

# **AREA PLAN ON AGING, 2022-2025 SENIORCARE INC.**

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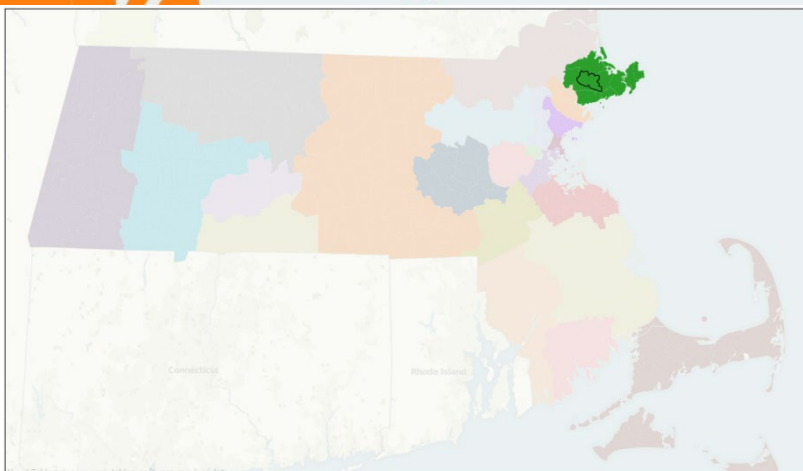
- A. Area Plan on Aging Assurances and Affirmation
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**SeniorCare Inc.  
Area Agency on Aging/Aging Services Access Point**

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**Providing Support and Services to Older Adults in Beverly, Essex, Gloucester, Hamilton, Ipswich, Manchester-by-the-Sea, Rockport, Topsfield, and Wenham**

# Executive Summary

Founded in 1972, SeniorCare Inc. (SeniorCare) is an innovative and multi-faceted organization that provides and coordinates a comprehensive array of services to older adults, caregivers, and people with disabilities. SeniorCare utilizes a person-directed focus to meet the diverse and changing needs of those we serve, supporting their individual decisions, and assisting them in attaining their best possible physical, cognitive, and mental health as they lead independent, meaningful, and dignified lives in their community of choice.

The SeniorCare Planning and Service Area (PSA) consists of nine communities on Massachusetts' North Shore and Cape Ann: Beverly, Essex, Gloucester, Hamilton, Ipswich, Manchester-by-the-Sea, Rockport, Topsfield, and Wenham. According to the Massachusetts Healthy Aging Collaborative's 2018 Massachusetts Healthy Aging Data Report, approximately 32,000 residents, or 27% of the PSA population are age 60 or older.

A private, not-for-profit, 501(c)(3), SeniorCare is a federally designated Area Agency on Aging (AAA) and a Massachusetts designated Aging Services Access Point (ASAP). It is one of the founding members of the Greater North Shore LINK (formerly known as the Aging and Disability Resource Consortium of the Greater North Shore). SeniorCare is also the local sponsor for RSVP Volunteers of the North Shore and in that capacity serves the additional communities of Danvers, Marblehead, Peabody, and Salem.

The Area Agencies on Aging are a creation of federal Older Americans Act legislation, originally passed in 1965 and most recently reauthorized in 2020. As an Area Agency on Aging SeniorCare receives federal funding administered by the state to create, implement, and monitor a range of supportive and nutrition services at the regional level. Area Agencies on Aging are asked to create an Area Plan every four years to be used for the development of comprehensive, community-based services that meet the needs of older adults in its PSA. From September to December 2020, SeniorCare conducted a needs assessment process that included a comprehensive survey as well as information gained through small group meetings and informational interviews with area Council on Aging Directors and Boards, caregivers, agency staff and additional stakeholders. Top areas of need identified included: household/personal care; personal safety/security, specifically concerns regarding balance/falls and mobility; accessing assistance; transportation; accessing and using technology; and social isolation.

SeniorCare takes an active role in providing advocacy and awareness among community partners and the public about the needs of older adults, including those residing in long term care facilities, educating older adults and care partners about services available to them, and addressing the needs of the elders, caregivers, and others in our PSA. We strive to meet the needs of all elders and their caregivers, and any person aged 60 or older may receive Title III services. The OAA prioritizes services to older adults who live alone, low-income elders, minority elder populations, socially isolated populations including limited English-proficient elders and LGBTQ+ elders, those living in rural areas, and Native American populations.

