**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 or other residents. Staff work diligently to resolve the issues and try to avoid evictions because they know that a resident evicted from a HUD community is not allowed to move into another HUD community, and other affordable, safe housing options are extremely limited. 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.

Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC)’s Area Agency on Aging partnered with a housing provider to pilot a project to provide behavioral health coaches for residents with behavioral health needs. With this project, the staff of the housing developments identified and referred residents with behavioral health needs. An ARC behavioral health coach met face-to-face with the residents, built relationships, and then assisted in getting the resident to clinicians for treatment. With the coach’s support, residents made and kept clinical appointments and had other service needs met.

CO-AGE seeks state funding to expand this pilot to serve clients in multiple sites across the state. We believe the start-up cost for each pilot will be $180,000. This will cover the behavioral health coach, benefits and expenses at -$140K, administration at $20k, client support at $10k & clinical consultation at $10k. The existing ARC pilot has a contract with the Fuqua Center and they are interested in possible additional pilots. 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 further pilots of this model in rural, suburban, and urban locations.