Annual Report 2013-14

Care Connection for Aging Services
106 W. Young
P.O. Box 1078
Warrensburg, Missouri 64093
660-747-3107
800-748-7826

Our Vision
The people we serve will live with maximum independence, respect and dignity.

Our Mission
Care Connection will provide resources and services that empower people to create healthy aging experiences.

Care Connection for Aging Services
www.goaging.org
information@goaging.org

This Annual Report was designed and paginated by Amy M. Fair, a senior marketing major at University of Central Missouri, as part of her internship with this agency. This project was funded through the Department of Health and Senior Services provision of the Older Americans Act.
Are we prepared for the growing senior issues – not only the growing population but current issues? These include:

- Food Insecurity – Missouri ranked 13th among the states for the number of seniors who were experiencing an insufficient supply of safe and healthy foods in 2009 and in 2013, and ninth for the percentage of underweight seniors.
- Aging in place is not only preferred by seniors but also cost effective, yet many Missouri homes and neighborhoods are not equipped to support aging in place.
- The health education and chronic disease management supported by informal caregivers are key to healthy aging.
- Seniors ranked staying connected as even more important to quality of life than financial means.

Care Connection continues to provide programs and services to create healthy aging experiences and to meet these important issues. This year has seen the expansion of several new initiatives to address the needs of our customers.

We began reassessing those receiving Medicaid Home and Community Based services through the Department of Health and Senior Services. Through FY 14, we provided reassessment services for 765 clients. Through a contract with CLAIM, we are providing additional Medicare services – outreach, education and assistance. We implemented a National Council on Aging (NCOA) grant to provide outreach and application assistance for the SNAP program.

We have implemented the Stanford University “Diabetes Self Management” course. This class has been very beneficial to those participating. We have implemented new menus this fall so that we can provide meals that are enjoyed by our customers. Through our statewide association, we provided assistance to those folks needing to access health insurance through the Marketplace. We continue to provide our core programs that our agency was founded on – senior centers, transportation, in-home services, etc.

We at Care Connection also surveyed you, our customers, to see what your needs are. The top results are that seniors in our area are concerned about:

- Needing assistance in paying for assistive devices (hearing aids, glasses, canes, etc.) A number of respondents cited the cost of glasses and eye care as an issue.
- Available medical and dental care is another important issue. Dental care is sometimes prohibited by the cost. People find it difficult to travel to see specialists if they are not in their community.
- Folks do not have the ability to physically keep up with their yard and house, or don’t have the funds to complete the repairs.
- Another serious issue is telemarketing and in-home sales – respondents commented that this is a nuisance and a constant problem. They feel harassed and bullied by these calls.

Care Connection will continue to assist our customers in meeting their needs and help the people that we serve to live with maximum independence, respect and dignity.
Board of Directors

Care Connection is governed by an Executive Board of Directors selected from each county in its district. The directors meet monthly, usually at 10 a.m. on the fourth Friday of the month, to conduct business. Various board committees meet as needed. Currently serving the board are:

**Bates County**
Stacey Hutton
Butler

**Benton County**
Michelle McLerran Morgan
Warsaw

**Carroll County**
Janet Smith
Bosworth

**Cedar County**
Pam Fidler
Greenfield

**Henry County**
Don Eaton
Clinton

**Hickory County**
Mike Jones
Osceola

**Lafayette County**
Chairwoman Mary Biesemeyer
Higginsville

**Johnson County**
Ken Messer
Warrensburg

**Pettis County**
Bob Milner
Sedalia

**Saline County**
Mary Mark-Kelz
Marshall

**St. Clair County**
Mildred “Sunny” Johnson
Osceola

**Vernon County**
Robert Moran
Sheldon

**Chariton County**
Judy Fehling
Salisbury

Advisory Board

Care Connection also depends upon an Advisory Board that meets at least quarterly to offer valuable advice and opinions on a variety of programs. Its members include:

Dr. Janice Putnam,
University of Central Missouri,
Warrensburg

Judy Schache,
Retired, Johnson County Health Department
Warrensburg

Larry Nichols,
Long Term Ombudsman
Warrensburg

Jim Graef
CLAIM Volunteer
Blairstown

Paige Wheeler
John Knox Village East/
Meyer Care Center
Higginsville

Linda Wilson
Hickory County Health Department
Hermitage

Linda Jones,
Golden Valley Memorial Hospital
Clinton
Central Office Directors

Cheryl Munsterman
Chief Financial Officer

Cheryl began working at Care Connection in April 2002, and has served as CFO since December 2011. She oversees financials as well as the benefits programs. She assists with Human Resources and leads a staff of five accountants. She has a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration in Accounting from the University of Central Missouri (CMSU).

