



2021 Highlights

Central Ohio Area Agency on Aging

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coaaa.org

Central Ohio Area Agency on Aging 2021 Highlights

COAAA continued its work in 2021 providing services and information to Central Ohio older adults and families as the COVID-19 pandemic continued to challenge us. Our focus of providing personal protective equipment and emergency supplies and food to older adults turned to getting as many people vaccinated as possible. Increased funding from federal, state and local COVID related funds to meet critical needs were welcomed and utilized by COAAA and our many local provider partners. While workforce challenges have tested all in the aging network, COAAA continues to see program growth and added 28 positions (totaling 393). We thank them all for their work on behalf of the region's older adults, people with disabilities and caregivers.



A clinic sign directing individuals to a COVID vaccination clinic coordinated by COAAA, Aetna Better Health of Ohio, Molina Healthcare, and Columbus Public Health.

Care Management Services

COAAA provided the following care management services to approximately 15,000 individuals in Central Ohio under the following case managed programs:

- *PASSPORT and Assisted Living: 5,055 individuals in eight counties with a year-end census of 3,736*
- *MyCare – Aetna Better Health: 3,946 in five counties with a year-end census of 3,441*
- *MyCare – Molina: 1,773 in five counties with a year-end census of 1,376*
- *Ohio Home Care Waiver – CareSource: 1,015 with a year-end census of 760*
- *Specialized Recovery Services – CareSource and Aetna: 1,340 with a year-end census of 989*
- *Franklin County Senior Options: Year-end census: 1,575 with 2,638 assessments in Franklin County*



The COAAA Aetna MyCare team received a 100 percent score on its state audit. Case managers on the Aetna team arrange and coordinate in-home services for COAAA consumers.

New Providers

COAAA certified 43 new agency providers, 2 new Assisted Living Waiver providers and 17 new Participant Directed Providers in 2021. In spite of that, worker shortages reached critical levels in home care across the state and left many people waiting for home care workers. This issue became our number one advocacy issue during the Ohio budget deliberations.



COVID-19 Support to the Community

In addition to our regular Title III awards for services totaling \$6,562,669, the following COVID-19 support was delivered to our 8 counties:

COAAA distributed \$3,027,960 in CARES Act funds to support older adults in the community. Some of the largest funded services included:



Steve Stivers, Ohio Chamber of Commerce President and CEO, helping Fairfield County Meals on Wheels deliver meals to seniors.

- Food assistance including home delivered meals, grab and go carryout meals, and restaurant delivered meals.
- Housing and utility assistance
- Legal assistance
- Delivery of personal care items, grocery shopping and delivery and efforts at centers to combat social isolation with online activities
- Equipment needed including barriers for congregate sites, including day centers, air cleaners, ovens and delivery vans to keep up with increased demand.

A mid-year federal allocation of Older Americans Act supplemental nutrition funding, totaling \$695,000, was granted to meals programs to sustain their increased demand.

Front Door

COAAA completed 7,442 assessments for services and provided Information and Assistance to 8,460 individuals. COAAA continued to see higher than average enrollment into case managed programs in 2021.

Housing Assistance

Housing has been a COAAA priority through the pandemic. Approximately 300 consumers were assisted with eviction avoidance funds and transition to housing assistance using \$170,000 in CARES funds and \$70,000 from the Housing Assistance Program funded by Columbus City Council.

Pat Scott (left), COAAA Information and Referral Specialist, providing housing assistance information to individual during an in person consultation.



Diversity, Equity and Inclusion



Tania Davis, Mindful of Race committee chair, holding Culture Corner, COAAA's newsletter that covers topics of race, racism, culture, and diversity.

Like many organizations in the past year, COAAA took time to examine the issues of equity and diversity. COAAA staff started the Mindful of Race committee to look inward through surveys and examination of practices. Educational information in a regular Culture Corner newsletter and trainings were developed with more to come. Another ongoing focus is increased outreach to older adults in diverse communities and ways to better impact health disparities.



Erica Drewry, COAAA Client Services Director, delivered a session on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at the 32nd annual o4a conference.

Vaccinations

COAAA, with a staff vaccination rate of 90%, was able to fully participate in vaccination outreach and assistance for older adults and people with disabilities.

