

March 2020

A Letter from AgeOptions CEO Diane Slezak



Diane Slezak

As our nation deals with the pandemic, AgeOptions leadership is taking appropriate steps to ensure the health and safety of our staff and volunteers while remaining committed to meeting the needs of older adults – those most vulnerable. We have taken the following steps:

- We are continuing to provide service while our Oak Park office is closed to the public. Most of our staff is working remotely and can be reached via their usual e-mail addresses and our usual phone number, (708)383-0258.
- Following IDOA guidance, we advised our partner agencies to suspend congregate dining and all group activities including Take Charge of Your Health, A Matter of Balance classes, Thrive with Pride and Memory Cafes.
- Each congregate dining site has an individual plan for how they will provide meals while dining sites are closed. Participants have been offered the option of receiving home delivered meals OR picking up prepared meals at the dining locations.
- The Home Delivered Meals program will continue but there will be accommodations to protect workers, volunteers and clients. There may be alternative services/arrangements where needed. We ordered shelf stable meals and asked our caterers to prepare and freeze additional meals. We are uncertain if the current volunteers who deliver meals will be able to continue as the days pass. In case they cannot continue, we will FedEx meals AND we will recruit community members to pitch in and deliver meals.

- During this pandemic **one of greatest concerns is the social isolation of older adults**. We are working to address this issue by adapting our current programs and creating new connections. We will share more information as we develop these efforts.
- To combat the negative effects of social isolation, you may want to **volunteer to call home-bound older adults or deliver meals**. Please contact Joan Fox at **(708)383-0258** or email her at joan.fox@ageoptions.org to arrange for this. We will require background checks to protect clients.

If you would like to make a donation to support any of these services, please call (708)383-0258 or click here: <http://www.ageoptions.org/donate.html>.

I want to personally assure you that we share your concerns at this time of tremendous uncertainty and upheaval in our lives and communities. We deeply appreciate the support we have received from the Illinois Department on Aging and Cook County Department of Public Health.

We will all get through this together and we look forward to resuming normal services to the older adults who need us now more than ever, and to continuing our relationship with you. Thanks to the amazing partners we have across Suburban Cook County who have gone above and beyond to continue to provide services as we are allowed.

With sincere gratitude for your care and support,

Diane