Engaging Older Illinoisans in Plans of Care

EDUCATING SENIORS ON SERVICES AND OPTIONS AVAILABLE

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State of Illinois

Illinois Department of Aging

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Executive Summary

The Illinois Department on Aging (IDOA) exits to serve and advocate for older Illinoisans and their caregivers by administering quality and culturally appropriate programs promoting partnerships and encouraging independence, dignity, and quality of life. DOA administers and delivers services that are provided through senior centers and social service agencies that help older adults live independently in their own homes and communities. With a budget of $1.2 million, IDOA is only one of three such cabinet level departments in the nation. IDOA's motto, "Respect for yesterday, Support for Today, Plan for Tomorrow" aptly describes the agency's mission and service delivery model that addresses real needs by the state's seniors, their caregivers and service providers.

The Department on Aging should be the first stop for resources available to ease the transition to the "golden years", whether they are spent at home or in more of an assisted living environment. Many applications have been developed that make it easier for both seniors and their families, community service providers or Community Care Units (CCUs), Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) and Aging employees to access needed information about living options and associated services.

The Department on Aging coordinates funding with 13 AAAs and 53 CCUs throughout the state to provide care and services for Illinois' aging population.

A focus has been given to expanding and developing new services in the areas with the greatest need and IDOA has collaborated with the Departments of Public Health, Public Aid and others to ensure seniors' needs are met in all communities. Funds have been readjusted to provide a broader array of options for home-based services. The partnerships provide everything from home delivered meals, planning and service grants, senior health assistance, adult protection, home care and traditional ombudsman programs, to a senior helpline, adult day services, legal assistance, and older adult services.

The windows to the broad array of housing options and services available to seniors in Illinois are the ***Provider Profile*** and ***Consumer Choice Search*** applications, both developed in house and put into production between December 2017 and December 2019. Both applications are accessible from the Aging Homepage, as well as cellular devices.

Project Narrative

Consumer Choice Search Program
Website: https://webapps.illinois.gov/AGE/OmbudsmanSearch/

Concept
Illinois law (PA89-21) requires that all persons age 60 or older who are seeking admission to a long-term care facility be provided with all options available to them regardless of their income, assets or funding sources.

The Ombudsman program is a resident-directed advocacy program staff that advocates for quality of life services on behalf of the residents of long-term care facilities. The "ombudsman" works to resolve problems of individual residents and promotes changes at the local, state and national levels of government. The statute requires the Ombudsman Program to work with the IL Attorney General's office and the Dept of Human Services to create a Consumer Choice Information Report to be completed by all licensed long-term care facilities. In addition, they are required to create a database of the Consumer Choice information reports information. Much of that information is then disseminated to the Consumer Choice Search site. The **Consumer Choice Search** site is a website directly linked to the Department on Aging's public website. This site assists individuals in making informed decisions when seeking a long-term facility for themselves or a family member. They can search in a variety of ways to "shop" the unique features of each facility and understand the valuable information regarding Residents' Rights and how the facility enforces those rights. Prior to the website, all questions were handled through the Senior Help Line and directed to the Ombudsman for their area. The website allows users to be more self-sufficient and find information faster. In addition to allowing the user to search for facilities and the Ombudsman assigned to their area, the website provides information regarding home and community-based services that allow the senior to remain in their home if they are able. The Ombudsman team at Aging began work with DoIT-Aging developers in October 2015 to design an application that provides a user with all pertinent information at their fingertips. Through this team effort, the Choices for Application was launched at that time. However, due to a turnover in developers, it was dormant until assigned to the final developer in July 2018 who created the interactive map and provided the coding to the application. It was implemented for the providers to update their information in September 2018 and it went live to the public in January 2019.

The application includes many features that are designed to be transparent to seniors and families, providers, and agency staff:

- a "clickable" map allows a user to choose a city or county to search all licensed facilities in that area. This displays a list of all available facilities in that area. Each facility in the list is a link to the details about that facility.

- a link for Resident Rights that opens a downloadable and printable PDF file that discusses all the rights of any individual that is a long-term care resident.

