

Aging SPECTRUM

INDEPENDENCE WITH DIGNITY NOVEMBER 2008 EDITION



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The AAA provides older adults and their caregivers long-term care choices, consumer protection and education so they can achieve the highest possible quality of life.



Joseph L. Ruby
President & CEO

In the interest of providing our consumers, providers, partners and other stakeholders with timely and informative news, we have changed our quarterly four-page newsletter to a more condensed version.

To guide the progress of our agency, we have developed our strategic vision, *The Way Forward*. This vision is articulated in our annual report and continues to guide our decision making. Achieving the goals set in *The Way Forward* will enable us to provide the best care possible for the older adults who count on us.

In **Our Consumer Plan: Make Consumer Choice a Reality in Long-Term Care**, we address the growing need for long-term care and the government policies that effect our older adult population. Long-term care is primarily funded through Medicaid. Currently, Ohio's statewide Medicaid programs offer three separate settings for long-term care: the community (PASSPORT), assisted-living facilities and nursing homes.

Viewpoints

Older adults should always have the right to choose where they receive their care. That is why *Our Consumer Plan* is so vital, to ensure that choice.

In 2007, Ohio spent 70% of its Medicaid long-term care budget in institutional settings which are significantly more expensive than community-based options. This means that Ohio's Medicaid long-term care per member/per month cost is considerably higher than in most other states. The State's 60+ population is projected to increase 44% between 2000 and 2020. Medicaid expenditures from 2000 to 2006 have increased by an average annual rate of 11.5%. These facts paint a dark picture for the future of Ohio. If the current trend in expenditures continues, Medicaid will consume 68% of Ohio's budget by 2020 (Scripps Gerontology Center – 2004, 2008).

The solution to this budgeting crisis is in "moving the needle" in Ohio from nursing home to community-based expenditures, driving down the per member/per month costs. Most states have been more successful than Ohio in finding a better balance between facility and community-based expenditures. Oregon ranks among the best states in "moving the needle" toward community-based

options and spends only 27% of its Medicaid long-term care dollars in institutional settings. This has been accomplished by providing the consumer with a choice of care settings through Area Agencies on Aging. As older adults choose less costly assisted-living and community-based options, the Ohio Medicaid per member/per month cost will decrease. This is why choice in long-term care is so imperative. We will be presenting our strategic initiatives that address these issues in future newsletters.

We would like your thoughts on our new Area Agency on Aging newsletter format. For more information, or to offer your thoughts, please contact **Matt Reed**, Communications Manager at mreed@services4aging.org or **330.899.5208**. If you received this newsletter by email, please provide your feedback by replying to the message. Thank you for joining *The Way Forward!*



Joseph L. Ruby | *President & CEO*



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The Foundation relies on philanthropic support to assist moderate-income older adults throughout Portage, Stark, Summit and Wayne Counties. To make a donation or add a name to the Foundation mailing list, please contact **Matt Reed** at **330.899.5208** or **1.800.421.7277 ext: 5208**.



Creating a Better Life

struggled with the healthcare system to find a diagnosis for Bob's growing health issues.

Mr. and Mrs. Perkins worked several different jobs before dementia caused Bob to require constant supervision. This coupled with Carol's pregnancy in later life caused tremendous strain on the family. Carol says she was near a nervous breakdown before the Foundation's help.

Thanks to the assistance of the Greater Akron/Canton Area Agency on Aging Foundation, Carol and Bob Perkins receive respite care in the form of three days at Coleman Adult Day Services. They have also received help with spring cleaning and some chore services.

Once Carol and Bob received help, her outlook on life changed. To celebrate, her children planned a full wedding for them on their 50th anniversary to renew their vows. "It was one of the best days of my life," she recalls with a smile.

Carol and Bob are one of thousands of older adult couples in our area that struggle with long-term care needs. They don't qualify for help from the government but need services to maximize their independence

in the community. Older adults of modest means do not have the resources to pay for their own care. The rising costs of everyday necessities such as gas and food are an even greater burden on these individuals who struggle to remain independent with dignity. With your help, the Foundation can provide a better life for these frail individuals. For more information, please contact **Matt Reed** at **330.899.5208** or **1.800.421.7277 ext: 5208**.

Carol met Bob while he was on a date with another woman. "Bob couldn't wait to take her home and come back to talk to me," she says, remembering how they first met. The Perkins have been married for over 50 years and have lived and worked in West Virginia and southern Ohio before settling in Portage County to raise their family. Carol and Bob Perkins have been battling dementia for over 30 years. They

Upcoming Training & Seminars

Portage County Council on Aging Meeting

December 9, 2008, at 2 p.m.
 Located at 705 Oakwood Street,
 Ravenna, Ohio 44266

Conference Room

For more information on these events, please contact Linda Vogel at 330.899.5227 or lvogel@services4aging.org

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