**Norwell Council on Aging Transportation Policy**

***Revised To Meet Pandemic Restrictions, Effective July 20, 2020***

The Norwell Council on Aging will resume limited transportation services, beginning **Monday, July 20, 2020.** As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, we are required to make several modifications to our transportation program, as outlined in guidelines provided by several State agencies. This service is subject to change at any time and may happen without advance notice. Thank you for your cooperation and flexibility as we all navigate these new restrictions together. With these current restrictions, we expect that wait time may be longer than usual. If you have access to other transportation assistance, please consider using that when possible.

**What type of transportation service is currently available?**

Transportation is currently limited to **the following only**

* necessary medical appointments and treatment.
* grocery shopping
* local prescription pick-up

**Are there any special requirements for riders?**

* Riders **must** wear masks or face coverings at all times. If your physician feels that you are exempt from this requirement, you **must** notify the COA at the time you request a ride.
* Riders will be pre-screened both at the time a ride is scheduled and the day of the ride. This is a precaution is to ensure everyone’s safety.
* Riders who are not feeling well, who have a household member not feeling well or who have been in direct contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, **will not be allowed** to ride the bus. Please understand that is a precaution for everyone’s safety.
* Riders and drivers must practice social distancing with regard to seating, boarding and disembarking from the bus. Once seated, please remain in your seat until you arrive at your destination. The driver will instruct you when you are able to exit the vehicle.
* Riders must be ready at least 15 minutes before the designated pickup time at home. Our schedules are tight and drivers cannot wait. Please allow for extra time to prepare as needed.
* Please be ready at the designated pickup time at the grocery store.
* Service may be denied if protocol is not followed.

**What information do riders need to provide when scheduling a ride?**

* Rides must be scheduled **a minimum of 3 business days in advance**. Please note that the center is not currently staffed on Fridays and we cannot accept ride requests for Monday that are received on Friday or over the weekend.
* Please check with your provider to be sure that it is necessary for you to make an office visit. **Be sure to ask about their waiting policy, for both before and after your appointment.**
* If your provider requires you to wait in the vehicle until they are ready to see you, please tell us that when you schedule a ride. Our driver will wait for you to go in, but it is important for us to know this in advance for scheduling purposes.
* Please provide the name of the provider, address, telephone number, date and time of your appointment.

**Are there any changes to the transportation schedule?**

* Transportation is available Monday through Thursday only. **There is no transportation available on Fridays**.
* Appointments can be made between 9:00 a.m. and a start time no later than 2:00 p.m.
* Grocery shopping will be done on Wednesdays however the time will be determined by the number or riders and previously scheduled medical appointments. Riders will be notified of pickup time on Tuesdays.
* The service area has not been modified at this time however, changes may be made if scheduling becomes too challenging with the new restrictions.

**How many passengers can be transported at one time?**

Social distancing guidelines require that all persons, including drivers and riders must remain at least six feet apart to the greatest extent possible. Seating will be restricted and assigned as needed. The number of riders that we can accommodate at any time cannot exceed the following:

* Dodge Caravan can only accommodate 1 passenger
* Ford 8 passenger accessible van can only accommodate 2 passengers
* Ford 14 passenger accessible van can only accommodate up to 4 passengers.

**What additional safety measures are being taken?**

* Hand sanitizer will be available on each vehicle for passengers to use upon entering.
* Masks will be available upon request for those riders who do not have one.
* Drivers will have their own dedicated supply of hand sanitizer that they will use after assisting each rider.
* Drivers may wear protective eyewear or a face shield at their discretion, if close contact is required to assist a rider.
* Drivers will clean seats, handrails and other frequently touched surfaces in between rides.
* Vehicles will be sanitized at the end of each day with a deep cleaning mist.

**How can the drivers assist me?**

* Drivers can provide limited assistance with entering and exiting a vehicle.
* Drivers can provide limited assistance with securing riders inside the vehicle.
* Drivers **cannot** go inside homes to assist clients, including bringing in groceries.
* Drivers **cannot** go inside a practitioner’s office or store to meet a rider.

**Here are a few reminders about proper hygiene to help prevent the spread of COVID.**

* Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
* Wash hands frequently with warm water and soap.
* Stay at least six feet apart from others while in social settings.
* Physical contact should be avoided unless being assisted by the driver. This includes, hugging, shaking hands, etc.
* If you are not wearing your mask for any reason, cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue, then dispose of the tissue in the trash and immediately wash your hands. Use hand sanitizer when soap and water is not available.