



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

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Addressing the Home Care Workforce Shortage

by **Debbie Gulley, AAA7 Interim Executive Director**

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Hearing the term “workforce shortage” is something our society has unfortunately grown accustomed to. Several industries have learned how to adjust and adapt when demand and workforce do not meet the needs and expectations as they have in the past.

This shortage is also experienced by those who are helping to provide long-term care services in the home – a smaller workforce trying to meet the needs of a growing older population and supporting individuals to remain in their home.

Our Agency, the Area Agency on Aging District 7 (AAA7), has worked hard this State budget season to advocate for home care workers and the vital job they provide to our communities. This has focused primarily on wages for these important workers, but also developing solutions and ideas to help address the workforce shortage in home care services.

One of these solutions is a program we have available through our Agency. It’s the Participant-Direction option in our PASSPORT Medicaid Waiver Program. This option allows someone you know, such as a friend, neighbor or some relatives, earn income by helping provide needed services to you in your home.

PASSPORT is designed to keep older adults at home or help them return home after a nursing facility placement. Services provided include personal care, homemaker, home-delivered meals, personal emergency response system, medical transportation, adult day care, and more. Consumers have the choice of either the traditional option where services are provided through home health agencies, or the participant-directed option, where services are provided by individuals selected and hired by the consumer.

In the participant-directed option, the consumer is the "employer of record" for individual providers and is responsible for hiring, firing, training, and completing all necessary tax forms and payroll duties for these workers. A Fiscal Management Service is provided to assist the consumer with the legal and financial aspects of the program. Staff at the AAA7 help consumers understand their options so that they can make the best decision that will support their health and independence.

If this option sounds like something you would like to learn more about, contact our Agency so that we can discuss further with you and if interested, we can schedule a free assessment in your home where we can learn more about your needs and how best we can help. Call us at 1-800-582-7277 or e-mail info@aaa7.org. The AAA7 serves ten core counties in Ohio including: Adams, Brown, Gallia, Highland, Jackson, Lawrence, Pike Ross, Scioto and Vinton.



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