Dear Neighborhood PACE Participant,

As we are certain you have heard, there is much talk about the Coronavirus and concerns related to how it may affect each of us. Although there has been no impact in our area, and the risk in the United States remains low, Neighborhood PACE is working to develop plans should the risk change in our area.

We are monitoring daily all reports and advice from the Centers for Disease Control and from the Boston Public Health Commission. We recognize that there are many questions regarding Coronavirus so we have put together this informational letter to keep you informed regarding what we know today.

This is intended to help you best protect yourself and others, and to lessen any anxiety we may all naturally have regarding becoming sick with coronavirus

Most respiratory illness with cough, fever, sputum, runny nose, or mild shortness of breath is NOT from coronavirus. Current risk of influenza (the Flu), however, remains HIGH, so please see your health care providers for your flu shot if you haven’t yet done so!

All of us at PACE-- employees and participants-- can best avoid getting sick or spreading illness to others (from ANY virus, not just coronavirus), by doing the following:

- Wash your hands often.
- Staying home with respiratory illness (cough, fever, runny nose) and avoiding close contact with others
- Covering your nose or mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. After using the tissue, it should be thrown away in the trash, and you should wash your hands
- Please be assured that our staff wash their hands after every contact in our visits with participants—but don’t feel shy about asking if they did or to please do so!
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth, as illness can occur when viruses are carried from your hands to those areas
- If someone at home sneezes or coughs on surfaces, use a disinfectant to clean the surface. However, PLEASE DO NOT USE CHLORINE BASED DISINFECTANTS ON YOUR HANDS OR FACE, as they can cause significant skin irritation. Soap and water are the best cleansers for your body.
- The Center for Disease Control recommends that older adults avoid crowds such as the theaters, large shopping malls, casinos, or sporting events.
- If you are at home, and have fever, cough, or other respiratory symptoms CALL THE CENTER BEFORE GETTING ON YOUR VAN RIDE OR BRINGING YOURSELF TO THE CENTER. We can then advise you as to whether to stay home or be brought to the center
All of the above helps to lower the risk of ANY virus infection, but specifically for coronavirus, there is one more thing you can do to help us all lower our risk of infection:

If you have a relative or other contact who has traveled to China, Iran, Italy, Japan, or Korea in the past 2-3 weeks, let us know. We can then advise you and your family about any potential risk of illness to anyone as a result of that travel. Please note, the list of affected countries is changing quickly.

We will continue to keep you updated to the changing advisories, but if you have any specific questions please contact your center.

Sincerely,

Neighborhood PACE Senior Management