March 9, 2020

LiveOn NY Recommendations and Considerations for the Department for the Aging (DFTA) related to COVID-19

- Communication to Providers
  - Convene regular briefings with information for DFTA providers
  - Publish a communications plan so that providers know who they need to contact at DFTA

- Closures and/or Adjustment to Programs
  - Issue the protocol and "triggers" for center closure. For example, does the “DOE Closure” trigger apply in this situation or should it be more proactive because of the vulnerability of older adults?
  - Provide guidance for who is responsible to make the decision as to whether to close a center/program. Include information on communication channels (ex. who at DFTA is the point person)
  - Provide guidance for the protocol for group activities at DFTA programs.

- Nutrition Programs
  - Provide an Action Plan immediately for meal distribution to clients who do not wish to attend senior centers and also in the event center(s) are closed. DFTA must communicate that plan to the public and providers.
  - Ease home-delivered meals requirements that require direct contact with client for the safety of both the client and the staff/volunteers, and should allow drop off at the door, with communication following to ensure the meal was received
  - Allow for lunch/meal pick-ups at centers and for those to count as units for seniors who do now wish to stay

- Contractual Requirements
  - Waive the requirement that senior centers be open for 250 days annually

- Program Guidance Needed
  - Provide guidance for any co-located centers in buildings, including NYCHA facilities, when a quarantine is placed on the building.
  - Provide public information in large print and multiple languages.
  - Issue guidance on how to address fear and xenophobia.
  - Issue guidance and best practices on how to support tenants in senior housing buildings.

- Guidance on Supporting Sick Clients
  - Issue guidance on how providers handle clients who appear sick.
    - For example: If somebody appears sick at a senior center, can the agency suspend them and require a Medical Clearance to return? Where should providers direct the client with symptoms?
    - Direct providers how to advise clients that are sick and need to be tested.
    - Provide a protocol to providers about what to do and where to report if a client reports they have tested positive or have been quarantined.
    - Provide guidance for case management agencies to ensure employees are protected and clients get the help and referrals they need if they are sick or for example have recently traveled to an area of concern or who have been in contact with somebody sick.

- Funding and Support
  - Provide process, timeline and guarantee of funding available for agencies to request reimbursement for additional needs, including but not limited to cleaning supplies and labor related to increase staffing needs.
  - Add on-site maintenance and facilities support to DFTA providers from DFTA to help with maintenance and cleaning.
  - Assess locations with poor ventilation program sites feed the fear of illness spreading quickly (basement location).