

AUGUST 2020

Ohio AAAs at Work: COVID-19 Report

OHIO ASSOCIATION OF AREA AGENCIES ON AGING



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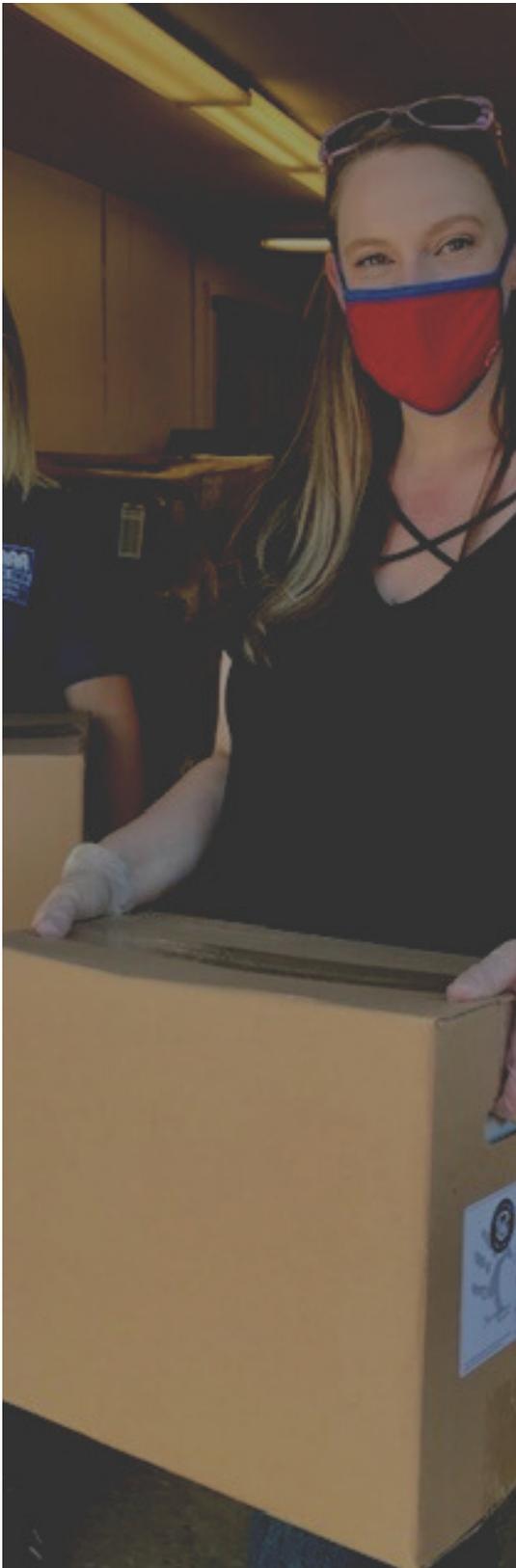
Ohio's Area Agencies on Aging Respond to COVID-19

Older adults, especially those with chronic conditions, and disproportionately Black and Latinx Ohioans, have experienced some of the most severe cases of COVID-19, and, unfortunately, the highest mortality rates.

Because older people are disproportionately impacted by the disease, Ohio's Area Agencies on Aging quickly mobilized and rallied to ensure continuity of services, to help those newly impacted, and to get necessities to those who needed it most.

"While we have never faced a pandemic, AAAs across Ohio have dealt with assisting older Ohioans in disasters for years. We were poised to respond quickly and effectively."

- Duana Patton, President, Ohio Association of Area Agencies on Aging and CEO, Ohio District 5 Area Agency on Aging



Ohio's Area Agencies on Aging:

- Are part of a national network of over 600 on-the-ground organizations in each state, mandated by the Older Americans Act, and charged with helping vulnerable older adults live with independence and dignity in their homes and communities.
- Are granted by the Older Americans Act with the flexibility to ensure that local needs and preferences are taken into consideration and that the resulting local delivery system is tailored to the community.
- Are mission-driven primarily not-for-profit organizations that operate a complex service delivery system that provides access to community-based, in-home and elder rights services.
- Work with public and private partners to respond to the unique needs of older adults, individuals with disabilities, and their families.
- Manage over 4100 contracts with local partners to deliver direct services, such as meals, transportation, personal care, and home modifications to individuals in their regions.
- Have been the champion of rebalancing home and community-based services to nursing facility efforts in Ohio for over 40 years.



Ohio's Area Agencies on Aging COVID-19 Response by the Numbers

March 2020 through July 2020



48,217 people received 4,044,449 home-delivered and shelf-stable meals directly in response to COVID-19



445,216 grab and go/carry out meals were provided



64,258 personal care/wellness kits delivered (with significantly more to go out in August and September)



68,336 requests for assistance



3,107 people participating in online training (e.g. wellness; Medicare)



81,766 individuals reached with telephone reassurance and check in calls



6371 caregivers received support

The Association conducted a survey of its 12 member agencies in May 2020 to understand how they were responding to the pandemic.

