

**A Message from Lori Vrolson, Executive Director
Central Minnesota Council on Aging
March 17, 2020**

Senior Dining Operations During Coronavirus Outbreak

We wanted to keep you abreast of the temporary changes in operations for the Catholic Charities Senior Dining program for Stearns, Benton, Sherburne, Wright, Mille Lacs, Pine, Kanabec, Isanti, and Chisago counties. In light of the Covid-19 Department of Health recommendations, CC has decided to stop all congregate dining until further notice. Too many of the host sites have suspended operation/banned visitors. Congregate diners will have a “take out” or “grab and go” option for their hot meal today and tomorrow [March 17-18, 2020]. Any meal pick-ups by diners will be coordinated by staff through “back door” means following the social distancing guidelines put out by the CDC. All registered diners have been contacted by phone. They are finding that most seniors are heeding the advice of the CDC and staying home. If diners indicate that they do not want to pick up the frozen meals but clearly need them, they are asking Site Coordinators to see if they would like frozen meal delivered to their home. So far we haven’t had any registered congregate diner who wanted the frozen and has needed meal delivery. They will also be sending 10 frozen meals with each diner who picks up a hot meal to get them through the next 2 weeks. Diners can put 5 meals in their refrigerator, and 5 meals in their freezer if freezer space is an issue.

For meals on wheels, CC will be sending out 1 hot and 10 frozen today and tomorrow [March 17-18, 2020]. Again, all MOW diners have been called by the Coordinator, but additional program information can be found on the Catholic Charities website.

This process will repeat this on a 2 week cycle for both MOW and Congregate dining for as long as the MDH is recommending social distancing. As a program, CC will be officially closed on Thursday and Friday of this week [March 19-20, 2020], and all of next week [March 23-27, 2020]. They will be open again for meal production and MOW delivery on March 30, 31, and April 1st. They will continue with this 2 week plan until it is again safe for seniors to be out and about and with groups of people.

We are asking you to refer calls or questions from diners to their main office line at 320-229-4584.