



Ohio Adult Care Facilities Association

SPECIAL EDITION
2020



National Alliance on Mental Illness

The State's Voice on Mental Illness

OUR MISSION

Our mission is to represent the adult care facilities industry in Ohio and advocate for the individuals with mental illness who live in these homes.





ADULT CARE FACILITIES SERVING THE SEVERELY MENTALLY DISABLED RECEIVE HELP

Terry Russell, Executive Director NAMI Ohio



During the corona-virus pandemic, housing the severely mentally disabled has been a difficult challenge. These individuals who live with illnesses so severe that they need residential supervision are at high risk of contracting the COVID-19 illness. Most are over the age of 50 and have a multitude of co-occurring illnesses. Additionally, these individuals struggle to understand the importance of social distancing, washing their hands and the dangers of being outside of the facility and interacting with others.

The individuals who operate these homes have faced a multitude of issues such as; access to mental health treatment during the crisis, ensuring medications are received, purchasing all of the needed items that were unavailable (cleaning supplies, PPE, toilet paper, etc.), and the additional issues faced when required to quarantine.

The Ohio Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services recognized early in March, during conversations with NAMI Ohio and the Ohio Adult Care Facilities Association, that these homes were in desperate need of help during this outbreak. The department has made available \$750,000 in special funding to support these homes. They provided these resources on two occasions, and that allowed each one of the 729 homes in the state of Ohio the ability to cover some of the additional costs that were created by the pandemic.

NAMI Ohio and the Ohio Adult Care Facilities Association have

advocated for these homes for the past 20 years and tried to help provide care to this very special population. The vast majority of the homes are located in distressed areas, and due to stigma, many communities will not allow these homes in their neighborhoods. More than 60% of all residents are African-American and more than 80% of the home operators are African-American. There is probably no other place that better demonstrates the disparities facing the minority community that are caused by institutional racism.

NAMI Ohio and the Ohio Adult Care Facilities Association started a fundraising campaign in late February/ early March and has been so appreciative of how many organizations and individuals contributed to this fund. 100% of all of the funds raised have gone directly to adult care facilities to help with staffing and the purchasing of PPE (masks, gloves, sanitizers, toilet paper, etc.) Thus far, each home has received supplies to help them get through this pandemic crisis.

We are especially grateful for the grant we received from the Ohio Housing Finance Agency because it was that grant inspired other organizations to participate in this life saving project.

Throughout this process, the Ohio adult care facility operators have continually voiced their appreciation for this assistance. Often, these homes have been left in shadows and not given the attention they deserve. These donations and the support they provided have shown how appreciative so many organizations and individuals are of the special care these homes provide every day.



