To: Heat Plan Participants

From: Elaine Lawley

Communications Director/Heat Plan Coordinator

Delaware County Office of Services for the Aging (COSA)

Date: June 22, 2021

Subject: Heat Plan for 2021

Delaware County Council and COSA work to ensure that all senior citizens in Delaware County are safe and that they have the resources they need to cope with challenging weather conditions. Attached is a copy of the Delaware County Heat Plan for 2021. Heat related handouts are included in the plan and can be duplicated for distribution to consumers and family members.

The Heat Information Line **(610) 872-1558** will go into effect June 1, 2021 through September 30, 2021**.** Remind your consumers not to leave messages at this number. Any questions or heat related needs should be directed to Information and Assistance at 610-490-1300.

If you have any questions, you can reach me at 610-499-1962.

COSA
Delaware County Office of Services for the Aging

1510 Chester Pike, Suite 250
Eddystone, PA 19022

610-490-1300
www.delcosa.org

Delaware County Office of Services for the Aging

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Purpose

Persons aged 60 and older are at a greater risk for heat related illnesses during a heat crisis. To help prevent serious illness due to heat related illnesses, the Delaware County Office of Services for the Aging (COSA) has developed a Heat Emergency Plan and will act as the focal point of their communities for aging programs and services. This county-based heat wave preparedness plan targets persons aged 60 and older who are considered most at risk for heat related illness. A twenty-four-hour emergency heat information line will be activated during the summer months beginning June 1 through September 30 annually. This information line will provide weekly heat safety tips and reminders, emergency information and locations where persons can cool off, especially during a heat crisis.

Criteria for Identifying Persons at Risk

Persons can be considered at risk if the following conditions exist:

1. Their physical condition makes them less able to handle heat stress which will include persons with chronic illness and who are over/underweight.
2. They are not able to easily control their environment, which will include dependent persons, urban dwellers, and those who are low income.
3. They are more difficult to reach through ordinary communication channels (live alone, homeless, non-English speaking, illiterate, culturally/socially isolated.

Other risk factors that may be associated with people being at risk of heat related illnesses include:

4. No air conditioning in the home and/or no time spent in air conditioning outside the home.
5. Failure to reduce activity and/or increase fluid intake during periods of high heat.
6. Use of medicines and/alcohol.
7. Living on second or third floor of a non-air-conditioned building.

Heat Plan Coordinator

The Communications Director will assume the role of coordinator for the heat plan. The coordinator will work closely with the Information and Assistance staff that will serve as a secondary contact person. The Coordinator will be responsible for:

- Coordination and updating of the annual heat plan.
- Maintaining the emergency heat information line.
- Notifying heat plan participants of significant changes in the heat index status based on the National Weather Service's criteria, and provide response information either by fax transmittal or email.
- Assure that responses during a heat crisis are carried out and that the needs of "at risk" consumers are addressed.
- Annually provide the Pennsylvania Department of Aging Emergency Management Liaison with a copy of the heat plan.
- Providing heat intervention updates to the Emergency Management Liaison when requested during an excessive heat crisis.
- Providing written information for consumers as requested.

Education Plan

The Heat Coordinator will:

- Disseminate to all COSA sponsored senior centers and adult day care facilities information flyers addressing heat related issues and safety interventions.
- Provide the local media with community service announcements concerning effects of heat on the elderly.
- Provide community based educational programs and written information on heat safety issues when requested.

Senior Centers and Adult Day Care Centers Responsibilities during a Heat Crisis

All COSA sponsored senior centers and adult day centers will participate in the heat plan. The center director will be responsible for:

***Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Senior Centers and ADCs may not be open or may have limited capacity.**

- Providing educational sessions throughout the summer months on heat related topics with a focus on its impact on older adults. Daily reminders are encouraged, especially during a heat crisis.
- Providing daily safety reminders, especially during a heat crisis, to help decrease the risk of heat related disease.
- Providing informational flyers to their in-home clients to remind them and their caregiver of heat related issues and safety interventions.
- Maintaining pitchers of cold ice water or other non-caffeinated beverages on the tables throughout the day to reinforce the practice of taking cool liquids frequently to prevent dehydration.
- Reinforcing with homebound drivers the need to check with consumers to ensure they have adequate cool water available and that their home has adequate ventilation. Drivers are to report to the meal supervisor any consumers they believe to be at risk.
- Identifying members who they feel may be at risk, contact them to determine their status, and help solve problems.
- Reminding caregivers about safety issues involving the heat and the effects of heat on the elderly.
- Determining if extended hours can be provided during a heat crisis at their center.
- Determining if the center will be open with extended hours on an as needed basis
- Notifying consumers who receive home delivered meals of any change in the normal meal delivery schedule.

