

Support network and positive attitude help double-amputee remain independent

Ralph isn't used to sitting around. Even though he's lost most of both legs, he refuses to feel sorry for himself or spend his days couped up in his Middletown home.

The youngest of seven kids, Ralph had plenty of responsibilities on his family's farm in Indiana. From baling hay, to raising and selling rabbits, to outrunning would-be robbers at the family's roadside vegetable stand, Ralph did it all. "We were poor," Ralph said, "but we didn't do without."

When Ralph graduated from high school, he enlisted in the Marines and went off to Vietnam. That's a subject he would rather not discuss. Instead, he recalls time he spent "getting his head straight" after the war, at his aunt and uncle's place in Mexico, playing softball on the beach and fishing. He might still be there had his father not gotten sick.

Ralph's father worked at Alcoa, and after he died, Ralph went to work there as well. A series of layoffs and other jobs eventually brought him to Butler County, where he worked for the *Middletown Journal* for more than 20 years. During that time, Ralph got married, raised seven of his own kids, and got divorced.

Life happened, and Ralph admits he lived hard. He developed diabetes and congestive heart failure, had by-pass surgery, and then enrolled in the Butler County Elderly Services Program (ESP) when it became difficult for him to manage things like housekeeping and shopping.

Then, at age 69, Ralph had part of his left leg amputated because the veins in the leg had deteriorated. After the surgery, he spent three weeks in a nursing home and wondered how he would cope when he got home.

A home health aide was already helping Ralph with housekeeping and errands, but his ESP care manager, Lois, made arrangements for things that would make it easier for him to adjust when he got home – a bath bench, grab bars and other equipment. "Anything I need, she takes care of it," Ralph said.

Two years later, Ralph lost most of his other leg after a sore on his toe turned into gangrene. The infection was stubborn and doctors had to remove more and more of the leg until it finally stopped spreading.

It takes fortitude and determination to bounce back from an ordeal like that, but Ralph has a remarkable attitude – he cautions people in similar situations to avoid self-pity. "It'll drive you crazy. You just need to accept what it is," he said. "Sometimes you can't figure out the reason – I sure can't!"

Ralph also has a strong support network. Besides support from ESP and his daughters, a friend built a wheelchair ramp to his front door and an occupational therapist became a trusted friend and taught him tricks that helped him relearn simple tasks like getting dressed. This support gave Ralph the confidence and determination to retrofit his car so he could drive without hand controls.

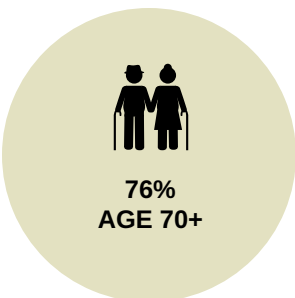
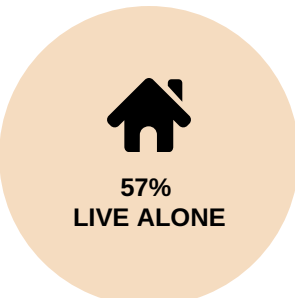
Though he admits to bouts of depression and suffers from phantom pains in his missing legs, Ralph is thankful for the support that has helped him remain independent in his home. "Without help from Lois (ESP), Gene (home health aide) and my daughters, I'd be in a nursing home – or worse," Ralph said.



Who the Elderly Services Program serves

ESP serves seniors who are caught in the middle – their income is too high to qualify for Medicaid, but too low to pay for private in-home care. The typical ESP client is a 77-year-old woman, living alone on an income of \$1,841 per month. Because of health problems, she spends \$234 per month on out-of-pocket medical expenses and she needs help with basic activities like personal care and transportation. In between work and other responsibilities, her family helps as much as they can, but they worry when she is alone. ESP fills in gaps in care to help seniors avoid premature placement in a nursing home.

