

Couple depends on aide employed via consumer-directed care

Butch and Eva fell in love in high school when they both worked at Kroger. They married in 1962 and according to Eva, have had a blessed life.

Butch was a cop with the Cincinnati Police Department for 33 years – first as a patrolman on Vine Street in the days of call boxes – and then in homicide during the time of the Cincinnati Strangler.



“He loved being on the streets talking to people,” Eva said. “The 8 p.m. to 4 a.m. shift was his favorite because that was the busiest. It was something different every day and that's what he loved.”

Butch and Eva raised three kids, two of whom are now Hamilton County Sheriff deputies. Until he retired in 1995, Butch worked two jobs to pay tuition and so Eva could be home with the kids. His second job was at the county morgue.

But Butch developed Parkinson’s Disease and now requires total care. At first, Eva managed everything on her own with help from family. But two years ago, she ran out of steam and her daughter contacted Council on Aging for help. Elderly Services Program (ESP) Care Manager Donna came out to assess Butch and was surprised by what she saw. “I saw her [Eva] trying to do things for him while she was pushing a walker around.”

Donna enrolled the couple into the program. “Donna got a big boulder rolling,” Eva said. “I can’t tell you the help, the relief, it’s been.”

Today, the couple relies on their children and grandchildren, therapists, hospice care and ESP to stay in their home. They receive help with personal care and housekeeping and ESP has provided home medical equipment, meals and an emergency response system to keep them safe when they are home alone.

The couple’s home health aide, Tasha, has been with them since the start. To say the couple relies on her is an understatement. “If Tasha isn’t here, I can’t get him out of bed,” Eva said. “I have to call one of our kids to help me. They work. They have kids...”

Tasha arrives at 9 a.m. and helps with meals, housekeeping and all of Butch’s personal care needs. She takes his vitals and helps him with exercises and breathing treatments. Though Tasha is paid through the Elderly Services Program, her employers are Eva and Butch. The couple hired her using ESP’s consumer-directed care (CDC) option.

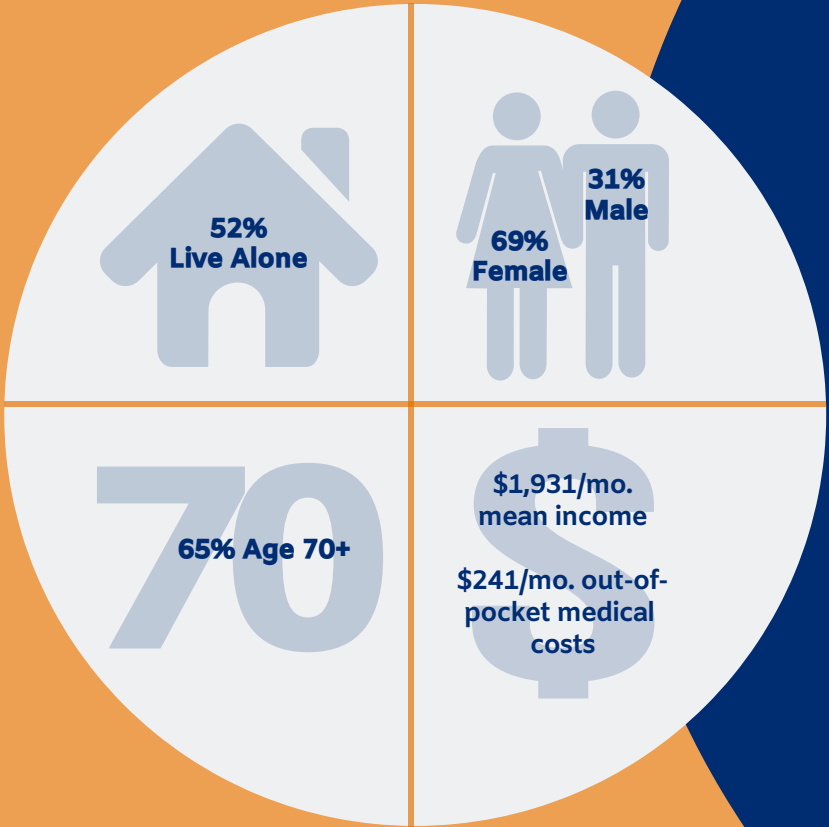
Here’s how CDC works: Instead of using a home care agency, clients become “employers” and hire their own “employees” to provide certain services, which are paid for by ESP. In many cases, the employee is someone the client already knows. CDC increases independence and program satisfaction for the client, while using ESP resources more effectively. It has the added bonus of reducing the impact of an ongoing, nationwide shortage of home health aides.

