



Ohio
Department
of Aging

2008
Annual
Report

Ohio

From the Director



The Ohio Department of Aging's work is increasingly critical as Ohio's older population grows dramatically. Each month, 12,000 Ohioans reach the milestone age of 60. With limited resources, we remain dedicated to serving seniors, while re-engineering our current long-term care system to address the changing needs and expectations of the baby boom generation for themselves, their parents and loved ones.

We know Ohioans want choices when deciding their long-term care. An AARP survey indicates more than 94 percent of Ohioans would prefer to receive long-term care services in their own homes. Governor Ted Strickland demonstrated a commitment to giving seniors these options by approving a new budget infrastructure based on the recommendations of the Unified Long-term Care Budget workgroup.

This new budget approach will establish a flexible funding stream based on the type of care consumers want and need. This flexibility will achieve a better balance between home- and community-based care and institutional services, and will help contain long-term care costs. Ohio is already making improvements in this area, having recently moved from 47th in the nation to 42nd for our expenditures for home- and community-based care versus institutional care. According to the Ohio Business Roundtable, if Ohio was to achieve the national average on such expenditures, our state would realize a savings of \$900 million a year in Medicaid costs.

The governor's Executive Medicaid Management Administration, of which this department is a part, is changing the way we think about Medicaid programs, not as separate services provided and paid for by multiple state agencies, but as a unified program working together. Through the joint efforts of the eight agencies involved, we are improving services to Ohioans, as well as realizing efficiencies.

Like all state agencies, the Department of Aging has had to reduce our costs. Working closely with Gov. Strickland's office, the department, along with our state's aging network, was able to find administrative savings without negatively affecting the seniors served by our Medicaid waivers.

We also are working to promote healthy and active aging. Many of today's seniors desire to work beyond what may have been a traditional retirement age in years past. The governor's Senior Civic Engagement Initiative is making certain employment, volunteerism and life-long learning opportunities available to older Ohioans.

Our accomplishments are shared ones. The department is fortunate to have a strong partner in Ohio's aging network, especially our area agencies on aging, which are at the forefront of implementing the reform of the long-term care system. I know through our continued hard work together we will build on these accomplishments to help older Ohioans enjoy healthy, active and independent lives.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Barbara E. Riley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Barbara E. Riley
Director, Ohio Department of Aging

Mission

To provide leadership for the delivery of services and supports that improve and promote quality of life and personal choice for older Ohioans, adults with disabilities, their families and their caregivers.

Vision

Ohioans will benefit from a network of effective resources and community services that support consumer rights, independence and dignity.

Accomplishments



Unified Long-term Care Budget

In May 2008, the 28-member Unified Long-term Care Budget workgroup, led by ODA, submitted its recommendations to the Joint

Committee on Medicaid Technology and Reform and the Executive Medicaid Management Administration. The report was the culmination of 10 months of work, involving more than 300 stakeholders. The Strickland administration approved the development of a new budget infrastructure beginning in fiscal year 2010. The recommendations will create a process for forecasting interagency expenditures and caseloads, outcome measures, consistent rate setting and a “no wrong door” approach to expedite access to services.

Assisted Living Resident Satisfaction Survey

In January 2008, ODA posted the results of the first survey in the nation to ask residents of residential care facilities, also known as assisted living facilities, how satisfied they are with the facility and the services it provides. Interviewers trained by Vital Research, Scripps Gerontology Center of Miami University and the Margaret Blenkner Research Institute met face-to-face with approximately 9,200 residents and asked them to rate their satisfaction on activities, choice, care and services, employee responsiveness, meals and dining, laundry and general satisfaction. With 514 participating facilities, the statewide average satisfaction score was 91.73 percent.

Nursing Home Family Satisfaction Survey

In December, 2008, ODA released the results of its biennial survey to determine how Ohioans rate the care and services provided to their loved ones in the state’s nursing homes. More than 24,500 family members participated in the survey, which was conducted by the Scripps Gerontology Center. The statewide average satisfaction score for facilities was 88.2 percent, up from 86.6 percent two years ago.

Medicaid Waiver Program Participant Satisfaction Survey

In March 2008, ODA released the results of its annual survey of more than 3,300 PASSPORT, Choices and Assisted Living Waiver program participants. Ninety-two percent of PASSPORT participants, 94.5 percent of Choices participants and 74.1 percent of participants in the Assisted Living program - the newest of the three programs - were “very satisfied” or “extremely satisfied” with the programs.

Expanded Assisted Living Waiver Eligibility

In March 2008, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services approved amendments to ODA’s Assisted Living Waiver program that allowed the department to open the program to current assisted living facility residents who have qualified for Medicaid, but would have been required to move to a nursing home for care.

Senior Civic Engagement Council

In May 2008, Gov. Strickland established the Senior Civic Engagement Council. The council began its work in October and will collect and analyze data, and promote policies and legislation that encourage participation of older adults in employment, volunteerism and lifelong learning. The council also will enable Ohio’s business leaders, economic development and workforce development systems to better prepare for and offer services to the state’s growing older adult population.