Items Distributed

30,000 Gloves

50,000 Masks

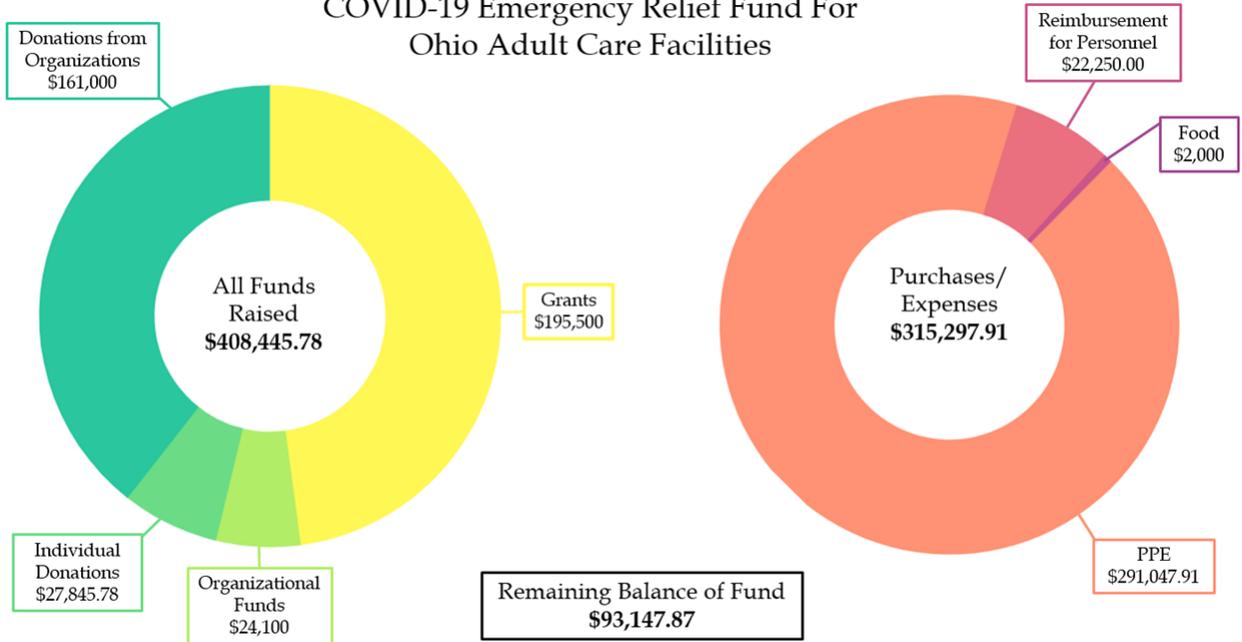
42,840 Bottles of Hand Sanitizer

70,000 Rolls of Toilet Paper

10,000 Cleaning Supplies

154 Thermometers

**COVID-19 Emergency Relief Fund For
Ohio Adult Care Facilities**



ACF Supply Revenue:

OHHMAS Grant	\$65,000.00
OHFA	\$50,000.00
Go Fund Me	\$13,642.78
Melissa's House Donation	\$14,203.00
OCCH	\$40,000.00
OACFA Funds	\$24,100.00
CareSource	\$10,000.00
United Healthcare	\$3,000.00
PhRMA	\$2,500.00
Anthem	\$25,000.00
L Brand Soap - donated	\$150,000.00
ODJFS Sanitizer - donated	\$5,000.00
COHHIO Hand Sanitizer - donated	\$5,000.00
Supply Donations - donated	\$1,000.00

Total Revenue \$408,445.78

ACF Supply Expenses

Soap	\$150,000.00
Toilet Paper	\$45,125.79
Hand Sanitizer	\$38,595.84
Cleaning Supplies	\$32,709.19
Reimbursement for Personnel Expenses	\$22,250.00
Thermometers	\$13,544.13
Gloves	\$5,805.16
Masks	\$5,267.80
Food for ACF	\$2,000.00

Total Expenses \$315,297.91



UNEXPECTED COSTS

NAMI Ohio and the Ohio Adult Care Facilities Association often voice our concerns about how the most severely mentally disabled in our state are treated. The adult care facilities industry was not started by the mental health system, but was started by a group of individuals taking in residents that once went to the state hospitals.

With the closures of the state hospitals 30 years ago, many adult care homes were created by individuals, many faith-based, to help these individuals who were unable to live independently in the community. The vast majority of these homes are located in distressed areas because of the discriminatory practice of “not in my neighborhood.” More than 80% of the home operators in this industry are African-Americans, and 60% plus of the residents are African-Americans. Although it is uncomfortable to say, it is true that institutional racism within our community mental health system has created the underfunding of these crucial resources.

Those of us working with the Ohio Adult Care Facilities Association see two types of homes. Most are adult care homes or family homes with 5 people or less. Many of these homes have live-in operators. We believe these homes to be models because they create a family atmosphere that cannot be duplicated elsewhere. The other group of homes are adult care facilities that house between 6-16 individuals. These homes require 24-hr supervision, and the vast majority of the residents in these homes have little or no family.

In February and March of this year, our world was hit with a pandemic that very few understood. We did recognize that this virus was extremely contagious and impacted African-Americans and those with underlying conditions at a higher rate than others and often led to more severe outcomes for these groups. We heard horror stories about deaths in our nursing homes and prisons, and congregate living became very high risk for the residents in all of these facilities. Again, because these homes have been marginalized for years, they did not receive the same urgency as other congregate living settings.

The Ohio Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services did recognize that the people living in these homes were in harm's way and they provided resources to each of the homes so that they could provide the safety precautions so desperately needed. NAMI Ohio and the Ohio Adult Care Facilities Association wrote grants, asked for donations, and advocated. We were overwhelmed with the compassion shown to this fundraising project. The intent of every dollar brought in was to provide personal protective equipment (PPE) for the 729 homes in the state of Ohio. The chart in this publication demonstrates the support we received.

