



Cortland County Area Agency on Aging

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

AGE WELL CENTER AT CORTLAND UPDATE QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

By Elizabeth Haskins, Director, Cortland County Area Agency on Aging

Why the name change? Restructuring the congregate meal program has been a long process that began in 2020. For a number of reasons including 40% progressive decline in participation over eight years, client feedback, and rising operating costs with decreased revenues, the need for change to a more sustainable model became abundantly clear.

Implementation of a new type of service delivery that supports community driven programming in the outlying areas are occurring at this time. In addition, the agency is focusing on what is needed to open the Age Well Center and creating a realistic time line. The commitment to restructuring the congregate meal program is high. Funding streams have shifted AAA's focus across the nation to health and wellness as an effort to reduce Medicare and Medicaid costs related to preventable disease.

The name "Age Well Center at Cortland" was designated in 2021 to better reflect the vision for a new model with a greater focus on overall wellness through enhancement of past programming.

When will we open?

After over a year of touring multiple sites and holding many conversations with potential hosts, partners and landlords, the agency is relieved and grateful for the Legislature's approval to lease the beautiful new space located at 165 Crescent Commons. Renovations are needed, community input is imperative, permits need to be obtained, systems need to be expanded, code guidelines need to be followed, availability of Buildings and Grounds staff to perform renovations, and plans need to be drawn. In addition, the rise in COVID cases has added a new level of uncertainty once again.

As much as we all desire an open date in October, it is clear this goal will not be met. As an

effort to expedite planning, in September the agency requested Legislative approval to contract with an expert to assist with the process. Help is needed to facilitate meetings with stakeholders and the community to create an action plan that clearly defines a timeline and refined vision based on community input. At this point, it appears opening may not be until after the first of the year. In the meantime, the agency is actively working with a new partner to jointly offer limited activities and Grab and Go Meals in a temporary location until the Age Well Center at Cortland is open.

What is the Vision?

The Vision is to enhance and expand past programming to create a modern state of the art center that incorporates best practices of successful 21st century models across the nation.

Core Focus Areas of Successful Models

- 1) State of the art, attractive and welcoming
- 2) Trained Community Navigators
- 3) Facilitate programs to increase civic participation
- 4) Classrooms (art, music, writing, drama, cooking, language)
- 5) Programming designed to appeal to younger older adults (60-70)
- 6) Expanded transportation options
- 7) Referral Center
- 8) Outreach programs
- 9) Diverse
- 10) Computer lab
- 11) Job training
- 12) Extended hours

The Cortland County Area Agency on Aging mission is to advocate, plan, develop and provide a coordinated system of programs and services on behalf of all aging citizens of Cortland County so that they might live with independence and dignity. For more information about our services, please call us at 607-753-5060.

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