Empowering Elders.
Strengthening Communities.
Mission

Our mission is to deliver practical, person-centered strategies and services that will strengthen and support Ohio’s elders and their communities.
A Message From the Director

August 1, 2018

At the Department of Aging, we believe in celebrating the relevance of our elders every day. When provided with opportunities to continue to grow, thrive and contribute, older adults make our state and everyone living here stronger.

This has never been more important than it is now. Our population is aging; Ohio has 2.5 million residents over the age of 60, and our 60-plus population is growing more than 20 times faster than our overall population. In 2010, only four Ohio counties had populations that were more than 25 percent age 60-plus. By 2030, only seven counties will be under that threshold. In just 12 years, Ohio will have nine counties where more than one out of every three residents are seniors.

These trends certainly present challenges for our state and our communities, but we believe they also give us unprecedented opportunities. We work with our aging network partners to identify service needs and resources to expand existing supports and adopt innovative approaches to meeting our elders’ needs. At the same time, we also strive to ensure that all older Ohioans are respected as vital members of society and that their communities regularly tap their collective knowledge and giving spirit to address some of the most pressing local issues.

Over the past seven years, the Kasich Administration has focused on these challenges and opportunities to improve long-term care and bolster health and wellness initiatives for older adults. This year, Ohio conducted its most ambitious and comprehensive statewide needs assessment, which gave us unique insights into the needs and preferences of our elders and will prove invaluable as we work to shape the future of elder services and long-term supports in our state. This is an exciting time to serve older Ohioans and I thank our countless partners for joining us on this journey.

Sincerely,

Beverley L. Laubert
Director
Introduction

The Ohio Department of Aging is a cabinet-level state agency and is designated as the state unit on aging to implement the federal Older Americans Act. We serve and advocate for the needs of Ohioans age 60 and older. We provide home and community-based services that help elders and others remain in their homes longer, and support consumers of long-term care in multiple settings. We also seek to promote active aging and positive attitudes toward growing older through education, outreach, volunteer programs and other efforts. We work with our elders to ensure their voices are heard and that our programs are not only beneficial, but also easy to access in every Ohio community.

Our work is driven by five core values:

- **Promote Independence** – Provide resources that foster independence and autonomy throughout the lifespan.

- **Empower Communities** – Deliver sustainable, relevant solutions that empower communities to act within the best interest of their elders.

- **Challenge Ageism** – Promote new perspectives of aging that challenge the traditional declinist narrative.

- **Advocate for Excellence** – Advocate with and for Ohio’s elders to ensure their voices are heard and their needs are met.

- **Engage in Innovation** – Engage the aging network by staying innovative, flexible and attentive to the evolving needs of our partners and stakeholders.

Statewide Needs Assessment

In fall 2017, our Elder Connections Division conducted a comprehensive assessment of statewide needs related to older adults, caregivers and communities. The department partnered with local area agencies on aging to host five regional forums and gather information about seniors’ needs from older Ohioans, providers and AAA staff. With 234 participants statewide, the forums helped inform a Statewide Needs Assessment Survey that launched in October. The survey garnered nearly 2,000 responses and explored topics such as health, wellness and prevention, volunteerism, caregiver support, independent living, community and demographics.

After compiling feedback from the regional focus groups and survey, we held 13 discussion groups with area agencies on aging staff and directors, external partners and stakeholders, regional planners, senior center directors and the Office of the State Long-term Care Ombudsman to further refine our understanding of the current state of older adults and especially the needs of our more vulnerable populations.
This work confirmed that the greatest needs of older adults statewide are the most basic human needs to remain independent in their communities: safe housing, accessible and affordable transportation, and access to healthy food. Findings from the Statewide Needs Assessment drove the work to develop Ohio's next State Plan on Aging, which will be implemented beginning in October 2018, and completed by September 2022.

**Key Accomplishments**

This annual report highlights key accomplishments this past year and throughout the Kasich Administration that demonstrate the many ways the Ohio Department of Aging and Ohio’s aging network are responding to the most pressing challenges and promising opportunities of our aging population.

**Raising the Bar for Long-Term Care**

The Department of Aging regularly works with our state and local partners to increase access to services and supports to provide older adults with the care they need to remain in their homes and communities. Over the past seven years, Ohio has made unparalleled advancement toward creating a unified long-term care system as well as a significant investment in home and community-based services. Ohio now spends at least 50 percent of its Medicaid long-term care budget on home and community-based services.