One issue that we did not anticipate was that when this pandemic became such a crisis, many of the minimum wage employees of our adult care facilities (6-16) became so frightened that they would no longer come to work. An operator in northwest Ohio who operates two 16-bed facilities lost his entire staff. He and his significant other each took over one of the homes 24-hours a day for the month of February. NAMI Ohio and the Ohio Adult Care Facilities Association used \$22,000 of the monies that we received and helped a number of adult care facilities pay bonuses if a staff member would commit to staying through June, and in other cases allowed the staff member a \$2-per-hour raise through June. This little bit of money ensured that some of Ohio's severely mentally disabled were not alone during this pandemic. Although we cannot document it, there is little doubt that at certain points, some homes were below the required staffing. The PPE supplies have been a miracle.

Local Alcohol, Drug Addiction & Mental Health Services Boards, Emergency Management Agencies (EMA's), and others have also helped to provide some PPE to these homes; however, the vast majority of supplies that were provided came from the NAMI Ohio & Ohio Adult Care Facilities Association special fund. Home operators throughout the state of Ohio have been overwhelmingly grateful for the masks, gloves, hand sanitizers, cleaning supplies, thermometers, and other supplies that we were able to provide. Some have said we are the only group that provided them this type of support. NAMI Ohio and the Ohio Adult Care Facilities Association want to thank the organizations that contributed as well as those who gave individual donations. Clearly, these donations have saved lives.

As this pandemic continues, we may need your help again. We have approximately \$93,147.87 remaining in this special fund, and an order for additional cleaning supplies was just made. If we do not see this pandemic come to an end, and we cannot find a way to continue to provide PPE and resources to these homes, only bad things can happen.

It is our understanding that the Governor and the state are stockpiling PPE's and they will be distributed through the local EMA's. With a few exceptions, the EMA's have not seen these homes as the same urgency as nursing homes and other residential settings. These homes must be a priority.

These last few months have been more than challenging for all of us. We are all frightened by how this virus will ultimately impact the citizens of this state. For those of you that have helped, we cannot thank you enough. For those that want to help, please contact us at 614-224-2700 or namiohio@namiohio.org.

“HOW DO I FEED THEM?”

When the panic about food shortages hit, Eleanor Croley's first thought was for five men she cares for at DuBose Adult Care Facility.

“How do I feed them?”

Where would she get enough food, especially beef, which was in short supply?

The Covid-19 pandemic has caused many hardships, but Croley helped ease the burden by thinking ahead and buying a whole cow from a farmer in Indiana to feed the residents at her adult care facility in Cincinnati. She keeps large quantities of beef and other food stuffs in several freezers at her facility.

Needless to say, the men eat well, even in these hard times.

“It would be very difficult otherwise for me getting enough meals for my residents. There's no way I could get enough, running from place to place to shop.” Croley said she still has to work to get pork and chicken, but her long-time habit of planning ahead is paying off.

Croley and her late husband started DuBose Adult Care about 20 years ago; he passed away in 2008.

Her resourcefulness helped Croley fare better than some home operators, but she's grateful for the help provided by the state and by NAMI Ohio and the Ohio Adult Care Facilities Association, including donations of toilet paper, hand sanitizer, paper products

and cleaning supplies. “I have appreciated it and everything they've done. One of the biggest problems I have is getting paper products and cleaning supplies.”

Croley said she has to maintain rigid safety protocols to protect the men from catching the dangerous virus. “When the guys who go out come back in, they must have their temperature taken. We do a very rigorous cleaning all the time, all the things that people touch.”

Not all her residents understand the full danger of a pandemic, Croley said, but “they are doing pretty well with it. They have a nice place to live and nobody seems too stressed out about it.”

Croley, who is a registered nurse, said the people in her facility “live in my home and they become family. You don't want to see your family in bad situations. I've been caring

for people all of my life in one way or another. They are part of the family and that's the way we treat them.”

The shelves at grocery stores have been bare and when food can be found, there are quantity limits. “Where will our meals come from,” is a question asked by many owners of adult care facilities.

LIVES TURNED UPSIDE DOWN

Stay-at-home orders hit some Ohioans harder than others, like the man at Loving Care Assistance who for many years worked on the grounds crew for the Cleveland Indians.