Marilyn Gunter
Director of Care Management

Marilyn has worked with Care Connection for seven years, and served as a care manager before she took her current position. She supervises nine care managers and directs In-Home Services, Care Transitions and services provided through County Taxes, and serves as the Lead Navigator for the Health Insurance Marketplace initiative. She has a Master of Social Work from University of Missouri Kansas City and a Bachelor of Social Work from University of Central Missouri (CMSU).

Kathryn House
Director of Nutrition

Kathryn has worked with Care Connection since March 2002. She oversees all aspects of the nutrition operation, including menus, a 50-member staff, raw food costs, the budget and equipment for 17 kitchens that provide meals in 22 dining rooms and for home delivery. She also oversees worker’s compensation and safety and assists with human resources. She has a Master of Science in Social Gerontology and a Bachelor of Science in Dietetics from the University of Central Missouri (CMSU).

Rona McNally
Director of Special Projects

Rona has worked with Care Connection for 17 years. She directs the Senior Medicare Patrol Program (SMP), Medicare/Medicaid Counseling, Legal, Public Information and the RSVP Programs. She also is a Licensed Navigator for the Health Insurance Marketplace.

Kathy Ray-Smith
Regional Ombudsman Director

Kathy has worked with the agency since September 1993. She has served as Senior Center Administrator, Johnson County Senior Services Director and Co-Director of the Seniors Organized to Restore Trust program. She directs the Regional Ombudsman Program and the Tax Counseling for the Elderly Program and chairs the Training Task Force. She has a Bachelor of Science in Recreation and Leisure Services from University of Central Missouri (CMSU).
Our Agency

Care Connection for Aging Services is an area agency on aging serving 13 counties through 22 centers. Our service area includes the counties of Carroll, Chariton, Lafayette, Saline, Johnson, Pettis, Henry, Benton, Bates, St. Clair, Hickory, Vernon and Cedar. The agency is part of a national network of 618 area agencies on aging.

We are led by an Executive Board of Directors, Executive Director and Chief Financial Officer, as well as four Program Directors and three Regional Service Directors. Our team also includes three administrative assistants, accounting staff, coordinators for RSVP and SMP volunteers, Medicare and Health Insurance Marketplace counselors, Care Managers, a Lifestyles Specialist, a Public Information Coordinator, Center Operations Staff, Head and Assistant Cooks, Custodians and Meal Delivery Drivers.

Also essential to our operations are hundreds of volunteers throughout the 13 counties who do everything from wash dishes and serve food to deliver meals and staff the front desk. Volunteers also serve as nursing home advocates, tax preparers, and benefits counselors.

We are funded with federal, state and county taxes, program fees, cash donations, in-kind donations and volunteer services.

About one-third of our money comes from donations and in-kind contributions.

Founded in October 1973, Care Connection is one of 10 Missouri area agencies on aging that resulted from the 1973 amendments to the federal Older Americans Act. As such, the agency is required to provide nutrition, in-home services, disease prevention and health promotion, transportation, information and assistance, advocacy and outreach, ombudsman program and legal services. Our agency also provides Tax Counseling for the Elderly.

Regional Service Directors, from left, are Alvin Brownley, Deb Krieger and Chris McCune. Each director oversees center operations in his or her area.
Volunteer Dez Denslow prepares whole wheat rolls for the Warrensburg Senior Center. Dez hopes to get a job in the kitchen at the center.

A Mexican casserole and vegetables provide a nutritious lunch when accompanied by milk and a healthy dessert.

**Nutrition**

Providing nutritious, delicious meals to our seniors is at the core of our operation. In FY 14, we served more than 202,000 meals to more than 8,200 people in our dining rooms. The seniors who gathered for lunch at our centers also were able to learn about our other services and to visit with old friends or make new ones.

During FY 14, we also delivered more than 297,000 meals to more than 1,900 homebound seniors in their homes. Most of those meals were cooked that morning in our kitchens using the same menus we served in our dining rooms. They then were delivered hot to the clients’ doorsteps. We also deliver frozen meals for the weekends.