- an advanced search option that allows a user to specify the type of facility. The list includes nursing, supportive living, assisted care, shelter Care, intermediate care for the developmentally disabled, specialized mental health rehabilitation facility and medical complexes for the developmentally disabled. All of these can be searched by county, city and zip code to find a conveniently located facility offering the specialized care needed for the future resident. For the Chicago area, it is also searchable by township.

- A search function allows a citizen to select specialized needs and amenities that can be accommodated by the facility and includes Alzheimer's care, mental illness support, religious services, pets, transportation, Medicaid/Medicare, etc. If the chosen facility cannot meet the selected criteria, facilities most closely matching the criteria and within proximity will be provided.

- A link to the Medicare Nursing Home Compare.

- Accommodations for visual enhancement.

- A built-in translator for a variety of languages.

Information about the facilities is kept current by the facilities through a direct link on the site. This compilation of data serves to assist citizens and/or their families in making decisions in planning for long-term care that serves their needs best. There is option on the application site for considering at-home care and provides a link to the *Provider Profile* site that works similarly for services and options available to older adults who wish to and are able to remain independent in their homes.

Outreach Campaign
Newsletters, internal announcements, and recognition events serve as the standard methods of presenting new programs to agency staff. Newsletters and announcements on IDOA's website serve to reach the public and providers. As new applications and site pages are added to the public website, banners are added to the home page to announce the addition. Complementary presentations at community events and a hands-on demonstration at the annual Illinois State Fair have been used to announce these programs. Visitors were given the opportunity to test the site and search for services. Both applications bring a wealth of information directly to a citizen planning to care for an elderly family member or friend and compare the options available.

Training
Initial training was conducted through a demonstration of how to enter and update the facility information. Training for the general population is not needed, as the site is intuitive and easy to navigate. CCUs are available for assistance as is Aging's Senior Help line for all consumers.

Assurance of data and transactional security
The Community Care Units distributed across the state maintain the facility information within their own areas. They are responsible for ensuring that the information on each of the facilities is up-to-date and complete.

Performance Measures
Performance is measured by the usage data that is tracked. We track searches performed by county and type of service. These numbers assist with planning and outreach. If we consistently have low numbers within a geographic area, outreach efforts need to be increased. Within the past year, the site has performed 5124 searches.

Significance
The Consumer Choice application is the first application of its kind in the United States and is being used as a model by other states. The Illinois Act on Aging section 4.02 requires an assurance that participants have the right to choose the services contained in their care plan and direct how those services are provided. This application and web site provide the information that all participants require for making decisions regarding their care.

Impact

The impact of the application is measured by the use. All searches are stored in the underlying database of the applications. This database provides useful data to both IDOA and the partner providers and facilities. Our data has shown that Alzheimer's, Medicaid/Medicare, Medicaid Pending, Criminal Offenders and mental illness are the top services being searched and the most common reasons for seeking long-term care vs in-home care.

When we can see that there are multiple counties with 0 searches, it also reveals that these areas either do not have the same needs as others or that more outreach is required for those areas. This helps to provide a picture of where and what type of services are needed. As searches increase and more data is collected, it provides IDOA and network facilities with a better picture of the needs of older Illinoisans.

Provider Profile

Website: https://webapps.illinois.gov/AGE/OmbudsmanSearch/

Concept

The Provider Profile was created to allow users and/or their family members to find information and access services available for seniors. Illinois Department on Aging works with Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) and Community Care Units (CCUs) across the state to provide services to aging adults.

These agencies and service providers, each with a unique set of services available, are paid by Department on Aging. The Older Adult Services Act (P.A. 093-1031) was enacted to provide support to older adults who wish to stay in their homes. It restructured the delivery of services to include home-based services, as well as institutional type care. The Illinois Department on Aging developed and continues to maintain the programs that support this legislation. The Community Care Program (CCP) supports senior citizens who wish to remain in their homes by providing in-home and community-based services. The program concentrates on those seniors who wish to maintain their independence and utilize cost-effective service alternatives to nursing and long-term care facilities. This is done through a network of providers, AAAs and the CCUs.

