

**Consumer-directed care is key in couple remaining at home**

John and Rita have lived in Clinton County all their lives. Rita’s family supported the region’s Underground Railroad. Now, she and John live in her family’s century-old farm house because they wanted to keep it in the family.



High school sweethearts, John said, “She was pretty darn cute – and still is!”

The couple married and John worked 46 years at the Randall Textron plant in Wilmington, working his way up to production supervisor. When he retired, John worked as a custodian for Wilmington City Schools – a job he enjoyed far more than his days at the plant. Rita also worked in the school system, as a bus driver for nearly 40 years.

Now, despite some challenges and with help from their daughters and the Elderly Services Program, they are committed to helping each other stay in their home as long as possible.

John developed Parkinsonism after injuring his head in a car accident. The couple’s daughter, Kathy, described his physical decline since the accident as “tremendous.” Rita is physically healthy but has dementia. “I’m in charge of the memory around here,” John joked affectionately.

Kathy helps her parents, but also works and helps with her grandchildren. Things got more difficult in 2017 after her parents’ identity was stolen. The local Sheriff’s office referred Kathy to Council on Aging and they were enrolled in the Elderly Services Program.

During the enrollment process, the ESP care manager explained the program’s consumer-directed care (CDC) option. Through CDC, Kathy could hire a caregiver on her own, instead of going through a traditional home health agency. CDC was added to the program in 2017 as a way to help lessen the local impact of a nationwide shortage of home health workers.

Here’s how CDC works: Instead of using a home care agency, clients become “employers” and hire their own “employees” to provide certain services, which are paid for by ESP. In many cases, the employee is someone the client already knows (but not a spouse). CDC increases independence and program satisfaction for the client, while using ESP resources more effectively.

With nurses and therapists already coming and going, Kathy was leery of allowing another stranger into their home. “I like to keep a close eye on who’s coming in and out of this house,” said Kathy. And so CDC appealed to her. She recruited an old family friend, Debbie, to provide her parents’ care.

“It really makes my life easier because I know that I’m going to have someone other than me coming in daily and checking on them,” said Kathy.

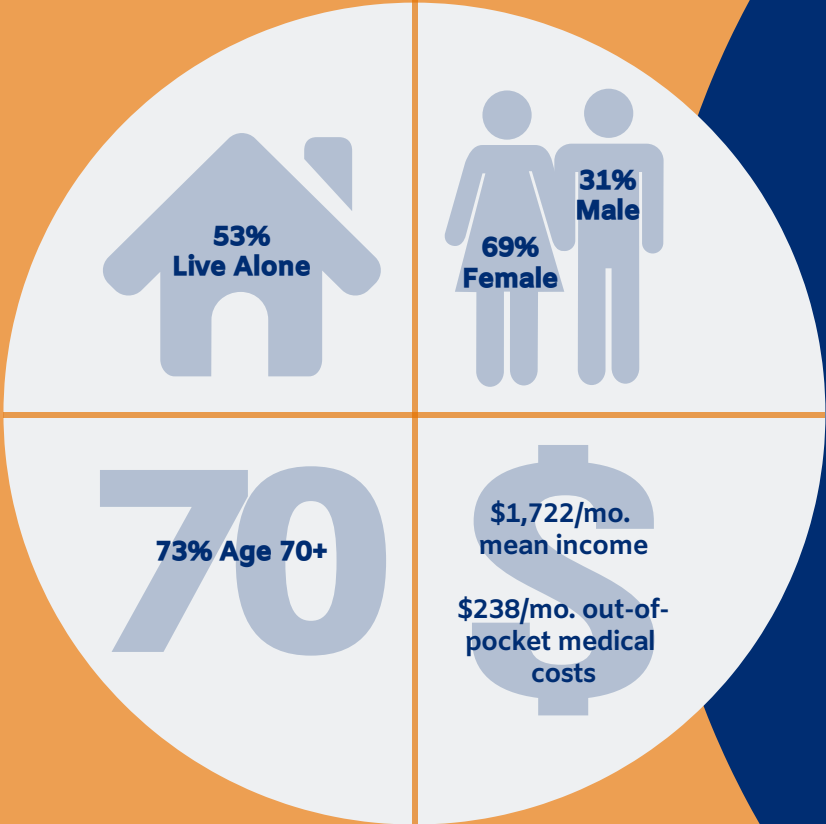
Debbie comes three days a week and weekends. She helps with housekeeping, prepares meals and checks their medications. She also helps with doctor’s appointments, shopping and personal care.