Nutrition Director Kathryn House ensures that all meals provide one-third of the daily nutritional requirements. The home-delivered meals, along with the many other services we provide, help many seniors stay in their homes rather than moving to nursing homes. In our area, the average cost of residential nursing care is about $3,600 a month, compared to $788 monthly for Care Connection services including case management, in-home services, home delivered meals and transportation.

Helping at-risk seniors to live in their own homes makes financial sense and usually is in keeping with their wishes. When we assess people to determine whether they qualify for home-meal delivery, we are able to connect them with other useful services that might help them maintain their independence.

Assistant Cook Sally Hart seals a meal for home delivery. Care Connection served 1,924 Home-Delivered Meal clients in FY 14.

Volunteer Dez Denslow prepares whole wheat rolls for the Warrensburg Senior Center. Dez hopes to get a job in the kitchen at the center.

**Nearly 500,000 meals served**
Juanita Horner, of Warrensburg, uses a medical alert system that keeps her constantly connected to help.

Our caregivers personally install the BOB 4200 device. This service is one way we help people live in their own homes as long as they are able and want.

We strive to give people 60 and older a place where they can find help and support as they live independently and cope with life’s challenges. In FY 14, we provided information and assistance to people on 2,433 occasions.

**Care Managers:** Our Care Managers cover 13 counties and generally are headquartered at the senior centers. They are trained to evaluate situations and help individuals find the information they need to live the life they want. They will assess people’s living conditions and the need for meals, transportation, and financial help. Care Managers are trained to conduct Medicare/Medicaid Counseling, including an evaluation of extra financial help that may be available. They also can connect people to resources including housekeeping, personal care, telephone reassurance and friendly visiting. When Care Managers make a visit to address a need for help in one area, they use that contact to let clients know what other services such as home-delivered meals or transportation may help them.

**Medicaid Reassessments:** Our Care Managers also work with the Department of Health and Senior Services to re-evaluate Medicaid recipients for necessary in-home health care and help.

**Family Caregiver Services:** We also provide information, help, care coordination and respite services for people who care for a loved one who is ill or disabled. We know the challenges of caring for an ill or elderly loved one, and we try to help.
Serving in 22 centers in 13 counties across West Central Missouri
Care Connection Centers

**Bates County:**
Butler Senior Center  
611 W. Mill St.  
Butler, Mo. 64730  
660-679-5830

Kern Senior Center  
613 E. Park Avenue  
Rich Hill, Mo. 64779  
417-395-2225

**Benton County:**
Cole Camp Senior Center  
P.O. Box 87  
206 Junge Street  
Cole Camp, Mo. 65325  
660-668-2352

Warsaw Senior Center  
Village Café/Harbor Village  
P.O. Box 1480,  
17571 N. Dam Access Road  
Warsaw, Mo. 65355  
660-438-3300

**Carroll County:**
Carroll County Senior Center  
200 Lifecare Lane  
Carrollton, Mo. 64633  
660-542-0399

**Chariton County:**
Brunswick Senior Center  
Sherry’s Home Cooking  
P.O. Box 203, 801 E. Broadway  
Brunswick, Mo. 65236  
660-548-3010

Salisbury Senior Center  
304 Broadway  
Salisbury, Mo. 65281  
660-388-5431

**Henry County:**
Clinton Senior Center  
970 E. Sedalia  
Clinton, Mo. 64735  
660-885-3482

Windsor Senior Center  
201 S. Main  
Windsor, Mo. 65360  
660-647-3224

**Hickory County:**
McCarty Senior Center  
Route 71, Box 3282  
Wheatland, Mo. 65779  
417-282-6100

**Johnson County:**
Holden Senior Center  
204 W. Second St.  
Holden, Mo. 64040  
816-732-5577

Warrensburg Senior Center  
445 E. Gay, Suite 128  
Warrensburg, Mo. 64093  
660-747-2624

**Lafayette County:**
Concordia Senior Center  
P.O. Box 76, 710 Main  
Concordia, Mo. 64020  
660-463-7393

Higginsville Senior Center  
21st and Walnut  
Higginsville, Mo. 64037  
660-584-7040

Margaret Gray Center  
811C S. Business Highway 13  
Lexington, Mo. 64067  
660-259-2025

