



Office of the Director

**COVID-19 UPDATE**  
**MARCH 13, 2020**

Dear Community Member,

At the DC Department of Aging and Community Living (DACL), we are committed to ensuring our seniors can live and thrive in the communities they know and love. This commitment includes ensuring the health and wellness of our older residents.

On March 11, 2020, Mayor Muriel Bowser declared both a state of emergency and a public health emergency, effective immediately, to provide additional coordination for the District's response to the coronavirus (COVID-19). Following guidance from DC Health and in a District-wide effort to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, **all DACL-funded Senior Wellness Centers and community dining sites will be temporarily closed for activities effective Monday, March 16, 2020 – March 31.** Meals will be available for pick-up at each site between 10:00am and 2:00pm for current participants. Adult Day Health Centers will remain open at this time.

While the presence of the coronavirus in the District is understandably concerning, it is not unexpected given the spread of the virus globally, and in the United States. There is still no widespread community transmission, and our priority continues to be prevention. Planning and preparation in DC have been underway for several weeks, including interagency coordination in partnership with DC Health and the DC Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency. We continue to monitor potential cases as well as their proximity to our senior wellness centers and other places where seniors gather. As we move forward, we are preparing for every potential scenario, should they become necessary.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), some people are at higher risk of getting very sick from COVID-19, including older adults and people who have serious chronic medical conditions. If you are in this higher-risk population, the CDC recommends that you:

- Stock up on supplies
- During a COVID-19 outbreak in your community, stay home as much as possible to further reduce your risk of being exposed
- When you go out in public, keep away from others who are sick, limit close contact and wash your hands often, using soap and water for at least 20 seconds
- Avoid crowds as much as possible
- Avoid cruise travel and non-essential air travel

The symptoms of COVID-19 are fever, cough, and shortness of breath. If you experience the symptoms of COVID-19 or have reason to believe you have been exposed to COVID-19, call your healthcare provider before visiting a healthcare facility.

To help prevent the spread of germs, you should:

- Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, multiple times a day. An alcohol-based hand sanitizer can be used if soap and water are not available.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home when feeling sick.

- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in a trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

We know that this is a rapidly evolving situation here in DC and around the world. Our plan is to share new information with you frequently so that you have all the information you need to protect yourself, your family, and our neighbors.

If you have any questions, please call us at 202-724-5626. For the latest information on coronavirus, please visit [coronavirus.dc.gov](https://coronavirus.dc.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'L Newland', written in a cursive style.

Laura Newland  
Director, DC Department of Aging and Community Living