- COAAA partnered with the Ohio National Guard to hold clinics at senior housing facilities regionally. COAAA vaccinated more than 700 residents at the clinics.
- COAAA partnered with managed care organizations and the Ohio Department of Aging (ODA) to encourage and facilitate vaccinations for COAAA case managed clients. Approximately 75% of case managed clients were fully vaccinated.
- COAAA hosted a clinic at our offices with Aetna and Molina providing incentives, transportation, vaccines and information.
- COAAA served as a hub for information announced by the Governor and ODA, coordinating information with county Health Departments and local resources.
- COAAA invested in a radio and TV ad outreach campaign beginning in December to encourage booster shots and vaccinations before family get together with older adults.



Licking County COVID vaccination clinic, a partnership between COAAA, ODA, and the Ohio National Guard.



COAAA volunteers at Licking County vaccination clinic. The clinics were coordinated between ODA, COAAA and the Ohio National Guard.

Age-Friendly Columbus and Franklin Co. and the Village Network

COAAA increased its support to the Network of Villages in Franklin and Union counties. Village neighborhood organizations played a critical role in vaccinations and support for their members during the pandemic.

COAAA joined Age Friendly Innovation Center and the Franklin County Office on Aging to do a regionwide needs assessment giving all organizations planning information and future data.



Village Connections annual fall yard clean up for members.

Advocacy



Legislative visit with Ohio State Senator Jay Hottinger. (L to R): Cindy Farson, COAAA Director; Sen. Jay Hottinger; Carole Wachtel, COAAA Advisory Council Member; and Melissa Owens, Licking County Aging Program Director.

COAAA and Advisory Council members completed individual visits and Zoom meetings with House and Senate members to discuss Ohio's budget impact on older adults. Legislators were supportive of requests and the budget included final increases of 6% in provider rates, \$2 million in senior community services and \$1.5 million in Adult Protective Services.

Post budget, COAAA initiated a quarterly zoom series to keep legislators up to date on issues affecting older adults and people with disabilities in their districts.



Ohio State Rep. Rick Carfagna joined COAAA Director Cindy Farson and District 5 AAA Director Duana Patton in Mansfield to discuss funding of Older Adult services and Broadband improvements, which he has championed.

Specialized Program Assessing Resource Connectivity (SPARC)

The Specialized Program Assessing Resource Connectivity (SPARC) is a partnership with the Columbus Division of Fire (CFD), placing COAAA social workers with paramedics to respond to non-emergency 911 calls. It is designed to reduce reliance on 911 for non-emergencies and connect older adults to community resources. COAAA added another SPARC social worker in 2021, based on the tremendous growth in referrals and contacts. In 4 years, referrals have grown from 644 to 1,700 annually. The program is funded by COAAA, Aetna Better Health, and the Franklin County Office on Aging.



SPARC team L to R: Robyn Curry (COAAA), Kenny Smith (CFD), Megan Gish (COAAA), Charles McFadden (CFD), and Lisa Sacket (COAAA).

Service Development

New Programs

COAAA's Aging and Disability Resource Division expanded Care Transitions (ODA CARES Act grant) to allow COAAA to work with discharge planners to connect individuals transitioning from the facility. Thirty-one patients received expanded care transitions in 2021.

Chronic Care Management – A telehealth and remote patient monitoring program to provide enhanced care management and surveillance to keep clients safer and healthier at home.

Program Success

- Trualta caregiver software program provided information, support and education through a virtual platform facilitated by COAAA.
 - 95 caregivers were referred and 57 caregivers actively enrolled.
- Positive Choices case management for substance use disorders and high ER utilizers.
 - Over 200 members enrolled since the program started on 11/1/2020.
- Anthem 30/60-day intervention to assist members transitioning from a facility.
 - Engagement has increased 277%, from 13 members engaged in June 2020 to 49 members engaged in June 2021.
- MMO 30-day intervention providing a registered nurse home visit to complete medication reconciliations, environmental assessments, identification of potential red flags and linkage to community resources. The Goal is to prevent avoidable readmissions and keep members healthier at home.
 - Admission rates were ~16% when the program started in November 2018 and they are now ~7.5% with 262 members receiving visits in 2021.



Anthem Preferred Community Health Partners/ Ground Game team at COAAA. The team works with local health systems to reduce re-admissions for recently discharged hospital and nursing facility patients.

Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program

The Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program continued to deliver produce boxes to older adults to reduce COVID exposure instead of distributing vouchers for farmers markets. From August through October, 5,105 boxes were delivered in seven counties. Our partner LifeCare Alliance recruited hundreds of volunteers to put boxes together and deliver them, including COAAA staff.

