



OCCOA

OTSEGO COUNTY COMMISSION ON AGING



Submitted by
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*We Help.
We Care*

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Person-Centered Care Leads OCCOA to Added Services!

We all like to be in control of our lives; it's a fundamental human need. On a large scale, we call it Democracy, and it's what built our country. On a small scale, when it's regarding choices for our care as we age, that ability to make our own choices is called "Person-Centered Care," and it's a concept that drives much of what we do at the OCCOA. Now especially, with our 60+ population in the county at nearly 24%, we are challenged to not only meet those needs, but meet them in the way that our older adults, and their caregivers, are looking for. In response, the OCCOA is making some fundamental changes to broaden our services and their delivery.



In the past, the OCCOA has chosen to provide the services that were authorized and subsidized under the federal government's Older Americans Act, include Personal Care (help with bathing, toileting, dressing, etc), light Homemaking, and Respite care, but only up to the point that the services could be paid for with the government and millage dollars. Therefore, the services any one client received were based both on need, as well as available funding. Clients with greater needs had no other options with the agency, even if they were willing to pay for additional care. And, typically, our staff worked in the traditional time frame between 8:00am and 5:00pm, Monday through Friday.

With the shift in demographics, though, an increasing number of OCCOA clients are asking us for additional services, and are offering to pay for them. And, it's not just clients asking for the services; in many cases the client's family is requesting them, and offering to pay as well. After all, it makes a lot of sense. If a client is used to getting Personal Care from our staff during the week, why not get those same services on the weekend from the same staff? Or, if we visit a client twice a week for Personal Care or Homemaking services, while the client's family handles the care the rest of the time, why not have us pick up the extra duty when the family is gone for a vacation, or attending to other responsibilities? And what about clients that need more-intensive, daily care? We didn't have a good answer for those clients.

Offering supplemental services!

So, in order to best meet client's needs, we have expanded our ability to offer supplemental services. The new capability gives us new tools, new parameters, and new ways of helping our clients. For instance, in the past, budgetary restrictions limited how much assistance we could give to any particular client. Although there will still be a limit to how much help we can offer through the subsidized programs, we can now provide more services if the client is able to afford them. Furthermore, we can offer services that we have been unable to in the past because they did not fit the description of the subsidized services authorized under the Older Americans Act. Because of that, we are now offering Companionship, an "Up-and-Tuck" service, limited Foot Care service, as well as Medication Set Up to our standard services.

At the OCCOA, we are very excited about the new services. Foot care is a very serious issue for many older adults, particularly those with diabetes and poor circulation. Proper foot-health maintenance can be a daily need, and inadequate care can lead to serious, life threatening situations. The Companionship offering adds to our Respite Care service, giving the agency an option to help those whose needs are more social than physical. Up-and-Tuck is basically our Personal Care service, but packaged in a way that gives oversight to the client's start-of-day and end-of-day activities, making it a much more complete service. Finally, with Medication Set Up our staff supervises and assists the clients in planning their medication schedule, insuring the right pills are taken in the right doses at the correct time.

We also understand that needs like these are not limited to an 8:00am to 5:00pm weekday schedule. Therefore, we are expanding the hours that we offer to services to evenings, nights, and weekends. This allow us to have the flexibility and availability to really deliver that Person-Centered Care.

Familiar care... familiar faces!

The result of these new service offerings and hours will be a more complete package of client care offered to the Otsego County's older adults and their caregivers, because we now have fewer limitations on what we can do, and when we can do it. For example, if a family cares for an aging parent, with some assistance during the week with Personal Care and Respite services from the OCCOA, they might request that we provide Up-and-Tuck services for a long weekend while they go out of town for a wedding or vacation. The client gets familiar care from familiar faces, and the caregivers are reassured that their loved one is in good hands.

Other circumstances might have an out-of-town son or daughter, who is worried about his or her parent's living alone, requesting that the OCCOA provide Companionship, Foot Care, and Medication set up services, on top of the regular Personal Care and Homemaking that the client already receives. By having our staff in the home on a more frequent basis, and by covering the foot-care and medication concerns, we can increase the family's peace of mind while we do more to insure that the client is safe and as independent as possible.



THERE ARE DOZENS OF POSSIBILITIES AND WAYS IN WHICH THE OCCOA MIGHT HELP OUR CLIENTS, THEIR CAREGIVERS, AND THEIR FAMILIES IN A COMPLETE PERSON-CENTERED CARE APPROACH. WE ARE EXCITED ABOUT THE OPTIONS IT GIVES THE AGENCY, AND WE WILL BE HAPPY TO DISCUSS THEM WITH YOU. TOGETHER, WE CAN WORK OUT A PLAN THAT GIVES OUR CLIENTS AN APPROPRIATE PACKAGE OF CARE. PLEASE CALL US AT 989-732-1122 AND LET US SEE HOW WE CAN HELP YOU.

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