Pandemic meant no baseball. And no baseball meant no job taking care of the Progressive Field, home to the Cleveland Indians.

Pearl Williams, the operator of the Loving Care Assistance adult care facility, said the pandemic has been tough for many of her residents whose lives have been turned upside down, or at least changed.

“We've had our ups and downs. The group I have here now is a pretty good group. I enjoy it,” Williams said. “People need somewhere to live and somewhere to lay their head. Sometimes I go to bed at night and scratch my head and say, ‘Why are you still doing this?’ But I know I signed up for it and they didn't.”

Williams has always enjoyed working with people in need, going back years ago to when she helped her cousin, Monique, who struggled with devastating disabilities that left her deaf and blind. “I was her babysitter for years. Working with her made me want to help other people,” said Williams. “I've loved working with people since I was a teenager.”

Williams looks after 12 residents, 10 men and two women, in her facility. It is a labor of love, Williams said with a laugh, because operating an adult care facility is not a money-maker. “I'm still waiting for a paycheck,” she said.

Williams will be the first to admit she didn't know what she was getting into when she started Loving Care Assistance about ten years ago. She decided to purchase the group home next door and apply to be a home operator. Most of Williams' residents are coping pretty well with the quarantine except for one man who has



Thousands of life-saving supplies





delivered to homes throughout Ohio





worked for years as a groundskeeper for the Cleveland Indians. The pandemic ended baseball so far, so the man is limited to going for walks for the time being.

NAMI Ohio and the Ohio Adult Care Facilities Association helped Williams by providing 96 rolls of toilet paper, hand sanitizer, gloves, masks and cleaning supplies. The state and local mental health

board also pitched in.

“It’s been very helpful. I appreciate all of the help we have received. With having so many people here I always bought in large quantities but things got limited. It was hard to tell people you can only get one roll of toilet paper.”

“I LOVE MY WORK AND I LOVE MY PEOPLE”

With its blooming flowers, spacious porch and welcoming dining room, it’s not hard to buy into Judy Schritter’s claim she runs the best adult care facility in Ohio.

The Pleasant Valley Group Home certainly lives up to its name.

The home that Judy and husband Don Schritter run in Lawrence County is located in the southern most point in Ohio, along the Ohio River and in sight of both Kentucky and West Virginia. The couple has been running Pleasant Valley for nearly 29 years. They care for eight women now, but can accommodate up to eleven.

“When somebody comes to Lawrence County to look at a group home, they bring them to mine,” Schritter said. “It’s the very best in the whole state. I keep it like it’s a private home.”

Schritter got in the group home business because of her mother-in-law, who operated a family home for years. “We don’t make a whole lot of money, but I love my work and I love my people. I fight for my people. When a doctor says they can’t do something, I say why?”

Coming from a family of 12 children, Schritter is used to being around lots of people. “They are just like family,” she said of her

residents. “We have birthday parties for them. I get really involved with families as much as possible. We try to take care of them the best we can.”

The Covid-19 pandemic caused some of the women to become very disappointed they couldn’t see their mental health care workers and go shopping. Now, the Schritter’s do the shopping for their residents. “We let them make a list and they can get pretty much whatever they want.”

But the Pleasant Valley women do understand the pandemic for the most part. Many struggle with being unable to go to church. “Some of them can’t handle it so we try not to talk about it too much.”

Like other operators, the Schritter’s are grateful NAMI Ohio and the Ohio Adult Care Facilities Association pitched in with the delivery of toilet paper, sanitizers and other products.

Schritter isn’t afraid to challenge case workers and doctors in defending the needs of her residents. “I totally love it. Sometimes you get people who are gonna save the world from their desk. But we live it, every day.”

Judy has worked hard to make her adult care facility not just a place to sleep and wait for the day to end, but a home for the women she cares for like family.



IT'S ALWAYS ABOUT THE PEOPLE

Operating a group home for those with mental health issues is never about the money. It's always about the people.

Arthaya Finley understands that because she's the rare person with a heart for people and a head for numbers. She knows that for all the time she and husband, Bob Finley, put into running Troy Residential Inc. in Cincinnati, they earn the grand sum of \$4.85 an hour. (By comparison, Ohio's minimum wage is \$8.70 an hour.)