**Assisted Living Waiver Program Workgroup** – The Assisted Living Waiver Program Workgroup, created in the 2017 state budget, conducted a review of the Medicaid-funded and state-funded components of the Assisted Living Program. Workgroup members included members of the Ohio House of Representatives and Ohio Senate, as well as designees from the Governor’s Office of Health Transformation and the Ohio Departments of Aging, Health and Medicaid. Other members included the Ohio Assisted Living Association, the Ohio Association of Area Agencies on Aging, LeadingAge Ohio and the Ohio Health Care Association. The workgroup’s recommendations will address enrollment, provider participation, payment rates, tier levels and regulatory oversight, as well as the feasibility and desirability of making home and community-based services like assisted living available under other Department of Aging programs.
Ohio Benefits Long-Term Services and Supports – October 2017 marked the culmination of four years of work related to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services’ Balancing Incentive Program with the launch of Ohio Benefits Long-Term Services and Supports. Developed in collaboration with the Ohio Department of Medicaid, the program engaged local partners such as area agencies on aging, Medicaid waiver case management providers, senior centers and other service providers, to serve as “single entry point” agencies for access to long-term services and supports. The program features the Long-Term Services and Supports Questionnaire, a standardized assessment tool that helps agencies determine individuals’ needs. A new state service called support navigation helps individuals access the services to meet those needs.

Person-Centered Staff Engagement Project – As part of its strategies to encourage and assist nursing homes to adopt high-quality care practices and policies, the Ohio Department of Health requires that each licensed nursing home in the state participate in at least one quality improvement project approved by the Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman every two years. This year, the Ombudsman’s office received funding approval from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to use civil monetary penalty funds to launch a quality improvement project to help nursing homes engage staff in person-centered care practices. More than 120 nursing homes are participating in the project, which will address workforce shortages and turnover and the resulting impact on resident care. Individualized care, enthusiastically supported by leadership and line staff, will result in measurable improvements in clinical, human resource and organizational outcomes. Using the evidence-based “Engaging Staff in Individualizing Care” toolkit, the facilities are addressing recruitment, onboarding, mentoring, staff development and creating an environment to reduce turnover. They are also implementing consistent assignment of staff to residents, creating shift huddles to facilitate communication, and tackling the inappropriate use of antipsychotics in residents with dementia. Now halfway through the two-year project, the regional long-term care ombudsman programs are reporting significant progress by participating facilities on action plans regarding staff stability. Twelve project ombudsmen were assigned to work on the project and have acted as focused consultants to the participating homes, hosting regional roundtables and working one-on-one with facility staff to improve quality practices.
**Resident Transition Team** – While most nursing homes in the state have responded to higher expectations for quality care, a few facilities have been unable to meet the new expectations and, as a result, have closed. Spotting this trend early, the Ohio Department of Medicaid tasked the Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman to lead a multi-agency effort to analyze the impacts of nursing home closures and various state agencies’ roles in assisting residents and ensuring their health and safety during the closure process.

The analysis led to reinvention of the Interagency Resident Transition Team, which is coordinated by the state ombudsman and responds to voluntary and involuntary closures of nursing homes, residential care facilities and other long-term care providers. The team includes representatives from the Ohio Departments of Aging, Health, Medicaid, Developmental Disabilities and Mental Health and Addiction Services, with ad hoc assistance from regional long-term care ombudsman programs, area agencies on aging, county departments of job and family services, Social Security Administration, the Ohio Department of Veterans Services and county boards of mental health and developmental disabilities. MyCare Ohio plans are also included in the team when closures impact their members. Since 2014, the team has been involved in 27 voluntary or involuntary closures of poor-performing nursing homes or residential care facilities, which impacted approximately 1,400 residents. Many other homes came within 60 days of involuntary termination and were closely monitored by the team, which uses a trauma-informed care approach to visit residents and discuss their options should their facilities close. The team conducts follow-up visits and facility training after transition.

**MyCare Ohio Ombudsman** – In 2014, the Ohio Department of Medicaid launched the MyCare Ohio demonstration project to coordinate all health care, including long-term care, for Ohioans who are eligible for both Medicare and Medicaid. The Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman received a grant from the U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to serve as long-term care advocates for MyCare Ohio members. To date, ombudsmen have worked with consumers to address about 2,000 complaints. They work with the Department of Medicaid, managed care plans and other stakeholders to address systems issues. The MyCare Ohio demonstration will conclude at the end of 2019, but is expected to be extended for an additional two-year period, with the Ombudsman’s office expected to continue its role of advocating for consumers.
Veterans on Medicaid Project – The Veterans on Medicaid Program started in 2013 as an initiative of the Governor’s Office of Health Transformation. It transitions Ohio veterans to VA long-term care facilities utilizing federal VA benefits that are more extensive than the benefits they currently have. Designated long-term care ombudsmen work with veterans and their family members to review options and assist in transitioning veterans to VA contracted nursing homes when veterans choose to do so. To date, 102 veterans have participated and 25 of those transitioned, resulting in approximately $2.1 million in savings. Veterans who have been transitioned highlight successes such as retaining more of their VA compensation after transitioning and improvement in the quality of care provided in their new homes. In state fiscal year 2019, the program will expand outreach capabilities and services will be offered across the state through two regional long-term care ombudsman programs.

