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PASSPORT – Ohio's Home Care Medicaid Program

What Is The PASSPORT Program?

PASSPORT stands for **P**re-**A**dmission **S**creening **P**roviding **O**ptions and **R**esources **T**oday. PASSPORT offers home health and community–based services (HCBS) to individuals as an alternative to institutionalization or nursing home care. PASSPORT is funded with state and federal funds under the Medicaid HCBS Waiver program.

What Services Does PASSPORT Provide?

The PASSPORT program provides services to an eligible individual including: personal care; adult day care; alternative meals; home care attendant; respite care; homemaker services; home-delivered meals; nutritional consultation; home maintenance and chore services; home modification; home medical equipment and supplies; personal emergency response system; social work or counseling; and waiver nursing.

Who Provides The PASSPORT Program Services?

PASSPORT contracts with home care providers certified by the Ohio Department of Aging to provide services to eligible individuals. You are assigned a PASSPORT case manager to make sure you are being safely maintained in the community. The case manager monitors your health and adjusts your plan of care to meet your needs.

How Do I Become Eligible For PASSPORT?

You must be 60 or older and live or plan to live in a non-institutional community setting. You must require a nursing facility level of care and be at risk of institutionalization. You must have an attending physician who will approve your agreed upon care plan. Your service needs must not exceed $14,700/month.

What Are The Financial Eligibility Requirements For PASSPORT?

PASSPORT financial eligibility rules are in many ways the same as those of the Institutional Medicaid program that pays for services provided in a nursing facility. See Pro Seniors' *Institutional Medicaid* pamphlet for a full explanation of Institutional Medicaid's income and resource rules. Below is a short summary of the financial eligibility rules.

Income: Only your individual gross monthly income is considered. The income of other family members is not counted. If your gross monthly income exceeds $2,829 (2024), you must establish a Qualified Income Trust to be PASSPORT eligible.

Resources: You can only have $2,000 in countable resources. However, some items, such as your home, one vehicle, regardless of value, an irrevocable pre-need burial contract, and burial plots are excluded when determining PASSPORT eligibility.

If you are married, and you and your spouse have less than $32,828 (2024) in countable resources (this includes the $2,000 the applicant is allowed to keep), then you are PASSPORT eligible.

If together, your countable resources exceed $32,828, then Medicaid will allocate your resources between you and your spouse via a formula and any countable resources allocated to you, the PASSPORT applicant, must be spent-down to $2,000 before you can be resource eligible.

Transferring assets for less than their fair market value within 60 months of applying for PASSPORT, may result in your PASSPORT services not being covered for a number of months depending on the gifted asset's value.

Do I Pay Anything For PASSPORT Services?

Your financial responsibility for PASSPORT home health care is calculated by deducting from your gross monthly income a personal needs allowance of $1,839/month (2024), medical insurance premiums and unpaid medical expenses. The remainder, if any, is your patient liability, or what you must pay.

Can My Spouse Keep Some Of My Income To Help Pay Expenses?

Yes, if your spouse's income is low enough. Your spouse's monthly income is subtracted from the total of the Minimum Monthly Maintenance Need Allowance (MMMNA), $2,465 (7/1/23) plus the calculated Excess Shelter Allowance (ESA), if any. The ESA is the amount that your spouse's housing costs exceed $739.50 (7/1/23). The MMMNA can be increased to a maximum of $3,853.50 (2024) via a State Hearing if exceptional circumstances exist such as catastrophic illness or home repairs.

How Do I Apply For PASSPORT?

To apply for PASSPORT, contact your local Area Agency on Aging office. In Butler, