First and foremost, I’d like to thank voters for passing the Warren County Senior Services Levy in November of 2021. The 78 percent who voted “yes” made this the largest winning margin of all similar levies in southwestern Ohio! To me, this confirms that our neighbors recognize the importance of supporting our older adults, who have contributed so much to our community over their lifetimes. In fact, in 2021, the Warren County Elderly Services Program (ESP) – 89 percent of which is funded by the levy – supported 2,593 older adults, up 5 percent over 2020.

The program continues to grow in other ways as well, including the addition of FastTrack Home in 2021. The program supports older adults in their recovery after release from a hospital or nursing home. Evaluation in the facility ensures that temporary services are in place upon the client’s discharge. FastTrack Home has proven effective in lowering the number of unnecessary return visits to the hospital.

As 2021 ushered in the second year of the pandemic, related efforts in the county shifted to helping older adults find COVID vaccination appointments, vaccinating them through clinics and coordinating with health departments to bring vaccines to those who are homebound. In addition, residents of our low-income senior apartment buildings continued to receive restaurant meals through the award-winning Comfort Meals Program.

The national home health aide shortage continues to impact our program, but ESP administrator Council on Aging (COA) continues to work on creative solutions to this challenge. One of these is identifying and onboarding a new financial management service provider to make it easier for clients to hire their own aide through ESP’s Consumer Directed Care option.

I encourage you to review this printed report, and then scan the QR code to read more. We are truly doing great things in Warren County.

Sincerely,
Dave Gully
Chair, Warren County Elderly Services Program Advisory Council

What Is ESP?
The Elderly Services Program (ESP) helps eligible county residents age 60 and older to 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 by 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.

The program is operated by Council on Aging (COA) via a contract with Warren County Commissioners, who appoint a board to advise on program needs and policies. Provider agencies deliver ESP services under a contract with COA. ESP is a compassionate and cost-effective alternative to nursing home care.

What Is COA’s Role?
COA’s responsibilities for ESP in Warren County 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 2021:

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Success Stories

**Council on Aging helps older adults get COVID-19 vaccinations**

Since February 2021, Council on Aging (COA) has played a key role in helping more than 3,000 area older adults get vaccinated against COVID-19, while helping countless others connect to information about the available vaccines.

When Ohio rolled out its statewide COVID-19 vaccination plan in February 2021, older adults were among the first eligible groups to receive a vaccination. However, older adults had difficulty getting vaccinated for two primary reasons: 1) there was not enough vaccine to meet the demand; and 2) most vaccine registration systems required use of a computer or smart phone to make an appointment – a barrier for many older adults.

There was also confusion about where older adults could go for assistance in navigating a fragmented vaccine system. (scan QR code for more)

**New financial management services provider makes it easier for ESP clients to hire their own caregiver**

As ESP’s administrator, COA contracts with organizations to deliver services to clients. Contracts are awarded through a competitive bidding process via requests for proposals (RFPs). The goal of the RFP process is to identify and contract with service providers who can offer the highest quality services at the lowest cost in order to serve as many older adults as possible with the available tax dollars.

In September, COA issued an RFP for Financial Management Services (FMS) in the Elderly Services Program. The FMS provider supports ESP clients who utilize the program’s consumer-directed care option to recruit and hire their own aides. In this case the ESP client or designated family member is the “employer” and the aide they hire is their “employee.” The FMS provider, on the client’s behalf, manages all the financial and payroll related responsibilities in addition to criminal background checks that go along with being an “employer.” (scan QR code for more)

**ESP helps Warren County woman live independently, despite health challenges**

Rebecca, 64, is a private, independent woman who draws on her strength each and every day.

Growing up in Lebanon, she is used to the quiet streets that surround her home of 13 years. It’s filled with photos - faces of her family smile at her as she watches TV on her couch. Her son’s picture hangs in a prominent location where she can always see it.

The Warren County Elderly Services program (ESP) has been a strong partner for Rebecca, lending her a hand and offering peace of mind. Rebecca’s health challenges began 15 years ago with an infection in her left foot, leading to the amputation of her left leg 10 years later. (scan QR code for more)