Adaptable: adjusting to new conditions

Mid-March 2020, as the Governor instituted a stay at home order, Ohio's AAAs quickly made the transition from office to home with remote access to their helplines, and telephonic services and case management. Their offices remain closed to the public as of August 2020, but they have maintained a high level of service while striving to keep their staff and those they serve safe and healthy.

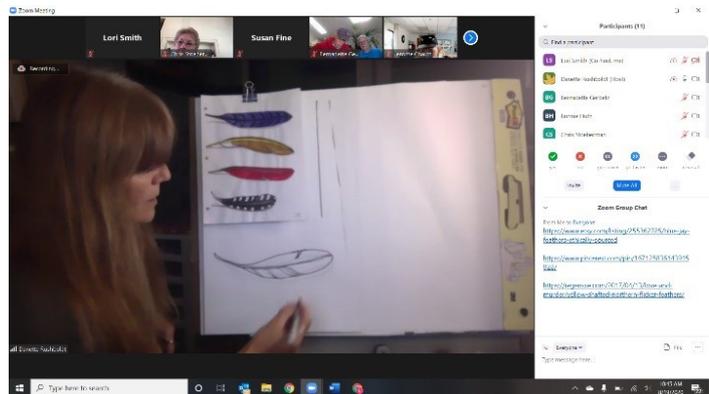


Resilient: recover quickly from difficulties

The AAAs invested in new technology to enable their call centers to go remote and staff to work from home. Calls increased, from new community members and for new services. Staff were redirected to telephone reassurance programs, volunteer training and outreach to community groups. The AAAs marshaled new volunteers as most of their existing volunteers were at risk and opted to stay safe at home. Existing assessment and case management that would occur in person was conducted telephonically. AAAs conducted well checks on consumers to ensure that services either continued as needed or that the consumer had a back up plan. Many decided to rely on family members who were also in the home due to the stay at home order.

Dedicated: devoted to a task or purpose

The greatest need was for meals and personal care items. Congregate sites such as senior centers closed, and older adults were advised to stay home and avoid going to grocery stores. With federal COVID relief funding and greater flexibility through the Older Americans Act, the AAAs provided more home delivered meals to more individuals, ensured that individuals had shelf stable emergency meals, had access to groceries and medications, and had toilet paper, hand sanitizer and masks. They worked with public health and emergency management agencies to get protective equipment to individuals and providers. AAAs also started telephone reassurance programs with volunteers and staff to contact existing clients and offer services to those isolated at home because of the pandemic. Behavioral health became a priority including increased screening for depression and loneliness and referrals to behavioral health services.



Dynamic: full of energy and new ideas

AAAs have adjusted to the new normal, connecting to older adults and their caregivers in new ways. They provide online live programming and web-based alternatives for caregiving support, telephonic caregiver support groups, and social media outreach with wellness tips of the day. Traditional in-person classes have pivoted to online meetings. Also, AAAs found new partnerships with community organizations and small businesses to obtain donations and put together and distribute wellness kits. Local restaurants have become partners in meal delivery services. Existing providers have pivoted as well; transportation providers delivered meals, and adult day service providers moved from facility to in-home settings.



Moving Forward:

AAAs are concerned that living with COVID-19 will increase the harmful effect of social isolation on older adults in congregate facilities as well as in their own homes. It can put more older adults at risk of elder abuse, neglect or exploitation. Social isolation can result in an overall decline in physical and cognitive health.

Older adults and family caregivers are now re-evaluating where they will seek short term or long term care. Life in the era of COVID-19 should not mean that older adults must be isolated and live in fear, with few choices for where and how to receive supports.

Aging services providers struggle to stay economically viable during this time, particularly in the context of low reimbursement rates in Medicaid. The State's priority must be to maintain the strength of the home and community-based services (HCBS) network to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and enable older Ohioans and the community at large to be healthy and safe at home now and in the future.



Under stressful conditions, healthcare providers are likely to make snap decisions about people solely based on their age that will determine the quality of care they receive. We need to make sure our standards of care do not discriminate based on age.



"We made an additional effort to provide individual wellness kits (supplies and informational materials) to all the independent providers of the consumer-directed programs including the care providers in our Veterans-Directed Home and Community-Based Service Program." - Area Agency on Aging, District 7.