SeniorCare utilizes funds from the Older Americans Act to help support information and referral, in-home money management, benefits specialist services, family caregiver support programs, nutrition services (including meals, in-home nutrition counseling, and education), volunteer medical transportation, ombudsman/LTC resident advocacy, and health and wellness programs. In addition to programs provided directly by SeniorCare, Title IIIB Supportive Service funding is extended to Councils on Aging and local providers to fund outreach and transportation services through a request for proposal (RFP) process, and funding is provided to Northeast Legal Aid to support legal assistance to low-income elders in the SeniorCare catchment area.

SeniorCare is designated by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs (EOEA) as an Aging Service Access Point (ASAP). Many of SeniorCare programs and services are delivered through this ASAP role with funding provided by Elder Affairs. As an ASAP, SeniorCare functions as a single entry-point for home care services for people aged 60 and over in its PSA who meet functional impairment and eligibility guidelines set by the Commonwealth. In the ASAP role, SeniorCare provides a wide range of services including care management, home care services, protective services, information services, SHINE, nursing assessments and screenings, nutrition services, care transitions, caregiver support, supportive living/housing assistance, options counseling, money management, transportation, volunteer services and health and wellness programs. Through its range of programs, SeniorCare serves more than 5,000 people each year.

SeniorCare receives funding from the Older Americans Act and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and through contributions and donations. External grants are utilized to support under-funded programs and innovative, unique programming.

SeniorCare plays a vital role in the service area as a leading source of information and resources for our constituents. Committed to collaboration, SeniorCare routinely works with other entities across the PSA, joining with Councils on Aging, community providers, local non-profits, Senior Care Options (SCO) and PACE programs, housing authorities,

first responders, the Greater North Shore LINK, and others to weave a web of services and programs to support elders, persons with disabilities and their families and caregivers.

As an agency we value community, choice, independence, respect, and compassion. These values will be infused into the work we do in the coming years as we continue to provide innovative, cost effective, and efficient services to those we serve.

## Context

The Older Americans Act (OAA) of 1965 (OAA), as amended (42 U.S.C.A. § 3001 et seq.), is the primary federal legislation intended to provide services that will improve the lives of older adults and help them stay as independent as possible in their homes and communities. The Administration on Aging (AOA) is the principal agency of the U.S Department of Health and Human Services designated to carry out the provisions. In 2012, the Administration for Community Living (ACL) was created, bringing together the AOA, the Office on Disability, and the Administration on Developmental Disabilities into a single focal point dedicated to improving the lives of those with functional needs into a coordinated, focused and stronger entity. The ACL oversees a national aging services network of State Units on Aging (SUA); in Massachusetts this is the Executive Office of Elder Affairs (EOEA).

In its role as an AAA, SeniorCare serves the Greater North Shore and Cape Ann, establishing priorities and plans for services to meet the needs of older persons, people with disabilities, and their caregivers and educating them about the services and benefits available to assist them. SeniorCare advocates for older adults, caregivers and people with disabilities and works to increase awareness of their needs among other agencies, organizations, and the public.

US Administration for Community Living Mission Statement: Maximize the independence, well-being, and health of older adults, people with disabilities across the lifespan, and their families and caregivers.

EOEA Mission Statement: We promote the independence, empowerment, and well-being of older adults, individuals with disabilities, and their caregivers.

SeniorCare's mission is to be a consumer centered organization that provides and coordinates services to elders and others, enabling them to live independently at home or in a setting of their choice while remaining part of their community. Our vision is that

all whom we serve inspire us to strive for excellence towards personal and community wholeness.

SeniorCare's mission and vision align with the Administration for Community Living and the Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs and in our planning process we coordinate with ACL Focus areas and seek to significantly impact vulnerable populations in our planning and service area.

As an Area Agency on Aging, in alignment with the SeniorCare Mission, Vision, and Strategic Plan goals, we seek to:

- Develop and explore the use of innovative technology, best practices and sustainable programs that support our mission.
- Address social determinants of health through expansion of existing programming and new initiatives.
- Effectively assist consumers with health and functional challenges; increase outreach and service delivery to underserved populations; and meet the needs of all consumers with dignity and respect.

### **Demographic Profile**

The SeniorCare PSA is comprised of nine communities on Massachusetts' North Shore and Cape Ann: Beverly, Essex, Gloucester, Hamilton, Ipswich, Manchester-by-the-Sea, Rockport, Topsfield, and Wenham. Throughout all the communities there are elders living alone (isolated), low-income elders, and minority elder populations including lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ+) elders and those who are limited English proficient (LEP).

