

Client keeps up the fight with help from FastTrack Home

Life has thrown many challenges at Howard, including a diagnosis of COPD. But Howard is a fighter – just like his hero Muhammad Ali, whose posters decorate the walls of his apartment. “God’s not through with me yet,” he said.



Howard almost didn’t have an apartment to come home to after spending 10 days at the University of Cincinnati Medical Center for complications related to his COPD. His landlord was forced to sell the building where Howard lived, and served him an eviction notice while he was in the hospital.

Luckily, a hospital case manager introduced Howard to two COA employees who helped him locate and transition smoothly into a new apartment, with services in place to ensure he would be able to recover there, rather than in a nursing home.

One of those employees – Care Manager, Lisa – enrolled Howard in COA’s FastTrack Home program, an extension of the Elderly Services Program (ESP). Its purpose is to help seniors avoid an all-too-common scenario: an expensive return to the hospital or nursing home stay when they aren’t prepared to care for themselves at home as they recover from an illness or injury. It alters ESP’s traditional enrollment process, simplifying the screening process, so eligibility determinations can be made quickly in the hospital or nursing home. As a result, in-home services can be set up within 24 to 72 hours of returning home.

The program began as a pilot at Clinton Memorial Hospital in Clinton County in 2016, and was expanded to Hamilton County in 2017. Christ Hospital, Jewish Hospital – Mercy Health and, fortunately for Howard, University of Cincinnati Medical Center, currently participate. In 2017, the program served 299 seniors in Clinton and Hamilton (252) counties.

With home-delivered meals and laundry assistance set up through FastTrack Home, Howard successfully settled into his new apartment. FastTrack Home services remain in place for 60 days, then clients like Howard undergo a full eligibility assessment for ESP. Howard qualified for ongoing care through ESP and he now gets the home care assistance and non-medical transportation services he needs to remain independent.

Sitting in his sunny new apartment, Howard reflected on his move. He learned after the eviction that his old building was moldy. “It was so bad. The air I was breathing was full of mold,” he said. He speculates the mold contributed to his hospital stay.

He also reflected on the people who have counted him out over the years, such as a doctor who refused to run certain tests because, she bluntly told him, they would be a waste because he wasn’t going to live much longer.

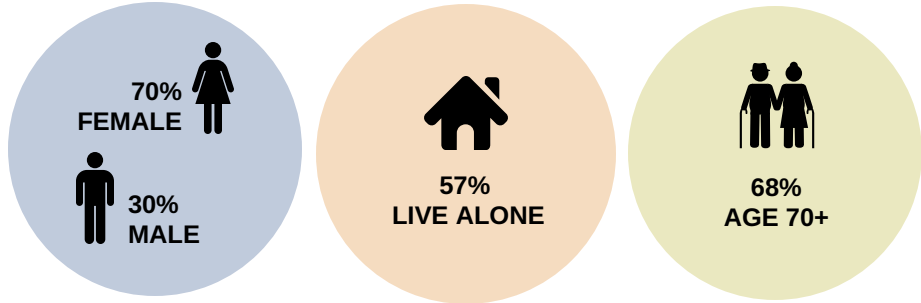
After settling in to his new apartment, Howard got to work to accomplish some shorter-term goals – like being able to walk his entire apartment building hallway – in order to move on to some larger goals. He plans to go back to school to train as a chef and a dietitian. “And I am going to go looking for that doctor, and invite her to my graduation,” he said.

Don’t ever count Howard out of the fight.

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 75-year-old woman, living alone on an income of \$1,634 per month. Because of health problems, she spends \$242 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: 6,235



ESP Hamilton County’s Elderly Services Program is a community partnership

Hamilton County Commissioners:  
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Advisory Council:  
Rose Stertz, Chair; Bianca Edwards, Vice Chair; Clarissa Rentz; Michael Robison; Stephen Smookler

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Hamilton 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.

Hamilton County

ELDERLY SERVICES PROGRAM



2017 Annual Report

Dear Friends and Supporters,

On behalf of the Hamilton County Elderly Services Program (ESP) Advisory Council, I am pleased to present our 2017 Annual Report.

2017 was an important year. Dedicated volunteers and advocates worked tirelessly to place an increase in the county’s senior services levy on the November ballot. It was an uphill journey, but we prevailed and 72 percent of voters approved our request. Now, we can begin to reverse a 10-year decline in the program’s ability to serve seniors at risk of nursing home placement. In 2017 we helped 6,235 seniors remain independent in their homes – an 8 percent increase over 2016.

Part of this growth can be attributed to a new program that gives seniors quick access to in-home care when they are leaving the hospital or nursing home – helping them recover in the comfort of their own home and preventing hospital or nursing home readmissions. FastTrack Home brings the benefits of ESP to more county seniors when they are most needed. Read more in our client profile.

