

By SUSAN JAFFE

ON A SUNNY afternoon the Friday before Labor Day weekend, Larry Fry takes one last walk through the Beverly Health and Rehab Center in suburban Columbus.

He has hugs all around for the nurses and physical therapists. In a hallway, he bends down to talk to a friend in a wheelchair, and stops in to thank Beverly's payroll manager.

There's no goodbye for his roommate, Mike Huggins. Next weekend, they're going to barbecue steaks in the picnic area of the facility's courtyard. They've been planning the menu for days.

He's waited almost eight years for this moment — to leave the institution and move into his own home. The 48-year-old has spent most of that time in and out of nursing homes, including the past 20 months at Beverly.

Desi Runkle, Beverly's social worker, offers to drive him to his apartment, with a stop for groceries and to pick up his prescriptions.

As he waits for her, there's a sudden lull in the day's high-pitched activities, and he wonders what he's gotten himself into.

"People don't understand what it's like to be in here," he says. "You gain a lot in a way, OK, because you're not responsible for anything, but what you lose is control of your own situation. You function under the laws of this facility and that limits you — and keeps you safe."



Larry Fry walks out of the Beverly Health and Rehab Center for the last time to live in his own apartment.

As Fry maneuvers his shopping cart down the crowded aisle of a Kroger's supermarket, he wonders at all the oddities: Giant boxes of Sweet 'N Low that could supply a restaurant, mini-kegs of beer and shiitake mushrooms almost the size of his hand. Folding chairs, too? And end tables?

He turns the corner at the end of one aisle and the sight of row upon row of fresh vegetables and fruit nearly stops him in his tracks. The last time he was in a supermarket, picking out lettuce was easy: There was one choice and it was sealed in plastic.

Fry selects a set of four inexpensive knives but pauses and examines a can opener.

"I wouldn't pay \$9 for a can opener," he says, indignantly, before finding one for \$4.

Fry, who once worked as a chef before becoming ill, is enjoying every moment in the store. He turns a bottle of olive oil upside down, inspecting it for freshness, before putting it into his cart.

"If the bubble stays on the bottom, that means it's old, it's bitter," he explains.

After paying for his groceries, a security alarm blares as he leaves the store.

"Oh my God, I'm just out of one place and I'm going to another," he says, but a guard tells him he's OK.

Actually, he couldn't be better.

You Can Go Home Again

*A move to a nursing home needn't be forever anymore.
A new Ohio program not only supports independent living, but also saves the state money.*



Fry straightens his half of the room, where he's lived for almost two years, before leaving. His new apartment is three times bigger. "I'll have an actual space in another room with my bed in it, and a bathroom that's only mine. And I can close my own door when I want to," he says. "That's the practical things you gain — which seems inconsequential to some people."

FRY ENDED UP in nursing homes after struggling with a deluge of cascading health problems, including knee and hip replacements and complications from diabetes that forced doctors to amputate three of his toes. When he left Beverly, he was taking 43 pills a day to control arthritis, diabetes, acid reflux, high blood pressure and numbing in his feet and hands, among other conditions.

The reason he stayed in the home once his health improved — at a cost of roughly \$5,000 a month, picked up by Medicaid, the government's health insurance for low-income people — was that he had no place to go. His apartment was gone, he had no furniture, and he had taken few clothes with him.

What made his transition possible now is Ohio's new pilot project to develop a program that could help dozens of nursing home residents move into their own homes. They could re-enter a world many thought they had left behind forever.



Fry says goodbye to Tracy Sowell, a nursing assistant. "I was here a long time," he says. "I built a lot of friendships."

Ohio Access Success Project is unwinding the government rules and red tape that trap people in nursing homes who don't want to be there, don't need to be there and certainly

don't need to be driving up the state's enormous nursing home costs (*See Graphic, "Paying More for Less," pg. 19.*)

If it succeeds, the effort targeting 250 nursing home residents could save

Ohio millions of dollars a year.

Nursing home care costs an average of about \$56,000 per resident a year in Ohio. Because Fry needs so little care, living on his own will save Medicaid roughly \$50,000 a year.

Without Ohio Success, Larry Fry may have lived in a nursing home forever. He has no savings. For Medicaid coverage in a nursing home, an individual can have no more than \$1,500 in assets. Fry's Social Security disability checks go toward his Medicaid bill. And the \$40 a month he's allowed to keep for spending money is not enough to save up a security deposit on an apartment.

The only things he owns in his half of a room at Beverly are a TV set and a green lounge chair.

So Fry was curious in July when his roommate showed him a packet of information he'd received about Ohio Success, which is run by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS).

