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Integrated Care at Home program expanding to include primary care

ST. JOSEPH — Area Agency on Aging’s Integrated Care at Home program is now accepting primary care patients with Medicare and/or Medicaid.

Integrated Care at Home was established in 2022 to lessen emergency room visits and hospitalizations, and bring health to where it happens – home.

“Since starting this program we’ve served over 80 clients for nutrition and behavioral health counseling in their homes,” Integrated Care at Home Manager Michelle Barnes said. “We’re excited to be expanding this program with the addition of a nurse practitioner, who will see clients in their homes as their primary care provider.”

Integrated Care at Home services are available to individuals aged 18 and older with a disability or chronic health conditions who would benefit from receiving their care and services in their home. Both Area Agency on Aging and Integrated Care at Home serve Berrien, Cass and Van Buren counties.

The program started with behavioral health counseling, provided by Counselor Kolleen Bennett. It then expanded to include nutrition counseling, provided by Registered Dietician Melissa Powell.

The newest member of the team is Nurse Practitioner Carole Derucki who will provide primary care. She is able to accept Medicare and Medicaid, and will soon be able to accept most health plans.

“Chronic disease management is what we’re doing here, and what I did in my previous role. This program puts a focus on keeping people in their homes and helping them to navigate the health care system,” Derucki said. “I think we’re going to help many older adults and people with disabilities in the community.”

The team of providers is supported by a robust team of social workers, nurses and administrative staff at Area Agency on Aging. It’s also currently seeking to fill two new roles on its team: Medical Assistant and Program Specialist. To apply, visit <https://areaagencyonaging.org/careers/>.

If you or a loved one would benefit from Integrated Care at Home, please call 269-982-7859 or complete the referral form on our website: <https://areaagencyonaging.org/integrated-care-at-home/>.

About Region IV Area Agency on Aging

Region IV Area Agency on Aging is a private, not-for-profit corporation. Established in 1974 for the business of developing age supportive commerce and services, it plays a major role in planning, funding, and delivery of a host of services. In 2024, it will celebrate 50 years of its mission of Offering Choices for Independent Lives. 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 RIVAAA, visit www.areaagencyonaging.org

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