According to the Massachusetts Healthy Aging Collaborative's 2018 Massachusetts Healthy Aging Data Report of the 120,020 residents in the PSA; approximately 32,145 - or 27% - are age 60 or older and 19% are age 65 plus. The percentages are above the Massachusetts estimates of 21.2% and 15.1% respectively. Nineteen percent of older adults in the PSA are age 65 or older, above the state estimate of 15%. Among the population age 65 or older, approximately 30% live with a disability, 28% live alone, and 7% have an income below the poverty line. Approximately 1% of those age 65+ identify as Black, Asian or Hispanic/Latino. Twenty percent of those 65 or older are veterans of military service.

Of the nine communities in the PSA, four lack a full-service grocery store. There is no comprehensive regional transportation system serving the PSA, leading to a lack of

inter-community transportation options as well as very limited evening or weekend transportation.

## **Needs Assessment Summary**

### **Needs Assessment Summary**

To prepare for the development of the 2022-2025 Area Plan, SeniorCare conducted a community needs assessment from October through December 2020. Given the COVID-19 environment, the primary data collection methodologies were survey, telephone, and virtual meetings. Surveys were packaged with self-addressed, stamped return envelopes and hand delivered to all home delivered meals consumers, residents in 23 elder housing sites throughout the PSA. Survey packets were also distributed via Grab & Go meals, and meals distributed through a regional emergency food provider. The survey was mailed to users of the SeniorCare Volunteer Medical Transportation program and Money Management participants and follow up telephone calls were made to these consumers. An on-line version of the survey was created, and a link accompanied by an explanatory e-mail was sent to area older adults via Council on Aging e-mail lists and other SeniorCare community partners. A total of 1,449 survey responses were received with 60% of responses from paper forms and 40% via the online survey. Individual interviews to discuss local needs were held with representatives from the Councils on Aging in the SeniorCare PSA and Caregiver Support group participants; small group meetings via Zoom were held with residents in three communities in the PSA and one COA Board.

**Social Isolation:** In our last area plan, social isolation had already been identified as a significant concern. The Center for Disease Control describes loneliness and social isolation as “serious public health risks,” and a risk for dementia and other chronic health conditions. Older adults are at increased risk for loneliness and social isolation because they are more likely to face factors such as living alone, the loss of family or friends, chronic illness, and hearing loss. The COVID-19 pandemic has only exacerbated social isolation. Isolation and loneliness of older adults was frequently cited as a concern in discussions during stakeholder interviews and 14% of survey respondents did not have anyone close by whom they could count on in an emergency.

In addition to social isolation, top areas of need included:

Household/Personal Care: assistance with housekeeping, laundry, grocery shopping and staying active and well

Personal Safety/Security: balance/falls; mobility concerns; home modifications and repair



Access Services: finding and accessing transportation; increased transportation options particularly broader service hours and transportation for social activities; understanding eligibility/options and accessing public benefits.

Social Support: affording internet access, learning to use technology

Healthcare: help with a physical disability; depression/anxiety; hearing loss; memory loss.

Top needs cited by caregivers included: support; help with a physical disability; depression/anxiety; balance/falls; home modifications and repairs; and understanding eligibility and options.

SeniorCare responses to the needs assessment are integrated into the Focus Area Goals and Objectives.

### **I & R Summary Trend Data**

A review of the FY2020 Information and Referral Summary Trend data, adjusted for SeniorCare data reporting methodology, was conducted. Of 1,862 callers, the largest group were calling on behalf of themselves (35.5 percent); an additional 17.9 percent of callers were sons and daughters calling on behalf of their parents. More than 95 percent of callers were calling in reference to individuals aged 60 or older. Most callers had contacted SeniorCare in the past. The majority of callers were seeking information on the State Subsidized Home Care program. More than 31 percent of the callers looking for assistance with public benefits sought information on the SHINE program while 15.1 percent wanted Veteran's Benefits information.

