



# DHS News

Newsletter of the Allegheny County  
Department of Human Services



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## Five questions with Brian Heywood

Brian is a care management supervisor in the Area Agency on Aging (AAA). He can be reached at [brian.heywood@alleghenycounty.us](mailto:brian.heywood@alleghenycounty.us) or 412-350-5725.

### **1. What was your path to Allegheny County/DHS?**

In 1990, I came to DHS as a family services caseworker in the newly formed Central Regional Office (CRO). In 1992, I came to AAA as a caseworker 2 in the Domiciliary Care program. I left DHS in 1998 to work with the enrollment agency as medical assistance went to managed care. In 1997, I went to DHS partner Mercy Behavioral Health where I supervised the Renaissance Center psych-social rehabilitation program. I returned to AAA in 2003 as manager of the assessment unit, where I helped to create the nursing home transition program. Summer 2019, as AAA transitioned, is when I began my present reassignment.

### **2. Tell us a bit about the work you do.**

I am fortunate to supervise several programs, including [Domiciliary Care](#), [Senior Companions](#) (link opens as PDF) and [Accelerated Support to Older Persons \(ASOP\)](#). More recently, I have begun conducting extensive community outreach to help AAA re-engage with many communities who we feel will benefit from knowing more about aging services, such as veterans, immigrants and internationals, LGBTQ individuals, and other communities which may be underserved.

I also oversee a new federal grant that will help us to better educate and provide supports and services around the topics of domestic and sexual violence among seniors. This funding from the Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) is a three-year, federal grant which has a goal of educating the community on the realities of domestic and sexual violence in the community, to create or enhance existing services to address the issue, and to increase accountability for offenders. This is a far-reaching grant in which AAA partners with a memorandum of understanding team which includes the Allegheny County Police, the district attorney's office, and the Center for Victims.

### **3. How does your work help to support DHS's mission and goals?**

Both the Senior Companion program and Dom Care use existing community resources to benefit county residents. The community aspects to those programs are welcome

elements to services such as ours which often lean on the efforts of our qualified professional staff to serve the public. While ASOP is relatively new, we feel that it will provide needed benefits to elder individuals who may need assistance following their experiences with the legal system.

***4. What most excites you about your work?***

The initial phase of the OVW grant will work to extensively engage the involvement of as many human services, law enforcement, and judicial agencies to address violence prevention and support. Local agencies should look forward to hearing from us to participate in the coordinated community response effort we are working on conducting in the fall of 2020.

***5. What is most important thing DHS staff should know about your role?***

I consider myself fortunate in the systems knowledge that I have gained across DHS (I also participate on AAA's speakers bureau and DHS's inclusion committee). My experiences and willingness to participate in a variety of our efforts I believe leave me better equipped to provide better services to the individuals we serve. As a supervisor, I feel responsible for helping to increase staff knowledge and empowerment so that our consumers' path to services can be cleared from barriers.