Odessa Senior Center  
217 S. Second  
Odessa, Mo. 64076  
816-633-4161

**Pettis County:**
Sedalia Senior Center  
312 S. Washington  
Sedalia, Mo. 65301  
660-826-0713

**Saline County:**
Marshall Senior Center  
P.O. Box 424, 120 Pine  
Osceola, Mo. 64776  
417-646-8292

**St. Clair County:**
St. Clair County Senior Center  
P.O. Box 424, 120 Pine  
Osceola, Mo. 64776  
417-646-8292

**Vernon County:**
Vernon County Senior Center  
301 N. Main  
Nevada, Mo. 64772  
417-667-5847
Harbor Village Wins Governor’s Award

Harbor Village Community Health & Senior Center in Warsaw received the Governor’s Community/ Redevelopment Project of the Year Award on Sept. 5, 2014, at the Governor’s Conference on Economic Development at Lake of the Ozarks.

In the photo below, from left are: Missouri Gov. Jay Nixon, Katy Trail Community Health Chief Executive Officer Chris Stewart, Care Connection for Aging Services Executive Director Diana Hoemann, Pathways Community Behavior Healthcare Inc. Chief Executive Officer Mel Fetter, Benton County Development Corp. Executive Director Irv Jensen, and Missouri Department of Economic Development Director Mike Downing.
Harbor Village Community Health & Senior Center in Warsaw received the Governor’s Community/Redevelopment Project of the Year Award this fall for bringing direct, immediate access to quality, affordable care to the Benton County area.

Care Connection for Aging Services, Pathways Community Behavioral Healthcare Inc., and Katy Trail Community Health are partners in the 23,300 square-foot project that opened in October 2013.

Harbor Village combines the agencies’ resources, programs and expertise into one location where people can get physical, oral and mental healthcare, as well as the educational, nutritional, cultural and recreational opportunities provided by Care Connection for Aging Services through the Warsaw Senior Center.

The Senior Center has a dining room for 200 people, café services, a fully-equipped commercial kitchen, a computer lab and a fitness center, as well as rooms for meetings and classes. The building at 17571 N. Dam Access Road also has six medical examination rooms, one procedure room, five dental rooms and nine counseling rooms.

The project was funded by a Health Resources and Services Administration Capital Grant, the state Neighborhood Assistance Program, local fundraising and federal New Markets Tax Credits. The facility created 54 new jobs.

The Community/Redevelopment Project of the Year Award recognizes the best example of a community/redevelopment project that demonstrated a significant impact on a neighborhood or community.

Harbor Village houses Pathways Community Behavioral HealthCare Inc., Warsaw Senior Center, and Katy Trail Community Health.
Care Connection for Aging Services had one of its own selected for statewide recognition in 2014, when Central Office receptionist Norma Moldovan was named the Missouri Older Worker of the Year for this area.

Norma, who has worked for Care Connection for 14 years, was honored by State Rep. Dean Dohrman, Missouri Sen. David Pearce, Warrensburg Mayor Donna DeFrain, and Johnson County Presiding Commissioner Bill Gabel during a celebration in Warrensburg. That event also was attended by many of her children, grandchildren and great grandchildren.

Norma was one of 10 honorees who were treated to two days of celebratory events, including a gala, at the Capitol in Jefferson City. She was unanimously chosen as the 2014 Older Worker of the Year by the Nominating Committee.

Norma works 25 hours a week and performs varied office duties, including answering the phones and receiving visitors. She works with accounts payable to help process and mail payroll, files paper work, and assists program directors with projects. Because our agency handles a wide range of projects, she may find herself stapling coupon booklets one day and copying and collating a volunteers’ training manual the next day. Passersby see Norma busy all the time – stapling, collating, shredding papers, answering phones, packing and unpacking boxes, making photocopies, running the laminating machine, distributing mail, dusting the furniture, washing windows, and making coffee. You name it, and Norma is doing it.

The 85-year-old said she enjoys the “hustle” of her job, and she seeks out work when she finds an idle moment. During her time with Care Connection, she has broken a shoulder, a hip, and a wrist. She has undergone open-heart surgery. She attributes her quick recoveries to her positive mindset. She awakens early every morning to exercise before she goes to work.

Before coming to Care Connection, Norma worked for 25 years as a supervisor in a uniform factory and after that, she worked at the University of Central Missouri, processing textbook sales.

When she is not at work, Norma spends her time making alterations and mending clothing. She sewed her own winter coat, and she made all the drapes in her home. She also makes items for some of our 22 senior centers.

