

# Program for All-inclusive Care for Elders (PACE): Providing Quality Care in the Home During Pandemic

Gary and Mary West (GMW) PACE has implemented innovative care delivery processes in response to COVID-19 to help reduce the risk of transmission and protect the health of PACE participants. To that end, GMW PACE has temporarily closed their day center and reduced in-person clinic visits to comply with social distancing guidelines. Instead, the GMW PACE team has begun using telehealth video and telephone visits to care for participants in their own homes.

**WHAT:** Performing daily check-ins with each participant, teaming up to form tribes, implementing telehealth and meal delivery

- Daily Check-Ins: PACE staff members are each assigned to lead a group of participants (or tribe) for daily phone call check-ins. The tribe leader calls each participant in the morning and assess how they are feeling, if they have immediate needs and screens them for COVID-19 symptoms. Any change in condition or concern is communicated directly back to the physician for follow-up.
- Virtual IDT Team Meetings: The IDT continues to virtually meet daily to discuss participants' needs, particularly as they are uncovered during the daily check-in calls. Any participant who needs to be seen in the clinic will be scheduled to be seen in the clinic. However, schedules are created to reduce or eliminate participants' exposure to each other even when a clinic visit is necessary. To the extent possible, staff try to provide care to participants in their homes.
- Home-Telehealth: When a need is identified, a Personal Care Aide (PCA) with mandatory PPE is deployed to the participant's home to facilitate a two-way video visit with a PACE provider (physician or NP) who is at the PACE clinic. The provider evaluates the participant and provides recommendations/treatment and care instructions.
- Tele-Psych: GMW PACE has also partnered with a regional behavioral health team to help meet the psychological, emotional and medical health needs of its participants. PCAs travel to participants' homes and facilitate two-way video visits between the psychiatrist and the participants.
- E-Consults: GMW PACE has partnered with a Telehealth company to provide medical subspecialty e-consults e.g. Infectious Disease consultations for COVID19 related concerns can be conducted virtually.
- Meal Delivery: During the pandemic, GMW PACE cannot provide meals to its participants in the day center. To meet its participants' nutritional needs, GMW PACE has partnered with a local senior meal provider who delivers meals to GMW PACE daily. PACE drivers have been redeployed to also deliver meals to participants' homes to ensure that participants who need meals will receive them while the day center is shuttered.

**WHY:** PACE participants often have multiple chronic conditions and difficulty performing activities of daily life. As such, PACE participants are very vulnerable to negative outcomes associated with COVID-19. Precautions to limit their exposure to the virus, such as social

distancing, can hamper care for their underlying medical conditions. Telehealth can expand access to medical, psychological and emotional care while limiting transmission in this vulnerable population.

**Resources:** To help facilitate rapid deployment, the Gary and Mary West Health Institute (WHI), in collaboration with GMW PACE are developing just-in-time telehealth implementation guides using telehealth with PACE participants.