Finally, 2017 marked the 25th anniversary of the first senior services levy in Hamilton County and the birth of ESP. This program has helped thousands of seniors – and their caregivers – live out their dream of staying in their own home for as long as possible. I am proud to be part of a community that places so much value on helping older adults live with independence and dignity.

**Rose Stertz**  
**Chair, Hamilton County Elderly Services Program Advisory Council**



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 Hamilton County Commissioners. A community board appointed by the commissioners advises on program needs and policies. Provider agencies deliver ESP services under contract with COA.

A county tax levy in place since 1992 provides funding. The most recent levy was approved by 72 percent of voters in November, 2017. The 1.6-mill levy will raise \$25.65 million annually for the next five years and costs property owners \$40.25 annually per \$100,000 of property valuation.

ESP serves eligible county residents age 60 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 and assets. 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 Hamilton 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 (30 percent of clients make a co-payment based on their income and assets).

ESP is a compassionate and cost-effective alternative to nursing home care. On average, it costs \$367 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 Hamilton County

As administrator of the Elderly Services Program in Hamilton 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.

In addition to eligibility assessments and ongoing care management, 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 Hamilton County
<b>Aging and Disability Resource Center</b> COA's call center and “front door” to services and community resources.	Responded to <b>more than 46,800</b> inquiries
<b>Home and Community-based services via Medicaid Waivers</b> Care for residents of all ages via PASSPORT, Assisted Living, Ohio Home Care, Specialized Recovery Services and MyCare Ohio programs.	Served <b>4,548</b> residents
<b>Transitional Care</b> Support to transition from hospital/nursing home care to in-home care via Community Transitions, Home Choice and FastTrack Home programs.	Served <b>1,050</b> residents
<b>Title III of the Older Americans Act</b> Federal funding administered by COA for senior center services, transportation, meals, caregiver support, legal help and wellness education.	In 2017, Hamilton County organizations spent nearly <b>\$3.1 million</b> in Title III funds allocated by COA

2017 highlights

Hamilton County senior services levy victory

In November, Hamilton County voters approved the first increase in the senior services levy since 2008. For the past 10 years, the levy which funds 92 percent of ESP has been losing revenue, and serving fewer seniors as a result. The increase, approved by 72 percent of voters, means the county can serve more seniors. The levy is marking its 25th year of service to county seniors and caregivers. **Thank you, Hamilton County voters!**



FastTrack Home expands, receives Inspire | Healthcare Award

Council on Aging's FastTrack Home program expanded from Clinton County into three Hamilton County hospitals and received the Health Collaborative's Leadership in Quality Improvement Award. FastTrack Home fills an unmet need in the health care community, connecting seniors to ESP’s in-home care services when they are needed most – as they are discharged from a hospital or nursing home. With support waiting at home, seniors can avoid nursing home stays and hospital readmissions. Read more in our client profile.

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 recruiting new providers in rural/ hard to serve areas. 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.

Expenses

Service*	Clients Served	Service Units	Cost
Care Management	6,235	N/A	\$3,302,570
Home Care Assistance	3,753	333,936 hours	\$6,661,777
Electronic Monitoring System	3,414	31,305 months of rentals	\$533,435
Home-delivered Meals	2,952	575,091 meals	\$3,802,955
Medical Transportation	1,331	47,456 one-way trips	\$1,393,622
Home Medical Equipment	1,299	1,918 equipment rentals	\$401,915
Minor Home Repairs	343	385 repairs	\$301,328
Consumer Directed Care	333	3,097 months of service	\$1,105,785
Non-Medical Transportation	229	3,734 one-way trips	\$110,334
Adult Day Service	163	9,091 days	\$530,543
Independent Living Assistance**	151	1,083 hours	\$58,882
Adult Day Transportation	87	37,593 miles	\$80,885
Environmental Services***	53	125 jobs	\$73,200
Intake and Assessment	N/A	N/A	\$166,345
Administration	N/A	N/A	\$1,111,418
TOTAL EXPENSES			\$19,634,994

Revenue

Federal and State (via Council on Aging)	\$1,070,114
Client Donation	\$8,136
Client Co-payment	\$540,276
Hamilton County Elderly Services Levy	\$18,016,468
TOTAL REVENUE	\$19,634,994
<b>Additional Expenses</b>	
To provide additional help to older adults in the county, including protection from fraud, scams and abuse, Hamilton County Commissioners distributed Elderly Services levy funds to the following Hamilton County organizations:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Hamilton County Job and Family Services - Adult Protective Services Unit: <b>\$369,272</b></li><li>Hamilton County Veterans Service Commission: <b>\$205,000</b></li></ul>	
*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.	