



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

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***Area Agency on Aging District 7 Named Recipient of
Prestigious Aging Achievement Award from USAging***

The Area Agency on Aging District 7 (AAA7) is thrilled to announce that its “Porch Talk” program received a 2023 Aging Achievement Award from USAging, one of the highest honors presented by USAging to its members. Porch Talk, which is a telephone reassurance/friendly chat service, was among 50 local aging programs to receive honors during USAging’s 48th Annual Conference and Tradeshow, held recently in Salt Lake City, UT.

The 2023 USAging Aging Innovations & Achievement Awards, supported by Caregiving.com and Cumulus, recognizes USAging’s Area Agency on Aging and Title VI Native American Aging Program members that have found new and innovative ways to support older adults, people with disabilities and caregivers as they live in their homes and communities.

“The Aging Innovations & Achievement Awards are a timely reminder of the evolving role USAging members play in the planning, development, coordination and delivery of aging and other home and community-based services in nearly every community in the United States,” said USAging CEO Sandy Markwood. “The AAAs and Title VI programs we honor today have set a standard for innovation and creativity in helping vulnerable older adults live with independence and dignity in their homes and communities,” Markwood added. “USAging is inspired by the example they have set for others in the Aging Network.”

“We are honored to receive recognition from our national association,” said Debbie Gulley, RN, AAA7 Interim Executive Director and Director of Care Management Services. “AAA7 takes our role of advocating for seniors in our district and developing programs to meet their needs very seriously. Porch Talk has allowed us to reach socially isolated seniors that we have not previously served and to hear from them how we can best support them.”

Porch Talk was developed shortly after the pandemic started to help individuals of any age who might be feeling lonely or isolated. The program provides company and conversation over the telephone with a friendly chat and also assistance with determining resources in the community that are available to help with any needs. Conversations can include talking about the weather, flowers or vegetables that are growing in the garden, the grandkids who live away, or that new store that is being built down the road. It’s an opportunity to extend a friendly voice and listening ear to those who can benefit. Since the start of the program in April 2020, a total of 2,163 calls have been made ranging from five minutes to 60 minutes in length.

Referrals can be made by calling the AAA7's Resource Center at 1-800-582-7277 or e-mail info@aaa7.org.

The 2023 USAging Aging Innovations & Achievement Awards honored traditional and new strategies in a range of categories, including Advocacy, Agency Operations, Caregiving, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Economic Security, Elder Abuse Prevention, Health-LTSS Integration, Healthy Aging, Home and Community-Based Services, Housing and Homelessness, Information and Referral/Assistance, Intergenerational Programs, Nutrition, Public Health and Vaccinations, Social Engagement, Technology, Transportation and Mobility, and Workforce Development and Volunteerism.

All winners are highlighted in the [USAging Aging Innovations & Achievement Awards Showcase](https://www.usaging.org) at www.usaging.org.

USAging is the national association representing and supporting the network of Area Agencies on Aging and advocating for the Title VI Native American Aging Programs. Our members help older adults and people with disabilities throughout the United States live with optimal health, well-being, independence and dignity in their homes and communities. USAging is dedicated to supporting the success of our members through advancing public policy, sparking innovation, strengthening the capacity of our members, raising their visibility and working to drive excellence in the fields of aging and home and community-based services. For more information about USAging, AAAs or Title VI programs, visit www.usaging.org.

Your local Area Agency on Aging District 7, Inc. provides services on a non-discriminatory basis. These services are available to help older adults and those with disabilities live safely and independently in their residence of choice through services paid for by Medicare, Medicaid, other federal and state resources, as well as private pay. Those interested in learning more can call toll-free at 1-800-582-7277 (TTY: 711). Here, individuals can speak directly with a Resource Center Specialist who will assist them with information surrounding the programs and services that are available to best serve their needs. Information is also available on www.aaa7.org, or the Agency can be contacted through e-mail at info@aaa7.org.

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The AAA7 received an Aging Achievement Award recently for its Porch Talk program. Pictured at the USAging Innovations and Achievement Awards Luncheon at the USAging Conference in Salt Lake City, UT, are, left from right: John Byer, Cumulus CEO, Sponsor of the Awards Program; Debbie Gulley, AAA7 Interim Executive Director and Director of Care Management Services; Jenni Lewis, AAA7 Director of Communications; Mary Ann Spanos, President of the Board of Directors, USAging; and Michael Eidsaune, CEO of Caregiving.com, Sponsor of the Awards Program.