But, like the vast majority of the 465 operators of Ohio's 729 adult care facilities, caring for the sickest of the sick mentally ill Ohioans, the Finleys aren't in it for the money. They're in it for the people they care for at the home they've been operating since 1995, licensed to handle five men.

The Covid-19 epidemic ravaging Ohio has made the challenges of operating a group home even harder. "We're struggling. We're scared. But we're grateful for the things that have been provided to us," Finley said.

"This thing has not gone away," she said of the pandemic now grinding into its fourth month. "I believe it's going to come back this fall with a vengeance."

Finley said she learned about caring for folks with mental health issues at the family dinner table. "From the time I was a child, my

father was a minister and he used to go to the Longview State Hospital (the first psychiatric hospital in Ohio, built in Cincinnati in 1856) and he would bring someone home to dinner with us. It really impressed me... Sometimes he would actually cry."

She is a tax preparer by profession, but has a long-time zeal for helping the mentally ill, largely due to her father's influence.

The current environment created by the pandemic ravaging the state is a "scary situation" for Finleys. She is 77 and he is 82, both are in the highest risk group should they contract Covid-19. "We didn't really have any of the personal protection equipment," she said. "I had a funny feeling about it. I became more worried and anxious about the situation. What are we going to do?"

Finley hired people to deliver supplies to her group home and pays an employee to take residents' temperatures. She said the delivery of much-needed gloves, masks, cleaning supplies and sanitizers that showed up on her porch one day was "such a blessing to us. The Ohio Adult Care Facilities Association and NAMI Ohio started making things available to us. We're on the front lines, too."

The men at Troy Residential are fed, cared for and protected, only occasionally venturing out for coffee. Their medications are delivered by mail. "Some of the really sick ones don't understand the enormity of what's going on," Finley said.

"We're struggling. We're scared. But we're grateful for the things that have been provided to us."

CRANMER NAMED NEW ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

Former NAMI affiliate director Lance Cranmer has been named the new Associate Director of the Ohio Adult Care Facilities Association.

"It is an exciting new challenge and a great opportunity to advocate for a community that needs a strong voice," said Cranmer, who stepped into the role on June 8. "I am looking forward to getting out and meeting the facility operators and residents and seeing their mission in action."

In August 2017 Cranmer was named the Executive Director of NAMI Southern Ohio, an affiliate located in Chillicothe, that served a five-county area including Highland, Fayette, Pickaway, Pike and Ross Counties. During that three-year stint, he took an affiliate that had struggled financially for years and turned it into one of the most successful rural affiliates in the state.

Prior to that he served as the Media and Public Relations Specialist for National Church Residences in Upper Arlington, OH, and also as a planner and grant writer for Community Action Commission of

Fayette County.

Cranmer also had a very successful 13-year career in print and broadcast journalism.

He possesses a bachelor's degree in journalism from Bowling Green State University and a master's degree in public relations from Kent State University. He resides in Chillicothe with his three children.

Cranmer can be reached at lance@namiohio.org.





WHERE ARE WE NOW?

Operators of congregate living homes for those living with mental illness in Ohio are still scared and struggling four months after the first reported COVID-19 death in the state.

Home operators who spoke to NAMI Ohio run the gamut from cautiously optimistic to horrified about what lies around the next corner for their residents, among the most vulnerable Ohioans in this unprecedented crisis. One home operator said she had to seek medication for anxiety for the first time in her life to cope with the stress of looking after residents during the pandemic, which hit Ohio in mid-March.

Despite the widespread risks of the disease, especially in congregate living settings, only one COVID-19-related death has been reported in an adult care facility.

Brandie Preston, who operates three mental health residential facilities in Toledo, said one of her residents died in her bedroom in March, and another person had to be hospitalized and placed on a ventilator. The resident is recovering and no longer needs the ventilator, but he is unable to walk because of complications of the disease, she said.

"This has been horrible. We've had a very rough time," Preston said. "There was panic from staff, and individuals with mental health issues, not understanding they can't do all the fun things they used to do."

"We've taken all the precautions. Everybody wears a mask all the same. But it's still scary every day."

"I have to keep going and do this every day," Preston said. "I have too many people who depend on me. I'm going to do it every day as long as I am able."

