

Behavioral Health and Housing

Safe, affordable housing is critically important to the independence of older adults. For individuals with limited incomes, senior living communities, including those operated by non-profits and subsidized by HUD, provide a sense of community with other residents, transportation, activities, and wellness programs. While most residents thrive in these communities, a few residents have behavioral health issues that make community living difficult for themselves and/or other residents. Without access to other options, some of these individuals move into higher levels of care unnecessarily (such as personal care homes or nursing homes) and some become homeless.

The Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC)'s Area Agency on Aging partnered with a housing provider to create a service to provide behavioral health coaches for residents with behavioral health needs.

- Staff of the housing developments identified and referred residents with needs
- Behavioral health coach met face-to-face with the residents, built relationships, and then assisted in getting the resident to clinicians for treatment.
- Residents made and kept clinical appointments and had other service needs met
- Resulted in a 99% success rate in avoiding evictions in 2019

CO-AGE seeks state funding to expand this service to clients in multiple sites across the state. ARC has a contract with the Fuqua Center and they are interested in additional service areas.

Start-up cost for each coach projected to be \$170,000 including

- the behavioral health coach, benefits and expenses
- administrative oversight
- client support and
- clinical consultation.

With state funding, this service could expand to meet the behavioral health needs of older adults living in additional affordable housing sites in multiple locations. We are investigating housing units for expansion of this model in rural, suburban, and urban locations.