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## **PA Council on Aging Releases Interactive Health & Wellness Guide for Older Adults**

**Harrisburg, PA** – The Pennsylvania Council on Aging (PCoA) today released an interactive guide with information and resources to help older adults cultivate a healthy mind, body and spirit amidst the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The guide, titled “SOLO: Strengthening Older Lives Online,” was produced by PCoA’s Risk Reduction Committee, which is made up of older adults and was formed in response to the council’s State of Older Adults Report in May. The committee is an extension of the Social Isolation Task Force, formed in 2019 to help mitigate social isolation among seniors.

“Social isolation is a problem that we already knew existed among seniors and became more of an urgent concern during the COVID-19 pandemic,” said Social Isolation Task Force Chair Janice Cameron. “The challenges we’ve faced also gave us an opportunity to focus on social isolation and what aging Pennsylvanians are experiencing and develop real ways to help combat it. The SOLO guide is a user-friendly self-empowering tool for older adults to be shared among their peers as a means of preventing social isolation.”

The SOLO guide is designed to go beyond some of the physical safety reminders during the COVID-19 pandemic. Using bold, color graphics, the guide incorporates ways for aging adults to combat some of the pervasive stressors exacerbated by the pandemic while helping them live their best lives.

Tools available in the guide include:

- Activities & videos to help stay mentally, spiritually, and physically fit
- Resources available to assist with those three areas
- Short questionnaires to build active health plans

Members of the Risk Reduction Committee have developed a training module that accompanies the guide in order to introduce it into communities of seniors in peer-led ways. The committee hopes it will help reduce instances of social isolation by informing older adults about some habits they can practice to prevent it in their lives.

“The Department of Aging is proud of the work of the Risk Reduction Committee, Social Isolation Task Force and PCoA. It’s a true commitment for older Pennsylvanians to be members of these groups and provide us with real input on experiences of seniors,” Secretary of Aging Robert Torres said. “The SOLO health and wellness guide was created by older adults for older adults. It is a great way to empower and support one another, as well as improve physical, mental, and spiritual health.”

“As we continue to navigate the COVID-19 pandemic, we understand this time may be difficult for Pennsylvanians in more ways than one,” Secretary of Health Dr. Rachel Levine said. “Mitigation efforts are necessary to save lives, but can be accompanied by loneliness, social isolation and a general sense of uncertainty. This interactive guide is another tool that can be used to improve the health and well-being of older adults across the state. It is essential that we provide the proper resources to older Pennsylvanians so they can learn ways to cope with the stresses that come with the pandemic.”

The interactive health and wellness guide is available in English [here](#) and in Spanish [here](#).

The Pennsylvania Council on Aging serves as an advocate for older individuals and advises the Governor and the Department of Aging on planning, coordination, and delivery of services to older individuals. The council’s 21 volunteer members, the majority of whom are required to be age 60 or older, are nominated by the Governor and approved by the Senate. Members of the council also serve as chairpersons for five regional councils totaling 65 volunteers, which meet quarterly. These regional councils gather information and insights on local needs and service delivery and report their findings to the council. They also serve as resources for research and community outreach efforts.

Learn more about the various programs offered by the Pennsylvania Department of Aging [here](#).