### **COVID-19 Pandemic**

It is well known that older adults are amongst those most affected by COVID-19. Throughout the pandemic, SeniorCare has continually implemented and updated measures to respond to the needs of the older adults we serve while maintaining the safest-possible environment for consumers as well as our staff and volunteers. Frequent, regular meetings between SeniorCare and COA staff were initiated early in the pandemic allowing current information on community resources to be exchanged; SeniorCare staff compiled and circulated this information for use by agency staff including I & R, community partners, and the general public. Title III services provided essential support to older adults facing the unprecedented challenges of the pandemic. Many caregivers experienced increased burdens as families made decisions to suspend in-home services or work force issues strained in-home care availability. SeniorCare helped to ease this burden by increasing staff capacity in the Family Caregiver Support

program increased staff capacity and support groups that continued to meet outdoors or virtually and increased availability of respite funds. The pandemic highlighted food insecurity. The need for meals increased by 40% and the nutrition program responded with continued regular meal deliveries as well as provision of additional meals through shelf stable food provision and participation in the USDA food box program. The initiation of Grab & Go meals through which mobile older adults could pick up a meal to be eaten at home proved highly successful, reducing strain on the home delivered meals program while providing healthy meals to elders who needed them. SeniorCare also initiated a Friendly Caller program, matching consumers with trained RSVP volunteers who engage in regular telephone calls. The pandemic also provided heightened awareness of the digital divide experienced by older adults, discussed in the following section.

## **Technology**

SeniorCare has long recognized the significant benefits and efficiencies that could be realized through the appropriate use of technology to meet the increasing needs of a rapidly growing aging population; on-going exploration and utilization of technology is embedded in our strategic plan. To enhance service provision, the agency:

- Pioneered a partnership to support the use of care.coach a system that offers an all-inclusive health engagement platform utilizing a tablet-based avatar to connect older adults with a variety of services including 24/7 caregiver support
- Begun utilization of Patient Ping a system that provides notifications to care management staff to alert them to consumer hospitalizations, emergency room visits and transfers within the health care continuum.
- Initiated plans to embark on new programming utilizing Virtual Reality (VR) technology as a means of connection, engagement, and consumer support.

The need for older adults to obtain and successfully use technology has been heightened during the pandemic. Without technology, elders are unable to participate in telehealth/virtual health care, arrange grocery deliveries, schedule vaccination appointments, or engage digitally in socialization and connection with family and friends. The need to access devices, technology training and support, and quality, affordable internet service was clearly articulated in our needs assessment. Through grant funding, SeniorCare developed a Technology Resource guide providing information on existing programs in the PSA through which elders can obtain devices and hot spots as well as training resources. SeniorCare is committed to addressing the digital divide affecting many older adults through a variety of strategies including, advocacy, linking older adults to reduced cost internet services and expanding its Caring Connections

through Technology program that matches trained volunteers with individuals needing technology training and support.

### **Age- and Dementia-Friendly Communities**

SeniorCare is the backbone agency for the Age and Dementia Friendly Cape Ann (ADFCA) Initiative a groundbreaking regional partnership with the four Cape Ann communities that seeks to create a supportive environment where all residents, regardless of age, gender, sexual identify, ethnicity, health status, or socioeconomic status can thrive. While ADFCA is regionally focused, the program coordinator also serves as expert support for other communities engaged in the Age or Dementia Friendly arena.

During the pandemic, the strong relationships already developed among the four Cape Ann Councils on Aging and SeniorCare through ADFCA fostered a new partnership with 1623 Studies, our regional cable television station to create the Cape Ann Virtual Senior Center (CAVSC). Recognizing that television is an easily accessible format to reach older adults, CAVSC utilizes a dedicated channel to offer educational, music, physical activity, and recreational programming. Regular specialized programming aligned with Grab & Go and home delivered meals is provided; these meals typically include outreach and/or educational materials delivered with the meal.

## **Focus Area Summary**

The MA EOEA has identified three focus areas to be addressed through the FFY2022-2025 Area Plan: Older American Act Core Programs, Participant-Directed/Person-Centered Planning, and Elder Justice.

Massachusetts Area Agencies on Aging are required to integrate ACL Focus Areas with populations targeted in the Older Americans Act and Title III services. The Title III intrastate funding formula targets older individuals with greatest economic need and older individuals with greatest social need, with particular attention to low-income individuals and those living in rural areas. SeniorCare's Planning and Service Area (PSA) includes elders who are living alone (isolated); low-income elders; minority elder populations; and socially isolated populations (i.e., geographic; LGBTQ+; limited English proficient elders; those separated from friends and family/COVID-19 related) and where germane, the needs of these population are integrated into the Area Plan goals and objectives. There are no designated rural areas in the PSA and identified Native American populations are nominal.

The largest program under the OAA, Title III, created critical programs and authorizes federal funds to be utilized on supportive services.