The program, which started in

Franklin County in June and will expand to Northeast Ohio later this month, is supported by a three-year, \$600,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The Ohio legislature chipped in another \$700,000 to cover residents' moving expenses and other one-time costs.

ODJFS hired the Easter Seals organization in Columbus to run its program. It sent Jeanette Kruty, a social worker, to talk to Beverly residents about who can participate.

Safeguards are in place to ensure that residents are able to handle living on their own and also that the program saves money for Medicaid: The cost of home care and other Medicaid services available in the community cannot exceed 80 percent of what Medicaid pays for nursing home care for that resident.

Individuals selected for the program must be on Medicaid and have been living in nursing homes for at least 18 months — long enough for most people to have to give up their homes. Finally, nursing home patients must be in good enough health to function without a nurse down the hall and 24-hour on-site emergency medical care.

"There is definitely a risk, but we accept risk every day," says Kruty. "The consumer has the choice — it's their life."

Each participant can get up to \$2,000 for relocation expenses, for things such as rental deposits, moving costs, furniture, dishes and other basics. But the money, provided by the state legislature, has been locked away since the program started up in June because someone forgot to set up a system to spend it.

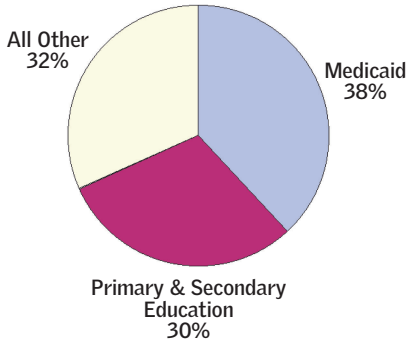
Checks couldn't be drawn on the account because Medicaid rules only allow reimbursements, after a purchase, and only to approved providers for approved services.

Medicaid just isn't set up to buy furniture, explains Laurie Damon, the Ohio Success project manager at ODJFS, as if she was stating the obvious.

Kruty has been visiting nursing homes in the Columbus area since June to explain the program to residents. Before she can determine if someone fits the criteria to participate, she reviews medical records and talks with the facility staff to obtain a complete picture of a person's needs.

Then she looks to see if there are services available in the community that offer the kind of help the resident receives in the nursing home. If she finds a match, and the cost is 80 percent or less than institutional care, the

Where Ohio Taxes Go



SOURCE: OFFICE OF GOV. BOB TAFT; STATE BUDGET FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2005

The Rising Cost of Care

The cost of Medicaid, which provides health care to the poor, is increasing so fast in Ohio that it now consumes the largest portion of the state's tax revenue — 38 percent. That is more than the 30 percent for primary and secondary education combined.

Medicaid's biggest expense is caring for the elderly and disabled.

That's because nursing home care is an entitlement in Ohio, like education: If you're eligible for Medicaid, you are guaranteed a nursing home bed. Although home care for Medicaid recipients who would otherwise be in a nursing home is almost one-fifth the cost, it is not an entitlement.

Medicaid money continues to flow into nursing facility care at an alarming rate: Since 1993, Medicaid's nursing home bill has increased 86 percent.

"It is unacceptable that at a time when the demand for home and community based services is growing, we are spending more and more money to serve fewer people in nursing homes," Governor Bob Taft told the Columbus Metropolitan Club in September.

Nursing home owners respond by noting that people entering their facilities have more chronic ailments than ever before and need more expensive care.

The payment formula is inscribed in state law, Taft notes, and "is not based on supply or demand."

Taft wants to expand Passport, the Medicaid-funded home-health program to enable more people to live independently, and reduce nursing home payments.

"If we don't get this right, we won't be able to afford to educate Ohio's next generation or continue to deliver essential public services to the people of this state." — SJ

Crossword Solutions

Ra-puns-el

JOT	PLUS	BAMBA	OCTOPT
EXITRAMP	ARDEN	PAINED	
DYEHAPPY	HAIRSHE	BLOWS	
EXO	TAP	MEANS	
CALIFORNIA	CURLS	DULY	
LANAS	RET	HAD	VENUE
OREM	ALE	TOTALLY	CLIPS
COMBONOVER	EYER	VIE	
ALI	LINECUT	MARG	IAN'S
LEASE	SHEARE	LEGANCE	
LISP	OSTER	SISTS	
THECOIF	FETERIA	EPICS	
CHAD	AVIS	SADISTS	BRA
ORR	PROJ	MANESTREET	
SOPHISTICUTS	TEE	ERSE	
TWEET	BAH	ANT	SPITS
ANDY	SCARLETT	TOHAIRAS	
CAPRA	TOM	LEI	
HANNAH	ANDHER	SCISSORS	
BIONDI	AIMAT	COSTELLO	
ORBWEB	ZOOMS	IOTA	ESP

New York Times

COMA	TBILL	BLAB	
ADAM	OLLIE	LOSE	
TINAL	LOUISE	ANTE	
SEX	OTRA	IDEAS	
	BOB	DENVER	
BOOHOO	RIIS		
ELIA	CEASE	BAA	
GILLIGANS	ISLAND		
SOY	MARGE	OLDE	
	MART	PANDAS	
JIM	BACKUS		
FAUNS	LESE	AAA	
IMIN	ALAN	HALEJR	
TACO	HORDE	ARAT	
STEW	STOOD	DORY	

Puzzles appear on page 27

Tis the Season

Ohio's Largest Year Round Christmas Shoppe

Beat the rush!
Shop early with a good selection still available

8th Annual Open House
November 11, 12 & 13
In-Store Specials
Door Prizes
Refreshments

Hours:
Mon - Fri 10am-7pm
Saturday 10am - 6pm
330-893-3604

Located 1 mile east of Berlin on State Route 39
Follow I-77 South to exit #83 (Dover/Sugarcreek) then take SR 39 west
The of Amish Country



What A Beautiful Way To Live?

A New Kitchen or Bath in 4 Days

- We Do The Complete Job
- Cabinet Resurfacing
- Senior Citizens Discounts
- General Remodeling
- Competitive Prices Always
- 30,000 Satisfied Customers
- Bank Financing
- Our Own Personal Staff

GEROME'S DESIGN CENTER

Visit our website at www.geromes.com or
VISIT OUR SHOWROOM AT 5576 MAYFIELD
Mon. - Fri. 9-5 Sat. 10-2 Evenings by appt.
EAST 440-473-1900 WEST 440-237-7111

THE BOLD LOOK OF **KOHLER**

ANGIE'S LIST SUPER SERVICE AWARD
MEMBER CLEVELAND
NKBA
NARI

Hamlet Village

IN CHAGRIN FALLS

Where every Resident is a VIP!



You Deserve the Very Best in Retirement Living

Hamlet Village offers the very best in retirement lifestyles. Our 47-acre campus in the heart of Chagrin Falls offers a wonderful journey through the seasons, conveniently located near charming village shops and restaurants. With affordable, maintenance-free spacious apartments to choose from, Hamlet offers all of the amenities and the peace of mind you deserve, including:

- Full calendar of social, cultural, educational, and recreational activities
- "Country Club" style fine dining and private Club House
- Assisted living options and medical care

Find out for yourself why Hamlet Village is in a class by itself.

Call **440-247-4676**.

Life begins at Hamlet Village!

HAMLET VILLAGE RETIREMENT COMMUNITY
200 HAMLET HILLS DRIVE | CHAGRIN FALLS, OH 44022
PHONE: 440-247-4676 | WWW.HAMLETRETIREMENT.COM

Are you post-menopausal? Have you noticed a change?

Many post-menopausal women experience adverse changes in their sexual functioning compared to younger years.

If you are experiencing a decline in your sexual health you may be eligible to participate in a worldwide ethically approved clinical research study.

You may qualify for this study if you are:

- Between 48 and 68 years of age
- Post-menopausal for a minimum of 6 months
- Experiencing decreased satisfactory sexual activity compared to younger years
- In an established sexual relationship which has lasted over 6 months
- Are willing to take 6 months of hormonal treatment

**UniversityHospitals
HealthSystem**

UniversityHospitals
of Cleveland

All participants who qualify for the study will receive confidential medical examinations (including self-reporting questionnaires about sexual functioning), blood tests and study medication.

Your enquiry will be treated in the strictest confidence.

Please call the number below to learn more about participating in this study.

**Clinical Research Coordinator
MacDonald Clinical
Trials Unit
440-995-3809**



Desi Runkle, the director of social work at Beverly, helps Fry in the dairy section of a Kroger's supermarket. It's been nearly eight years since he's been shopping. The "sheer volume" of products is a surprise; the prices a shock.

easy part of her job is done.

Before a resident can move, Kruty writes up an individual relocation plan to set up such things as an affordable apartment, furniture and household necessities, visits with a home health aide and home-delivered meals. She arranges for new doctors and a pharmacy, transportation to medical appointments or grocery-shopping, a bank account and recreational activities and even job possibilities.

Kruty delivered chairs and household supplies, too, until Easter Seals recently hired a moving company to do the heavy lifting.

So far, 10 nursing home residents in Franklin County have been accepted into Ohio Success and four have moved out.

IT WAS MID-AUGUST when Kruty gave Fry a list of 40 places to call for an apartment he could afford on his limited Social Security income. The task was one of his first tests of self-reliance.

"The 39th had one apartment," says Fry. It is a federally subsidized apartment on the second floor of a complex that stretches along several blocks. It fit his budget, and the flight of stairs — while not his first choice — would not deter him.

"I got lucky. It's almost like there was a plan by God."

Suddenly, he had two weeks to move. If he didn't act fast, someone else would grab the apartment.

Kruty found him a couch and a bed. As word spread that Fry was scram-

bling to set up his apartment on short notice, some of the nursing staff at Beverly donated a loveseat, towels, dishes and silverware. As soon as the apartment had the bare necessities, Fry spent one or two nights there to become used to being alone and to learn how to take the bus.

Now he's moving in for good.

At Fry's apartment, he and Runkle make several trips up and down the flight of stairs to bring in all the bags. Fry collapses into his familiar green lounge, and instinctively turns on his TV to see how Florida State's football team is doing.

The bags of groceries are sprawled over every available surface in the kitchen, piling up on the counter and the stovetop. He needs to rest before putting it all away.

"I'm tired," he says. "I'm happy."

Next week will be busy: He'll sign up for a membership at the YMCA, just six blocks away. A home health aide will come in the mornings the first week, to show him how to keep track of his medications and when to take them.

If there's an emergency, he has a number he can call 24 hours a day to reach a doctor. There's also 9-1-1.

"I have all that under control," he says. "Jeanette organized that."

Eventually, he wants to find a job.

There's a program run by Social Security, he says, that helps you go to school or go back to work.

"Physically, I'm not able to stand [for very long] or lift, so I figure I'd do something with phones or computers.

"I'm really good on the phone. I can talk a sheep out of its wool on the phone."

He also can type about 80 words a minute, which he attributes to a good Catholic school education, back in Wheeling, West Virginia.

"I will find something. I know I will."

He also wants to volunteer at Beverly, running games, helping in the Alzheimer's unit, visiting people.

"I feel like I've abandoned some of them, to be straight honest, I do," he says. "Because for the past two years, they've been my family, more than my family has been my family."

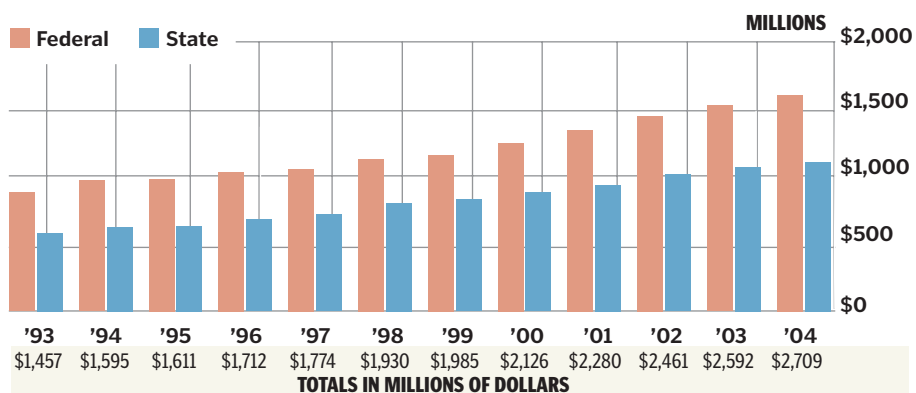
"But I'll go back."

SINCE THE OHIO Success project was first mentioned in the media last March, Damon and others at ODJFS have heard from nearly 100 people who wanted to participate, to help collect household supplies, to rent rooms, or to work as caretakers.

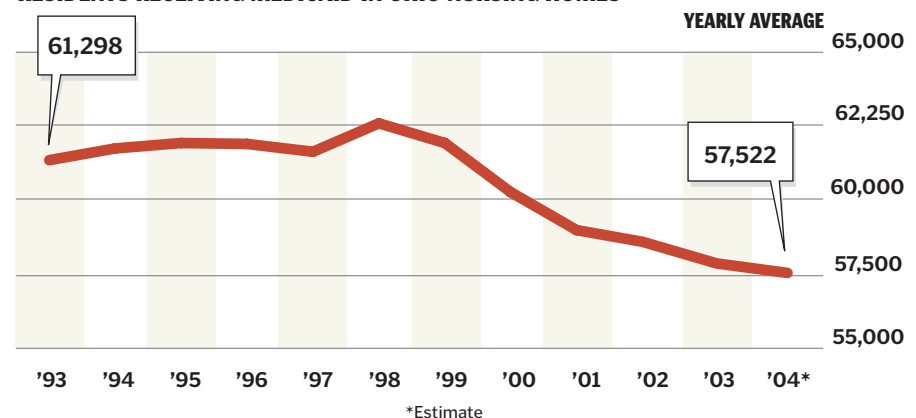
Paying More for Less

State and federal Medicaid payments to Ohio nursing homes have increased by 86 percent over the past 11 years, even though the number of people living in nursing homes has declined 6.2 percent.

MEDICAID PAYMENTS TO OHIO NURSING HOMES

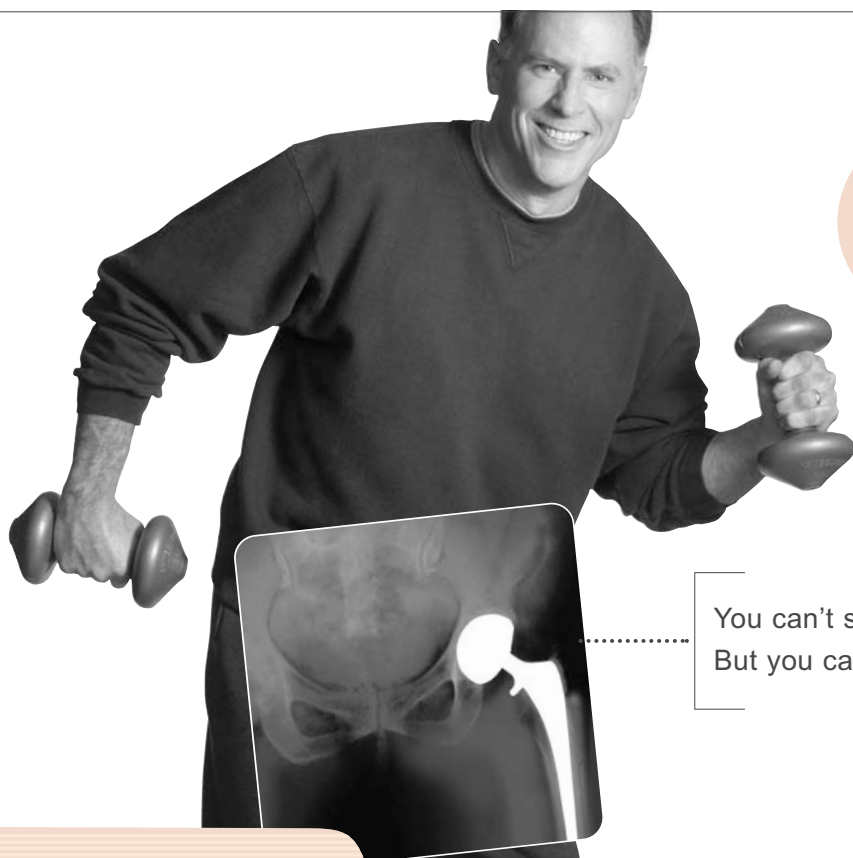


RESIDENTS RECEIVING MEDICAID IN OHIO NURSING HOMES



SOURCE: Ohio Department of Job & Family Services

THE PLAIN DEALER



PARMA HOSPITAL
Highest Ranked in Northern Ohio –
Third Year in a Row
OVERALL ORTHOPEDIC CARE



You can't see the artificial hip.
But you can see someone taking a major step forward.

Take a closer look at Parma Hospital.

You'll see a center of clinical excellence ranked #1 in Northern Ohio and in the top 5% in the nation for orthopedic care*. When you need the most advanced orthopedic care available, make the call to us your next step.

*ranking by HealthGrades, a leading provider of healthcare quality information.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
440-743-4900 www.parmahospital.org

TO SCHEDULE AN APPOINTMENT CALL: Southwest Orthopaedics, Inc. 440-842-1570
Center of Orthopedic Surgery, Spine & Sports Medicine 440-845-6400
Abi Afonja, M.D. 440-816-5476

**Parma
Community
General Hospital**
Technology that touches lives.

Stacey Conner's mother, Susan Shadley, spotted an article, tore it out and took it to the Columbus Rehabilitation and Subacute Institute, the nursing home where her daughter had been living since February 2002, after spending 13 months in a Westerville facility.

While pregnant with her second child in 2001, Conner contracted a virus that damaged the nerve endings in her hands and feet. The fingers of both hands are curled up, as if she was about to open a jar. She also can't move her feet.

A former high school business teacher, Conner, 30, knows how to take charge of a situation. She wanted to go home, she wanted her children to live with her, and she wanted to go back to work.

"I just had my mind made up that I could do it and I didn't think about if it was going to be possible or not. I just said, 'This is what I want and this is what I'm going to do.' Whatever the logistics, I would deal with it when I got to it."