"Mary called WRAAA when she was down to only a few cans of vegetables. She had no protein/meat or fresh fruits or vegetables on hand. In the short-term and addressing her immediate need we coordinated for Mary to receive an Emergency Pantry Box from the Cleveland Food Bank. She didn't want anyone in the house nor did she want to even open the door to anyone. The National Guard through the Cleveland Food Bank delivered a box of food to her late that same afternoon adhering to her request and left it on her porch and her friend brought it in her home later that day. The next day we received a tearful call thanking WRAAA for spending the time with her and making the necessary arrangements to bring her food and put her mind at ease. Mary had no idea WRAAA even existed until she was told about us by her physician's office. We've spoken monthly since then and have assisted her in signing up for home delivered meals and assisted her with completing SNAP application." - Western Reserve Area Agency on Aging





"One of our friendly caller volunteers, Cheryl, has been calling other individuals isolated and stuck at home since the beginning of COVID-19. Through these calls, Cheryl has formed many friendships and bonds. One such bond can be found with call receiver Lori. Lori reports that Cheryl is "very friendly, motivates her a lot and really enjoys talking to her." Lori states her and Cheryl have "formed a good friendship" and that Lori says "she is the bomb!" Cheryl states that not only is she helping others, but these calls are helping her to not feel as isolated in her own life. These relationships are not limited to during the pandemic, and will continue for as long as each individual would like the call." - Area Agency on Aging 3, Inc.





Wellness Tip of the Week

with the Area Agency on Aging District 7

Let Up on Worry

Take a break from worrying by doing something positive. Try going for a short walk, calling a friend to catch up, or enjoy a cup of coffee or tea on your porch.

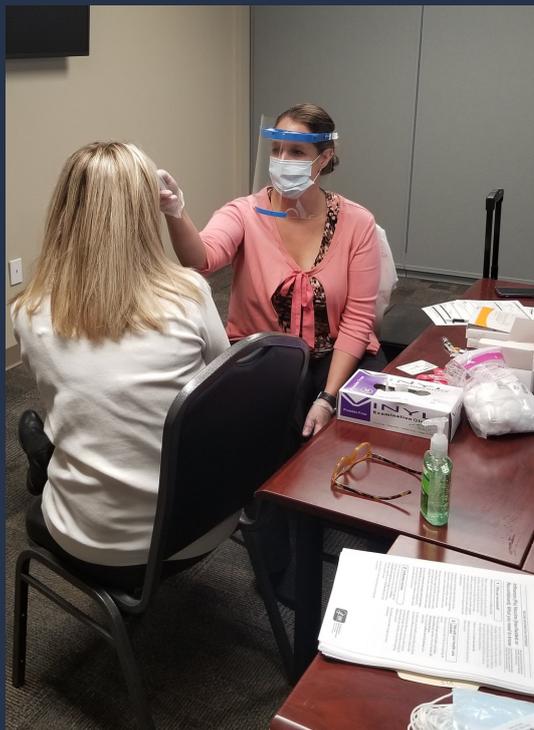


"When the pandemic began in March, adult day centers closed and Priscilla had nowhere to go. That meant Suzie couldn't work. She became her mother's full-time caretaker, in the home they shared. From March to July, Suzie and Priscilla existed with no income. But, five months after their struggles began, Suzie was scheduled to return to work. With adult day services still closed, she desperately needed somewhere for her mom to stay during the day. "I couldn't leave my mom," Suzie said, choking up. "She's been my rock. There is nothing she wouldn't do for me, and I owe her that, too." Suzie turned to her mother's ESP care manager, Carla, who went above and beyond the call of duty and was able to secure an aide to stay with Priscilla in her home six hours per day, four days per week. Suzie's job has been flexible and she does not work on Fridays so she can be with her mom." - Council on Aging of Southwestern Ohio





"Through a partnership with our local United Way, AOoA received a generous donation of Tranquility™ incontinence products including various sizes of adult briefs, pull-ups, and bed pads from local business, Principle Business Enterprises, Inc. Because of the generosity of this local business, AOoA had the opportunity to distribute 1,100+ cases, totaling 74,726 individual pieces, and a cost of \$102,000+ these items throughout Northwestern Ohio, northeast Ohio, and southeast Michigan. Recipients include individuals, nursing homes, senior centers, apartment complexes for older persons, Adult Day Centers, other caregivers, and various other associations which serve older persons and the chronically disabled." - Area Office on Aging of Northwestern Ohio





"A Dayton Foundation Del Mar Encore Fellow has developed a new, innovative training program to help hospitality and retail workers, who have been laid off due to COVID-19, get back to work and fill the ever increasing need for skilled home healthcare aides. In partnership with the Area Agency on Aging, PSA 2, this program will offer free Certified Nurse Aide Training and a virtual job fair to Dayton-area displaced hospitality and retail workers, who are interested in working in home healthcare. Training begins this September." - Area Agency on Aging, PSA 2.



Grab & Go Frozen Meals

Are you 60 years or older?

You could be eligible for 5 meals to pick up and take home with you.

Tuesdays from 11AM to 1PM
Hawkins Corner
 2131 Park Avenue West, Ontario

Reserve your meals today
855-447-5792

Reservation should be made no less than 24 hours prior to meal.