Own Your Future

In spring 2008, the Ohio Departments of Aging, Insurance and Job and Family Services, teamed with area agencies on aging and other local partners to bring the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ (HHS) “Own Your Future” long-term care planning awareness campaign to Ohio. HHS mailed letters to 1.7 million Ohio households with residents between the ages of 45 and 65, offering free copies of an Ohio-specific long-term care planning guide. More than one in five targeted Ohioans ordered the guide, a response rate well above the national average of six percent.

Senior Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program

The Senior Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program, which provides low-income, older Ohioans with coupons they can redeem for locally-grown, fresh produce and herbs, received an additional \$433,469 in federal funds to expand into a total of 37 counties. ODA produced three cookbooks that provide healthy, low-cost, easy-to-prepare recipes using fresh fruits and vegetables. A partnership with the Ohio Department of Health made the booklet available to participants in the Women, Infant and Children Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program as well.

Evidence-based Prevention Initiatives

ODA, together with the Ohio Department of Health, local health districts, area agencies on aging and other local organizations and providers, implemented three classroom-style, evidence-based prevention programs throughout the state: Chronic Disease Self-Management (“Healthy U”), A Matter of Balance and Active Living Every Day. An in-home program for depression called Healthy IDEAS was established and is administered through case management. In 2008, 10 of the state’s 12 area agencies on aging provided all or some of these programs, and the partners have trained more than 200 leaders and benefited 2,000-plus participants.

Accomplishments (con't)

Ohio Benefit Bank

In August 2008, ODA joined the public-private partnership between the Governor's Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives, the Ohio Association of Second Harvest Foodbanks and more than 400 faith-based, non-profit, governmental and private-sector partners to offer online services through the Ohio Benefit Bank. The service offers eligibility screening and application assistance for Ohio's Best Rx, Golden Buckeye and the Senior Community Service Employment Program, among others.

Ohio Housing Locator

In 2008, ODA launched a rental housing database to communities, seniors and people with disabilities. OhioHousingLocator.org includes more than 1,300 property listings, and has had more than 21,000 visitors since July, 2008. The Web site also provides links to other housing resources, including foreclosure prevention and universal design.

Ombudsman Training

The Office of the State Long-term Care Ombudsman was awarded a grant from the AARP Foundation National Legal Training Project to co-sponsor a two-day training for regional ombudsmen. Topics included elder abuse, financial exploitation, elder law, advocacy and guardianship. More than 80 participants learned the national perspective from AARP skilled trainers. The state ombudsman's office provided Ohio's perspective with local experts from law enforcement, protection, advocacy and guardianship.

HOME Choice

Ohio's regional ombudsman programs help older adults and persons with disabilities move from facility-based services and support systems to home- and community-based settings. HOME Choice (Helping Ohioans Move, Expanding Choice) provides participants with greater choice and control over the services they receive in their preferred settings, while helping the state balance its long-term care system. Ohio was one of 17 states to receive funding and garnered the third largest amount (\$100 million over five years), behind Texas and California.

Digital TV Transition

ODA worked with the FCC, the Ohio Association of Broadcasters, area agencies on aging and other organizations to raise awareness of the potential impact of the June 2009 transition to all-digital television broadcasts and encourage older Ohioans to apply for federal converter box coupons. Regional ombudsman programs conducted targeted outreach to residents of adult care facilities.

Senior Services Levies

Thanks to great voter support in the May and November elections, Ohio ended the year with senior services property tax levies in 70 of its 88 counties, as well as additional municipal and local human services levies that benefit seniors. Revenue generated by these levies equals \$131 million annually, up from \$117 million in 2007. ODA continues to work with area agencies on aging and other local partners to raise levy awareness and support.

Economic Stimulus Rebates

Throughout the spring and summer of 2008, ODA, Ohio's area agencies on aging and other agencies worked together on a statewide education campaign to encourage eligible older Ohioans, even those not normally required to do so, to file their 2007 tax returns in order to receive an economic stimulus rebate. ODA supported the initiative of the Governor's Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives to offer free federal and Ohio income tax return assistance through the Ohio Benefit Bank to Ohioans with annual household incomes below \$54,000. In addition, regional ombudsman programs provided more than 1,000 hours of outreach and assistance to long-term care consumers to help them file for the stimulus rebate.

Wind Storm Response

Following the Sept. 14, 2008 windstorm, the area agencies on aging activated their respective emergency plans to contact their consumers who were at greatest risk to determine their whereabouts and need for services.

Necessary services included shelf-stable meals to replace food that had spoiled due to extended power outages, and help accessing emergency benefits, such as food

stamps. Staff also worked with providers to help minimize disruptions in service delivery.

At the state level, ODA collaborated with other state agencies to meet seniors' needs and to keep the most up-to-date information flowing between the state and local levels.