Toward a Dementia-Capable State

With more Ohioans living longer lives comes a rise in the number of older adults living with cognitive health issues, including Alzheimer’s Disease and other dementias. According to the Alzheimer’s Association, 210,000 older Ohioans live with dementia. It is increasingly crucial that services are provided in a system that recognizes the unique needs of people with dementia and their caregivers. It is equally important that local entities learn to recognize and adopt best practices to keep older adults with dementia engaged and contributing to the overall needs of the community.

Alzheimer’s Respite Program Enhancements – With the beginning of the 2018-2019 biennium, the Department of Aging deployed a new data collection requirement to the Alzheimer’s Association chapters and the area agencies on aging that receive Alzheimer’s Respite funds. The agencies provided monthly reports to detail which services are funded as well as how many caregivers are served. Data collection ended in June 2018 and we will conduct an ongoing analysis of data to evolve our practices and policies to match the needs of our Ohioans.

Dementia-Capable Communities – In August 2017, the Ohio Department of Aging and Area Agency on Aging District 3 (serving lower northwest Ohio, including Lima and surrounding communities) launched an 18-month project to expand the Benjamin Rose Care Consultation program in the region and identify community entities that can benefit from dementia education and resources. Care managers talk with individuals living with dementia and their primary caregiver about the community entities they come into contact with regularly (including churches, post offices, school systems, banks, etc.). Then, a team coordinated by the Ohio Council for Cognitive Health reaches out to the community entities and offers training to help them better understand the unique needs of people and families living with dementia. The Benjamin Rose Institute on Aging is collecting data that the partners will use to measure success and develop a model that can be replicated in other communities.
DAS Caregiver Support – As an employer, the State of Ohio recognizes the satisfaction many of our employees get from caring for loved ones, as well as the pressure and stress that caregiving can present when one must juggle it with their day-to-day job. At the direction of the Governor’s Office, the Ohio Department of Aging and the Ohio Department of Administrative Services launched the Working Adult Caregiver Support Initiative in June 2017. The initiative assists state employees with balancing their work and caregiving responsibilities, while also helping supervisors and other leadership understand how best to support working caregivers. The initiative has three major components: a caregiver resource website, training for managers and education sessions for caregiver employees. The goal of the initiative is to help state employees feel supported at work, reduce absenteeism and aid employees in balancing the duties of caregiving and their career. The program was also designed to serve as a model for the local level to encourage and enable Ohio’s private and public employers to recognize and support the caregivers in their workforces.

Community Engagement

An aging population comes with many opportunities. Ohio’s elders play a vital role in their families, in their communities and in our state. Thus, the Department of Aging works every day to ensure they have ample opportunities and access to required information and resources to continue to grow, thrive and contribute throughout their lives. We also engage with community leaders to coordinate and bolster local response to some of the most pressing issues facing our aging population.

Cambridge Community Forums – Elder abuse, transportation and food insecurity have long topped the list of concerns when it comes to communities providing for their elders. However, through conversations with Ohio’s area agencies on aging, partner state agencies and other partners, the Department of Aging has seen additional issues emerge. These include isolation, cognitive health, caregiver support and the opioid epidemic. The sheer size and diverse nature of our elder population will require innovative solutions to these and other issues at the state and local levels. In September, the Department of Aging partnered with Area Agency on Aging Region 9, Inc. (serving east-central Ohio) to pilot a community roundtable in Cambridge to gather local senior service agencies, law enforcement, government and other officials to discuss senior issues, possible solutions and the roles of state and local partners. The Cambridge roundtables focused on the topics of isolation and opiates and were well-attended. The Department of Aging and the area agency will use the information gathered to inform future policy decisions.
“Well Beyond 60!” EXPO – Throughout the Kasich Administration, the Department of Aging has had a laser focus on health, wellness and injury prevention to help reduce the added strain on the health care system from an aging population. In 2017, the Department of Aging hosted the third annual “Well Beyond 60!” EXPO on Senior Day at the Ohio State Fair. Located in a high-traffic area of the fairgrounds and consisting of 10 booths from state and local partners, the EXPO offered health screenings that helped visitors of all ages identify healthy choices they can make throughout their lifespans to ensure they live a healthier, more active life at age 60 and beyond. Services included computerized balance testing, blood pressure screening, fall risk assessment, vision screening, nutrition education, physical activity and more. More than 500 fairgoers visited the EXPO, and our partners provided more than 2,000 free services during the six-hour event. The EXPO was featured on the Columbus-area CBS affiliate mid-day newscast. Based on the success of this year’s event, we will work with our partners to double the size of the EXPO for the 2018 State Fair.

