

# Beaver County Office on Aging COVID-19 Task Force Newsletter Volume 4, April 22, 2020

## Beware of Coronavirus Scams and Fraud

As the COVID-19 situation continues, so do the scams and fraud directed toward older adults. What should you do to protect yourself?

- Do NOT give out your Social Security number, Medicare number, bank account or other personal information in response to unsolicited texts, emails or phone calls.
- If anyone is going door-to-door offering free Coronavirus or COVID-19 testing, supplies or treatments, this is a scam.
- Review your Medicare Summary Notice or Explanation of Benefits, looking for errors or claims for products or services that were not received.
- While the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and other public health officials may contact you if they believe you may have been exposed to the virus, they will NOT need to ask for your insurance or financial information.
- The federal government will be mailing or direct depositing economic impact payments to most Pennsylvanians. Do not provide any banking information to anyone who contacts you on the phone, through email or text messages, or on social media. Ignore solicitations that offer to get you this payment early or get you more money. Just hang up or delete the email or text.
- To report a scam or for more information, contact the Senior Medicare Patrol at 1-800-356-3606.

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## Customers Need to Wear Masks Inside of Businesses

Pennsylvania Department of Health Secretary Dr. Rachel Levine has signed an order requiring all customers to wear masks while on premises of businesses, and deny entry to individuals not wearing masks, unless the business is providing medication, medical supplies or food, in which case the business must provide alternative methods of pick-up or delivery of goods, except individuals who cannot wear a mask due to a medical condition (including children under the age of two years) may enter the premises without having to provide medical documentation.

Information from the PA Department of Health website

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## Stay at Home Order Still in Place

All 67 counties in Pennsylvania remain under a Stay at Home order until May 8, 2020, unless any changes come from the Governor. The Pennsylvania Department of Health recommends staying home as much as possible. Try to get groceries once a week instead of daily. Freedom of travel remains, but refrain from non-essential travel. Essential travel includes things like commuting to an essential job, picking up supplies like groceries and medicine and checking on family and pets in other households. Do not host or attend gatherings.

Information from the PA Department of Health website

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## Information for Those Who Have Filed for Unemployment Compensation

If you have filed for Unemployment Compensation due to COVID-19 and are waiting for a call from Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry, add their telephone number to your cellular phone, 888-313-7284. Some cellular providers block 888 numbers if they are not in your contacts and others filter them as spam.

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## Will Economic Impact Payments Affect Eligibility for Consumers of Office of Long Term Living Services?

The Office of Long Term Living (OLTL) has received questions on how the Economic Impact Payments (Stimulus checks) will affect Medical Assistance eligibility for people receiving services including Community Health Choices, Living Independence for the Elderly (LIFE) program, OBRA Waiver and Act 150 program.

Q. Will participants be over the resource limit after receiving the Economic Impact Payment?

A. The portion of the Economic Impact Payment that is spent within 12 months of receipt is considered excluded resource for Medical Assistance eligibility. Any portion of the payment that is not spent within 12 months of receipt is a countable resource.

Q. Does the Economic Impact Payment (Stimulus) need to be reported as income for the month it is received and will it count as income in the month it is received?

A. The payment must be reported to the County Assistance Office, but it will be considered excluded income for Medical Assistance eligibility.

Q. Does the Economic Impact Payment (Stimulus) need to be included in the resident liability (patient pay) for the month?

A. No, the payment will not be counted to determine the patient pay.

Information provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services

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## Veterans Benefits Continue to be Available During COVID-19

The Pennsylvania Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMVA) are continuing to process veterans state and federal benefits. The DMVA and the Federal VA are working remotely to provide veterans' information, enroll for benefits, and serve other veterans' needs during the pandemic emergency.

The DMVA administers an array of programs and services to meet the needs of veterans including:

- **Veterans Temporary Assistance/Military Family Relief Assistance programs:** This provides financial assistance to service members, veterans and families who experience unforeseen financial challenges. For questions email: [Ra-vta@pa.gov](mailto:Ra-vta@pa.gov)
- **Records Request Program:** Provides assistance in requesting military service records to include DD Form 214, DD Form 215, NGB Form 22, NGB Form 23, and other service-related documents. For questions email: [Ra-req@pa.gov](mailto:Ra-req@pa.gov)
- **Amputee, Paralyzed and Blind Veterans Pension programs:** These programs provide a monthly pension to eligible veterans who incurred a service-connected disability. For questions about the Amputee and Paralyzed Veterans Pension email: [Ra-pvp@pa.gov](mailto:Ra-pvp@pa.gov). For questions about the Blind Veterans Pension email: [Ra-bvp@pa.gov](mailto:Ra-bvp@pa.gov).

- **Educational Gratuity Program:** This provides financial assistance to children of honorably discharged veterans who have service-connected disabilities and served during a period of war or armed conflict or children of veterans who die or died in service during a period of war or armed conflict. For questions email: [Ra-eg@pa.gov](mailto:Ra-eg@pa.gov).
- **Disabled Veteran Real Estate Tax Exemption Program:** Provides real estate tax exemption for any honorably discharged veteran who is 100 percent disabled, a resident of the commonwealth and has a financial need. For questions email: [Ra-retx@pa.gov](mailto:Ra-retx@pa.gov).

Applications for these programs are traditionally initiated with the county director for veterans affairs (CDVA) staff. If a CDVA is not available due to county office closure, the veteran may contact DMVA's Office of Veterans Affairs directly at 800-547-2838.

For more information and updates on all of DMVA's programs and services, visit <https://www.dmva.pa.gov/veteransaffairs> or follow us at [www.facebook.com/padmva](https://www.facebook.com/padmva) or [www.twitter.com/padmva](https://www.twitter.com/padmva).

Veterans, family members and people who work with veterans can connect with DMVA to request information related to the valuable state benefits, programs and services offered by also signing up on the Veteran's Registry at [www.register.dmva.pa.gov](http://www.register.dmva.pa.gov).

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### **Online Course for Elders Caring for Children with Special Needs**

An online course, "Elders Caring for Children with Special Needs," will be held at 9:30 a.m. May 7. Sponsored by PA Link and Anderson Elder Law, the course is designed to provide informative and understandable information on elder law and special needs planning. The course, led by certified elder law attorney Linda M. Anderson, Esq., of Anderson Elder Law, will discuss common cases, common problems and resolutions on working with both populations. The course addresses both generations to ensure vulnerable parties are protected and receive all the support they need.

Register for the no cost course at: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/elders-caring-for-special-needs-children-registration-102786483138>

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### **Older Adult Protective Services**

If you feel an older adult is being abused, neglected, or exploited, call Older Adult Protective Services at 724-775-1786. The hotline is open 24 hours a day.

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### **Ombudsman Service is Available**

The Beaver County Office on Aging Ombudsmen are working full time, at home, and are available to accept calls and handle any complaints or questions related to nursing facility and personal care home resident rights and problem resolution. We will return your call by the end of the next business day. Ombudsman calls are considered and treated with highest confidentiality.

To contact the Ombudsman program you may: email [Ombudsman@BCOA.US](mailto:Ombudsman@BCOA.US); call the Ombudsman direct phone line 724-480-8589; or call the Office on Aging main phone 724-847-2262, identify your call as an Ombudsman issue, with no details, as these calls are highly confidential and leave your name and phone number only.

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