Conner began by showing the article to the nursing home's social worker, who called Kruty.

"I said I'd love to be one of the first people to do this," Conner recalls.

She had already begun reading the listings of wheelchair-accessible apartments she could afford so that she could one day live on her own. She found a



An exhausted Fry relaxes after bringing his groceries upstairs to his new apartment, while Runkle writes down one more phone number before leaving him on his own. "If Governor Taft puts money into this program, I'll be a happy man," he says.

Medicaid program that provided nurses or home health care aides for disabled people at home.

Before she could receive the home health assistance, she learned she had to be evaluated to see if she qualified.

"They have to come your home," she says. She didn't have one.

But she couldn't leave the nursing home.

When she was accepted into the Ohio Success program, Conner had already picked out an apartment. Setting up a home was a challenge.

She was in the midst of a divorce and "had nothing," says Conner.

Kruty went with her to select free furniture from the Salvation Army, including mattresses, three dressers, end tables and a broken washer and dryer.

To Learn More

To reach the Ohio Access Success Project, call Easter Seals Northeast Ohio at 440-838-0990 (toll-free 1-888-325-8532); write the organization at 1929A East Royalton Road, Broadview Heights, OH 44147; or e-mail jkkruty@easarseals-cseohio.org.

"I took them anyway," says Conner. "My dad fixed them with \$20 worth of parts."

Kruty took Conner to Volunteers of America, where she picked out free clothing, including shoes, jackets, even pajamas and undergarments for both her and the children.

The two women also went to Best Foot Forward Career Closet, where Conner chose four nice dress outfits and shoes to wear to her new job — finding one is next on her list.

"Without Jeanette's help, I don't think anyone would be able to move out," says Conner, sitting in her living room. Opposite a white couch is a small table with two chairs, the perfect size for her three-year-old daughter and four-year-old son. The children came to live with her on November 1, shortly after

THE NEW NAME IN HOSPICE CARE

Hospice and Palliative Care Partners of Ohio is a new name that blends 100 years of Visiting Nurse Association knowledge and expertise with a brand new vision and direction for Hospice care in Ohio.

Our wonderful staff, like Patrick McCabe, attend to your end of life care needs with compassion and skill. Services include medical and nursing care, pain and symptom control, counseling and a host of care options with 24-hour availability.

In the home, hospital or extended care facility, Hospice and Palliative Care Partners of Ohio is your hospice of CHOICE.



To speak with someone about your loved one's needs call
800-862-5253

or visit on the web at
www.hospiceohio.org

Patrick McCabe, RN
Hospice Registered Nurse

Formerly VNA Hospice. An Agency of the Visiting Nurse Association.

her divorce became final.

An aide comes weekday mornings to take her grocery shopping or help with light housekeeping, which they try to do together.

"I like to do as much as I can," says Conner.

She thinks others can, too.

"If you are determined to leave, don't let anything stop you," she advises. "Don't get frustrated with the system."

ABOUT A HALF-HOUR drive from Conner's apartment, Donald Buzzelli has been living for the past four years at Traditions, a Gahanna nursing home. At 88, the retired restaurant manager and entertainer has recovered from the falls that sent him here and he wants to leave.

He's been approved to be part of the Ohio Success program and has applications at four apartment complexes. He's also eligible for Passport, Ohio's home care program for people over 60.

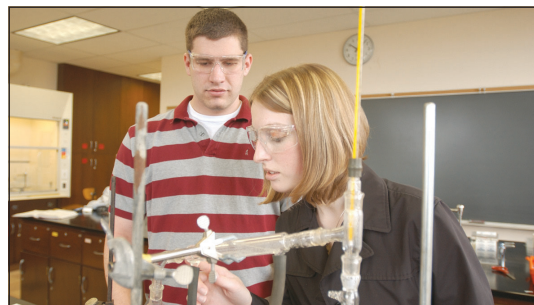
As soon as an apartment opens up and an eye problem clears up, he'll leave.

"I think I'm missing out on life too much," says Buzzelli, his voice loud enough to compete with his roommate's TV.

Continued on page 23



Sitting in her living room, Stacey Conner talks to Angela Chapman, a nurse's aide, who helps her during the week. Conner was one of the first nursing facility residents to move into her own home under the Ohio Access Success Project. She hopes state officials will expand the program. "This is what I don't understand: They would rather pay more money for you to be in a facility than they would if they just helped you to go back to the community. Does that make any sense?"



Make a difference - BECOME a NURSE

Notre Dame College and Huron School of Nursing now offer a collaborative program leading to dual credentials: an Associate of Science in Health Sciences degree from Notre Dame College and a Diploma in Nursing from Huron School of Nursing. The three-year program will prepare you to take the R.N. licensure test.

The Notre Dame College/Huron School of Nursing Advantage

We'll train you for a rewarding career. Nursing is both an art and a science. This partnership provides a rich emphasis on nursing knowledge and clinical practice underscored with a strong liberal arts and science background.

Choose our established programs and learn from the pros

Notre Dame has been educating scientists for industry, research and education for more than 80 years. Huron School of Nursing, part of the Cleveland Clinic Health System, has been educating nurses since 1884.

Classes are offered days, evenings and weekends. The next session begins the week of January 10, 2005.

Schedule an appointment today to learn about Notre Dame College's nursing partnership by calling 216.373.5355 or emailing admissions@ndc.edu.



4545 College Road
Cleveland, OH 44121
1.877.NDC.OHIO
www.NotreDameCollege.edu

**Changing the World...
One Student at a Time.**

The Different Approaches of Other States

OHIO IS ONE of the latest states out of 31 to start a program to move residents out of nursing facilities and help them set up their own homes.

Not being first has benefited Ohio, says Roland Hornbostel, deputy director of the Ohio Department of Aging.

Many of the programs "had to get over that initial knock on the door," says Robert Mollica, a senior researcher at the National Academy for State Health

Policy in Portland, Maine, who is studying the endeavor nationwide.

States that have been successful have assigned nurses or social workers to work with individual nursing homes to find residents eligible to participate in their program, says Mollica. "People of any age — no matter how long they've been in a nursing home — ought to be asked if they want to leave. If there's no one there asking them, they tend to get forgotten."

Maryland's legislature passed a law requiring nursing home owners to tell residents about services available in the community should they want to leave.

"In most cases, that's not the nursing home's priority," says Mollica. "Their goal is to keep their units filled."

Peter Van Runkle, president of the Ohio Health Care Association, wasn't worried about a mass exodus of residents.

"There are always going to be people who need the level of services provided by a nursing home," he says. "But if they can be served elsewhere, if they don't need to be there, then they shouldn't be there."

Half of the 265 individuals helped by the program in Michigan didn't require nursing home services, but didn't have any place to go. Transition grants of up to \$4,000 help cover moving and related expenses. One woman needed only the \$168 airfare to return home to Colorado, says David Young,

A 1999 U. S. Supreme Court decision in *Olmstead vs. LC* said that segregating people into nursing homes is discriminatory, a violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act. The court ordered states to offer noninstitutional, community-based services if individuals prefer it, if their doctors agree it is appropriate and the state can afford it.

Pennsylvania is taking the *Olmstead* decision seriously and has created more alternative programs to nursing homes than any other state, says Ann Torregrossa, senior policy manager in the Pennsylvania Governor's Office of Health Care Reform.

The state has a diversion program to help people avoid going into nursing homes by providing home care services within 24 hours. It also will approve nursing home care only for a specific period of time needed.

Pennsylvania's nursing home relocation pilot project was one of the first dozen in the country and opened in

"People forget that people get better in nursing homes and then don't want to be there."

— David Young, project manager, Michigan Nursing Facility Transition Initiative

There are over 3,500 men, women and children living with HIV/AIDS in northeast Ohio.

HIV

The Cuyahoga Regional HIV Services Planning Council, appointed by the Cuyahoga County Board of Commissioners, assesses HIV health care and social service needs and allocates federal grant funds to meet those needs.

The Planning Council's open meetings are held the third Wednesday of every month (except July and December), at 5:30 PM, MetroHealth Medical Center.

we can help

For information about the Cuyahoga Regional HIV Services Planning Council or Title I services call:

216-348-3986

Services are funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

project manager for the Nursing Facility Transition Initiative.

Michigan's program differs from Ohio's in a number of ways, including that it provides home modifications, such as grab bars in the bathroom, wheelchair ramps and even remote garage door openers. Also, instead of one social worker trying to make nearly all the arrangements, a social worker acts as transition coordinator, handing off various tasks to those who deal with them best, such as a Legal Services lawyer or an expert on affordable housing. An analysis of about 30 participants in the Michigan program's first year, 2001, found that the overall cost savings was 42 percent, or an average of \$25,404 per resident annually.

For all its success, Young had trouble securing state money to continue the program. The Michigan Department of Community Health rescued it at the last minute: Up to \$2 million a year of the fines that nursing facilities pay for violations will go toward the program. Young says that will be enough to make it a permanent part of Michigan's long-term care services, and will relocate an estimated 500 nursing home residents.

It's the law that states offer alternatives to institutional care.

2001. In July, it graduated from a trial to a permanent fixture in the state's Medicaid menu of services, open to 1,500 nursing home residents annually.