Long Term Services & Supports Responsibilities during a Heat Crisis

Supervisors, care managers, and assessors will:

- Review their caseload to identify consumers identified "at risk" using the following long-term services and supports criteria as a guide. A consumer will be considered "at risk" if they:

1. Have limited, nonexistent, or inconsistent informal supports.
2. Have no phone.
3. Are home or bedbound.
4. Live alone or with another frail elderly person.
5. Have a history of mental or cognitive impairment.
6. Have a prior history of problems with inadequate heating or cooling for the home.
7. Have limited financial resources.
8. Have health needs that require the utilization of medical equipment using electricity.

- A list of "at risk" consumers will be developed and be available at all times to the supervisor and care manager. This list should be updated at least monthly and should contain the following consumer information.

1. Name
2. Address
3. Telephone number
4. Emergency contact and telephone number
5. Primary Care Physician

- A list of "at risk" consumers will be provided to COSA's Program Director of Home and Community Based Services.

In-Home Services

1. The supervisor will communicate any necessary information to the staff throughout the crisis. It will be the supervisor's responsibility to assure that consumers are contacted on the weekend or holiday.

2. The care managers will call their consumers or their emergency contacts on the list to determine their status and to help solve problems.

- If a problem is identified which cannot be resolved over the phone, they should contact COSA's emergency on-call number or the police, depending on the situation.

COSA
Contact: Annie McAlpin, Program Director of Home & Community-Based Services

1510 Chester Pike, Suite 250
Eddystone, PA 19022
610-872-1482
After hours call 610-490-1300 and listen for emergency number

Senior Community Services

Contact: Debbie Templeton, Director of Long Term Care

1515 Lansdowne Avenue

Darby, PA 19023

Cell phone: 484-534-2050

After hours call COSA at 610-490-1300 and listen for emergency number

COSA

Contact: Joanna King, Assessment Unit Director

1510 Chester Pike, Suite 250

Eddystone, PA 19022

610-490-1842

After hours call 610-490-1300 and listen for emergency number

Transportation

Community Transit will provide transportation on the weekend if requested. The requesting center must notify Community Transit by Friday at 10:00 a.m. Transportation will be provided on Saturdays only when extended hours are offered.

*Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Senior Centers and ADCs may be closed or have limited capacity.

Standard Heat Index Crisis Criteria and Responses

During periods of prolonged heat, the Heat Plan Coordinator will identify the heat index stage and notify all participants of the appropriate responses to minimize adverse effects from the heat via email. The same notification will be posted on the Heat Emergency Information line along with heat safety guidelines and other pertinent information for consumers.

The emergency information line can be reached at 610-872-1558, twenty-four hours a day, and will be in effect from June 1 through September 30. Updates will be provided on a weekly basis and more frequently during a heat emergency.

Note: All temperatures are based on the heat index listings.

	Criteria	Participant Response
Excessive Heat Outlook-Be Aware!	Issued when the potential exists for an excessive heat event in the next 3-7 days. An Outlook provides information to those who need considerable lead-time to prepare for the event.	• All participants will reinforce educational components of heat & its effects on older adults
Excessive Heat Watch-Be Prepared!	Issued when conditions are favorable for an excessive heat event in the next 24-72 hours. A Watch is used when the risk of a heat wave has increased but its occurrence and timing are still uncertain.	• Same as above
Heat Advisory-Take Action!	Is issued within 12 hrs. of the onset of extremely dangerous heat conditions. The general rule of thumb is when maximum heat index is expected to be 100 degrees or higher for at least 2 days and night time air temperatures will not drop below 75 degrees.	• Same as above • Encourage use of fans and air conditioners for the homebound • Encourage dressing in cool natural fiber clothing • Encourage hourly fluid intake or at the discretion of the physician • Identify and check on at-risk consumers
Excessive Heat Warning-Take Action!	Is issued within 12 hrs. of event. Maximum heat index is expected to be 105 degrees or higher for at least two days and night time air temperatures will not drop below 75 degrees.	• Same as above • Activate extended hours for participants • Implement any state directed recommendations