She has four children, six grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.
Ombudsmen

Ombudsmen gathered at the Lake of the Ozarks to learn how to be better voices for people in long-term care facilities. Front, from left are: volunteers Tom Foster, Mike Hutchko, Richard Underwood, Larry Nichols, and Brigitte Nichols. Back from left, Kathy Ray-Smith, Regional Ombudsman Director for Care Connection, and volunteers Ruth Maynart, Carol Rupp, Pat Yoder, Jenny Niederjohn and Mary Dimit.

Kathy Ray-Smith, the Regional Long-Term Ombudsman Director for Care Connection, leads some 40 volunteers who advocate for residents’ rights in 89 nursing homes.

She also leads the effort to educate folks on the issue of elder abuse, an unsavory topic that nonetheless is essential for the public to recognize and understand. Ombudsmen receive training that helps them ensure all residents know their rights and are empowered to resolve complaints they may have at their nursing homes.

Some of the volunteers have advocated for residents for 20 or more years. They form friendships and build trust with residents so that they can help to resolve any problems that may arise.

Volunteers: 40
Residents Visited: 1,037
Number of Visits: 15,205
Hours Volunteered: 1,756
Complaints Resolved: 9
Value of In-kind Donations: More Than $35,000

One Volunteer Ombudsman is Shirley Baxter, of Milo, who has served as a long-term care advocate for the residents of the Moore-Few Care Center in Nevada for the past two decades. Regional Ombudsman Director Kathy Ray-Smith (right) presented Baxter with a Governor’s Proclamation to honor her 20 years of service recently. Also pictured is Steve Branstetter, Administrator of the Moore-Few Care Center.
Lifestyles Specialist Vickie Whitsitt helps seniors with health, wellness and fitness issues ranging from fall prevention and muscle strengthening to brain fitness and diabetes management.

Step into one of our centers, and you will find a variety of health and wellness programs. The leadership in each center listens to the preferences and needs of the community and seeks to tailor exercise programs, fitness and recreation programs to fit each one.

Some examples are Tai Chi for Health, the Arthritis Foundation Exercise Program, the Diabetes Self-Management Program, and the Total Memory Workout. Our programs are evidence-based, meaning that our clients see measurable improvements.

Some centers offer a chance to walk on an indoor track or have fitness centers, and some partner with local parks and recreation departments to offer swimming. All our programs are aimed at keeping seniors active and happy, independent and healthy.

Under the leadership of Lifestyles Specialist Vickie Whitsitt, our centers oversaw 5,277 physical fitness sessions in FY 14, and had 2,600 people participate in 7,151 recreation sessions. We also helped 5,214 clients in our 1,165 disease prevention health promotion sessions. Senior volunteers lead many of our programs and find the activity to benefit themselves and their peers.
We try to make our centers places where seniors can relax and enjoy themselves. The five women, above, modeled Cato’s clothing at a spring fashion show at the Warrensburg center. From left are Donna Hoskins, Jane Colster, Eveline Lamb, Peggy McClendon and Pat Alkire.

Charles Melling, at right, of Clinton, celebrated his 99th birthday with his friends and family at the Clinton Senior Center. Melling is pictured with his daughter, Marsha Stanton, of Jefferson City, (left) and his wife of 66 years, Marjorie.
Tax Counseling for the Elderly

Volunteers for the Tax Counseling for the Elderly (TCE) program this year provided help to file 1,956 claims in our 13-county service area. Those claims put nearly $1 million into the pockets of seniors to spend in their local communities.

The program, funded by a grant from the IRS and directed by Kathy Ray-Smith, enlists volunteers who are retired seasoned professionals to complete seniors’ income tax returns and Circuit Breaker claims free of charge.

This year, 22 volunteers helped people at 18 sites in the service area.

The greatest participation came from Hickory County volunteers who contributed 246 hours at the McCarty Senior Center in Wheatland. Area-wide, the value of the volunteer hours was calculated to be $13,550. The volunteers also helped many of the seniors file electronically, a procedure that the IRS encourages.

Retired & Senior Volunteer Program

RSVP Coordinator Kristin Brock recruits volunteers for the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program in five counties — Benton, Cedar, Henry, Hickory and St. Clair.

