

# HealthEASE

## STAYING HEALTHY RECOMMENDATIONS & RELATED NEWS

Following up on last month's newsletter, this edition provides additional wellness-related links to COVID-19 information. In addition, it includes important information for providers of evidence-based health promotion programs who may be considering offering workshops virtually. We hope you find these useful to keep yourselves, your staff and volunteers and participants healthy.

- Primary NJ COVID-19 Websites: [State](#), [DOH](#), and [DHS](#)
- AARP: [Home Chronic Conditions Complicate Coronavirus Infections](#)
- American Collage of Sports Medicine: [Exercise, Immunity, and the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)
- American Diabetes Association: [Diabetes and Coronavirus](#)
- American Heart Association: [Coronavirus and Heart Health](#)
- American Liver Foundation: [Your Liver and COVID-19](#)
- American Transplant Foundation: [Coronavirus and Transplant Patients](#)
- American Psychological Association: [Grief and COVID-19](#)
- Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America: [Coronavirus: What People with Asthma Need to Know](#)
- CDC: [Stress and Coping](#)
- CDC: [Testing for COVID-19](#)
- COPD Foundation: [Tips and Videos](#)
- Federal Trade Commission: [Stimulus Payment Scams: What You Need to Know](#)
- Harvard School of Public Health: [Food Safety, Nutrition, and Wellness During COVID-19](#)
- Medicare.gov: [Medicare and Coronavirus \(including information on Telehealth and Related Services\)](#)
- National Alliance of Mental Illness: [COVID-19 Resource and Information Guide](#)
- National Foundation for Infectious Diseases: [Common Q&As for People with Chronic Health Conditions](#)
- National Kidney Foundation: [Coronavirus Information and Updates](#)
- National Osteoporosis Foundation: [COVID-19 and Osteoporosis](#)
- National Rheumatoid Arthritis Society (UK): [Coronavirus and RA](#)
- NIH National Cancer Institute: [Coronavirus: What People with Cancer Should Know](#)
- NIH's HIV.gov: [Coronavirus and People with HIV](#)
- Oral Health Foundation: [Dental Care and Coronavirus](#)
- World Health Organization: [Advice on the Use of Masks](#)



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## Tips for offering evidence-based health promotion programs in the time of COVID-19

In this time of mandatory social distancing and closed venues, we know some providers of evidence-based health promotion and disease prevention programs are interested in offering classes on-line. If so, we have identified two major considerations:

- Do program creators allow classes to be offered virtually, and if so, what adjustments are needed/recommended?
- Do you and your potential participants have the technical capabilities to pull it off?

The National Council on Aging (NCOA) is tracking [program guidance](#) on their website of programs eligible for support through Title IIID of the Older Americans Act. You are strongly encouraged to visit this website resource often for updated information.

Over the past 20 years, the Division of Aging Services ([DoAS](#)) has taken the lead in introducing to New Jersey and expanding some of the key programs on the NCOA list. Below is current information on those programs:

**Chronic Disease Self-Management Program (called Take Control of Your Health in NJ)** – The Self-Management Resource Center ([SMRC](#)) in Palo Alto, CA is permitting for classes to be conducted online under certain conditions. These include two-way visualization, class sizes of 8-10, and calling on people to speak rather than waiting for a participant to volunteer. A “Session 0” is also recommended. Special instructions have been produced and were distributed to all leaders operating of the multisite license maintained by DoAS via email on March 30th.

**A Matter of Balance: Managing Concerns About Falls** – [MaineHealth](#), which developed and licenses this program, has not authorized its online use at this time. Individuals who have taken an MOB class and know the exercises are encouraged to continue practicing them on their own at home.

**The Otago Exercise Program** – This physical-therapist led program created in New Zealand and managed in the US by the University of North Carolina’s School of Medicine, has virtual training for new providers and even before the COVID outbreak most interactions with participants is via phone. This intervention can be offered fully virtual at this time using guidance provided by [UNC](#) to program leaders.

**Stress Busting Program for Family Caregivers** – The University of Texas Health Science Center and [WellMed](#) have made the online version of SBP available to trained leaders at no cost for the rest of 2020. This guidance was emailed to all SBP facilitators. Participants will need to be sent participant books in advance as well as supplemental pages developed to make the online version feasible. All of the information for the online program can be found on the [Leader Portal](#) through WellMed’s website. If a master trainer or group facilitator has not registered for the portal yet, they should do so and then email [heather.taylor@dhs.nj.gov](mailto:heather.taylor@dhs.nj.gov).

**Tai Ji Quan: Moving for Better Balance** – Created by the [Oregon Research Institute](#) and managed regionally by Dartmouth University’s Center for Health and Aging, this program is allowing virtual classes but should not be considered evidence-based since no studies have been conducted to determine the efficacy of virtual classes. Virtual classes must include two-way visualization and participants must be able to mark their starting point on the floor with tape.

In addition to the above programs eligible for Title IIID funding, over the years DoAS and its partners, including the [Interagency Council on Osteoporosis](#), created three community-based health promotion programs that remain popular throughout the state. Guidance for continuing these programs online follows. The division recommends including a disclaimer in any video or webinar which places individuals on notice that they are voluntarily and safely participating in said activity. Most programs have a form that covers this.

**Project Healthy Bones** – This 24-session exercise and education program has classes that continue long past the 24-weeks. DoAS is allowing those existing classes to continue online but until further notice recommends not starting new [PHB](#) classes or allowing new participants to join ongoing classes. Online sessions should be live-streaming (not pre-recorded) and instructors should make sure the exercise area in each participant’s home is safe for the required activity.

**Move Today** – This nine-session exercise class can also be offered online but only those [Move Today](#) classes that have continued beyond the nine weeks. Like PHB above, virtual classes should be live, no new classes should be started or new participants allowed in at this time. Also, like the PHB instructions, make sure the exercise area in each participant’s home is safe for exercising.

**HealthEASE** – This eight-session educational curriculum can be offered online. Arrangements should be made to collect pre- and post-tests, and for emailing the relevant handouts prior to each session. As with the community presentations, [HealthEASE](#) sessions can be offered individually or as a series. Each session must be live, not recorded.

#### **Additional considerations for on-line classes:**

- Have each participant’s phone number and emergency contact information with you for each session.
- Make sure participants have all the required materials in advance of the class. This might include manuals, handouts, pre-tests or surveys, weights or resistance bands, lists of related resources, etc.
- Become familiar with the online platform and have a test class with members or your staff, family or friends to work out issues before launching a real class.
- Send post-tests and surveys prior to last session.

#### **Notes on online platforms:**

You can choose from a number of online meeting-hosting platforms in order to offer your class virtually. While each do basically the same thing, there are advantages and challenges that differ from platform to platform, and the choice you make must be HIPAA compliant. Watch this [NCOA webinar](#) for more information. You may also consider the following:

- Allow only signed-in users to join and lock the meeting
- Remove unwanted or disruptive participants, and prevent them from rejoining
- Turn off file transfer and annotation
- Prevent participants from screen sharing
- Have the ability to put participants on hold, disable video, mute participants and disable private chat

#### **When permissible to begin holding in-person classes again, here are some considerations:**

- Reduce class size to maintain social distancing in the classroom.
- Ensure class leaders and participants have and wear face masks.
- Have hand sanitizer available and encourage its use.
- Wipe down all surfaces before and after class.
- No handshaking.
- Tell participants to skip class if they are not feeling well or live with someone who is sick.