



NEWS RELEASE – Area Agency on Aging District 7, Inc.

Release Date: Tuesday, August 30, 2016

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Southern Ohio Community-Based Care Transitions Program Receives National Association Award

Area Agency on Aging District 7 Recognized Along with Other Program Partners

The Buckeye Hills Area Agency on Aging District 8 (AAA8) announces that the Southern Ohio Community-Based Care Transitions Program (CCTP) has been honored with an *Aging Achievement Award* by the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a). The Southern Ohio CCTP was among 46 local aging programs to receive honors at the recent n4a Annual Conference. The Area Agency on Aging District 7 (AAA7), covering 10 counties and based in Gallia County; and the Central Ohio Area Agency on Aging District 6 (AAA6), based in Franklin County; are partners in the program along with AAA8.

The 2016 *n4a Aging Innovations and Achievement Awards* recognizes Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) and Title VI Native American aging programs that develop and implement cutting-edge approaches to support older adults, people with disabilities, and their family caregivers. A part of the criteria for the selection of the honorees was the ease with which other agencies could replicate the program in their communities.

“With the health care landscape continuing to change rapidly, our members are discovering new ways to position themselves in the long-term and health care marketplaces, as well as to strengthen long-standing services, to meet the needs of America’s rapidly growing older adult population,” said n4a’s Chief Executive Officer Sandy Markwood. “Our members work tirelessly, and with little fanfare in their communities, and this program enables us to shine a well-deserved spotlight on their critical work to support older adults’ health, safety, independence and dignity,” Markwood added.

The Medicare-funded CCTP is sponsored by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. The program is designed to make the transition from the hospital to another setting as seamless as possible. According to CMS, nearly one in five Medicare patients discharged from a hospital—approximately 2.6 million seniors—are readmitted within 30 days, at a cost of over \$26 billion annually.

“With our staff of community and hospital-based coaches, the Southern Ohio CCTP is working to reduce unnecessary readmissions through its process improvements and regional partnerships created across the region’s health systems,” said Carolyn Ditchendorf, LSW, Program Manager for AAA8. “The goal is to reduce avoidable hospital readmissions, but also to

empower people to be engaged in their care. The AAAs are focused on connecting individuals to home and community-based resources,” noted Ditchendorf.

The Southern Ohio Community-Based Care Transitions Project is a collaborative project between three Ohio-based Area Agencies on Aging: Buckeye Hills AAA8 based in Marietta; Central Ohio AAA6 based in Columbus; and AAA7 based in Rio Grande. The project also includes five hospital partners: Adena Regional Medical Center in Chillicothe, Fairfield Medical Center in Lancaster, Holzer Medical Center in Gallipolis, Marietta Memorial Hospital in Marietta, and Southern Ohio Medical Center in Portsmouth. The project spans 26 Ohio counties and multiple counties in West Virginia.

The 2016 *n4a Aging Achievement Awards* honored traditional and new strategies in a range of categories. All winners are showcased in an n4a publication.

Your local Area Agency on Aging District 7, Inc. provides services on a non-discriminatory basis in ten counties in Southern Ohio including Adams, Brown, Gallia, Highland, Jackson, Lawrence, Pike, Ross, Scioto and Vinton. These services are available to help older adults and those with disabilities live safely and independently in their own homes through services paid for by Medicare, Medicaid, other federal and state resources, as well as private pay. The AAA7’s Resource Center is also available to anyone in the community looking for information or assistance with long-term care options. Available Monday through Friday from 8:00 am until 4:30 pm, the Resource Center is a valuable contact for learning more about options and what programs and services are available for assistance.

Those interested in learning more can call toll-free at 1-800-582-7277 (TTY: 711). Here, individuals can speak directly with a nurse or social worker who will assist them with information surrounding the programs and services that are available to best serve their needs. The Agency also offers an in-home assessment at no cost for those who are interested in learning more. Information is also available on www.aaa7.org, or the Agency can be contacted through e-mail at info@aaa7.org. The Agency also has a Facebook page located at www.facebook.com/AreaAgencyOnAgingDistrict7.

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From left at the n4a Aging Innovations & Achievement Awards event are: Heather Sellar, Vice President of Managed Care and Independent Living, CST; Joe Ruby, n4a President; Carolyn Ditchendorf, LSW, Program Manager for the Buckeye Hills AAA8 who served as the lead agency for the Southern Ohio Community-Based Care Transitions Program; Connie Montgomery, RN, Program Supervisor for AAA7; and Mindy Cayton, AAA8 Program Development Coordinator.