



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

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**More Elders in Southern Ohio and Across the State Can Access
the Assisted Living Waiver Thanks to Expanded Eligibility**

Enrollment Barriers Removed

The Area Agency on Aging District 7 (AAA7) can help older adults and others in its district access Ohio's Assisted Living Waiver more quickly thanks to recent program changes. These changes, written by the Ohio Department of Aging and approved by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, mean that anyone living in the community, who meets Medicaid eligibility, can access the program. A second change means that consumers can begin receiving assisted living services while their Medicaid eligibility is being determined. Ohio's Assisted Living Waiver program pays the costs of care in an assisted living facility for certain people with Medicaid, allowing the consumer to use his or her resources to cover "room and board" expenses. Counties the AAA7 covers in southern Ohio include Adams, Brown, Gallia, Highland, Jackson, Lawrence, Pike, Ross, Scioto and Vinton.

"We are dedicated to helping people receive the services they need in the most appropriate setting. These changes remove barriers to program enrollment and allow us to ensure more people receive services more quickly," said Pamela K. Matura, executive director of the AAA7.

"Governor John Kasich has made it clear: a state priority is to enable Ohio's elders and those who live with disabilities and need assistance to live with dignity and respect in settings they prefer as their care needs change," said Bonnie Kantor-Burman, director of the Ohio Department of Aging. "These program changes ensure just that."

Anyone who lives in the community and who meets Medicaid eligibility requirements now will be able to enroll in Ohio's Assisted Living Waiver. Previously, to be eligible, an individual had to have lived in a nursing home or residential care facility for six months before enrolling. Consumers also would have to wait until their Medicaid eligibility was determined before they could begin receiving assisted living services. Assisted living facilities provide elders with an alternative to nursing facility care that is both less expensive and less restrictive. Services include 24-hour on-site response, personal care, supportive services (housekeeping, laundry, and maintenance), nursing, transportation, meals, and recreational programming. In addition, each individual is assigned a care manager from the AAA7 who is either a registered nurse or

licensed social worker. The care manager assists the individual with program accessibility, well-being monitoring, advocacy, and access to community services and activities.

To participate in the Assisted Living Waiver Program, an individual must meet the following requirements:

- Be a resident of Ohio
- Be age 21 or older
- Be Medicaid-eligible
- Have the ability to make a minimum room and board payment to the assisted living facility
- Meet the intermediate nursing home level of care
- Be able to have all care needs safely met in a residential care facility

Nearly 3,200 Ohioans currently use the Assisted Living waiver. To determine if assisted living is a good option for you, contact the Area Agency on Aging District 7 toll-free at 1-800-582-7277 and request a free assessment. For additional assistance, the Long-Term Care Consumer Guide (www.ltcoho.org/consumer/index.asp) is an online tool that can help you find and compare nursing and residential care facilities, including assisted living, in your area

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 own homes through services paid for by Medicare, Medicaid, other federal and state resources, as well as private pay. The AAA7's Resource Center is also available to anyone in the community looking for information or assistance with long-term care options. Available Monday through Friday from 8:00 am until 4:30 pm, the Resource Center is a valuable contact for learning more about options and what programs and services are available for assistance.

Those interested in learning more can call toll-free at 1-800-582-7277 (TTY: 711). Here, individuals can speak directly with a nurse or social worker who will assist them with information surrounding the programs and services that are available to best serve their needs. The Agency also offers an in-home assessment at no cost for those who are interested in learning more. Information is also available on www.aaa7.org, or the Agency can be contacted through e-mail at info@aaa7.org. The Agency also has a Facebook page located at www.facebook.com/AreaAgencyOnAgingDistrict7.

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