



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

Release Date: Thursday, July 13, 2017

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Celebrating 45 Years of Service to Our Community!

**Pamela K. Matura, Executive Director, Area Agency on Aging District 7
July 2017 Monthly Column**



2017 is an exciting year for our Agency as we celebrate 45 years of service to our district!

The Area Agency on Aging District 7 (AAA7) was established in 1972 through the Older Americans Act (OAA) of 1965 to plan and provide a comprehensive and coordinated system of care through in-home and community-based supportive and nutritional services.

Initially, the AAA7 was one of only four model projects in Ohio funded by the US Administration on Aging. It was sponsored by Rio Grande College to focus on ways and means to assist older adults living within the district. The AAA7 originally served four counties including Gallia, Jackson, Meigs and Vinton, and focused on social services for older adults including transportation, information and referral.

In 1974, the Agency was designated as the AAA7 by the Ohio Commission on Aging and the area was expanded to ten counties. At this time, the statewide AAA network was also formed. Today, the AAA7 covers the following counties: Adams, Brown, Gallia, Highland, Jackson, Lawrence, Pike, Ross, Scioto and Vinton and is one of twelve Area Agencies on Aging throughout the state of Ohio. Meigs County was later included as a part of the Area Agency on Aging District 8.

Program growth in the Agency occurred throughout the years. In 1978, we added the Regional Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program, a service mandated in the OAA that receives, investigates and acts on complaints by older individuals and their families who are residents of long-term care facilities, and advocates for the well-being of such individuals. We also added the responsibility of the Nutrition Program, funded through the Older Americans Act, to provide congregate dining opportunities and home-delivered meals through a network of dining sites and rural routes throughout our ten counties.

In 1990, the largest expansion of services took place when the AAA7 became the administrative agency for the PASSPORT Medicaid Waiver program. This program, which provides in-home services to older adults age 60 and over who medically qualify for nursing home placement and meet specific financial eligibility requirements, includes in-home, case-managed services such as personal care, home-delivered meals, medical transportation, adult day care, emergency response systems, and durable medical equipment. The AAA7 currently offers this program through the traditional method or self-directed option.

Other services that have been added over the years include Service Coordination, available for older adults or disabled individuals who reside in selected apartment complexes in the area; the Home Repair Program, that provides emergency home repair assistance for those older adults or disabled individuals

in need; the National Family Caregiver Support Program, designed to assist the role of the caregiver with information, referral and support, as well as a special focus on grandparents who are raising their grandchildren; and the Assisted Living Waiver Program, that assists individuals living in assisted living communities throughout the district.

In 2010, the AAA7 was designated by the Ohio Department of Aging as an Aging and Disability Resource Center to assist the public with information and resources to help them learn more about long-term care options in their communities. Most recently, we have also worked with our local hospitals on post-discharge assistance and transition to home; helped veterans with self-directed home and community-based services that allow them to stay safe and independent in their homes; worked with individuals under the age of 60 needing long-term care services; and providing wellness classes in our communities to assist those living with a chronic disease, individuals living with diabetes, those who have a fear of falling, and family caregivers who are looking for helpful advice and tips. In addition, we continue to advocate for seniors and those with disabilities with our state and federal legislators, and enjoy participating in community events and activities in order to share the resources available through our Agency.

Our Agency is dedicated to educating our community about the services we provide. Unfortunately, many people are unaware of the valuable resources that are available to them. By making a simple phone call to our Agency at 1-800-582-7277, you can learn more about the resources that are available in your community that support a safe and independent living environment for you or someone you know. We have trained staff members ready to answer your questions and help you determine what options and resources are available to meet your needs.

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