What Can You Expect when Returning to the Senior Activity Centers?

On March 13, 2020, the senior activity centers were closed by order of Gov. Hogan out of concern for the spreading COVID-19 virus and resulting pandemic. The Department of Aging & Human Services, Division of Senior Center Operations knows that you have missed attending the center and can’t wait for it to reopen. The Division is working to plan for the safe reopening of the senior activity centers when allowed by the Governor, the St. Mary’s County Health Department and County Government. This plan for initial reopening does not include the resumption of congregate and home delivered meals. It should also be noted that not all activities previously offered at the senior activity centers may be accommodated at this time due to space limitations and social distancing guidelines. Things will look and operate differently, at least upon reopening. But, with everyone’s cooperation, understanding, and effort the centers will safely reopen and someday return to operation as you know it.

The following guidelines will be in place when the senior activity centers reopen:

- Hours of access to seniors will be 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.
- Due to limited space and availability of programs, only St. Mary’s County residents will be able to attend
- Class sizes will be limited in all activities to allow for a minimum of 6 feet social/physical distancing. A reservation to participate must be made in advance by calling the reservation request line at the center one wishes to attend. No drop-in programs or visits will be allowed at this time. Drop-in activity will resume at a later time when deemed safe
- Observe social/physical distancing guidelines as recommended by County Government, County Health Department and the CDC
- Always wear a face covering when indoors; and when outside if unable to maintain 6 ft. distance while walking through the parking lot and on the grounds. Outdoor group activities involving physical activity (walking, pickleball, biking) may require additional space for physical distancing and wearing of face coverings
- Complete the Daily Health Screening tool before entrance. Temperature will be checked at the door before entering the facility. Anyone with a fever of 100° F or higher and/or completing an unsatisfactory health screening will not be allowed entry
- If able to enter, consumer will proceed to receptionist who will confirm activity appointment and collect fees, if needed
- Seniors should arrive no more than 10 minutes before their planned activity. Participants should leave the building within 10 minutes after completion of their activity
- Have an up-to-date signed waiver and AIM registration form on file with the Department; checked by staff before arrival
• Provide for frequent hand washing or use of hand sanitizer (≥ 60% alcohol) throughout the building

• Use of exercise equipment will be by appointment only, limited to 45 minutes. Only 1 exercise appointment will be available each hour, on the hour, to allow 15 minutes for adequate cleaning between consumers. Household members can exercise together. Face coverings are to be worn at all times

• Participants in group exercise classes will be spaced 8-10 ft. apart, with floors appropriately marked for social/physical distance. Each participant will supply their own equipment (mat, hand weights, exercise band, etc.). Face coverings are required while exercising unless the participant has a medical exclusion. Approval of a medical exclusion is determined by the County nurse based on medical documentation before admittance to a senior activity center is allowed. If fans are used, they will be overhead, not directly aimed at exercise participants

• Signage will be placed outside of the restrooms. Restrooms will be limited to ½ capacity with every other stall locked and only one urinal available for use. Likewise, alternating sinks will be available for handwashing so that social distancing can be maintained

• Due to social/physical distancing and resulting space limitations, not all activities previously offered at the senior activity centers may be available at this time. Card, board, and table games do not allow for adequate social/physical distancing and cannot resume at this time. Activities that require direct physical contact such as massage and reflexology will not be available at this time. Small groups that can maintain adequate social/physical distance such as sewing and quilting, and are able to bring their own supplies, may be able to meet. Bus transportation schedules that work with the centers’ requirements for social/physical distancing are being considered

• Center tours for new participants will be by appointment only, Monday – Friday, 3-4:30 p.m.

Your cooperation with these guidelines helps to ensure the health and safety of everyone at the center. We realize that this is restrictive and not everyone will be able to attend. Please remember, this is a starting point from which we will grow.