*Criteria obtained from https://www.weather.gov/safety/heat-ww

Locations providing Extended Hours During Excessive Heat Warning

***Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Senior Centers and ADCs may be closed or have limited capacity.**

Senior Centers

Chester Senior Center

721 Hayes Street

Chester, PA 19013

610-497-3550

Contact: Jamee Nowell

Hours: 4 p.m. to 6 p.m.
Monday to Friday

Upper Darby Senior Center

326 Watkins Avenue

Upper Darby, PA 19082

610-734-7652

Contact: Michael Maloney

Hours: 8 a.m. to 10 p.m.
Monday to Friday

Saturday: 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Wayne Senior Center

108 Station Road

Wayne, PA 19087

(610) 688-6246

Contact: Katie Mahon

Hours: 4 p.m. to 6 p.m.
Monday to Friday

Adult Day Centers

Active Day of Crozer

The Alexander Silberman Center

1 Medical Center Blvd.

Upland, PA 19013

484-768-2110

Contact: Jessica Curcio

Hours: 7 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Monday to Friday

Saturday– 9 a.m.– 4 p.m.

Note: Staff should be notified by 3 p.m. of the intent for use to assure center will be open and

Adult Day Services

3 South State Road

Upper Darby, PA 19083

Phone: 610-352-9945

Contact: Patty Banes

Hours: 7 a.m. – 7 p.m.
Monday to Friday
(Transportation for consumers only)

Active Day of Broomall

1991 S. Sproul Rd, Suite 850

Broomall, PA 19008

Phone: 610-325-1600

Contact: Melanie Butler

Hours: 7 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Monday to Friday

Note: Notify 3 hours in advance of need

Active Day of Clifton Heights

214 East Baltimore Pike

Clifton Heights, PA 19018

Phone: 610-626-4270

Contact: Nancy Cook

Hours: 7 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Monday to Friday

Saturday 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

Locations Providing Weekend Hours

Upper Darby Senior Center

326 Watkins Avenue

Upper Darby, PA 19082

610-734-7652

Contact: Michael Maloney

Hours: 8 a.m. to 10 p.m.
Monday to Friday

Saturday: 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Additional Resources:

Department of Human Services

Severe Weather Information for Vulnerable Households

This information contained within explains the expanded services and resources available during times of extreme heat and severe weather for those who are vulnerable and homeless in Delaware County. Many of the services described are in place and operational regardless of the temperature, however, in times of severe heat, overflow shelter beds are made available, service hours are expanded, street outreach intensifies and well-checks are completed on persons who have are unsheltered, housed and/or identified as "at risk".

The Delaware County Department of Human Services, Office of Behavioral Health- Division of Adult and Family Services and the Division of Mental Health oversee various activities to ensure the safety and well-being of vulnerable households. The Office of Behavioral Health assures that resources are available for extreme heat conditions for individuals and families with mental illness, mental illness and co-occurring drug and alcohol disorders, and the homeless. The Mental Health Division provides a Summer Cooling Program for persons with mental illness and mental illness and co-occurring drug and alcohol disorders who are registered in the public mental health system. Case managers or other support staff can access fans for the individuals and families that they serve by contacting Providence House at 610-876-2403. In addition, the Adult Services Division also assures that homeless individuals and families have access to expanded street outreach, emergency shelter beds, and day center facilities in Chester and Upper Darby. These resources provide air-conditioned environments and access to fluids to prevent heat exhaustion, stroke, and dehydration during periods of extreme heat.

Shelters & Over Flow Beds - The following shelter programs offer overflow beds during times of extreme **heat.**

*Due to COVID-19 closures and restrictions, it is recommended to call shelter prior to inquire about availability.

Storm Alerts - In situations of extreme conditions or an approaching storm, the Division of Adult & Family Services electronically alerts all shelter programs to prepare for power outages, food needs, overflow capacity and expanded hours if needed.

Outreach - The goal of Outreach is to locate homeless persons and bring them into safety at a day center facility by offering expanded service hours; programs can ensure that the vulnerable population is safe. Outreach efforts are mobilized by the three outreach programs in the county that target areas where homeless people are known to be. Outreach efforts may be expanded in time and locations in hopes of locating and engaging the folks to come in from the extreme conditions.