Because of the shortage, COA’s provider network has struggled to recruit and retain workers to provide in-home care services to ESP clients. As a result, new clients often face delays in starting their services (especially in rural areas) and existing clients experience irregularities in their service schedule and the aide who provides their care.

“We are very fortunate we can stay in our home. Otherwise we couldn’t do it; we couldn’t afford it. It wouldn’t be safe to stay here and Butch wants to stay at home. With Donna’s help [ESP], we get what we need.”

Who are Hamilton County ESP’s clients?

In 2018, there were 7,048 of them. Forty-three percent are minorities. They are seniors caught in the middle: with income too high to qualify for Medicaid, but too low to pay for private in-home care. They need help with basic activities like personal care and transportation. Family helps as much as they can, and ESP fills in gaps in care so they can continue to live independently in their homes and communities.



HAMILTON COUNTY  
ELDERLY SERVICES  
PROGRAM

ANNUAL  
REPORT  
2018



Hamilton County’s Elderly Services Program is a community partnership

Hamilton County Commissioners

Denise Driehaus, Stephanie Summerow Dumas, Todd Portune

Hamilton County Elderly Services Program Advisory Council

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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.

Dear Friends and Supporters,



On behalf of the Hamilton County Elderly Services Program (ESP) Advisory Council, I am pleased to present our 2018 Annual Report. This report shows how tax dollars are spent and gives a picture of the program’s impact on our county.

2018 was a year of growth for our program. We helped 7,048 seniors remain independent in their homes – a 13 percent increase over 2017. This growth is due in part to the expansion of FastTrack Home, a program within ESP which provides temporary supportive services to seniors as they return home following a hospital or nursing facility stay. In 2018, we designated staff to focus exclusively on enrolling patients discharging from nursing homes. This means we can support seniors and give families a boost of confidence and security when their loved one is coming home from a rehab stay. Read more about this in our highlights section.

Since passage of the levy in 2017, ESP has been in a better position to serve the county’s growing senior population – and their caregivers. For the first time in many levy cycles, there is no waiting list to enroll. We are grateful for the support of Hamilton County residents and voters, who, since 1992, have been committed to meeting the needs of our elderly friends, family members and neighbors. I am proud to be part of a community that places so much value on helping its older residents live with independence and dignity.

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

About the Elderly Services Program

ESP helps eligible county residents age 60 and older remain safe and independent in their homes by providing help with certain activities of daily living (bathing, cleaning, cooking, transportation and more), filling gaps in care that may already be provided by family caregivers.

ESP offers flexible care to meet clients’ changing needs. Eligibility and care needs are determined during an in-home assessment and a professional care manager coordinates and monitors clients’ care. Income is not an eligibility factor for ESP, but some clients have a co-payment based on their income and assets.

The program is operated by Council on Aging (COA) via a contract with Hamilton County Commissioners, who appoint a board to advise on program needs and policies. Provider agencies deliver ESP services under contract with COA.

ESP is a compassionate and cost-effective alternative to nursing home care. On average, it costs \$355 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

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 a state-designated Area Agency on Aging, COA provided these additional services to county residents in 2018:



**Aging and Disability Resource Center**  
COA’s call center and “front door” to services and community resources responded to 47,431 inquiries.



**Home and community-based services via Medicaid Waivers**  
PASSPORT, Assisted Living, Ohio Home Care, Specialized Recovery Services and MyCare Ohio programs provided care for 4,803 Hamilton County residents.