Mark Mayle, the operator of four congregate living facilities for 60 clients living with mental illness in Carroll County, said he cares for a very vulnerable population that is not always easy to manage.

"The virus threw some of our residents into total chaos. It was a real shocker. We scrambled. We had a hard time getting a lot of supplies," Mayle said.

His biggest fear, Mayle said, was what to do if a resident or staff member got sick from the virus. Fortunately, that hasn't happened so far.

Mayle said many of his residents have now adapted in the four months since the pandemic began. "Their lives have been in turmoil."

In Cincinnati, Pat Parker remains worried about how to get enough food and supplies for the 19 residents in her care. "I've had to go to different stores and get this and that. Some didn't have toilet paper. Their shelves were empty."

Parker said she resorted to homemade hand sanitizer until NAMI Ohio came through with donated supplies.

"Things are improved. They all wear masks when they walk to the store up the street," Parker said. "It's still so stressful... I'm hanging in there. I don't think about myself that often. I think about my residents."

Darryl Lumpkins, another Cincinnati home operator, said things have gotten better due to help from NAMI Ohio and the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services. But the burden is still on Lumpkins "since I am responsible for every resident. It's hard when you're responsible for somebody else's life."

Some residents had a hard time coping with rules on washing their hands, using sanitizer, and wearing masks, Lumpkins said. "It's been difficult, but it's much better now. So far, we've pulled through it."

Fraz Betts admits the strain of operating her Toledo group homes got to her at first. "I wasn't sleeping, and I was nervous all the time. I had to go out, but I didn't want to. I had to ask my doctor for something for my nerves for the first time in my life."

Betts said things are somewhat better now compared to the first few months after the pandemic hit. "It's still hard. I didn't want to go out, but I didn't have any choice."

Her biggest worry remains what she will do if one of her residents comes down with the virus.

This article was written by speaking with home operators who provide housing for the severely mentally disabled. They need all of our help!

Until this COVID-19 pandemic is over (the sooner, the better), we want and need to be able to continue to help the residents in these congregate living settings. If you or your organization would like to contribute to this cause, please contact NAMI Ohio at 614-224-2700 or namiohio@namiohio.org.

It appears there will be a significant need to provide Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and other supplies to these homes for the foreseeable future.

Any help you may be able to provide will help keep these lovely people safe!

Thank you!

(COVID-19)

Social Distancing This or That!

PREVENTION



INSTEAD OF THIS...

DO THAT.....

Only washing your hands on occasion, or just using water.



Wash your hands regularly! Use water and soap and wash for at least 20 seconds.

Sneezing into your hands (ew!).



Sneeze into your arm or a tissue.

Checking social media or cable news 24/7.



Continue to stay informed, but also disconnect on occasion. Try reading a new book or trying meditation. Mental health is important.

Going straight to the doctor or urgent care when you're feeling under the weather.



Always call your doctor or healthcare provider **FIRST** before going in.

Believing every rumor you see online or using non-reputable sources.



Use reputable sources! Get info from verified accouts from CDC, Ohio Department of Health, Governor Mike DeWine, local health departments, and verified media accounts.



MIKE DEWINE
GOVERNOR OF OHIO



Department
of Health

For more information go to
coronavirus.ohio.gov



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HOW TO BECOME AN OACFA MEMBER

As a member of the Ohio Adult Care Facilities Association, you will be at the forefront of ACF news and funding opportunities. Members of the Ohio Adult Care Facilities Association are seen as active participants in efforts to assure quality care, increase occupancy, and obtain resources to meet the needs of your residents. **By forming a collective voice for adult care facilities in Ohio, we can accomplish more than if we work alone.**

Upon receipt of your yearly \$100 dues, you will receive a plaque to display in your home indicating you are a member of our association. Each year thereafter, you will receive a year plate that shows your continuing membership.

To become a member of OACFA, please go to <http://www.ohioadultcarefacilitiesassociation.org/become-a-member> to access the membership application and return a completed copy to the address on the form. If you have any questions, please call **(614) 800-7863** for more information.

We look forward to your home becoming a member of our organization. Together, we can work to meet the expanding needs of adult care facilities in Ohio and improve residents' lives.



If you would like to become a member, feel free to contact OACFA at 614-800-7863