



NEWS

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Contact: Laurie Petrie, Communications Director, 513-345-3393

Taxpayer-funded services help thousands remain in their homes
Help for seniors highlighted in annual reports

Programs to help seniors have been growing in an effort to meet expanding need as our population ages.

In its recently-released 2007 annual report, Council on Aging of Southwestern Ohio reports it is:

- Serving nearly 18,000 people in five counties with services to help them remain in their homes and avoid unnecessary nursing home placement (a 4 percent increase over 2006)
- Working with providers to deliver nearly 2 million meals annually to about 11,000 homebound older adults in five counties
- Responding to nearly 30,000 calls a year for information about help for seniors
- Funding programs in senior centers, legal assistance, transportation, and support for caregivers
- Advocating in the public arena for the interests of older adults

Council on Aging (COA) is a nonprofit organization which enhances the quality of life for older adults and their families. Since 1974, it has been designated as Ohio's Area Agency on Aging for Butler, Clermont, Clinton, Hamilton and Warren counties.

COA promotes choice, independence, dignity and well-being of older adults through a range of services that help them remain in their homes for as long as possible. One call to COA links people to the wide variety of agencies, information and programs that serve older adults in our region.

Council on Aging receives federal, state and local funding, including tax levy funds to support the Elderly Services Programs in Butler, Clinton, Hamilton, and Warren counties. In addition to the agency's annual report, Council on Aging has also released 2007 reports for each of these four programs.

All five annual reports can be found on the COA website, www.help4seniors.org. Click on COA Information.

Below are highlights from the county Elderly Services Program reports. Council on Aging administers the Elderly Services Program under contract with boards of county commissioners in each of the four counties. Each program has a volunteer community board which provides oversight and sets policy for the programs.

Butler County

- Butler County's Elderly Services Program has grown steadily since voters approved a tax levy in November 2005. At that time, there were nearly 900 residents on a waiting list for home care services. **The program served 3,593 seniors in 2007, a 10 percent increase over 2006 and 32 percent increase since the levy year, 2005.**
- **The typical client is a woman in her 80s who lives alone on an annual income of about \$18,000 from which she pays \$3,000 in out-of-pocket medical expenses.** Most clients – 76% - have incomes below 200% of the federal poverty level (\$20,420 for one person) About ¼ of clients have a co-payment because they can afford to help cover the cost of their care.
- **Due to declining health and mobility, the typical client is unable to perform daily activities such as driving, bathing, preparing food, or managing medications.** She needs help, but not costly nursing home care.
- **The most used services are: home-delivered meals, electronic monitoring devices, homemaker help, and medical transportation.** In 2007, the program delivered more than 400,000 meals to 2,115 homebound seniors, and provided about 119,000 hours of homemaker service to 1,714 clients.
- **The cost is \$332 a month per client on the Elderly Services Program, compared with \$4,800 a month for nursing home care.**
- **About half of those who leave the program have died or moved into a nursing home.** Other reasons include improved health, enroll in another program such as PASSPORT, move, or make other arrangements for care.

"We are proud of these numbers," said Helen Smith, of Hamilton, president of Butler County Citizens for Elderly Services, Inc. "They mean we are doing what the community has asked of us: to provide eligible older adults with free or low-cost alternatives to nursing home care so they can remain independent within their own homes for as long as possible."

Clinton County

With passage of a tax levy in November 2007 and several months of hard work enrolling clients, Clinton County's Elderly Services Program was able to eliminate a waiting list that had grown to 100 seniors needing home care services. The waiting list ended in mid-March of this year.

"No one likes to see people in need have to wait to get help," said John Hosler, of Wilmington, president of Clinton County Citizens for Elderly Services, Inc. "Clinton County Community Action handles intake and case management for our program and they wasted no time in getting people enrolled once the levy passed. Our county clearly wants to help its seniors."

The program served 409 people in 2007.

The typical client is a woman in her 80s who lives alone on an annual income of about \$16,500 from which she pays \$3,300 in out-of-pocket medical expenses. Most clients – 82% - have incomes below 200% of the federal poverty level (\$20,420 for one person). About one out of every 10 clients have a co-payment because they can afford to help cover the cost of their care.

Due to declining health and mobility, the typical client is unable to perform daily activities such as driving, bathing, preparing food, or managing medications. She needs help, but not costly nursing home care.

The most used services are: home-delivered meals, electronic monitoring devices, homemaker help, and personal care. In 2007, the program delivered more than 41,000 meals to 229 homebound seniors, and provided about 10,000 hours of homemaker service to 152 clients.

The cost is \$217 a month per client on the Elderly Services Program, compared with \$4,800 a month for nursing home care.

About half of those who leave the program have died or moved into a nursing home. Other reasons include improved health, enroll in another program such as PASSPORT, move, or make other arrangements for care.

Hamilton County

The program served 8,044 people in 2007.

The typical client is a woman in her 80s who lives alone on an annual income of about \$17,300 from which she pays \$2,400 in out-of-pocket medical expenses. Most clients – 77% - have incomes below 200% of the federal poverty level (\$20,420 for one person). A little less than 1/4th have a co-payment because they can afford to help cover the cost of their care.

Due to declining health and mobility, the typical client is unable to perform daily activities such as driving, bathing, preparing food, or managing medications. She needs help, but not costly nursing home care.

The most used services are: home-delivered meals, homemaker help, electronic monitoring devices, and home medical equipment. In 2007, the program delivered nearly 707,000 meals to 3,883 homebound seniors, and provided more than 274,000 hours of homemaker service to 3,874 clients.

The cost is \$324 a month per client on the Elderly Services Program, compared with \$4,800 a month for nursing home care.

About half of those who leave the program have died or moved into a nursing home. Other reasons include improved health, enroll in another program such as PASSPORT, move, or make other arrangements for care.

“2007 ended on a high note when voters gave a resounding ‘yes’ to the senior services tax levy,” said H.A. Musser, Jr. chairman in 2007 of the Hamilton County Elderly Services program

Advisory Council. "It passed by 70 percent of the vote. With renewal plus a modest increase, we'll be able to help more Hamilton County seniors."

Warren County

The program served 2,083 people in 2007, an increase of 12 percent over 2006.

The typical client is a woman in her 80s who lives alone on an annual income of about \$19,800 from which she pays \$3,200 in out-of-pocket medical expenses. Most clients – 70% - have incomes below 200% of the federal poverty level (\$20,420 for one person). A little more than 1/4th have a co-payment because they can afford to help cover the cost of their care.

Due to declining health and mobility, the typical client is unable to perform daily activities such as driving, bathing, preparing food, or managing medications. She needs help, but not costly nursing home care.

The most used services are: home-delivered meals, electronic monitoring devices, homemaker help, and medical transportation. In 2007, the program delivered more than 227,000 meals to 1,245 homebound seniors, and provided 65,594 hours of homemaker service to 990 clients.

The cost is \$301 a month per client on the Elderly Services Program, compared with \$4,800 a month for nursing home care.

About 40 percent of those who leave the program have died or moved into a nursing home. Other reasons include improved health, enroll in another program such as PASSPORT, move, or make other arrangements for care.

"Warren County's Elderly Services Program has been growing strongly since the voters approved the levy in 2006," said Bernard Eichholz of Lebanon, chairman of the Warren County Elderly Services program Advisory Council. "We believe we are going a long way toward meeting the need in our community."

For Answers on Aging:

Council on Aging of Southwestern Ohio
175 Tri County Parkway, Cincinnati, OH 45246
513-721-1025 Toll-free 1-800-252-0155
E-mail: info@help4seniors.org.
Website: www.help4seniors.org

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