



IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT CORONAVIRUS

Dear Member:

There continues to be a great deal of concern about the new Coronavirus (COVID-19) that has been infecting people in many countries, including in the United States and here in the New York metropolitan area. The New York metropolitan area has become a major “hot spot” for infections, with a rapidly growing number of infections, and thousands of deaths. Because of this, the Governor has issued a stay-at-home order, and we expect this to continue for at least the month of April. It is important that everyone limit trips outside of your home to only those that are necessary to get food or medications.

We want to provide you with some information about this illness and your benefits in Hamaspik Choice. The symptoms of Coronavirus (also known as COVID-19) are similar to the flu. They include fever, coughing and shortness of breath. Like the flu, the risks are often more serious in an elderly person or a person with a weak immune system. It appears to mainly be spread through close person-to-person contact. There is no vaccine for this illness, so it is important to take common sense steps to try to prevent becoming ill.

Please remember to use the same precautions as we would during any flu season including:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom, before eating, after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing.
- If soap and water is not available, then use an alcohol-based sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Be sure to cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue and then throw into the trash immediately.

There has been much discussion regarding the use of face masks. Recently, the CDC updated its guidance and now recommends that people should use face masks when you need to leave your home. Please note that you should only use non-medical face masks, because there is a shortage of personal protective equipment for health care workers.

If you do not feel well and have the kinds of symptoms described above – such as fever, dry cough, and/or shortness of breath – please stay home and avoid contact with others. We encourage you to call your doctor, and follow his/her instructions. Your Care Manager or our Member Services staff can help you if you need assistance. We can also provide transportation to and from your appointment.

The CDC has published more information about Coronavirus on its website, which includes an up-to-date FAQ section. Please click here for more information:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html#basics>