The program seeks to connect volunteers 55 and older with rewarding opportunities in their communities. These volunteers are often retired professionals who are skilled at services ranging from home construction to immunizations for children. Our volunteers work at Head Start preschool programs and at the senior centers. A major project of the RSVP in recent years is the coordination of a National Day of Service on Sept. 11. We have 175 volunteers who served 10,755 hours in FY 14.

This year, volunteers ran simultaneous food drives in five counties, collecting 467 pounds of food to be donated to the pantries in their communities.

People who are interested in making use of a volunteer or becoming one may contact Brock at (660) 723-1008. Our RSVP headquarters are at 17571 N. Dam Access Road, Warsaw, Mo., in the Harbor Village.
Marilyn Gunter, Care Connection Director of Care Management, explains how the SNAP – Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – works for seniors and the disabled. Care Connection has helped more than 70 seniors enroll in the program this year.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

Like all consumers, seniors are experiencing sticker shock at the grocery stores.

To help ease that financial burden, Care Connection has joined a push by the National Council on Aging and the Wal-mart Foundation to help people enroll in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), also known as food stamps in Missouri.

Many times, seniors who would qualify for the program never apply – either because of a stigma they see attached to government help or because they think they have too much income. Often, though, seniors who have worked all their lives and provided for others now face high medical and housing costs.

Those expenses can be deducted from income used to determine a SNAP benefit for people 60 and older. Director of Care Management Marilyn Gunter has led an effort to help more than 70 seniors make their applications for the SNAP Program, and the endeavor is continuing through February.

Sara Maria Jensen, SNAP Program Liaison, helps a client with a food stamp application.
Bus Driver Nolan Jackson helps Karen Renfrow off the bus after lunch at the Warrensburg Senior Center. Karen takes the bus to the center for lunch and an afternoon walk every weekday. “It’s the only way I have to get here. Without it, I wouldn’t have any way to get out.”

**Transportation**

Carole Burgess, of Warrensburg, gets a lift from OATS Bus Driver Nolan Jackson. Burgess uses the accessible bus to travel to her physical therapy appointments, grocery shopping, and the library.

Bill Long works with his son at Pack ‘N’ Mail in the mornings and then takes the OATS Bus to the Warrensburg Senior Center to have lunch and exercise. Without the OATS service, “I wouldn’t be able to go out,” Bill says. “I’d be home.”

Number of Riders: 6,903

Number of Rides: 55,201
Silver Haired Legislature

The restoration of state funding for home-delivered and congregate meals for older Missourians tops the Silver Haired Legislature priorities in 2015. Funding for programming for older Missourians has been an issue since Missouri made budget cuts in 2008.

Four other Silver Haired Legislature priorities are:
- An increase in programs and services provided by Area Agencies on Aging.
- The expansion of Medicaid eligibility from the current level to 138 percent of the federal poverty level.
- An increase in the MO HealthNet Allowable Asset Level to $2,000 for an individual and $4,000 for a couple.
- The retention of the Property Tax Credit known as the “Circuit Breaker.”

Care Connection sent a delegation representing the West Central Missouri to Silver Haired Legislature session in Jefferson City in October.

Much like its state counterpart, the Silver Haired Legislature met in committees and in regular session on the House and Senate Floor. Its legislative priorities are to be presented to the Missouri Legislature in 2015.

If you are interested in the SHL, call Lifestyles Specialist Vickie Whitsitt at 1-800-748-7826.

SHL Senate Delegates

Delegation Chairwoman Shirley D. Ross, of Lexington, representing Lafayette, Carroll, Chariton and Saline counties.

Nancy Maxwell, of Holden, representing Johnson, Pettis, Henry and Benton counties.

Len Redding, of Butler, representing Hickory, Bates, Cedar, Vernon and St. Clair counties.

SHL House Delegates

Edith Dilley, of Butler, representing Bates County.

Cynthia Smith, of Warsaw, representing Benton County.

Donald Brockmeier, of Carrollton, representing Carroll County.

Larry Pursley, of Stockton, representing Cedar County.

Pamela Tietjens, of Brunswick, representing Chariton County.

John Rotert, of Clinton, representing Henry County.

Ramona Jung, of Wheatland, representing Hickory and St. Clair counties.

Janice Powers, of Warrensburg, representing Johnson County.

Sarah Black, of Lexington, representing Lafayette County.

Elaine Bagnell, of Blackburn, representing Saline County.
Many of the Care Connection staff and volunteers are certified by CLAIM, the Missouri State Health Insurance Assistance Program to provide Medicare and Medicaid Counseling.