10 Million Steps – Ohio’s communities stepped up in a big way to help the state’s older adult falls prevention initiative raise awareness of older adult falls and promote strategies to prevent them. For the third consecutive year, the STEADY U Ohio initiative called on community organizations, businesses and groups to help take “10 Million Steps to Prevent Falls.” Communities responded by logging more than 56 million steps in the name of falls prevention. More important than the steps, local events raised awareness of the epidemic of falls and promoted community resources that can help seniors and their families and caregivers minimize the risk and live active lives free of the fear of falling.

Medication Safety and Falls Prevention – During the first week of April 2018, the Department of Aging partnered with the Ohio Pharmacists Association and pharmacies around the state to help older Ohioans and their caregivers understand and minimize the risk of falls potentially caused by medicines they take to remain healthy. At more than 400 community locations pharmacy staff
reviewed customers’ medicine usage and identified those medicines and combinations that may increase the risk for falls. Customers received a list of their potentially problematic medicines to take to their health care professionals so that they can discuss risks and appropriate treatment options. Participating pharmacies included all 249 Ohio Walgreens Pharmacy locations, more than 100 Kroger Pharmacy locations, and select Discount Drug Mart Pharmacy, Fruth Pharmacy, NEON Health Center Pharmacy, Rite Aid Pharmacy and Shriver’s Pharmacy locations, the Happy Druggist and other local pharmacies.

**New Website** – In October 2017, the Department of Aging launched an all-new website (www.aging.ohio.gov) that introduced an entirely new look and feel and is optimized for use on mobile devices, such as tablets and smartphones, which an increasing number of older adults and caregivers are using to access information about services and supports. The new site offers self-help resources for healthy and active aging, and also connects visitors to information about home and community-based services, the Long-Term Care Ombudsman, caregiver support and more. The site includes local contacts for area agencies on aging, senior centers, ombudsman programs, employment and wellness programs and more. More than a quarter million people accessed the new site during its first six months.
Expenditures SFY 2018

Long-Term Services and Supports
$435.1
Home, Community and Caregiver Support
$58.3
Healthy and Productive Aging
$3.8
Long-Term Care Ombudsman
$4.7
BELTSS
$0.6
Program Support
$1.4

Program Budgets SFY 2018

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Budget Amount</th>
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<tr>
<td>Long-Term Services and Supports* (Medicaid)</td>
<td>$435,137,672</td>
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<tr>
<td>Home, Community and Caregiver Support** (Older Americans Act / General Revenue)</td>
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<td>Healthy and Productive Aging (Older Americans Act)</td>
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<td>Long-Term Care Ombudsman (Older Americans Act / General Revenue)</td>
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<td>Program Support / Other (General Revenue)</td>
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<td>Long-Term Care Consumer Guide</td>
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<td>BELTSS - Board of Executives of Long-Term Services and Supports</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$504,878,009</strong></td>
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* Long-Term Care Services and Supports is administered by the department. Funds are part of Medicaid line item in the Ohio Department of Medicaid’s budget. Most low-income seniors with Medicare eligibility are required to enroll in MyCare Ohio. SFY 2015 was the first full year for MyCare Ohio which provides long-term care services and supports.

** Home, Community & Caregiver Support includes another $53,831,579 in local funds, which do not pass through the department’s budget.
Core Values:

Promote Independence
Provide resources that foster independence and autonomy throughout the lifespan.

Empower Communities
Deliver sustainable, relevant solutions that empower communities to act within the best interest of their elders.

Challenge Ageism
Promote new perspectives of aging that challenge the traditional declinist narrative.

Advocate for Excellence
Advocate with and for Ohio’s elders to ensure their voices are heard and their needs are met.

Engage in Innovation
Engage the aging network by staying innovative, flexible and attentive to the evolving needs of our partners and stakeholders.

For more information about aging services, contact:
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The Ohio Department of Aging is an equal opportunity employer and service provider.