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## **LeadingAge Ohio issues holiday ideas for family gatherings involving older loved ones**

**COLUMBUS, Ohio** – With Thanksgiving one week away and cases surging in Ohio, LeadingAge Ohio today shared ideas for family gatherings that involve older adult loved ones, particularly those who require long-term services and supports or reside in a congregate care setting. [The recommendations were issued in an open letter to friends and family of older Ohioans](#), penned by Kathryn Brod, president and CEO of LeadingAge Ohio. The letter was sent to LeadingAge Ohio's aging services and post-acute care provider members across the state for them to share in their communities.

"The challenges of 2020 have been unprecedented, and there is no doubt that Ohioans are worn down by the repeated obstacles to visiting with older loved ones," stated Kathryn Brod. "Despite this fatigue, fresh vigilance is required as we approach the holidays with an out-of-control case count. While the temptation is strong to enjoy the holidays as usual, extra precaution and creativity are required as we continue the fight against COVID-19 and care for this most at-risk group of Ohioans."

The letter urged Ohioans with older adult loved ones, especially those who live in a congregate care setting or suffer from serious illness, to consider finding new ways to celebrate the holidays this year. Some of the suggestions include:

- *Setting up a remote visit with the loved one before the meal, so they can walk you through preparing a favorite recipe.*
- *After having dinner with the primary household members, holding an extended-family virtual party over dessert.*
- *Hosting or attending a virtual dinner with friends and family.*

If a family insists on having their loved one come home for the holiday, it is likely the loved one's long-term care facility will require transmission-based precautions upon their return or other measures to protect both residents and staff. LeadingAge Ohio urged Ohioans to consider:

- *Holding a "pre-meal" earlier in the day that the older loved one can attend, with just one or two people that have been able to quarantine prior. The loved one can attend this meal, then return to the nursing home or assisted living residence, and a larger, extended family gathering can follow.*
- *Ensuring that all individuals that the loved one will be in contact with have quarantined for the 14 days preceding the holiday. **This would require severely limiting contact with others beginning last Thursday, November 12.** If a family hasn't begun quarantining, they can delay the holiday by a week or two, until they've had sufficient time to prepare.*
- *Monitoring all individuals for symptoms, including fevers, cough, or other COVID-19 symptoms. Ensure use of proper thermometer or ensure individuals take their own temperature prior to joining the meal.*
- *As an additional precaution, asking anyone who will have contact with the loved one to obtain a negative COVID-19 test result prior to the holiday gathering.*
- *Ensuring all spaces—including the vehicle, kitchen, bathrooms, and all gathering areas are clean and sanitized immediately prior to the visit. An extra precaution could be to ensure that no other person has used these spaces for several days prior to Thanksgiving.*

LeadingAge Ohio recognizes the challenges families and loved ones face this holiday season. [The full letter can be viewed here.](#)

*Founded in 1937, LeadingAge Ohio is a nonprofit organization that represents over 400 long-term care organizations and hospices, as well as those providing ancillary health care and housing services, in more than 150 Ohio towns and cities. The continuum of care reflected by the member organizations serve an estimated 400,000 elderly Ohioans daily and employ more than 35,000 persons statewide.*