



**Mike DeWine**, Governor

**Jon Husted**, Lt. Governor

**Ursel J. McElroy**, Director

DATE: March 13, 2020

TO: AAA Directors

FROM: Ashley S. Davis, Chief, Elder Connections Division

RE: Prioritization of Service Delivery to OAA Consumers

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Background:

ODA is committed to supporting the Aging networks' efforts to prepare and respond and address health and safety needs of individuals enrolled on our programs. This work requires the active engagement of Area Agency on Aging staff and contracted providers to actively monitor individuals' needs, develop and document appropriate back-up plans, and identify any emergency planning needs in the event of a significant disruption in service delivery.

Disaster Priority Levels:

As of 03/10/2020, WellSky Aging and Disability (formerly SAMS) offers the capability to assign a disaster priority level to every enrollee. This functionality was added to facilitate the network's ability to prioritize the care needs of individuals potentially impacted by emergency situations, such as loss of electricity, travel barriers due to flooding, provider shortages related to illness, etc.

All individuals enrolled and actively being served in the following Older Americans Act service programs are required to have an assigned disaster priority level: Personal Care, Adult Day Services, Escort - Assisted Transportation, Home Delivered Meals and Care Coordination. For Care Coordination, the Disaster Priority is assigned by the Care Coordinator in WellSky Aging and Disability. The Disaster Priority will be assigned by the contracted service provider for the other services listed. The category is located on the Consumer's page. Disaster Priority corresponds to High, Medium, or Low Risk.

A disaster priority level will need to be assigned to all new Older Americans Act enrollees to the services listed above. If an individual is enrolled in one of the aforementioned services and does not have an assigned disaster priority, the contracted service provider or Care Coordinator at the Area Agency is required to assign a priority level to the individual(s). For all individuals with an assigned disaster priority, the Area Agency on Aging is to review the individual's needs to validate appropriateness of the assigned disaster priority level.

***Fostering sound public policy, research, and initiatives that benefit older Ohioans.***

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Contracted service providers and Care Coordinators at the Area Agency on Aging must rely on their or his/her professional judgement and consider all risk factors when assigning a priority. The following criteria are to be shared with contracted service providers to assist in making priority level determinations. Below is a list of factors to consider:

High Priority individuals may be:

- Medically fragile;
- Living alone with limited or no social support;
- Geographically isolated;
- Dependent on life-support equipment, including continuous oxygen, respirator, tube feedings;
- Diagnosed with a severe cognitive or mental health impairment which affects decision making capacity;
- Significantly affected by any loss of service.

Medium Priority individuals may be:

- Living alone or with another person with limited or no capacity to assist with meeting the needs of the individual;
- Without consistent social support, but someone is nearby who could check on the individual;
- Intermittently dependent on oxygen;
- Able to function with a temporary loss of service;
- Able to follow through with a back-up and emergency plan.

Low Priority individuals may be:

- Living with family or living alone with dependable social support;
- Living in a supportive care environment, such as assisted living;
- Able to function with a temporary loss of service;
- Able to follow through with a back-up plan and emergency plan.

When an emergency situation arises, such as flooding, chemical spills, etc., contracted service providers and Care Coordinators of the Area Agency on Aging are to make reasonable efforts to contact individuals enrolled in the aforementioned services who are possibly affected to assist in ensuring their health and safety. Contracted service providers and Care Coordinators of the Area Agency will prioritize contacting those individuals who are most at risk, based on their Disaster Priority level and other pertinent factors.

Contracted service providers and Care Coordinators at Area Agencies on Aging will make reasonable attempts to reduce the risk and minimize the negative impact on individuals through the support of community services and formal and informal care providers. Contracted service providers will be expected to keep their disaster/emergency back-up plans for service delivery updated and made available to Area Agencies on Aging in response to any changes made to service delivery as a result of a specific disaster or emergency event.

We recommend that you review the following sections of Ohio Administrative Code that direct provider disaster response, personal care and transportation provider availability and back-up plans, home delivered meal provider emergency closings, and congregate meal provider emergency closings:

- 173-3-06 Older Americans Act: requirements to include in every AAA-provider agreement. Specifically, 173-3-06(B)(3)(a)-(b) regarding disasters and significant changes in consumers served
- 173-4-05.2 Older Americans Act nutrition program: home-delivered meals projects. Specifically, 173-4-05.02(C)(1) and (C)(2)(a)-(b) regarding emergency closings
- 173-4-05.1 Older Americans Act nutrition program: congregate dining projects. Specifically, 173-4-05.01(D)(1)-(2) regarding emergency closings
- 173-3-06.5 [Effective until 7/1/2020] Personal care. Specifically, 173-3-06.5(B)(1)(b) regarding availability of providers and back-up plans
- 173-3-06.6 Older Americans Act: transportation. Specifically, 173-3-06.6(B)(1)(a)-(c) regarding availability of providers and back-up plans

The following WellSky Aging and Disability report provides information reflecting disaster classifications:

- Consumer Listing Report  
The report will need to be filtered for the following Older American Act funded services: Personal Care, Adult Day Services, Escort - Assisted Transportation, Home Delivered Meals and Care Coordination and the Custom Field of Disaster Ranking will need to be selected before running the report.

*Next Steps:*

No later than 45 days after the date of this notice, Older Americans Act contracted service providers providing Personal Care, Adult Day Services, Escorted Transportation and Home Delivered Meals and Older Americans Act Care Coordinators providing Care Coordination at the Area Agencies on Aging are required to:

Review the WellSky Aging and Disability record for all individuals enrolled in the aforementioned services and ensure all individuals are assigned a Disaster Priority classification, reflective of their current needs.

Please direct all questions to the contact listed above.