

Created by the Older Americans Act, as amended, in 1973, Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) are the local leaders in serving older Kansans and caregivers in all 105 Kansas counties. For 50 years, AAA programs have been helping older Kansans and their caregivers by coordinating cost-effective supports and services. We aim to educate Kansas lawmakers of the specialized needs of older adults by advocating for the following priorities:

## 1. Senior Care Act (SCA)

The Senior Care Act is a smart-dollar, cost-effective program serving eligible Kansans aged 60 and older. It addresses social determinants of health by providing assessments case management, home care, emergency response systems, home modification, respite and other services to respond to older Kansan's needs.

The program serves an average of 1,874 customers and results in a \$7.1 million cost avoidance to Kansas taxpayers; However, the monthly \$1,445 cost cap rule must be adjusted in order to fully maximize the impact of SCA services needed by older Kansans. ***To support SCA customers, k4ad advocates that regulations be amended to authorize the KDADS secretary to modify the monthly cost cap to not less than the FY23 rate, and to adjust for inflation as needed.***

## 2. Core Funding

AAAs receive an average of 7% from non-Medicaid contracts to cover indirect costs. Since Medicaid-related contracts do not include compensation to administer these programs. AAAs are severely challenged to cover indirect costs, implement quality improvement initiatives, and maintain sustainability of important programs that help thousands of older Kansans and caregivers.

The solution is for AAAs to receive core funding to cover basic organization and administrative costs.

Core funding is needed for AAAs to achieve the mission of serving an increasing number of older Kansans and their caregivers and to safeguard financial resiliency, improve technology to increase program efficiency, and provide flexibility for unexpected expenses. Core funding is also vital to address the specialized needs of a growing and very diverse aging population. To support solid organizational capacity and allow flexibility needed to serve older adults and their caregivers, ***k4ad advocates for a base of \$10 million in core funding for the Area Agencies on Aging.***

## 3. PASRR CARE Level I Assessment Rate

The Medicaid Preadmission Screening and Resident Review (PASRR) Level I Assessment is an important tool that diverts individuals from inappropriate settings and ensures that the right services are authorized for eligible nursing home residents.

The AAAs complete standardized assessments and provide local resources and information that customers need to make informed choices about long-term supports and services.

KDADS policy requires that assessors hold specific degrees in a human services field or be a Kansas-licensed registered nurse. This means funds for higher wages are required.

Prior to FY24, the rate paid for AAAs to deliver this administrative service have not kept pace with COLA or inflationary costs and rates for several AAA have remained unchanged for 12 years, although Kansas received significant match from federal sources. In recognition of increasing costs of service delivery, technology, fuel, and market conditions driving wages much higher, ***k4ad advocates for your support to increase the rate to \$300 per assessment.***

## 4. Living in the Community

Successful health outcomes require person-centered approaches where the customer drives services and satisfaction. Whether participating in community programs and/or maintaining employment, "aging in place" must be a deliverable and more than a concept. ***To advance health equity among older Kansans, k4ad advocates for the legislature to:***

1. Appropriately fund the Older Kansans Employment Program (OKEP) in response to higher costs and program growth from older adults re-entering the workforce.
2. Require case management under the Brain Injury, Frail Elder, and Physical Disability waivers be provided without perceived or actual conflicts of interest
3. Appropriate equitable provider rates among all waivers

**AAAs Comprehensive Approach:** When more than 90% of Kansans want to age in place at home, comprehensive efforts must be implemented and sustained to make systems work.

Area Agencies on Aging provide “non-Medicaid” services, which address social determinants of health. Trustworthy information, home-delivered meals and personal care services contribute to optimal health and enhance caregivers’ capacity. Area Agencies on Aging have close ties with local communities and their expertise in leveraging resources and ideas make effective use of important, but very limited, resources.

**Medicaid Expansion:** A robust plan is needed to address the significant demographic shifts that challenge equitable policy and opportunities. Expanding Medicaid will actively facilitate improved access to care for older adults with low incomes – particularly those who are unserved or underserved; incorporate quality and sustainability into program operations; add stability for health systems serving rural Kansans and improve coordination between health systems. Better health is an outcome of accessible health care. ***K4ad supports Medicaid Expansion to improve access to health care, good nutrition, and reliable non-emergency medical transportation.***

**Medicare Policy:** Area Agencies on Aging also work at the federal level to advocate for fair and equitable policies related to Medicare. Beneficiaries should not be forced into private plans to receive needed services, nor be subjected to penalties from providers committing intentional, dishonest acts. To prevent, detect, and report Medicare fraud, ***k4ad supports the award of sole-source contracts to the Area Agencies on Aging for the State Health Insurance Counseling For Kansas (SHICK) and the Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act programs.***

The Area Agencies on Aging in Kansas are part of a national network of 629 AAAs and 246 Title VI organizations, which are the designated leaders on aging issues at the local level to respond to the needs of older adults and caregivers in every local community. In Kansas, Area Agencies on Aging are the “single points of entry” and coordinate the delivery of publicly-funded community-based services for older adults and caregivers. The AAAs are locally administered and use federal, state and local funding to provide five broad categories of services aligned with Title III-B (in-home and access services); III-C1 and III-C2 (home delivered and site-based nutrition programs); III-D (disease prevention and health promotion services); and III-E (caregiver services), which are all provided in the homes and communities for older adults in need of services.

**Primary Responsibilities of Area Agencies on Aging include:**

- 1) Serving as a community planning agency to improve community services to older adults
- 2) Acting as an advocate for older adults
- 3) Promoting person-directed care and providing services which help older adults remain in the community and avoid unnecessary or premature moves from their homes and providing supports that help caregivers of older adults
- 4) Developing coalitions and networks of support for older adults and their caregivers to avoid or reduce the need for publicly-funded services
- 5) Coordinating services in a specific geographic area and managing services effectively and efficiently
- 6) Helping older adults live happier and more active lives through disease prevention and intervention

**Comments? Questions? Please feel free to contact:**

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