During the pilot, Pennsylvania officials discovered that when an affordable home was found, it often needed modifications to accommodate someone with a disability. Once the home was ready, there was still a six- to nine-month wait for home care.

"I think that Ohio — if it's anything like Pennsylvania — will find incredible programmatic barriers to quickly and in large numbers transitioning people from nursing homes to the community," says Torregrossa. "You can't do it right until you have the systems to support people."

After creating more than 15 different home modification programs, establishing the nursing home transition program and making sure affordable apartments and home health care providers were available, the state's efforts to offer nursing home alternatives are beginning to pay off.

"We believe strongly it's a civil rights issue, and happily it's a win-win because it saves money for the state and taxpayers," says Torregrossa. "We're serving at least two people for every one in a nursing home."

— S.J.



"I picked the environment I'm in," says Conner, describing the purpose of the new Ohio program. "And that's the whole thing — it's our choice."

Continued from page 21

"I want to enjoy some of my life."

He doesn't have the kind of big plans that Larry Fry has, but he has a few ideas.

"I want to go out and do my own thing. Go out and have dinner. See a movie once in a while.

"Like everybody's doing — for a change. I feel like I've passed away and I'm not around anymore.

"It's no fun in here."

THINGS HAVEN'T gone exactly as Larry Fry planned.

Within days of moving, his foot is bothering him.

He calls the doctor, and in October ends up in Grant General Hospital, a few blocks from the State House. The remaining three toes on his right foot have to be amputated. He has to stay off his feet for as long as six weeks to recuperate — back at Beverly.

While he recovers, Kruty says he can keep his apartment as long as he returns within 90 days. After that point, Medicaid considers him a long-term nursing home resident — again.

It's a setback, but these things happen, she says.

"We can't foresee every health issue that consumers may encounter once they leave," she says. "But what we can do is plan for the immediate future and make sure you have everything in place

so that they don't relapse."

Even though his doctors at the nursing home had said he could leave, Fry wonders if he was really ready.

"I'm not sure what occurred," he says, lying in his hospital bed with his foot immobilized in a Styrofoam cube.

"I'm trying not to think about it. I'm not real happy. Because I feel like I'm going backwards — or at least sideways.

"And it's not my nature to backtrack. I'd rather fight on forward than backtrack. But sometimes you have to back across," says the serious football fan, maybe imagining the quarterback who scrambles for a second chance.

Fry perks up a little talking about the apartment, and as he gestures, his hand emerges from its hiding place under the sheets, exposing the intravenous tube planted in his lower arm. He realizes that when he gets better — this time — he has something to go back to. He's made some headway.

"Oh yeah, I sure did. I got out. I got out and up."

And he's planning on paying his December's rent — three weeks early. ■

Susan Jaffe is a Plain Dealer reporter who covers aging issues. She was surprised to learn that New Jersey's relocation project helped someone move out of a nursing home after 31 years. She may be reached at 216-999-4822 or through magmail@plaind.com.

GET READY FOR
BIKINI WEATHER!

Introducing

Lakeshore Laser Center

Professional Aesthetic Services by Dr. Stefanie Christian

**Laser Hair Removal
& Spider Vein Ablation**

**Special Fall Prices
Now Available**

LAKESHORE
OB-GYN

Lakewood **Obstetrics & Gynecology**

1450 Belle Ave., Suite 310 • Lakewood, Ohio 44107 Ph. (216) 228-0980 Fax (216) 228-0902

Wheel Chairs
Scooters
Beds

Lift Chairs
Stair Lifts
Ramps

AccuCare
Home Medical Equipment

Sales • Service • Supplies • Rental

26997 Center Ridge Road

32730 Walker Road, D-1

2098 Warrensville Center

Westlake, Ohio 44145

Avon Lake, Ohio 44012

South Euclid, Ohio 44121

(440) 899-1060

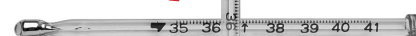
(440) 933-3525

(216) 371-5801

www.accucarehomemedical.net

If you or someone you know is living with HIV/AIDS the Ryan White Title I Program offers free medical and social support services to eligible persons who are uninsured or underinsured in Northeast Ohio.

HIV



we can help

Case Management
Child Care Assistance
Dental Services
Home Delivered Meals
Home Health Care
Hospice Care
Medical Laboratory Testing
Mental Health Counseling
Nutritional Counseling
Primary Medical Care
Substance Abuse Counseling
Support Group
Transitional Housing Assistance
Transportation Assistance

For additional information about eligibility services and local service providers:

216-348-3986

All inquiries are strictly confidential.

Services are funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services