Total Clients Served in 2017: 3,804



Butler County's Elderly Services Program is a community partnership

Butler County Commissioners:
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Butler County Citizens for Elderly Services:
Cynthia Stever, President; David Mancuso, Vice President; Kim Gay, Secretary; Melinda Wendling, Treasurer; Randy Allman; Katherine Abbott; Margaret Baker; Marc Bellisario; John Centers; John Freeman; Julie Gilbert; Sabrina Jewell; Cheryl Marischen; Christy Quincy; Jared Wojcikowski



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Butler County ELDERLY SERVICES PROGRAM



2017 Annual Report

Butler County ESP services are funded by a special tax levy. ESP does not supplant care provided by families but rather secures the necessary additional care the family is unable to provide. ESP expects families to take responsibility to care for family members to the fullest extent possible.

ESP does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, age, sex, national or ethnic origin, or disability.

Dear Friends,

On behalf of Butler County Citizens for Elderly Services, I'm pleased to present our 2017 Annual Report.



In 2017, the Butler County Elderly Services Program (ESP) helped 3,804 older adults remain independent in their homes through services such as home-delivered meals, transportation and home care assistance.

Other counties in our region offer similar services, but we stand out in one area – mental health services. Since 2007, a program called Uplift has provided in-home treatment for Butler County older adults suffering from depression and anxiety. Many participants are ESP clients. In fact, ESP is one of Uplift’s top referral sources. This makes sense. Older adults are at an increased risk for depression – chronic health conditions, disability and isolation are contributing factors. ESP care managers are in an ideal position to identify and refer seniors to Uplift and other community resources that can improve their quality of life. Read more about Uplift in our Highlights section.

The nationwide shortage of home health workers continues to impact our ability to provide a consistent level of service for clients who need home care assistance (personal care, housekeeping, respite). But this community board, Council on Aging, and the program’s service providers have been working to find solutions. For example, providers are now grouped by region to create efficiencies with scheduling and travel time. And, aides who provide only housekeeping services no longer require the same training as those who provide personal care.

ESP is a program *for* our community, supported *by* our community. Without the support of county taxpayers, it would not exist. Through this report, I hope you will better understand the value and impact of this important program.

Cynthia Stever, President
Butler County Citizens for Elderly Services

2017 highlights

COA and provider network work to address aide shortage – A nationwide shortage of home health workers continues to impact our region, but Council on Aging and local service providers have made changes in an effort to improve service delivery for seniors in the county. For example: creating cost efficiencies by grouping providers and home care workers by region, and changing training/certification requirements for aides who provide only housekeeping services. COA is working on a plan to competitively bid home care services, including new hourly rates and revised requirements for service delivery in the levy-funded Elderly Services Programs.

COA, Butler County Commissioners agree on new contract – After responding to a Request for Proposals issued by Butler County Commissioners, Council on Aging agreed to a new five-year contract to administer the levy-funded Elderly Services Program in the county. The new contract will result in approximately \$250,000 in savings over the next five years because COA proposed changing its administrative fee from a flat dollar amount to a 7 percent cap. COA has held a contract with county commissioners to administer ESP for 20 years. A Butler County non-profit organization, LifeSpan, Inc., handles eligibility assessments and care management in the program.

Program lifts seniors out of depression – Older adults are at an increased risk for depression, especially if they have one or more chronic health conditions. But depression is not a normal part of aging and treatment can help a person feel like themselves again and even improve physical health. In Butler County, a mental health program for older adults has relieved depression symptoms among nearly 90 percent of participants. Called Uplift, the program is a joint effort of COA and the Butler County Mental Health Board. In-home therapy and other services are provided by Community First Solutions. Uplift is offered at little to no cost to county residents age 50 and older, including those enrolled in Butler County ESP. In 2017, 221 individuals enrolled in Butler County ESP received treatment and services via Uplift.

About the Elderly Services Program

ESP helps eligible older adults remain safe and independent in their homes, preventing unnecessary nursing home placement and filling gaps in care that may already be provided by family caregivers. The program is operated by Council on Aging (COA) via a contract with Butler County Commissioners. A community advisory council appointed by the commissioners advises on program needs and policies. COA contracts with LifeSpan, Inc. to assess, enroll and care manage clients in the program. Provider agencies deliver ESP services under contract with COA.

