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Delco seniors receive cooling fans in anticipation of summer

Delco's Heat Plan details resources to help vulnerable people cope with extreme heat

Summer officially begins on June 21 and the National Weather Service is calling for dangerously hot conditions across our region this week, with a heat advisory in place and heat index values up to 102 degrees.

Delaware County Council wants residents to know that the county's Heat Plan is in place. Both the Office of Services for the Aging (COSA) and the county Office of Adult and Family Services offer assistance to elderly and vulnerable residents throughout the summer.

"We all love summer, but it's important for our residents, particularly the elderly, young children and those with health challenges to stay cool, stay hydrated and stay informed," said Delaware County Council Chairman John P. McBlain. "The fact is that heat is dangerous, and it can kill, or cause heat stroke or heat exhaustion."

Residents are urged to visit the county's website to read the 2018 Heat Plan and learn about the resources the county provides. Residents should take precautions during heat waves and high humidity, to check in with the elderly and disabled family members and neighbors who are at greater risk for heat-related illnesses.

COSA's Heat Plan includes a Heat Information Line, extended hours at Senior Centers, and educational information on heat safety tips, dehydration, and safe use of fans. COSA has purchased 250 cooling fans and 100 were donated by PECO, which will be delivered to the county's eight senior centers for distribution to seniors needing cooling assistance.

"A fan creates air flow which helps the body evaporate sweat and cool down," said McBlain. "We want to thank PECO for their generous donation of fans to our seniors this season."

The Delaware County Heat Plan calls for senior centers and adult day care centers to extend their hours, to offer water and non-caffeinated beverages throughout the day, and to reinforce with service-provider drivers to check on consumers. Care managers are asked to identify "at risk" consumers who are homebound, living alone or have a prior history of inadequate cooling in their home.

It is also important to remember the safety of pets during the warmer, more humid months as animals respond differently to heat. "It's not just the ambient temperature but also the humidity that can affect your pet," said McBlain. "If the humidity is too high, they are unable to cool themselves, and their temperature will skyrocket to dangerous levels—very quickly. Please also remember to not leave anyone in a car, including your pets and make sure they have plenty of water and shade."

On any day when temperatures reach 90-degrees, it is especially important for young children and older adults, as well as people who have heart and breathing problems or are on certain medications, to pay close attention to what they are doing and how they feel during hot and humid weather.

People need to drink before they feel thirsty and if someone experiences signs of heat exhaustion, drinking water is not enough to reverse the symptoms. Individuals might need medical help.

COSA's Heat Information Line at (610) 872-1558 is a recorded 24-hour phone service that runs June 1 through Sept. 30, providing residents with heat advisory updates and information. People who need additional

assistance can contact a COSA's Information and Assistance service at (610) 490-1300. For more information, and to read the county heat plan, visit <http://www.co.delaware.pa.us/heatinfo/HeatPlan2018.pdf>