“This is our life support in more ways than you’ll ever dream of,” said John. “We couldn’t make it without [the Elderly Services Program].”

Consumer-directed care was first offered in Clinton County in 2017 and ESP staff have been working to enroll eligible clients. Enrollment in the service grew 150 percent in 2018.

**Who are Clinton County ESP’s clients?**

In 2018, there were 582 of them. They are seniors caught in the middle: with income too high to qualify for Medicaid, but too low to pay for private in-home care. They need help with basic activities like personal care and transportation. Family helps as much as they can, and ESP fills in gaps in care so they can continue to live independently in their homes and communities.



**ESP** Clinton County’s Elderly Services Program is a community partnership

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Mike McCarty, Kerry R. Steed, Brenda Woods

**Clinton County Elderly Services Program Advisory Council**  
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**CLINTON COUNTY  
ELDERLY SERVICES  
PROGRAM**

**ANNUAL  
REPORT**

**2018**

Clinton County ESP services are funded by a special tax levy. ESP does not supplant care provided by families but rather secures the necessary additional care the family is unable to provide. ESP expects families to take responsibility to care for family members to the fullest extent possible. ESP does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, age, sex, national or ethnic origin, or disability.

**Dear Friends and Family,**



On behalf of the Elderly Services Program Advisory Council, I am pleased to present our 2018 Annual Report. This report shows how tax dollars are spent and gives a picture of the program’s impact on our county.

In 2018, the Clinton County Elderly Services Program (ESP) helped 582 older adults remain independent in their homes, a nearly 14 percent increase over 2017.

Much of this growth is the result of an on-going outreach campaign to increase awareness and reach more seniors and families who need help. In 2018, ESP staff at Council on Aging, the program’s administrator, participated in nearly 50 community outreach activities, including: events at senior centers in Wilmington, Sabina and Blanchester; presentations to community groups; education events at senior and low-income apartment communities; and networking with other regional businesses, community and social service agencies.

The expansion of FastTrack Home into nursing facilities has also fueled growth. Read more in the highlights section of this report.

With ESP staff focused on outreach, the advisory council worked to address issues impacting service delivery. For example, our county has been hit hard by a nationwide home health aide shortage. With Council on Aging, we’ve sought ways to increase the capacity of home care providers so we can better serve county residents. Consumer-directed care, a relatively new service of ESP which allows clients to hire their own caregivers instead of using a traditional home care agency, is helping to address this challenge. The client story in our report explains how the program works.

Many of our advisory council members have visited ESP clients in their homes. We’ve seen firsthand both the benefit and the value of the program in helping our county’s older adults live with dignity in their own homes. Because of ESP, I believe Clinton County is in a better position to serve our growing aging population and I am proud to be part of that effort.

**Kathi Spirk**  
**Chair, Clinton County Elderly Services Program Advisory Council**

**About the Elderly Services Program**

ESP helps eligible county residents age 65 and older remain safe and independent in their homes by providing help with certain activities of daily living (bathing, cleaning, cooking, transportation and more), filling gaps in care that may already be provided by family caregivers. ESP offers flexible care to meet clients’ changing needs. Eligibility and care needs are determined during an in-home assessment and a professional care manager coordinates and monitors clients’ care.

Income is not an eligibility factor for ESP, but some clients have a co-payment based on their income. The program is operated by Council on Aging (COA) via a contract with Clinton County Commissioners, who appoint a board to advise on program needs and policies. Provider agencies deliver ESP services under contract with COA.

ESP is a compassionate and cost-effective alternative to nursing home care. On average, it costs \$279 per month to help a senior stay in their home with services through ESP, compared to more than \$4,000 a month for Medicaid nursing home care, also funded by tax dollars.

**COA’s role in Clinton County**

In addition to eligibility assessments and ongoing care management, COA’s responsibilities include: program development; provider management; data analysis and reporting; financial services and oversight; information technology; quality improvement; and community engagement. As a state-designated Area Agency on Aging, COA provided these additional services to county residents in 2018:



**Aging and Disability Resource Center**  
 COA’s call center and “front door” to services and community resources responded to 47,431 inquiries. COA has an Aging and Disability Resource Center in Clinton County.