Volunteer Guardian Program

COAAA's Volunteer Guardian Program (VGP) matches nursing home residents with legal volunteers through the probate courts. VGP staff provided critical assistance to guardians who had to find ways to connect with their wards in locked down nursing facilities and understand the changing visitation rules that continued in 2021. Fourteen new cases were matched and nine more volunteers were added to the average number of approximately 100 volunteers.

Education and Training

- Caregiver Information, Assistance and Education – Counselors connected with over 2,500 callers. Fifteen presentations reached 281 people and the Caregivers Toolbox video series is being posted on the COAAA website.
- Dementia Support Groups – 43 online sessions completed.
- Medicare – One on one consultations over the phone, email or in-person totaled 717. The Medicare for Beginners sessions reached 234 people through 15 presentations and staff completed 79 Part D comparisons and assisted 78 case managers with client Medicare issues.
- Professional Education – 28 programs with 84 CEUs were offered with an average of 25 participants in attendance.
- 12 DRIVE trainings for transportation drivers or trainers with 295 participants.
- Evidence-based programs including Healthy U and Matter of Balance had 24 scheduled series offered on Zoom or phone.
- Healthy, Well & Wise – 27 health presentations were presented on Zoom and one was held outside with 197 total participants.



COAAA staff managing a display table at the Central Community House event.

Friendly Caller Volunteer Program

COAAA's Friendly Caller Volunteer Program matches a trained volunteer with a COAAA consumer for a weekly or biweekly friendly chat. Sometimes an older adult or person with a disability would like additional social interaction, and this program connects them with a volunteer for six months of friendly calls. The program is important because studies show that long-term loneliness is damaging to a person's health. There were 53 referrals and 40 volunteers in the program in 2021.

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD)

COAAA hosted a half day virtual session for this year's World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD) and had approximately 100 professionals in attendance. Speakers represented the Ohio Attorney General's Office Elder Justice Commission, Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, Grove City Division of Police's Elder Services Coordinator, BMI Credit Union, Heartland Bank and Franklin County Adult Protective Services. In addition to the virtual event, COAAA provided information and resources via social media and the COAAA website.

Central Ohio Senior Citizens Hall of Fame

COAAA was finally able to honor the 2020 Hall of Fame inductees with an event at Champions Golf Course in Columbus attended by family, friends, county commissioners and Councilmember Mitchell Brown. NBC4's Colleen Marshall was the emcee.



L to R: Cindy Farson, COAAA Director; Linda Schuler, 2020 Hall of Fame Inductee; Karla Rothan; and Mitchell Brown, former Columbus City Councilmember at Hall of Fame event on October 6, 2021.

Alzheimer's Special



COAAA sponsored WCMH NBC4's A Journey Through Alzheimer's, the station's annual special that focuses on the impact Alzheimer's has on individuals and families, as well as the latest in developments in Alzheimer's research. COAAA staff volunteered at the phone panel to answer viewer questions and provide information about available resources.

Aging Solutions Foundation, Gift Drive, and Friendly Cards

Aging Solutions Foundation, COAAA's nonprofit, assists COAAA consumers with emergency funds for rent, utility bills, appliance and minor home repairs, and other supports. For 2021, an estimated total of \$33,282 funded 105 consumer requests. An estimated value of \$5,765 fulfilled 97 inventory requests, which included microwaves, vacuum cleaners, space heaters, tablets, and televisions.

The 2021 Holiday Gift Drive, part of the Aging Solutions Foundation, provided holiday gifts to approximately 1,500 COAAA consumers. Gifts include blankets, clothes, household goods, and small luxuries. COAAA case managers make the gift requests and gift matching is coordinated by Mary Donahue, Aging Solutions Board Member, and Besa, a community organization that links volunteers to community service projects. Anonymous gift donors are matched to consumers and case managers deliver gifts during December.

COAAA saw continued interest from the community in supporting COAAA consumers. One outreach opportunity included friendly handwritten cards to uplift COAAA consumers who may experience loneliness or social isolation. COAAA received card donations from Columbus Academy students, Altrusa volunteers, and holiday gift donors. The cards were delivered with holiday gifts and food box deliveries, and directly by case managers during home visits.

Aging Solutions



COAAA consumer Charlotte with her gift blanket through the Holiday Gift Drive.



L to R: Frances Krumholtz (COAAA), Madeline Proctor, and Renee Proctor with friendly cards created by Columbus Academy students. Madeline started the friendly card project at Columbus Academy.

Central Ohio Area Agency on Aging serves Delaware, Fairfield, Fayette, Franklin, Licking, Madison, Pickaway, and Union counties.



Central Ohio Area Agency on Aging is a division of the City of Columbus, Recreation and Parks Department.