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## **Ohio Area Agencies on Aging Capture National Grants**

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### ***State's aging network leads the way to improve care, control costs***

**Columbus, Ohio (November 21, 2011)** – Ohio's Area Agencies on Aging received two of the first seven federal grants awarded to reduce hospital admissions among seniors and cut health care costs. Ohio was the only state with more than one grant recipient. The awards place the state's aging network at the national forefront in helping older adults remain at home and out of hospitals.

On Friday, the federal Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) announced the first site selections for the Community Based Care Transition Program of the Partnership for Patients. The Akron/Canton Area Agency on Aging and the Southwest Ohio Care Transitions Collaborative were selected to test methods to improve collaboration among caregivers to promote better health and better use of health care dollars.

"Ohio legislators affirmed the importance of Area Agencies on Aging in reducing nursing home admissions and costs when they passed the new state budget. The CMS grants are another powerful endorsement of the aging network that will allow us to build on our success in meeting the growing needs of Ohio's aging population," said Larke Recchie, executive director of the Ohio Association of Area Agencies on Aging (o4a).

Ohio may win additional contracts. Four Area Agencies on Aging have applications pending with CMS, and other agencies are working with local hospitals and plan to apply. These collaborations with local providers have made Ohio's Area Agencies on Aging particularly successful at providing care and reducing expenses.

Recchie said, "Area Agencies on Aging have effectively managed the long-term care needs for older adults for more than 30 years. These CMS grants will help to keep the aging network strong so we can continue being an essential partner with federal and state government to improve health outcomes and reduce long-term care expenditures."

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“Area Agencies on Aging are proud to bring additional federal grant dollars into the state to help individuals and families right here in Ohio,” she said.

More than 80 Area Agency on Aging staff from around the state have been trained in a CMS-approved Care Transitions Intervention model that has proven to reduce hospital readmissions and teach patients to take control of their chronic diseases.

Patients who have benefitted from this help have improved self-management of their chronic conditions and confidence about caring for themselves. Short-term studies at the Area Agencies on Aging have shown remarkable decreases in hospital readmission rates among patients who received care transitions coaching, and most patients were discharged to their homes or assisted living rather than a nursing facility.

Currently, about one in five Medicare patients is readmitted to the hospital for avoidable medical conditions within 30 days, costing taxpayers about \$17 billion annually. Beginning in 2013, hospitals will receive reduced payments from the federal government for excessive readmission rates among Medicare patients.

CMS will measure funding recipients on their ability to reduce hospital readmissions, improve patient satisfaction, and generate savings to Medicare.

Sites in Georgia, Maine, Arizona, Massachusetts, and Illinois were also selected in the first round of awards.

**About the Ohio Association of Area Agencies on Aging | o4a**

The Ohio Association of Area Agencies on Aging (o4a), a nonprofit organization, is a statewide network of agencies that provide services for older adults, their families and caregivers, as well as advocate on their behalf. The Association addresses issues that have an impact on the aging network, provides services to members, and serves as a collective voice for Ohio’s Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs). Equal Opportunity Employer/Provider. For more information visit, [www.ohioaging.org](http://www.ohioaging.org).