Shelter Program	Location & Contact Information	Population	# of year-round beds	Overflow beds
Life Center of Eastern Delaware County	6310 Market Street, Upper Darby After 10:00 PM, the Life Center accepts drops offs and walk-ins. Two additional beds are reserved for police placements.	Single Adults	50	13
Salvation Army	151 W. 15th Street, Chester	Single Adults	35	5
Community Action Agency – Temp. Emergency Shelter Program	Voucher based for vulnerable house-holds only 610-874-8451-intake and overnight and weekend answering	Vulnerable families & single adults	N/A	As needed

Reproducible Handouts

The following handouts are attached and can be duplicated for distribution to your consumer and their families;

- Heat Stress Fact Sheet
- Don't Risk Becoming Dehydrated
- Heat Safety Tips to Help You Survive the Heat
- Fan Facts

Heat Safety Tips to Help You Survive the Heat

During periods of prolonged heat, the elderly and persons with chronic health conditions are usually the first to be affected by the heat. The following are some preventative tips that can help you cope with the heat:

- Dress appropriately by wearing lightweight, light colored, loose fitting clothing.

- Stay indoors in air-conditioned areas as much as possible. If you do not have air conditioning, you can seek relief for some part of the day at a local senior center, a mall, a library, and a movie theater, of visit family who have air conditioning.

- If using a fan to keep cool, a window should be kept open to allow the hot air to escape. Keep blinds and curtains drawn and spend as much time as possible on the first floor of their home.

- Protect skin and eyes by using sunscreen, wearing a wide brimmed hat and sunglasses when outdoors.

- Slow down and avoid strenuous activities, especially outdoor activities, during the hottest part of the day (noon – 4 p.m.). If you must be active, you should take frequent rests in a cool place and drink plenty of fluids.

- Drink plenty of water, even if you do not feel thirsty, to prevent dehydration. Avoid alcoholic and caffeinated beverages.

- Eat small light meals. Avoid hot meals. Eat several small, light meals throughout the day

- Take cool baths or showers. Cool water temperature cools your body 25 times faster than cool air.

- If the following signs are experienced, you should call a doctor or seek medical help immediately: fatigue, nausea, diarrhea, dry skin, rapid heartbeat and cramps.

Prepared by: The Delaware County Office of Services for the Aging (COSA)

610-490-1300

COSA

Delaware County Office of Services for the Aging

Don’t Risk Becoming Dehydrated

Dehydration occurs when your body loses too much water or you drink too little liquid.

During the hot summer days, it is important to drink plenty of liquids. The recommended amount is 8-12 glasses unless your physician has instructed you otherwise.

Alcohol and caffeine containing beverages (coffee, tea, soda), which act as a diuretic (removing body fluid), so they should be avoided in extreme heat.

NO

NO

NO

Thirst indicates you are dehydrated.

Common warning signs that may indicate you are dehydrated are:

headache (the most common symptom)

dry skin

dry mouth and tongue

nausea

diarrhea

weight loss

low blood pressure (sometimes)

fast heart beat

disorientation (in extreme cases)

With adequate intake of fluids, symptoms should be relieved.

If symptoms continue, call your physician .

FAN FACTS

DO –

- Do use your fan in or next to a window. Box fans are best.
- Do use a fan to bring in the cooler air from the outside.
- Do use your fan by plugging it directly into the wall outlet. If you need an extension cord, the extension cord should be UL (Underwriters Laboratories) approved.

DON'T –

- Don't use a fan in a closed room without windows or doors open to the outside.
- Don't believe that fans cool air. They don't. They just move the air around. The fans keep you cool by evaporating your sweat.
- Don't use a fan to blow extremely hot air on yourself. This can cause heat exhaustion to occur more rapidly.

If you're afraid to open your window to use a fan, choose other ways to keep cool such as taking a cool shower or bath, or going to a local emergency cooling center.

