



JB Pritzker, Governor

Illinois Department of Human Services

Grace B. Hou, Secretary

100 South Grand Avenue, East • Springfield, Illinois 62762
401 South Clinton Street • Chicago, Illinois 60607

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONTACT

Meghan Powers, Meghan.powers@illinois.gov

Patrick Laughlin, Patrick.laughlin@illinois.gov

ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES AND DEPARTMENT OF AGING SHARE RESOURCES FOR OLDER ADULTS AT RISK DURING SOCIAL ISOLATION

*Resources Shared as Part of Mental Health Month and National Older Adult Mental
Health Awareness Day 2020*

CHICAGO – The Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) Division of Mental Health, together with the Illinois Department on Aging (IDOA), is sharing resources for all Illinoisans who are older adults or have older adults in their lives in need of support. While the COVID-19 pandemic is impacting everyone, older adults are particularly at risk for social isolation. These resources are being shared today, which is National Older Adult Mental Health Awareness Day 2020.

“Older adults, particularly those who are at a greater risk for social isolation, need our support now more than ever,” said Grace Hou, Secretary of IDHS. “We want to be sure older adults and their loved ones know they are not alone. The Illinois Department of Human Services Division of Mental Health and the Illinois Department on Aging offer many resources to address mental health issues and are here to help now and always.”

To slow the spread of COVID-19, IDHS and IDOA recommend following guidelines from the Illinois Department of Public Health, including wearing a face mask when in public, practicing social distancing, and washing your hands frequently. The departments also recommend getting an average of 6-8 hours of sleep per night, establishing or keeping a record of a daily routine and exercise, and practicing regular self-care, such as showering and grooming.



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“The stress on everybody is growing every day. Plan for what you can, and focus on things you can control,” said Paula Basta, Director of IDoA. “I encourage everyone to be mindful of our older family members, friends, or neighbors, and check in to see how they are doing. Find a creative way to communicate with them during this time and monitor their health.”

For those seeking assistance, please visit www.dhs.state.il.us and click on HELP IS HERE, visit the IDoA website at www.illinois.gov/aging, call the IDOA Senior HelpLine at 1-800-252-8966 (hearing impaired call 888-206-1327), or by email aging.ilsenior@illinois.gov.

IDHS also offers the following links and resources for older adults who are in need of support:

- **Distress:** [Disaster Distress Hotline](#) or the [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#).
- **Food assistance:** [Meals on Wheels](#) and [Feeding America](#) provide options based on ZIP Code.
- **Transportation:** [Eldercare Locator](#) for local services.
- **Medicine:** [GoodRX](#) or [NeedyMeds](#).
- **Medicare:** Seek advice from the local [State Health Insurance Assistance Program](#) or from [Medicare.gov](#).
- **Benefits assistance:** [BenefitsCheckUp.org](#) provide options by state to help with utility bill payments, prescription drug costs, and more.

Additionally, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), the Administration on Community Living, the Veterans Administration, and the National Coalition on Mental Health and Aging have announced a virtual event to discuss practical ideas to promote connection and recovery for older adults with serious mental illness and substance use disorders, during this unprecedented time in our history.

The event, Combating Social Isolation for Seniors during the COVID-19 Pandemic, will take place on Thursday, May 7th from 12:00pm to 1:30pm. The announcement and registration can be found [here](#).

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