Title III Services include:

- Title III-B Supportive Services: including Information and Referral, Transportation, Benefits Specialist Services, and Money Management
- Title III-C Nutrition Services: home delivered meals, grab & go meals, congregate/community dining meals, malnutrition screening, nutrition education, nutrition counseling and medical nutrition therapy.
- Title III-D Disease Prevention and Health Promotion Services: Evidence-Based Programs that educate and empower older adults to make healthy lifestyle choices.
- Title III-E Family Caregiver Support Program to provide information, assistance and other support to spouses, relatives, and other caregivers of older adults.

Together with Title VII (LTC Ombudsman and Elder Rights/Protective Service Programs) Title III services serve as the foundation of the aging services network.

SeniorCare programs receiving Title III funding include:

- Information and Referral services from certified aging specialists
- Outreach
- Transportation, including Volunteer Medical Transportation
- Benefits Specialist/insurance information/health benefits
- Evidence-based Health Promotion/Disease Prevention programming
- Nutrition Services including Home Delivered Meals, Congregate Dining, Nutrition Education, In-Home Nutrition Assessment and Counseling
- Family Caregiver support
- Long-term Care Ombudsmen in eight licensed facilities
- Legal Services
- Money Management

Title IIIB Supportive Service funding is extended to Councils on Aging and local providers to fund outreach and transportation services through a request for proposal (RFP) process, and funding is provided to Northeast Legal Aid to support legal assistance to low-income seniors in the SC catchment area. As part of the RFP process SeniorCare identifies target populations to be served and priority areas to be addressed.

Many of these programs reflect multiple ACL focus areas. Populations served include elders living alone (isolated), low-income elders, minority elder populations, and socially isolated populations including LGBT+ and limited English proficient elders.

Areas identified by the SeniorCare Needs Assessment that are addressed through these services include: transportation, social isolation/loneliness, personal safety and security; financial security, in-home services, nutrition, food insecurity, community accessibility, mental health, caregiver support, access to social services, and maintaining independence.

## Goals and Objectives for the Three Administration for Community Living Focus Areas

### Older Americans Act Core Programs

Core programs: Title III Supportive Services, Nutrition Services, Disease Prevention/Health Promotion, Caregiver, LTC Ombudsman and Title VII Elder Rights/Protective Service

**Goal 1: Strengthen and expand an array of Older Americans Act Core Programs, ensuring that older persons, adults living with disabilities, and their caregivers throughout the SeniorCare PSA have access to high quality, innovative, effective, and efficient programs and services to assist them in maintaining their well-being, dignity, and independence.**

**Objective:** Increase awareness of information, programs, and services available to older adults, persons with disabilities, families, and caregivers to assist them in identifying and accessing supports that will help them maintain their independence and maximize their well-being.

Strategies:

- Continue direct operation of an Information and Referral Department staffed by certified aging specialists utilizing a “no wrong door” approach.
- Create and disseminate regional resource guide identifying relevant services and access information
- Enhance community outreach including outreach activities and information sessions in non-traditional locations including those serving OAA targeted populations
- Provide Title IIIB funding to Councils on Aging to support outreach activities

**Objective:** Enhance outreach efforts and increase accessibility of services to minority and/or socially isolated elders.

Strategies:

- Ensure SeniorCare services are accessible to consumers with limited English proficiency through offering translated written materials in print and on the SeniorCare website.
- Maintain access to translation services to facilitate calls from LEP older adults
- Maintain TTY phone access to support communication with the hard of hearing and deaf community
- Ensure all sub-grantees receiving Title IIIB funds from SeniorCare include outreach to minority groups and are able to deliver culturally appropriate services.
- Engage with community partners serving the LGBTQ+ community to develop and implement effective, programs to support LGBTQ+ elders and caregivers.
- Utilize the SeniorCare Diversity, Equity & Inclusion work groups to identify and implement relevant trainings for staff with minimum of four trainings per year.

**Objective:** Coordinate, fund, and/or operate effective and efficient services and develop innovative programs to assist with meeting the transportation needs of the PSA.

Strategies:

- Directly operate the SeniorCare volunteer medical transportation program, providing access to critical medical appointments for isolated elders and those who lack other transportation options.
- Support and coordinate efforts of partner agencies providing transportation to elders and people with disabilities to maximize service.
- Capture and convey available transportation options to elders in the PSA through regular updates and dissemination of the SeniorCare Regional Transportation Guide
- Seek out innovative models to address transportation needs in the PSA, with a particular focus on broadening service hours and availability and accessing transportation for a greater range of activities.
- Investigate collaboration with local Veteran's Assistance programs to better serve older veteran's seeking transportation to veteran's health services in Boston and Bedford.
- Provide Title IIIB funding to sub-grantees to support transportation services

**Objective:** Provide evidence-based programs to inform, educate, and empower elders and their caregivers with information and tools for healthy aging, chronic disease management, falls prevention, mental health support and support for caregivers.