For more information or help, see your Center Director, Care Manager or contact COSA at 610-490-1300

Prepared by Communications Director, Delaware County Office of Services for the Aging

Revised 5/25/21

Heat Stress Fact Sheet

What: Heat stress is an illness caused by heat

Where: Outdoors – in the sun
Indoors – Hot rooms

When: Temperatures - 90°F or higher
Humidity above 60%

Who's at risk: Persons with chronic problems:

Heart or kidney failure
Recent or past stroke
Infection or Fever
Some Medications
Overweight or underweight
Diarrhea
High blood pressure
Drinking alcohol
Reduced sweating

Mild and Moderate Warning Signs	Serious Signs
Mild: Decreased energy Slight loss of appetite, nausea Lightheadedness **Moderate:** Heavy sweating, thirst, faintness, giddiness, headache, confusion	Throbbing headache Mental confusion Irritability, combativeness Rapid heartbeat, difficulty breathing Dry Skin (no sweating) Vomiting, diarrhea Muscle Cramps, staggering
Treatment	Treatment
Get person into cool place Give more fluids to drink Remove excess clothing	**Call 9-1-1** **This is a medical emergency**

How to Reduce your Risk

- Drink plenty of water
- Wear light colored, lightweight, loose clothing (cotton/synthetic blends are best)
- Wear a wide-brimmed hat, or use an umbrella for shade
- Spend time in air-conditioned areas (senior center, mall)
- Take extra cool baths and showers, and sprinkle yourself with water
- Keep windows open
- Use insulated drapes; keep blinds/shades closed during daylight hours
- Use fan, but only when there is cool air blowing. Don't use a fan to blow extremely hot air on yourself.
- Don't engage in vigorous activity in the heat of the day
- Don't wear dark, nylon clothing that is tight
- Don't increase salt or potassium intake or take salt tablets without a doctor's approval

* Don't eat hot, heavy foods

* Don't travel outside in the heat of the day

* Avoid alcohol or caffeinated beverages

Steps to follow to prepare for a possible weather emergency:

- Keep an appliance thermometer in the refrigerator and freezer. An appliance thermometer will indicate the temperature in the refrigerator and freezer in case of a power outage and help determine the safety of the food.
- Make sure the freezer is at or below 0° F and the refrigerator is at or below 40° F.
- Freeze containers of water for ice to help keep food cold in the freezer, refrigerator or coolers after the power is out.
- Freeze refrigerated items such as leftovers, milk and fresh meat and poultry that you may not need immediately - this helps keep them at a safe temperature longer.
- Plan ahead and know where dry ice and block ice can be purchased.
- Store food on shelves that will be safely out of the way of contaminated water in case of flooding.
- Have coolers on hand to keep refrigerator food cold if the power will be out for more than four hours. Purchase or make ice cubes and store in the freezer for use in the refrigerator or in a cooler. Freeze gel packs ahead of time for use in coolers.
- Group food together in the freezer - this helps the food stay cold longer.

Steps to follow after the weather emergency:

- Keep the refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible to maintain the cold temperature.
- The refrigerator will keep food safely cold for about 4 hours if it is unopened. A full freezer will hold the temperature for approximately 48 hours (24 hours if it is half full and the door remains closed.)
- Food may be safely refrozen if it still contains ice crystals or is at 40° F or below.
- Never taste a food to determine its safety!
- Obtain dry or block ice to keep your refrigerator and freezer as cold as possible if the power is going to be out for a prolonged period of time. Fifty pounds of dry ice should hold an 18-cubic-foot full freezer for 2 days.
- If the power has been out for several days, check the temperature of the freezer with an appliance thermometer or food thermometer. If the food still contains ice crystals or is at 40° F or below, the food is safe.
- If a thermometer has not been kept in the freezer, check each package of food to determine its safety. If the food still contains ice crystals, the food is safe.
- Discard refrigerated perishable food such as meat, poultry, fish, soft cheeses, milk, eggs, leftovers and deli items after 4 hours without power.
- Drink only bottled water if flooding has occurred.
- Discard all food that came in contact with floodwaters including canned goods. Discard wooden cutting boards, plastic utensils, baby bottle nipples and pacifiers.
- Thoroughly wash all metal pans, ceramic dishes and utensils that came in contact with flood water with hot soapy water and sanitize by boiling them in clean water or by immersing them for 15 minutes in a solution of 1 teaspoon of chlorine bleach per quart of water.

When in Doubt, Throw it Out!

For additional information of food safety during an emergency, call the toll-free USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline at 1-888-MPHotline (1-888-674-6854); for the hearing-impaired (TYY) 1-800-256-7072.