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**For Immediate Release**

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**Frail Senior Gets Wish of Being Home For The Holidays Instead of Being in a Nursing Home**

Patricia had many blessings to be thankful for over the holidays. Top on her wish list was getting out of the nursing home and being home for the holidays. "All the people from the Area Office on Aging's PASSPORT Program and the Ability Center who enabled me to get out of the nursing home and come home have been the greatest blessing of my life," Patricia said. These words mean a lot coming from a person who was pronounced dead for over six minutes and was brought back to life. She was in a serious car accident and was ejected from her car and almost had to have her left leg amputated. This accident caused problems with her lymph system.



After being in the nursing home from a recent fall that she wasn't able to get up from, it looked like Patricia was going to be in the nursing home for a long time since she needed assistance with bathing, dressing and meals. Instead of Medicaid paying about \$60,000 a year for Patricia to be in a nursing home, she found out the PASSPORT Program could bring services like she received at the nursing home right to her own home instead, at a cost to tax-payers that is only 1/3 of the cost of a nursing home. PASSPORT also provides an Emergency Response System that allows her to push a button she keeps on a necklace to get help if she falls again.

The best news was that Patricia did not have to sit on a waiting list for these services. Thanks to the Home First provision state legislators set up, people in nursing homes can by-pass the waiting list for PASSPORT and get in-home services right away.

Since Patricia was in need of financial assistance to make the transition from the nursing home back into the community, she was also assisted by the HOME Choice Program which helped with funding her security deposit and 1st month's rent on her apartment, as well as some household items she needed.

Patricia is thrilled with her transition back to having her own place. Patricia stated, "It saved my life! I was so depressed at the nursing home, trying not to give up. I wouldn't have gotten out without these programs. It was so overwhelming being in the nursing home, sharing a room with a stranger and having to be around people with emotional problems. I needed to be there for awhile to get stronger and to lose weight, but it is so nice to be home."

She said, "I have plenty to give thanks for at this time of year. Being out on my own will allow me to be a contributing member to society." Patricia, who is a retired teacher, said she just finished helping a person pass their GED test.

When asked what she thinks of her 700 square foot apartment, she smiles and says, "It's like being in a castle."

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### Legislation Helps Older Adults Stay in Their Homes

*Buckeye Hills Area Agency on Aging 8 Explains Ohio's Home First Option*



At their residence, Home First client Marvin Taylor and his wife Alberta receive support from Area Agency on Aging 8 Case Manager Alta Coffman, RN, (standing).

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The Taylors are settled in their new home in time for the holidays. Home for the holidays may have new meaning for Ohio families with loved ones in nursing facilities. Through the Home First provisions, older adults can immediately enroll in programs that offer in-home services.

Whether leaving hospitals or nursing facilities or in the case of involvement with Adult Protective Services, as well as those who have depleted their assets in assisted living, or whose physicians have signed that they are at risk of nursing facility placement within 30 days, Home First can help.

For the Taylors, the Home First option allowed Marvin to move from a nursing home to his own apartment. Now, he is settled in time for the holidays.

“We asked about putting up our Christmas lights and decorations and they let us,” said Alberta Taylor. “Marvin loves to watch the deer outside in the morning from the front window.”

Buckeye Hills Area Agency on Aging 8 (AAA8) Case Manager Alta Coffman, RN, noted she cannot believe how well Marvin is doing since he came home. Through the Home First provision and services with Ohio's PASSPORT program, the Taylors will enjoy Christmas at home.

“I hope I don't have to go back,” said Marvin. “I have been too many places, the hospital and nursing home, I like it best here at home.” Marvin gets out some with the aid of his power chair and has in-home support from caregivers with Interim of Zanesville.

Marvin's wife of 31 years, Alberta, laughs that he is definitely more cooperative with the home care workers than with her. She is glad they have this support.

"They are a lot of help to us and are very good with his care and the support they offer us," added Alberta.

Due to cuts in state funding and high demand for services, older adults have to wait anywhere from a few days to several weeks to be enrolled in home and community services, including PASSPORT. Many older adults are unnecessarily in hospitals or abusive situations while they wait for services that allow them to return home.

"Home First will help people get connected to services when they are most vulnerable for nursing home placement," said Rick Hindman, Director AAA8. "Many older adults just need help with meals, or medications, or other services after hospitalization. They don't want to be, nor need to be, in expensive nursing facilities for care that they can receive in the comfort and privacy of their own home."

In addition to creating choices for older adults, Home First reduces state government spending. Nursing facility care is three times as expensive as home care, at \$60,000 per person annually versus \$20,000 per person. This year Marvin's annual PASSPORT service plan is \$3,846, a savings of over \$52,600 when compared to the average annual cost for nursing facility care in Ohio.

"Anytime we can serve a person's needs at home, we're helping older adults, their caregivers, and local taxpayers," Hindman said. Families who have loved ones in a nursing home that want them "home for the holidays" should call AAA8 at 1-800-331-2644 or visit [www.areaagency8.org](http://www.areaagency8.org) to learn more about the Home First option. AAA8 serves Athens, Hocking, Meigs, Monroe, Morgan, Noble, Perry and Washington Counties.

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