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**Region IV Area Agency on Aging selected by Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services to test Medicare
Dementia Care Model**

*Guiding an Improved Dementia Experience (GUIDE) Model aims to increase care coordination, support for
caregivers*

ST. JOSEPH — Region IV Area Agency on Aging (AAA) is excited to announce it has been selected by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) to participate in a new Medicare program designed to support people living with dementia and their caregivers.

Under CMS' [Guiding an Improved Dementia Experience \(GUIDE\) Model](#), AAA will be one of almost 400 participants building Dementia Care Programs (DCPs) across the country, working to increase care coordination and improve access to services and supports, including respite care, for people living with dementia and their caregivers.

“CMS is excited to partner with Region IV Area Agency on Aging under the GUIDE Model,” said CMS Administrator Chiquita Brooks-LaSure. “GUIDE is a new approach to how Medicare will pay for the care of people living with dementia. The GUIDE participants are envisioning new ways to support not only people living with dementia, but also to reduce strain on the people who care for them, so that more Americans can remain in their homes and communities, rather than in institutions.”

Launched on July 1, 2024, the GUIDE Model will test a new payment approach for key supportive services furnished to people living with dementia, including: comprehensive, person-centered assessments and care plans; care coordination; 24/7 access to an interdisciplinary care team member or help line; and certain respite services to support caregivers. People with dementia and their caregivers will have the assistance and support

of a Care Navigator to help them access clinical and non-clinical services such as meals and transportation through community-based organizations.

“The GUIDE Model aims to improve health equity by ensuring that underserved communities have access to dementia care services,” AAA Integrated Care at Home Manager Michelle Barnes said. “This program complements our current service offerings to provide more comprehensive, equitable care to those with dementia.”

“This new service aligns solidly with our strategic goal of making Southwest Michigan a dementia friendly – and dementia inclusive – community,” AAA CEO Christine Vanlandingham said.

The GUIDE Model will help people living with dementia and their caregivers have access to education and support, such as training programs on best practices for caring for a loved one living with dementia. The GUIDE Model also provides respite services, enabling caregivers to take temporary breaks from their caregiving responsibilities. Respite is being tested under the GUIDE Model to assess its effect on helping caregivers continue to care for their loved ones at home, preventing or delaying the need for facility care.

GUIDE Participants represent a wide range of health care providers, including large academic medical centers, small group practices, community-based organizations, health systems, hospice agencies, and other practices.

This model delivers on a promise in the Biden Administration’s Executive Order on Increasing Access to High-Quality Care and Supporting Caregivers and aligns with the National Plan to Address Alzheimer’s Disease. For more information on CMS’ GUIDE Model, please visit: <https://www.cms.gov/priorities/innovation/innovation-models/guide>.

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Region IV Area Agency on Aging celebrates 50 years of serving older adults, people with disabilities and caregivers in 2024. RIV AAA is a private, nonpartisan, not-for-profit corporation. Established in 1974 for developing age supportive commerce and services, it plays a major role in planning, funding, and delivery of many services. Empowerment and independence of community members are driving themes behind its efforts. Designated by the State of Michigan to receive federal Older Americans Act funds for planning and development, the agency manages an array of government contracts for service delivery in Southwest Michigan. Its primary service area includes Berrien, Cass, and Van Buren counties. For more information about the RIVAAA, visit www.areaagencyonaging.org.