**Precautions for the eventual coming of COVID-19 (Coronavirus Disease-2019), or other infectious diseases, particularly for those who use CDPAS**

Officials from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control said that Americans should prepare for the spread of the Coronavirus COVID-19 in communities across the country.  it is flu season, and many people are getting sick with this and other respiratory illnesses.  The Western New York Independent Living, Inc. Family of Agencies [WNYIL, Independent Living of Niagara County (ILNC), Independent Living of the Genesee Region (ILGR), Taking Control Consumer-Directed Personal Assistance Services (TC-CDPAS)] and our CDPAS partners, Maximizing Independent Living Choices (MILC) and the Southwestern Independent Living Center, Inc. (SWILC) encourage everyone to take the steps necessary to protect themselves.

**The same steps you take to protect yourself from the flu are used to protect yourself from the Coronavirus:**

* Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
* Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
* Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. In the event that soap and water are unavailable, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

This may not be enough for Taking Control Consumer-Directed Personal Assistance Services (TC-CDPAS) consumers who rely on Personal Assistants for home care.  WNYIL is encouraging attendant service users to take steps and build habits now that will protect yourself and your workers from the flu and other communicable diseases like the Coronavirus.  Here are some things you should do:

1. Ensure you have sufficient back up attendants in case your regular attendants cannot work; your attendants may not be able to work, either because they get sick, or they need to take care of a family member who is. You will still need assistance, so make sure you have someone who can provide it. You may need to identify an attendant who may only intend to work with you in an exceptional situation like this. Get them enrolled now, before you need them, so they can get paid.  We understand that it is difficult to find attendants, so if you need help identifying possible resources for emergency coverage, talk to a Taking Control staff member at the Independent Living Center (ILC) serving your county from the list below.  There may also be people who cannot be paid to be your attendant but are willing to help you; identify these people now so you have the resources when you need them.

* **In Erie County** please contact a Taking Control staff person at (716) 836-0822, either Ashley at extension 191 or Kara at extension 194.
* **In Niagara County** call Joe at Independent Living of Niagara County at (716) 284-4131, extension 215
* **In Genesee, Orleans or Wyoming Counties** call Amie at Independent Living of the Genesee Region at (585) 815-8501, extension 403.
* **In Jefferson, Lewis, Franklin, or St. Lawrence Counties**, call Jennifer at Maximizing Independent Living Choices, at (315) 764-9442, extension 208, or toll-free at 1-877-397-9613.
* **In Chautauqua, Cattaraugus and Allegheny Counties** call Jim at the Southwestern Independent Living Center, Inc. (716) 661-3010.

1. Ensure that you have the ability to get assistance if an attendant does not show up for work.  They may not be able to get to you and you need to make sure your needs are able to be met.
2. Have at least a week of non-perishable food in your home at any given time; (if possible, have two-weeks’ supply) and identify people who can assist with shopping. If this is not financially feasible, you may need to seek out assistance from local organizations or food banks. If you need assistance finding local resources:

* **In Erie County** please contact an Independent Living Specialist with the Independent Living Center in Buffalo at (716) 836-0822.
* **In Niagara County** call Brittany at Independent Living of Niagara County at (716) 284-4131, extension 214.
* **In Genesee, Orleans or Wyoming Counties** call Cathy at Independent Living of the Genesee Region at (585) 815-8501, extension 400.
* **In Jefferson, Lewis, Franklin or St. Lawrence Counties**, call Jackie at Maximizing Independent Living Choices, at (315) 764-9442, extension 101, or toll-free at 1-877-397-9613.
* **In Chautauqua, Cattaraugus and Allegheny Counties** call Jim at the Southwestern Independent Living Center, Inc. (716) 661-3010.

1. Stock up on other important supplies.  There may be shortages of other supplies like toilet paper, cleaning supplies, hygiene products and such.  You don’t need to hoard these, but plan to keep a supply in your home.
2. Identify a way to make sure you can get your medications in a timely manner. This may mean having friends or family assist you or using a pharmacy that offers prescription delivery.
3. Plan for your pets.  There may be difficulties in getting pet food or your pets may need someone to take care of them if you are hospitalized.  If you have pets, make sure you have planned for their needs, too.
4. Have your attendants wash their hands and use hand sanitizer when they arrive at your home and each time prior to touching or feeding you.  Repeated handwashing can become rough on an attendant’s hands.  Using a hand sanitizer can be a way to protect you and their skin.
5. Regularly clean, sanitize and disinfect the surfaces that are touched in your home to prevent the spread of infection.  If possible, get into the habit of having your attendants do this each time, immediately when they arrive at your home.
6. Use disinfecting wipes on items that are frequently touched. These include your telephone, doorknobs, your refrigerator handle, your wheelchair controls, lifting device controls and remote controls. Make this convenient by having wipes near the items that should be regularly cleaned.
7. Have your attendant take extra steps to avoid possibly infecting you by wearing a surgical mask if someone close to your attendant – like a member of their household – becomes sick. They should be extra vigilant about not touching their face or yours.
8. If your attendant becomes sick, urge them to seek medical care and utilize your backup attendants.  Please remember that attendants accrue sick leave and can utilize this.
9. Take immediate steps to avoid infecting your attendants if you, one of your attendants, or a member of your household begins to feel sick. Protecting their health supports your own independence. Tell all of your attendants if you, one of your attendants, or someone in your household is not feeling well. Ensure everyone washes their hands and uses hand sanitizer regularly. Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.  Individuals should cover their cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.  As a person with a disability, it may be difficult for you to cover a cough or sneeze, so we encourage you to wear a surgical mask if you are sneezing or coughing.  It is important to use a surgical mask correctly.  The following link explains how to properly use one. <https://www.sfcdcp.org/communicable-disease/healthy-habits/how-to-put-on-and-remove-a-face-mask/> You may not have access to surgical masks as an individual.  You should contact your medical provider, your Department of Social Services, or your managed care organization for assistance with this.
10. If someone in your household becomes sick, take steps to avoid infecting other people.  If possible, have them stay in a separate room of your home to get well. Regularly clean, sanitize and disinfect shared spaces, particularly the bathroom, to avoid spreading the infection.
11. If you become sick, seek medical care immediately. As people with disabilities we are at greater risk from illnesses like these.
12. If you cannot be supported at home, contact your doctor and notify Taking Control CDPAS so we can make sure you are able to get back home when your situation is resolved.  Many of us know people with disabilities who have been institutionalized when they sought medical care, so some people are reluctant to seek medical support.  You do not have to put your health and life at risk to preserve your freedom.  Taking Control is here to help.

**Additional Resources**

What you need to know about Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19): <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/2019-ncov-factsheet.pdf>