**Transitional care**  
Support to transition from hospital or nursing home care to in-home care via Community Transitions, Home Choice, FastTrack Home and other programs was provided to 656 residents.



**Title III of the Older Americans Act**  
Hamilton County organizations spent more than \$3.3 million in Title III funds allocated by COA for services such as congregate meals, legal assistance, wellness education, caregiver support and transportation.

2018 highlights

**FastTrack Home continues growth in 2018**  
FastTrack Home is now a permanent service in the Elderly Services Program and the program is serving more seniors because some staff are focused exclusively on enrolling nursing home patients. FastTrack Home brings the benefits of ESP to seniors when care is needed most – as they are leaving a hospital or nursing home. It provides temporary support – care transitions coaching, personal care, housekeeping, transportation and meals – to support recovery at home and prevent readmissions. In 2018, 486 hospital and nursing home patients enrolled in the program – a 93 percent increase from 2017. About 35 percent of FastTrack Home patients go on to enroll in ESP when their temporary FastTrack Home services end. For those who do not need ESP, the average length of stay on FastTrack Home is 55 days – enough time to ease their recovery and prevent a readmission.

**Council on Aging invests in new case management and billing system**  
As administrator of the Elderly Services Program in four counties, Council on Aging invested in, and owns, a new system to manage care and costs for clients enrolled in the program. Called CareDirector, the cloud-based system replaces an outdated, unsupported technology platform and aligns the program and COA with current industry standards for security and privacy. Once fully-optimized, CareDirector will provide flexibility to grow and adapt programs to better serve clients.

How tax dollars are spent

ESP would not exist without the senior services tax levy and the generous support of voters. A county tax levy in place since 1992 provides 90 percent of funding. The most recent levy was approved by 72 percent of voters in November, 2017. The 1.6-mill levy costs property owners \$40.25 per \$100,000 of property valuation annually. COA’s goal is to ensure the highest quality services at the lowest cost in order to serve as many people as possible with the tax dollars available.

As the Area Agency on Aging for Southwestern Ohio, including Hamilton County, COA leverages state and federal funding to cover 7 percent of ESP expenses. Additional funding comes from voluntary client donations and client co-payments (28 percent of clients make a co-payment based on their income and assets).

Revenue

Federal and State (via Council on Aging)	\$1,574,179
Client Donation	\$3,385
Client Co-Payment	\$448,139
Hamilton County Elderly Services Levy	\$18,991,983
TOTAL REVENUE	\$21,017,686

Expenses

SERVICE*	CLIENTS SERVED	SERVICE UNITS	COST
Care Management	7,048	N/A	\$3,567,952
Home Care Assistance	3,830	346,996 hours	\$6,939,826
Electronic Monitoring System	3,592	32,734 months	\$587,204
Home-Delivered Meals	3,060	604,672 meals	\$4,052,267
Medical Transportation	1,343	46,995 one-way trips	\$1,384,500
Home Medical Equipment	1,245	1,695 equipment rentals	\$374,468
FastTrack Home Care Management	486	N/A	\$374,794
Minor Home Repairs	337	373 repairs	\$258,302
Consumer-Directed Care	332	3,074 months of service	\$1,087,531
Non-Medical Transportation	276	3,804 one-way trips	\$116,685
Independent Living Assistance**	173	2,807 hours	\$64,923
Adult Day Services	168	9,033 days	\$522,904
Adult Day Transportation	92	42,324 miles	\$93,167
Environmental Services***	63	130 jobs	\$80,934
Intake and Assessment	N/A	N/A	\$230,049
Administration	N/A	N/A	\$1,282,180
TOTAL EXPENSES			\$21,017,686

\*Services listed in order of clients served.  
\*\*Help with benefit applications and organizing personal and household records.  
\*\*\*Pest control, major housekeeping and waste removal.

Additional Expenses

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:

- Hamilton County Job and Family Services – Adult Protective Services Unit: \$351,200
- Hamilton County Veterans Service Commission: \$233,197