



March 26, 2020

Re: ADSD COVID-19 Crisis Update and Launch of NV COVID-19 Aging Network (NV CAN) Rapid Response

Dear Aging Network Members,

Recent events have Nevada facing a challenge unlike anything we have seen in our lifetimes. At the same time, the communities, families, and individuals that the Aging and Disability Services Division provides services to need us more than ever. I first want to update you on the status of current operations: ADSD has been maintaining all essential services including the Adult Protective Services, Long Term Care Ombudsman, Home and Community Based Services, Children's Services and Developmental Services. We have transitioned many of our 1000+ staff to a primarily telecommuting workforce, while others are on alternative schedules in order to practice maximum social distancing while ensuring essential services continue across the state.

The unprecedented aging services crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic is impacting the entire Nevada Aging Services Network, with many demands on our time as well as our services as we try to maintain the quality of life of Nevada's currently 454,221 homebound, at-risk elders. We must recognize that all of Nevada's elder citizens are currently homebound and at-risk, because at the current time (and for an unpredictable duration), all people ages 65 and older are highly encouraged not to leave their homes, due to an elevated risk of serious complications if they contract the coronavirus. This highly-encouraged physical separation itself has the potential to cause a range of impacts on elder health and well-being, including among others, a lack of access to basic daily essentials such as food and medications, social isolation and a lack of access to needed health care and social services.

Keeping Nevada's elders safe from exposure to the coronavirus, while ensuring they are well-supplied, have access to medical and social services, and remain free from social isolation (while being physically separated) are now our collective top priorities as an aging network.

To enact a rapid response, Aging and Disability Services is leading a partnership with the University of Nevada, Reno School of Medicine (UNR Med) Sanford Center for Aging (SCA), UNR School of Community Health Sciences (CHS) Dementia Engagement, Education and Research (DEER) Program, Nevada Senior Services and Nevada 2-1-1, to plan and implement a comprehensive and coordinated approach to meet the needs of the potentially hundreds-of-thousands of newly-isolated elders. This new statewide, integrated aging services response to the COVID-19 crisis will carry the aspirational name of **NV CAN**, the Nevada COVID-19 Aging Network (CAN) Rapid Response.

This approach will require expansive engagement, inclusive collaboration, highly effective coordination, and resource re-allocation with deliberate prioritization across our network. We are focusing our collaborative efforts on, and will engage you in, the following priority areas:

1. Broad-based communication and outreach to elders, aging services organizations and the public;
2. Volunteer mobilization to support critical areas of need;

3. Access to daily essentials (e.g., food and medications);
4. Social support and regular one-on-one check-ins; and
5. Access to telehealth services.

We are developing and launching a website in coordination with Nevada 2-1-1 that will offer a single point of entry intended to provide elders and their caregivers the ability to easily send a request for help that clearly identifies their specific needs in a defined set of essential areas. In addition, this important new website will provide seniors access to credible information and updated federal and state guidance regarding the COVID-19 crisis and response.

The website will also provide support to the aging network with timely information, guidance and tools during this evolving situation. We want to be sure our partners have the most recent information as well as the ability to share ideas, tools and resources with one another to fully support collaboration across the state. We know how hard you are working to address the needs of vulnerable Nevadans across our state, and know that together we can “flatten the curve” of COVID-19, while also supporting the well-being of Nevada’s elders.

We need each one of you to make this effort a success. The statewide, coordinated approach at the heart of NV CAN will include the following three priority service areas:

1. **Access to Essentials for Daily Life**, i.e., food and medications, with a statewide Action Team led by Jeff Klein of Nevada Senior Services;
2. **Volunteer Mobilization and Virtual Social Support/One-to-One Check-ins**, with an Action Team led by Dr. Jennifer Carson of the UNR CHS DEER Program; and
3. **Access to telemedicine and tele-social work services**, with an Action Team led by Dr. Peter Reed of the UNR Med SCA.

The participation of all Nevada’s aging services agencies and many others will be essential to the success of NV CAN and its coordinated efforts. Your support and active engagement is needed at this time as we all come together to tackle the biggest challenge we have ever faced in supporting the well-being of Nevada’s elders. There will be much more information coming shortly to explain how you, your organization and your volunteers can actively participate in NV CAN. Please review the attached program plan for more details of the structure and function of NV CAN, and please reach out through the identified channels to get engaged.

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to each of you and your teams as we work together to lead and support such an amazing group of passionate advocates and service professionals working together to serve elders during this crisis. Together, I know that the aging network of Nevada CAN come together to meet the demands we now face. Thank you for everything you are doing, and please watch for more resources and information from NV CAN shortly.

With tremendous gratitude and respect for our entire network,



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