StateWide).....	518-689-1084

STAY CONNECTED with STATEWIDE

Call StateWide's Telephone Teach ins:

- **April 21:** Empowering New York Consumers in an Era of Hospital Consolidation. Community Catalyst
- **May 19:** Difficult Decisions for Patients and Caregivers About Post-Acute Care and Why They Matter, United Hospital Fund
- **June 23:** Take CHARGE Campaign; 5 Steps to Patient Empowerment

Call StateWide's State and Federal Budget Calls:

- **April 17th:** Final budget negotiations impact on programs that support older residents.
- **June 19:** Federal legislation and budget issues that impact older New Yorkers.

NEW—Call the StateWide Message Line to find out the latest information!

518-689-1084

E-MAIL US: info@nysenior.org

CALL US: 800-333-4374

BOOKMARK OUR WEBSITE:
nysenior.org

FOLLOW US ON TWITTER:
[@NY_StateWide](https://twitter.com/NY_StateWide)

FACEBOOK: facebook.com/NYStateWide

Teach ins and Budget Calls: 10:00 AM—11:00 AM

Call in Numbers: 425-436-6260 - or- 712-832-8330. Access Code: 4715203#

NEW!
Coronavirus
Special Edition

STATE WIDE

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The 2020 Census invitations arrived March 12-20. Don't forget to respond online, by phone, or by mail. Visit www.census.gov for more information.

BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR SCAMS

- **The IRS, Social Security, and the Census will not be calling you** or coming to your door without having first sent you something in the mail.
- **Always ask for identification.** Do not give out your credit card, Medicare/Medicaid/insurance numbers or any self-identifying information.
- **Beware of scammers selling bogus medical treatments.** There is currently no FDA approved vaccine to prevent the disease, so ignore offers promising otherwise.



Source: SMP Library www.smpresource.org/;
NY Attorney General ag.ny.gov/coronavirus

• Hang up on Robocallers!

Beneficiaries are receiving robocalls

about "special virus kits" and being asked for their Medicare number to send a "free" test.

- **The World Health Organization (WHO) is warning that a phishing scam is underway** involving online scammers pretending to be part of the WHO. Double-check the email addresses of senders. Make sure the address following that @ symbol is official. (Official WHO email addresses end with "@who.int.")

Remember to call our Helpline with any questions or concerns.



Medicare, Medicare Fraud and Patient's Rights Helpline 800-333-4374