A. Purpose

To reduce loneliness and social isolation among older adults through participation in in-person, virtual and/or telephonic program options. Interventions should be designed to help older adults improve social connectedness and become more active doing the things they enjoy. Interventions should be purposeful in ongoing engagement of the older adults to ensure the development of social connections to decrease ongoing isolation and loneliness.

Additionally, the purpose of the program is learning. The intent is to learn about social isolation interventions, track older adult participation in these interventions, and measure the impact of interventions through client feedback and measurement tools.

B. Service Activities, Unit(s) of Service and Documentation Requirements

Multiple types of service activities and units of services are included to allow flexibility for the types of social isolation interventions provided.

While the unit rates below are activity-based, providers should consider costs of administrative tasks and engagement of the older adult aside from the actual activity in the unit cost(s). For example, administrative costs may include recruitment, assessment, pre- and post-measurement, reporting, travel time (if applicable), etc. Engagement aside from the actual activity may include intentional invitation to the client, reminder calls, follow-up calls to ensure ongoing engagement, etc.

1. Group Activities that Foster Social Connectedness
    a. Definition: In-person or virtual group activities that foster social connectedness through social interaction and constructive use of time. The needs and interests of the older adult and the feasibility of the activity fostering social connections should be primary considerations.
    b. Example Activities: Activities may include instruction and facilitation of games, crafts, hobbies, physical activities, arts, group volunteerism, etc. These activities should include facilitation to ensure conversations and connections among the older adult participants. Virtual activities should allow participants to be seen and interact with one another during the activity.
    c. Unit of Service Definition: One scheduled activity
    d. Minimum Required Supporting Documentation:
        i.   Date of service delivery
        ii. Identification of activity
        iii. Names of participants
        iv. Name of person facilitating the activity
        v.   Signature of person facilitating the activity

2. Telephonic Activities to Reduce Social Isolation and Loneliness
   a. Definition: Routine telephonic engagement to or from older adults that live alone to provide opportunities for socialization and/or check in on the psychological wellbeing of the older adult. Telephonic activities should be routine in nature, with a minimum of one weekly call.
   b. Example Activities: Check-in calls to conduct routine short screenings with older adults and/or routine calls from a dedicated team member or volunteer to socialize with the isolated older adult.
   c. Unit of Service: One telephone call placed or received.
   d. Minimum Required Supporting Documentation:
      i. Date of service delivery
      ii. Name of participant
      iii. Name of person placing/receiving the call

3. One-on-One Activities to Reduce Social Isolation and Loneliness
   a. Definition: Regular visits by staff or volunteers to socially isolated or lonely older adults for the purpose of companionships and social contact. These activities are intended for older adults that are unable or unwilling to leave their residence with little to no social connections and/or high levels of loneliness.
   b. Example Activities: Visiting older adults in their homes to socialize, play games, provide meal companionship, check in on wellbeing, etc.
   c. Unit of Service: One hour of time spent visiting with the older person (billable in 15 minute increments)
   d. Minimum Required Supporting Documentation:
      i. Date of service
      ii. Participant's name
      iii. Start time and end time of visit
      iv. Participant's signature
      v. Signature of staff or volunteer

C. Non-Duplication of Other Title III Funded Service Activities

Whether or not an organization is already Title III funded, there are certain Title III funded services that cannot be included in the unit cost of social isolation interventions. Examples include:

- Congregate Meals
- Home Delivered Meals – including the cost of the meal and/or the cost of delivery
- Transportation

For existing Title III providers, social isolation interventions may be combined with existing Title III services. However, unit rates proposed for social isolation interventions cannot include the cost of activities already funded by Title III.

D. Reporting - Billing

WellSky Aging and Disability data is to be collected and reported as an integral part of the providers day-to-day operations. Billing is completed in WellSky as a Consumer Group (aggregate unit entry). Individual client registration and collection of demographic data is not required in WellSky. Providers are responsible for ensuring compliance with Sections (B)(1)(d), (B)(2)(d), and (B)(3)(d) above to demonstrate support of services delivered.

Allowable Activities

Activities can vary in types and intensity, and may include a broad category of outreach/ activities including one on one and group such as social engagement, volunteerism, exercise, nutrition, mindfulness, and faith-based activities etc.

Excluded Activities

- Gambling
- Gathering of individuals that do not have planned or educational component
- Billing for activities funded through Title III
- Congregate Meals

E. Consumer Contributions

The provider may solicit and accept voluntary contributions as outlined in the Voluntary Contributions section of Rule 173-3-07 - Ohio Administrative Code | Ohio Laws.   This service is exempt from the Cost Sharing section of this rule.

F. American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funding

ARPA is one-time limited funding that expires September 30, 2024 and can be used to support activities that address loneliness and isolation. ARPA funding allows providers to pilot activities and measure outcomes which will impact future program decisions should traditional Title III funds be prioritized to address this need on an ongoing basis. COA may request pilot data.