We provide these services through public presentations (including a game called Medicare Bingo) as well as one-on-one counseling to ensure that people have the right information as they enroll for Medicare insurance.

We can help people compare Part D prescription plans to decide which works best for their medication needs, as well as provide information on the differences in Medicare Advantage Plans, Original Medicare and Medicare Supplement Plans.

These free, unbiased and one-on-one Medicare counseling services are available from care managers, counselors and volunteers.

At the Stockton Senior Center, Bernita Thomas, at left, studies her Medicare Bingo card provided to her by CLAIM Counselor Stacey Gilkeson, who crafted the game as a way to help beneficiaries understand how the federal program works.
Insurance Marketplace

In FY 2014, we joined the effort to educate people and help them navigate the maze of the Missouri Health Insurance Marketplace. Lead Navigator Marilyn Gunter, Special Projects Coordinator Stacey Gilkeson, and Special Projects Director Rona McNally are steering this effort, one of the first for Care Connection that targets more than the aging population.

In 2013-14, some 8 million people of all ages signed up for the insurance nationally, and that number is expected to grow as the federal government penalties for the uninsured increase. The mission of this program is to help people understand the requirements, the tax credit benefits and the health coverage available through the Marketplace. This effort continues into the FY 2015.

SMP: Senior Medicare Patrol

Care Connection runs the Missouri Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) under the direction of Rona McNally and the volunteer coordination of Roary Hutt. The mission of the SMP is to empower and assist Medicare beneficiaries, their families, and caregivers to prevent, detect, and report healthcare fraud, errors, and abuse through outreach, counseling, and education.

Because this work often requires face-to-face contact, SMPs have recruited nearly 4,500 volunteers nationwide to support this effort. Our staff and volunteers help Medicare beneficiaries through group presentations, at community events, and on phone calls to the SMP help line. We also meet individually with clients.
As a non-profit agency that depends upon state and federal tax dollars, Care Connection for Aging Services prides itself on financial responsibility and careful stewardship of every dollar. We also depend on our local communities to match those funds nearly dollar for dollar.

Since 2008, government and taxpayer funding for senior services such as those we provide has decreased. However, we have strived to keep our levels of service the same.

Of our $7.6 million budget, about 50 percent comes from the local communities in the form of fundraisers, in-kind donations including volunteer services, contract revenues, county tax funding, and program income. Virtually all of our programs depend on volunteers.

Each of our 22 centers depends upon the generosity of its community to operate. Fundraisers including motorcycle rallies, dances, festivals, pie and quilt auctions, and dinners of fried chicken, tostadas, fish, and steak offer chances for people to support the centers. Without that support, centers would not be able to provide their services – including the vital delivery of thousands of meals to older people who otherwise might not be able to live independently. In FY 2014, we served 12,254 clients in our centers, in their homes and throughout the community.
Care Manager Roy Qualls says his most rewarding moments come when he installs a Personal Response System (PERS) that allows older people to remain in their homes. “Each request for PERS has unique circumstances due to individual and family needs at their home,” Roy said. He has helped people feel more secure as they recover at home after a major surgery; remain in their homes after a spouse dies; and return home from the hospital (rather than a nursing home), even though they may be a fall risk.

Home-Delivered Meal recipient Alice Smith, of Nevada, wrote this note of gratitude to Angie Daniels, former Vernon County Senior Center Coordinator: “Thank you for the preparation and the delivery of the meals. Thank you to anyone who has a part. This lets me stay in my own home. Thank you.”

Pettis County Care Manager Liz Kast says she was able to help an applicant increase her food stamp Supplemental Nutrition Assistance (SNAP) benefit from $15 to $132 a month by re-evaluating her application. Seniors who enroll in SNAP are allowed to deduct medical and housing expenses before declaring the income that makes them eligible.

Cathy, a senior center administrator in Union, shared the impact that an SMP (Senior Medicare Patrol) Fraud Fact had on a home-delivered meal recipient. “I just wanted to say thank you and to let you know our seniors are paying attention,” Kathy writes. “Our Home-Delivered Meals person, Pam, called some of our clients that were ready for re-assessments, to set up appointments. I had a call from one of the seniors asking if this was “an approved person,” as some of the fraud information sent out says to make sure you know who you are letting into your home. I was very proud of her for checking. … Just thought you’d like to know it is working.”