Strategies:

- Provide dedicated funding for a part-time coordinator to enhance program outreach, implementation, and evaluation.
- Expand breadth of programming and increase cost efficiencies by training minimum of three additional volunteers to deliver EBP.
- Support expanded outreach to, and program delivery through, additional community partners emphasizing those serving target populations, including the LGBT+ community
- Provide EBP targeting identified areas of need including, caregiver support, falls prevention, and mental health.

**Objective:** Promote independent living, reduce isolation, support healthy aging, and reduce food insecurity through the provision of high-quality nutritious meals and ancillary nutrition services.

- Work with COA staff, housing, and other community partners to rebuild and reimagine congregate programs following long periods of closure due to the pandemic
- Investigate new meal models; pursue viability of maintaining Grab & Go meals and research implementation of medically tailored meals.
- Incorporate new strategies such as utilizing Zoom and video with traditional methods of delivering nutrition education to expand reach of nutrition education programming
- Maintain and expand RD in-home consultation program
- Expand malnutrition screening and RD follow-up; initiate implementation of efforts to address older adult malnutrition within the community setting.
- Explore viability of focused LGBTQ+ congregate meal.

**Objective:** Assist family caregivers and elders through providing effective and efficient services and developing innovative programs to meet their needs.

Strategies:

- Continue to offer quality caregiver support services that meet the needs of caregivers in the PSA.
- Provide and expand respite opportunities for caregivers.
- Utilize care.coach to cost-effectively provide 24X7 caregiver support while providing care plan management and socialization opportunities for older adults.
- Provide evidence-based programming that supports the needs of family caregivers.
- Pilot outreach program to conduct caregiver information and support in area businesses.

## **Participant-Directed/Person-Centered Planning**

Participant-directed services that are home and community-based help people of all ages across all types of abilities maintain their independence and determine for themselves what mix of personal assistance supports and services work best for them.

Participant-directed person-centered planning is an integral part of service provision at SeniorCare, reflected in the agency's values of community, choice, independence, respect, and compassion. Person-centered services provide elders, persons with disabilities, and their family caregivers a degree of choice and control over the long-term services and supports they need to live at home. Consumer-directed planning is at the core of service planning regardless of whether the consumer is in the home, a nursing facility or a hospital setting.

**Greater North Shore Link:** SeniorCare is a founding member of the Greater North Shore Link. The GNS Link was established to create a “no wrong door” approach to consumer care offering a single, coordinate system of information and access for persons seeking long term services and supports regardless of age or disability.

**Options Counseling:** Options counseling is a free short-term service that helps older adults and people with disabilities who need long-term support services identify their needs and provide them with unbiased information and decision-making support to assist them in evaluating all of their options for a plan of action that meets their preferences, values, and individual circumstances. Options counseling services are available to individuals who live at home or reside in a hospital, rehabilitation, or nursing facility and to caregivers wherever they may live, including out of state. Options Counselors can meet with individuals and/or caregivers via phone, email, virtual, in person, or a combination.

**Consumer Directed Care:** Consumer Director Care is available to people who have been assessed and found eligible for a state-funded home care program. The consumer becomes the employer, is allowed to choose their home care worker (or workers), set their schedule, and assign tasks that fit specific needs that may not be allowed with a traditional home care agency, such as assisting with pets, certain cleaning tasks, and assistance with unique medical care as they train the worker themselves in carrying out these tasks. A “Fiscal Intermediary” (FI) agency takes care of the payroll, tax withholding, and other accounting tasks that are required of a legal employer. The FI agency is contracted and paid by SeniorCare.



**Goal 2: SeniorCare will partner with older adults, people with disabilities, their families, and caregivers to offer education about all services available to them and assist them in determining for themselves what mix of personal assistance supports and services work best for them to enable their health and independence.**

**Objective:** Maintain, develop, and expand home and participant-directed community-based services to maximize opportunities for consumers to plan and direct their own care and increase their well-being.