The IDOA Community Relations and Planning and Development staff started working with the IT staff in July 2018. The purpose was to provide an online method of allowing participants and/or their families to provide education and information regarding the services available for aging Illinoisans in their community. These services are to provide an alternative option for staying in their residence or with a caretaker in lieu of a long-term care facility.

The development began in August 2018. Information about the AAAs and CUs was initially collected from other databases. The application was available to providers and the public beginning in March 2019.

The Provider Profile application includes many features that are designed to be transparent to seniors and families, providers and agency staff:

- a "clickable" map allows a user to choose a city or county to search all services available in that area. This will display a page with the Area Agency on Aging, Community Care Unit and a list of services they provide

for that area.

- an advanced search that combines geographic location and desired services. Searchable services include Adult Protective Services, Area Agency on Aging, Care Coordination Unit, In-Home Service, Adult Day Services, Emergency Home Response Service, Automated Medication Dispenser Service and Home Delivered Meals.

- based on the type of service selected, additional options are available for the service. This includes: hours of operation, languages spoken, transportation services, type of dispenser, type of emergency response system,

- services are listed by area, description and provider.

- participants may select the type of meals desired.

- the site links to the AAA or CCU site

- the site links directly to the Senior Help Line

- ability to increase font size for visual enhancement

- a built-in translator for a variety of languages

The **services page** provides information for the **Adult Protective Service** center to report any suspected abuse, neglect or financial exploitation. It also includes the information regarding the Care Coordination Unit that handles the services for that area. The CCP will provide a caseworker who will make a home visit and assist the participant in determining the eligibility for the services that are available and prepare a plan of care. Clicking on the facility provides the hours of business, and if available, the email address of the provider.

There are links to a myriad of other services and associated providers. These services may include in-home, adult day, emergency home response and automated medication dispenser services. Clicking on these images again displays a list of all service providers for the specific service in that area.

The **Area Agency on Aging** (AAA) services are also listed. Each AAA will update their menu of services, including; assisted transportation, congregate meals, education, health promotion, and home delivered meals. **Family Caregiver services** are listed for those family members caring for an aging adult in their home. Options include counseling and respite care.

Outreach Campaign

Newsletters, internal announcements and recognition events serve as the standard methods of presenting new programs to agency staff. Complementary presentations at community events and a hands-on demonstration at the annual Illinois State Fair have been used to announce these programs. Visitors to the Illinois State Fair were given the opportunity to search for services and learn what is available for themselves and/or family members and loved ones.

Both applications bring a wealth of information directly to a citizen looking to plan care for an elderly family member or friend and compare the options available all from a single source.

The agency's public relations staff also announce new applications and services on Facebook, LinkedIn and other social media sites.

Training

Instructions were mailed to each of the CCU and AAA providers including details to update their agency information. For the citizens seeking care, the website and tools are user friendly and intuitive. Information is easily accessible.

Assurance of data and transactional security

Each provider updates their own information. Therefore, it is always accurate and current. As services are added or removed or contact information changes, the application site is changed.

Performance Measures

Performance is measured by the number of searches performed. Over the course of the past year, application usage has increased from 557 searches in July 2019 to 8884 in June 2020. Searches are tracked not only by the total number that has increased every month since inception, but the application's database also tracks searches by county and services desired.

These numbers assist with planning and outreach. If we consistently have low numbers within a geographic area, it may be that outreach efforts need to be increased.

Significance

The Illinois Act on Aging section 4.02 requires an assurance that participants have the right to choose the services contained in their care plan and direct how those services are provided. This application and web site provide the information that all participants require for making their decisions regarding their care and advising them on alternative options to the high costs of residential facilities.

Impact

The impact of the application is measured by the use. All searches are stored in the underlying database of the applications collecting data, useful to both IDOA and providers. In the past year, 37,956 searches have been made within the application. The top 5 services searched are: transportation, information assistance, home delivered meals, assistance and respite for families. These represent 48% of all services searched. Trends are tracked to determine where specific services are more or less needed.

Illinois' data reveals the desire for more citizens and/or families to keep the aging citizen in their home as long as possible. This alternative is less expensive and allows the resident to retain independence. Expenses remain lower for the Medicare/Medicaid systems, as well.