
S.C. SENIOR CARE CALLS



South Carolina
**DEPARTMENT
ON AGING**

MAY 6

S.C. Department on Aging



S.C. Senior Care Calls

A response to social isolation among seniors during the COVID-19 Crisis.

S.C. Care Calls is an answer to helping seniors in S.C. fight social isolation. Weekly, bi-weekly, or even daily calls from staff, volunteers, or members of the faith-based community will serve as an outreach to vulnerable seniors. The guidelines included are intended to provide a starting point or blueprint for a multitude of agencies and organizations.

The S.C. Department on Aging recognizes the need for seniors to remain connected during the COVID-19 Crisis. We will providing guidelines to address social isolation and provide wellness calls to seniors. While many providers across the state have been making these calls since the beginning of the crisis, we will now also be including the use of volunteers, faith communities, and other civic organizations.

It is our hope to not only provide connection for seniors already in the network, but also to reach out to seniors who may now be isolated due to current circumstances. As local currently contracted providers make calls to seniors, they can identify seniors who are “at risk” for social isolation and in need of further contact. This can be completed by either professional judgement and/or use of the Lubben Social Network Scale (LSNS-6). These identified seniors will then be sent to the local AAA or disbursed within the agency to make more frequent connections with the seniors. Providers will be reimbursed for these calls at the rate of 1 call per senior per week either through IIID funds or IIIB as it is allowed by ACL during the time of a declared disaster. The calls in which reimbursement is approved will be only those in which the local currently contracted service providers use their paid staff.

Local providers, AAAs, as well as the SCDOA have volunteers who are willing to help seniors. These phone calls are a way to connect seniors with a volunteer while still practicing safe social distancing. If a senior is identified “at risk,” providers will refer them back if they do not have a volunteer base to cover the need. Seniors will be paired with a volunteer who will make a wellness call at least once a week.

Faith-based organizations have a strong connection to their senior population. Many have expressed an interest in conducting wellness calls as a way to help their home-bound seniors. This packet will also be available for those organizations as a blueprint to develop their wellness calls program. They may develop their program to fit individual organizational needs.

Call Questionnaire

We recommend developing a call questionnaire form that your staff or volunteers will use when conducting their phone calls to the senior. An example call questionnaire is included in this document as Attachment 1.

Tip #1: Only ask about needs you can respond to. If you ask if the participant has all the medications they need and they respond no, what comes after their response?

Tip #2: Think about questions specific to your organization. For example, if you are a religious organization, you may want to ask if the participant has any prayer requests. If your organization has volunteers willing to assist with household task such as grocery pick-up or assistance with yard maintenance, add this to your questionnaire.

Tip #3: Use this time to inform the participant of any important information. If you know of an upcoming tele-event or online support group the participant may be interested in, use the time on the phone to share that information.

Making the Call. See Attachment #1. This is designed as a starting point for conversation with seniors. You may add more questions to this, but be careful to only ask about needs you or your organization are prepared to respond to.

The Wellness Check: This can be found as Attachment 1 to this document. After the wellness check has been completed there must be follow up to include the Lubben Scale Questions.

The Lubben Scale: This can be found as Attachment 2 to this document. The Lubben Scale is a validated instrument designed to gauge social isolation. This scale will need to be completed in its entirety. This will validate a senior who is at high risk for social isolation. All AAAs must capture this data and keep documents on file and must provide documentation upon request by SCDOA. Send the completed questionnaires to jbrewton@aging.sc.gov

Do Not Call: Some seniors may prefer not to be called at all. If a senior is identified as not wishing to be contacted for the purpose of a wellness call, please identify them as such so no other employee or volunteer will attempt to make a wellness call.

Postcards: We suggest that any agency utilizing the SC Senior Care Calls send postcards to identified seniors as a way they can reach out to you.

Wellness Check

Date of Call _____

Older Adult Name:

Older Adult Phone Number:

Good morning/afternoon Ms./Mr. _____, this is _____, I am a (Volunteer/Employee at X/Church member at X). I am calling to check on you today.

1-How are you feeling today?

2-Who have you spoken with today? How often do you talk with family/friend?

3-Are you able to get groceries/ Medications? If not, who helps you with this?

4-Do you have access to the internet? If so, can I provide you a website that has information find helpful? Great, that address is aging.sc.gov

I would like you to write down these numbers to ask for help. (Provide numbers your organization can respond to)

I have truly enjoyed talking with you today. Would it be ok if I, or another volunteer called you again next week/later in the week?

Caller Name/Affiliation:

If Volunteer- Phone Number:

Feedback/Concerns/Observations during call: _____



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Lubben Social Network Scale (LSNS-6)

The LSNS-6 is a validated instrument designed to gauge social isolation in older adults by measuring the number and frequency of social contacts with friends and family members and the perceived social support received from these sources. Please complete the form for each individual.

FAMILY: Considering the people to whom you are related by birth, marriage, adoption, etc.

1. How many relatives do you see or hear from at least once a month? ___ none ___ one ___ two ___ three or four ___ five thru eight ___ nine or more
2. How many relatives do you feel at ease with that you can talk about private matters? ___ none ___ one ___ two ___ three or four ___ five thru eight ___ nine or more
3. How many relatives do you feel close to such that you could call on them for help? ___ none ___ one ___ two ___ three or four ___ five thru eight ___ nine or more

FRIENDSHIPS: Considering all of your friends including those who live in your neighborhood

4. How many of your friends do you see or hear from at least once a month? ___ none ___ one ___ two ___ three or four ___ five thru eight ___ nine or more
5. How many friends do you feel at ease with that you can talk about private matters? ___ none ___ one ___ two ___ three or four ___ five thru eight ___ nine or more
6. How many friends do you feel close to such that you could call on them for help? ___ none ___ one ___ two ___ three or four ___ five thru eight ___ nine or more

To score responses and interpret the results: The LSNS-6 total score is an equally weighted sum of these six items. Each LSNS-6 question is scored from 0 to 5 and the total score ranges from 0 to 30. The answers are scored: none = 0, one = 1, two = 2, three or four = 3, five thru eight = 4, nine or more = 5. A score of 12 and lower delineates "at-risk" for social isolation.

Source: J. Lubben, E. Blozik, G. Gillmann, S. Iliffe, W. R. Von Kruse, J. C. Beck and A. E. Stuck, *Gerontologist* 2006, 46, 503-513