Strategies:

- Continue provision of options counseling to elders, persons with disabilities, and their families.
- Continue provision of person-centered programming through SeniorCare home care programs such as the Enhanced Community Options Program-Independence Plus and the Consumer Directed Care programs.
- Maintain and expand integrated care programs that facilitate care coordination between SeniorCare and health care providers.
- Assist individuals and family members to make informed decisions about their medical insurance coverage through continuation of Benefits Specialist services.
- Help consumers of all ages who have Medicare understand their health insurance options through access to SHINE (Serving Health Information Needs of Everyone).

**Objective:** Effectively assist individuals with health and functional challenges by increasing staff knowledge through trainings targeted to specific skill enhancements.

- Ensure staff will participate in at least three trainings per year that have been specifically chosen to address identified staff knowledge or skills gaps.
- Ensure Information & Referral Specialists maintain current knowledge of community options for younger consumers with a disability and are able to articulate useful information particular to the needs of the caller.
- Coordinate services and trainings through the Greater North Shore LINK, the Aging and Disability Resource Consortium (ADRC) of the Greater North Shore.

**Objective:** Increase access to behavioral health services and providers.

Strategies:

- Through Home Care program continue contracting with LICSWs to provide home visits.
- Utilize LICSWs or other licensed behavioral health providers for consultations to staff with consumers exhibiting difficult behavior due to BH/MH diagnoses.
- Train care managers in Healthy Ideas EBP

**Objective:** Provide and support age-friendly and dementia-friendly programs and services throughout the PSA.

Strategies:

- Continue direct coordination of the Age & Dementia Friendly Cape Ann Initiative
- Through the ADFCA Coordinator, continue to provide information, resources and support as needed for Age- and Dementia-Friendly efforts throughout the PSA
- Continue campaigns to destigmatize dementia
- Conduct minimum of two public events per year targeted to age and/or dementia friendly topics
- Advance the establishment and enhancement of dementia-capable home and community-based systems
- Collaborate with partner organizations to support establishment of Memory Cafes or specialized programming for people with dementia and their care partners within the PSA.
- Provide Dementia Friends training to at least 50% of meal delivery drivers

**Objective:** Provide education and support regarding advance directive planning to consumers and staff.

Strategies:

- Utilize SeniorCare staff who have completed curriculum to become Honoring Choices trainers to conduct information sessions in the community.
- Using Honoring Choices model, promote discussion and implementation of advance directives and health care proxies.
- Continue and expand outreach events during annual Health Care Decision month.
- Offer one public presentation per year by an elder law attorney.

## Elder Justice

**Protective Services:** SeniorCare is a state-designated adult protective services agency, investigating and resolving reports of elder abuse, neglect or financial exploitation. The goal of protective services is to reduce or eliminate risks to the elder and to prevent recurrence of risk.

**Money Management Program:** The money management program receives partial funding from Title III. Program staff match low-income seniors and adults with disabilities with trained volunteers who work with elders in their home and assist with budgeting, bill paying, balancing checkbooks and other needed assistance. Money management services help at-risk seniors and adults with disabilities remain independent for as long as possible and helps protect them from potential financial exploitation.

**Representative Payee Program:** SeniorCare is an authorized agency of the [Social Security Representative Payee Program](#). The program provides benefit payment management for beneficiaries who are incapable of managing their Social Security or Supplemental Security Income payments. and provides benefit payment management for beneficiaries who are incapable of managing their Social Security or Supplemental Security Income payments.

**Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program:** The SeniorCare Long Term Care Ombudsmen program provides skilled advocacy to protect the rights of all individuals, regardless of age, who live in long-term care facilities in the SeniorCare catchment area. State-certified trained program staff and volunteers make regular visits to each facility. Ombudsmen monitor and provide assistance, help identify and resolve issues and ensure that residents' rights are respected.

**Elder Law Project:** Older adults in the SeniorCare PSA who need legal services are referred to Northeast Legal Aid (NLA) which has developed a special Elder Law Project focusing on the special needs of the elderly. The program focuses on elders 60 years of age and older in the greatest social and economic need, advocating for them in a variety of matters including eviction defense and nursing home rights.

**Compulsive Hoarding, Cluttering, and Acquiring Program:** SeniorCare offers one-on-one mentoring for people over 60 years old with excessive clutter. SeniorCare's Hoarding Program staff are social workers who specialize in helping people who have issues with excessive clutter. Program staff provide one-on-one mentoring with consumers to identify their goals and weekly or bi-weekly visits are made to monitor

progress. The program uses a risk reduction model to support independent living and improve quality of life for consumers and communities alike.

