

Mary

Mary, 93, had been enjoying the independent life in her condominium since 1994. She was active and could handle just about anything she needed to do to take care of herself, except for the grocery shopping. Her daughter Lisa helped with that.

But one night Mary called Lisa, reporting she wasn't feeling well. The squad transported Mary to the hospital, where she was diagnosed with a life-threatening pulmonary embolism. What followed was time in the hospital on a ventilator, and then rehabilitation at a nursing home in Warren County, near Lisa.

While she received good care and "did well for her age," according to Lisa, when it was time to leave the nursing home, Mary wasn't quite ready to go back to her condo to fully recover by herself. She was at high risk for falling and still was not feeling as well as she did prior to hospitalization.

There was no question – Mary would stay with Lisa. But how would that work, given that Lisa's home was not equipped with the safety modifications Mary needed? And although Lisa was working from home at the time due to the COVID-19 pandemic, she knew she would be going back to the office soon.

Council on Aging's (COA) FastTrack Home program was there to help. A COA staff member met with Lisa and Mary at the nursing home to enroll Mary in the program and determine how it could give her the best chance at a successful recovery. Lisa's bathroom required modifications so Mary could bathe safely. And once Lisa returned to work at her office, Mary received an emergency response system she could use to call for help in case of a fall.

Lisa was pleased with the COA service providers who visited her home to install these items. "Both of the vendors have been lovely," Lisa said. "The service felt very personal and they were pleasant and nice."

Lisa was also very appreciative of the personal touch they received from their COA care manager, Amy. Every client receives support and coaching from a professional care manager to ensure they understand how to take their medications and how to identify "red flags" that could indicate a serious change in their condition.

"One of the things that was so helpful was the sense that you are not alone, that you are talking to someone who cares and knows a lot more than you do," Lisa said. "As time went on, Amy would check in and send information about Mom's options." Depending on the client's needs, FastTrack Home can also provide home-delivered meals, transportation to medical appointments and other home modifications for up to 60 days for no cost. The program is a service of the Warren County Elderly Services Program, the majority of which is funded by the Warren County Senior Services Levy.

FastTrack Home's goal is to help older adults recover successfully at home after a hospital or nursing home stay, avoiding the risk of a return to the hospital, which can be a common occurrence with older adults. It also helps primary caregivers like Lisa continue to tend to their own responsibilities while caring for their loved-one.

Mary's hope is to return not to the hospital, but to her condo and her independence. With the help she's received from FastTrack Home, she's headed in the right direction.



Mary (right) and daughter Lisa.