ESP is funded by county property taxes. The most recent levy was passed in November 2015 by 74 percent of voters. The 1.3-mill levy is a renewal and the cost to homeowners is approximately \$39.81 per \$100,000 of property value.

ESP serves eligible county residents age 65 and older who need help with certain activities of daily living (bathing, cleaning, cooking, transportation, etc.). There is no income qualification for ESP, but some clients have a co-payment based on their income. Eligibility for the program and each service is determined during an in-home assessment. Care plans are flexible and can change over time. ESP provides the right services in the right amount at the right time.

How tax dollars are spent

ESP would not exist without the senior services tax levy and the generous support of county voters. Local tax dollars provide 92 percent of funding needed for the program.

As the Area Agency on Aging for southwestern Ohio, including Butler County, COA leverages state and federal funding to cover 5 percent of ESP expenses. Additional funding comes from voluntary client donations and client co-payments (37 percent of clients make a co-payment based on their income).

ESP is a compassionate and cost-effective alternative to nursing home care. On average, it costs \$296 per month to help a senior stay in their home with services through ESP, compared to more than \$4,000 a month for Medicaid nursing home care, also funded by tax dollars.

COA’s role in Butler County

As administrator of the Elderly Services Program in Butler County, COA’s goal is to ensure the highest quality services at the lowest cost in order to serve as many seniors as possible with the tax dollars available.

COA’s responsibilities include: program development; provider management; data analysis and reporting; financial services and oversight; information technology; quality improvement; and community engagement.

As the state-designated Area Agency on Aging, COA provides additional services to county residents:

Service	2017 in Butler County
Aging and Disability Resource Center COA's call center and “front door” to services and community resources.	Responded to more than 46,800 inquiries
Home and Community-based services via Medicaid Waivers Care for residents of all ages via PASSPORT, Assisted Living, Ohio Home Care, Specialized Recovery Services and MyCare Ohio programs.	Served 1,496 residents
Transitional Care Support to transition from hospital/nursing home care to in-home care via Community Transitions, Home Choice and other programs.	Served 169 residents
Title III of the Older Americans Act Federal funding administered by COA for senior center services, transportation, meals, caregiver support, legal help and wellness education.	In 2017, Butler County organizations spent almost \$1.1 million in Title III funds allocated by COA

Expenses

Service*	Clients Served	Service Units	Cost
Care Management	3,804	N/A	\$2,038,727
Electronic Monitoring System	2,570	24,770 months of rentals	\$403,110
Home Care Assistance	1,780	139,806 hours	\$2,947,122
Home-delivered Meals	1,623	315,492 meals	\$2,125,186
Home Medical Equipment	693	1,274 equipment rentals	\$156,192
Medical Transportation	539	15,469 one-way trips	\$472,044
Independent Living Assistance**	384	2,611 hours	\$537,623
Minor Home Repairs	328	380 repairs	\$309,522
Behavioral Health Services	221	N/A	\$24,433
Consumer Directed Care	147	1,440 months of service	\$425,141
Non-Medical Transportation	130	972 one-way trips	\$25,118
Adult Day Services	58	2,574 days	\$146,443
Environmental Services***	41	119 jobs	\$53,900
Adult Day Transportation	21	8,574 miles	\$21,284
Intake and Assessment	N/A	N/A	\$223,321
Administration	N/A	N/A	\$738,641
TOTAL EXPENSES			\$10,647,807

Revenue

Federal and State (via Council on Aging)	\$537,623
Client Donation	\$11,699
Client Co-payment	\$254,005
Butler County Elderly Services Levy	\$9,844,480
TOTAL REVENUE	\$10,647,807
Additonal Expenses	
To provide additional help to older adults in the county, including protection from fraud, scams and abuse, Butler County Commissioners distributed \$150,342 in Elderly Services levy funds to the Butler County Prosecutor's Office.	
*Services are listed in order of clients served. **Help with benefit applications and organizing personal and household records. ***Pest control, major housekeeping and waste removal.	