### **Elder Justice Focus Area**

**Goal 3: SeniorCare Inc. will provide programs and services that advocate for, promote, and protect the rights of older people and prevent, detect, assess, intervene and/or investigate elder abuse, neglect, and/or financial exploitation.**

**Objective:** Protect the rights of older adults through responding to reportable conditions of physical, sexual and/or emotional abuse, neglect, and exploitation of the most vulnerable individuals through operation of the Elder Protective Services program.

Strategies:

- Trained protective services staff will receive and investigate reports of abuse, neglect, self-neglect and/or financial exploitation.
- When allegations have been substantiated, interventions will be provided as indicated and appropriate referrals will be made for risk reduction.
- Protective staff will work with community partners such as local police and hospitals, domestic violence agencies, emergency services, and the District Attorney's office to resolve and prevent situations of abuse, neglect or exploitation.

**Objective:** Increase awareness about the signs of abuse, neglect, and/or exploitation through community collaborations, trainings, and presentations.

Strategies:

- Protective services staff will conduct six or more internal and external education programs per year to mandated reporters to increase awareness regarding signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation.
- SeniorCare Elder Protective Services will partner with community-based coalitions, including law enforcement, TRIAD Councils and area domestic violence prevention programs including the expansion of current high risk task forces.
- Continue to raise public awareness of elder abuse and exploitation through continued support, planning and participation in activities such as World Elder Abuse Awareness Day and community Elder Abuse Awareness events.

**Objective:** Support the ability of residents in long term care facilities within the PSA to live their lives with dignity and respect, improve their quality of life and care, and assure residents of their rights through provision of Long Term Care Ombudsman services.

Strategies:

- Ensure trained, certified ombudsmen provide regular on-site visits to elders and others residing in long term care facilities located in the SeniorCare PSA.
- Build on base of volunteer Ombudsman through identification and training of minimum of one additional volunteer.
- Provide information and training regarding long term care both within SeniorCare and to those in the community on an as-needed basis.

**Objective:** Support economic well-being and assist older adults to remain independent by maintaining and enhancing Money Management and Representative Payee Program service provision, outreach, and education.

Strategies:

- Maintain and expand a well-trained corps of volunteer money managers to provide services to low income elders in the PSA.
- Extend awareness of Money Management program services to local financial institutions.
- Expand awareness of SeniorCare representative payee services to community partners
- Offer two or more presentations per year to older adults in the PSA on financial planning, fraud and scams and other in person or via cable television programming.
- Create and disseminate two or more blog posts and/or newsletter articles per year on relevant financial topics.

**Objective:** Support legal advocacy for elders in the greatest social and economic need residing in the SeniorCare PSA.

- Continue provision of Title IIIB funding to the Elder Law Project of Northeast Legal Aid to provide free civil legal assistance to elders in greatest socioeconomic need.
- Ensure that the agency list of private pay services is updated, that new attorneys are fully vetted for referrals, and that consumer choice is honored.

## **Quality Assurance**

SeniorCare Inc. is committed to a process of continuous improvement, both internally and externally, to meet or exceed the needs and expectations of the communities we serve. As an agency, our goal is to provide our consumers with quality services that meet their needs.

Although all agency personnel are responsible for the quality of the services they provide, SeniorCare's Quality Improvement Director has overall responsibility for the quality system, internal audits, corrective action, and survey data analysis. Numerous Consumer Satisfaction Surveys are conducted yearly for Home Care and Title III services through which SeniorCare solicits input from its consumers and they: rank the services provided for quality and adequacies; comment on interactions with agency staff and others; and provide comments where they feel the need. The Executive Office of Elder Affairs (EOEA) requires all ASAPs to measure quality parameters (WQMs) each month. There are also department level quality measurements. SeniorCare's Quality Improvement Team (QAT) comprised of a vertical and horizontal cross section of agency personnel along with the QA Director use the aforementioned measurements, data analysis and feedback, and audit findings to identify and drive the agency's quality improvement efforts.

Title III programs and services are monitored on an annual basis, reporting and invoicing is required monthly, and a monthly Community Services report is presented to the AAA Advisory Council. The Council provides ongoing input into the processes of contracting, monitoring, and performance and provides recommendations to the Board. The AAA Board acts on recommendations and provides ongoing input into the Title III processes.

The Senior Management team which consists of the Executive Director, the Chief Financial Officer, Director of Home Care, Director of Community Programs and Planner, and the Quality Improvement Director serve as the agency quality committee.