



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **As Holidays Approach, Orange County Board of Supervisors Call for COVID-Friendly Connections with Senior Residents**

**SANTA ANA, Calif.** (November 12, 2020) – With the holiday season rapidly approaching, the Orange County Board of Supervisors is calling on residents to safely connect with their elderly neighbors amid the COVID-19 pandemic. ***Happy Holidays Neighbor!*** is a public awareness micro-campaign targeted at raising awareness of the dangers related to senior isolation and suggesting ways everyday citizens can reach out and make a difference.

“No one should be alone during the holidays,” said Chairwoman Michelle Steel, Second District Supervisor. “The ***Happy Holidays Neighbor!*** micro-campaign connects seniors with local neighbors who can provide help and support.”

According to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) website](#), there are many public health risks linked to social isolation and loneliness. With one-fourth of adults aged 65 and older considered to be socially isolated, this makes seniors more susceptible to increased risk of serious medical conditions, such as dementia and heart disease. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic threatens to further cut off seniors from regular social engagement as well as limit their ability to access needed food, supplies and medication. During the holiday period, seniors face further challenges related to gift buying, mailing packages and decorating their home exteriors.

“Seniors are among the most at-risk for contracting COVID-19, which is why many have chosen to isolate themselves for the past 9 months,” said Vice Chairman Andrew Do, First District Supervisor. “Because of this, seniors have never felt more isolated than they do now. Reaching out to a senior neighbor, in a safe way, can help reduce their loneliness and anxiety. The County’s Office on Aging provides many handouts and other resources to help you get started.”

“It’s all about taking action,” indicated Supervisor Donald Wagner, Third District. “One call, one errand, or one holiday connection can be the difference in making this holiday season special to a senior.”

The ***Happy Holidays Neighbor!*** public awareness micro-campaign suggests ways to connect and support seniors this holiday season in COVID-safe ways that focus on physical distancing but still maintain a social connection. It features a printable postcard that neighbors can fill out and send to local seniors, asking what assistance they need and providing the neighbor’s contact information. Additionally, the micro-campaign provides information about County and local senior resources that are important during the holiday season.

“Connecting people during the holidays can make all the difference,” said Supervisor Doug Chaffee, Fourth District. “Seniors who are home-bound or physical distancing during COVID-19 may look forward to a cheerful greeting or holiday helping hand.”



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“The physical health of our seniors is critical, but we can’t overlook the importance of mental health,” stated Supervisor Lisa Bartlett, Fifth District. “The holidays are a time to come together to show how much we care for the health and well-being of our seniors.”

For more information on how residents can support neighbors in their community, please visit the County’s Office on Aging website at [officeonaging.ocgov.com](http://officeonaging.ocgov.com).

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# HAPPY HOLIDAYS NEIGHBOR!

During the Coronavirus pandemic, seniors should stay at home to protect their health and safety while maintaining a connection with those they love.

Visit our website to download a **"Happy Holidays Neighbor!" postcard** and let your neighbor know you are here to help!



Offer to help with picking up groceries, prescriptions, or holiday shopping



Call and check on elderly friends and family members



Organize a holiday card drive to deliver notes and seasons greetings to seniors



Offer to hang exterior holiday decorations



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