**Home and community-based services via Medicaid Waivers**  
 PASSPORT, Assisted Living, Ohio Home Care, Specialized Recovery Services and MyCare Ohio programs provided care for 238 Clinton County residents.



**Transitional care**  
 Support to transition from hospital or nursing home care to in-home care via Community Transitions, FastTrack Home and other transitions programs was provided to 118 residents.



**Title III of the Older Americans Act**  
 Clinton County organizations spent \$368,245 in federal Title III funds allocated by COA. Funding is for services such as senior center services, transportation, meals, caregiver support and legal services.

**How tax dollars are spent**

ESP would not exist without the senior services tax levy and the generous support of voters. The most recent levy was approved by 75.99 percent of voters in November, 2016. The 1.5-mill levy (a renewal) costs property owners \$37.67 per \$100,000 of property valuation annually. COA’s goal is to ensure the highest quality services at the lowest cost in order to serve as many people as possible with the tax dollars available.

As the Area Agency on Aging for Southwestern Ohio, including Clinton County, COA leverages state and federal funding to cover 16 percent of ESP expenses. Additional funding comes from voluntary client donations and client co-payments (27 percent of clients make a co-payment based on their income).

**Revenue**

Federal and State (via Council on Aging)	\$214,499
Client Donation	\$111
Client Co-Payment	\$29,143
Clinton County Elderly Services Levy	\$1,094,305
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>\$1,338,058</b>

**Expenses**

SERVICE*	CLIENTS SERVED	SERVICE UNITS	COST
Care Management	582	N/A	\$262,757
Electronic Monitoring Systems	384	3,528 months	\$71,565
Homemaking	309	17,491 hours	\$496,073
Home-Delivered Meals	150	26,058 meals	\$186,800
FastTrack Home Care Management	113	N/A	\$32,369
Home Medical Equipment	95	119 equipment items	\$20,804
Personal Care	57	2,076 hours	\$54,558
Consumer-Directed Care	20	150 months of service	\$57,227
Minor Home Repairs	18	21 repairs	\$15,016
Adult Day Service	13	824 days	\$39,696
Medical Transportation	12	196 one-way trips	\$7,878
Respite	5	121 hours	\$2,626
Intake and Assessment	N/A	N/A	\$6,081
Administration	N/A	N/A	\$84,608
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>			<b>\$1,338,058</b>

\*Services listed in order of clients served.

**2018 highlights**

**Council on Aging finds a new home in Clinton County and opens resource center**

To better serve county residents, Council on Aging (COA) moved its Clinton County office to the Smith-Feike-Minton Insurance building at 2333 Rombach Avenue. ESP staff work out of the office, which now includes an Aging and Disability Resource Center. The office is open Monday-Friday with a COA staff member available to assist those who wish to talk face-to-face about COA services, like ESP, or other community resources. County residents can also call (937) 449-0642 to talk with someone by phone. The resource center is a separate service of Council on Aging and is primarily supported by federal and state funding. COA has had an office located in Wilmington since 2014.

**FastTrack Home continues growth in 2018**

FastTrack Home is serving more seniors because of a new focus on enrolling nursing home patients. FastTrack Home provides temporary ESP services and care transitions coaching to seniors when care is needed most – as they are leaving a hospital or nursing home. In 2018, 113 seniors enrolled in the program – a 140 percent increase from 2017. About 33 percent of FastTrack Home patients enroll in ESP when their temporary FastTrack Home services end. For those who do not need ESP, the average length of stay on FastTrack Home is 47 days – enough time to ease their recovery and prevent a hospital or nursing home readmission.

**Clinton County joins AARP network of Age-Friendly Communities**

Council on Aging joined other community partners, including Clinton County Commissioners and the Regional Planning Commission, in a successful bid to join AARP’s Age-Friendly Community Network. According to AARP, membership includes a commitment by the county’s elected leadership to actively work toward making the county a great place for people of all ages.

**Council on Aging invests in new case management and billing system**

As administrator of the Elderly Services Program in four counties, Council on Aging invested in, and owns, a new system to manage care and costs for clients enrolled in the program. Called CareDirector, the cloud-based system replaces an outdated, unsupported technology platform and aligns the program and COA with current industry standards for security and privacy. Once fully-optimized, CareDirector will provide flexibility to grow and adapt programs to better serve clients.

“This is our life support in more ways than you’ll ever dream of. We couldn’t make it without [the Elderly Services Program].”

–John

