Supporting Older Adults in NYC Without Internet Access: A Guide for Professionals

While we implement social distancing, those who are not connected online become further isolated. Professionals who work with older adults or others without digital access have a critical role to play: By providing information and resources through the telephone, mail, and home deliveries, we can help ensure that everyone is connected in this time of great need.

Areas of Outreach

IMAGE: NYC has maps and data available on the percentage of older adults in NYC, by neighborhood, who have no computer or no internet access. Additional demographic data and services and resources on IMAGE: NYC can help to inform your outreach.

Printed Communication

If you are able to send mail through the postal service or through home-delivered services, this handout provides useful information for older adults and others with chronic conditions about the coronavirus. This factsheet from the NYC Department of Health provides useful information for all New Yorkers and is available in 22 languages.

Healthcare Access

Since Medicare relaxed its telehealth service regulations, patients can now call their doctor’s office to see if their regularly scheduled in-person appointments can take place over the phone instead. Patients can also schedule a virtual or phone check-in for more urgent or potentially coronavirus-related issues.

For those with supplemental insurance, there is usually a call-in number on the back of the insurance card to speak with a healthcare professional about urgent issues.

Food Access

The Mayor has instructed all Department for the Aging programs to close, canceling all congregate meal, recreational, and educational services and activities. Please check LiveOn NY’s COVID-19 webpage for updated information on meal pick-up and/or delivery options.

Older adults can call Aging Connect at 212-244-6469 to learn about home-delivered meals and other resources. They can also call 311 or their local senior service provider for assistance.

Umbrella, a community platform that helps older adults age in place, is offering grocery delivery and medication pick-up for people age 60+. They are waiving their membership fee and charging just $6 per order to help defray costs. You can submit an online form or call 844-402-2480 to place an order.
Prescription Medications
This memo provides guidance on early refills for 90-day prescription orders for Medicaid recipients.

Encourage older adults to contact their local pharmacy or Umbrella to learn about home-delivery options.

General Support by Phone
For help in finding medical care or learning about other resources and services, call 311. This service is available to anyone regardless of immigration status or ability to pay.

Emotional Support by Phone
For mental health support 24-hours-a-day and in multiple languages, call Thrive NYC at 888-NYC-WELL (888-692-9355) or the Disaster Distress Helpline at 800-985-5990.

Social Connection
Encourage older adults to pick up the phone and call family and friends – they will likely be home too and they can assist in accessing useful online information.

DOROT’S University Without Walls offers lifelong learning programs on the arts, news, literature and more – all over the telephone. Register by calling 877-819-9147.

Internet Access
For older adults who have children in grades K-12 or in college who are living or staying with them, Spectrum/Charter at 844-488-8395 and Optimum/Altice at 866-200-9522 are offering free, 60-day subscriptions for internet service.

To avoid long wait times, call early in the morning or later in the evening.

News and Updates
Encourage older adults to watch local television stations and to listen to local radio stations for up-to-date information.

Access-a-Ride
While it is NOT recommended for older adults to leave their homes, Access-a-Ride is operating and booking trips one day in advance. The phone number for Access-a-Ride is 877-337-2017.

Aging Services Contact Information
Contact information for Area Agencies on Aging, including phone numbers, can be found here.

LiveOn NY’s Benefits Outreach and Assistance Hotline can be reached at 212-398-5045.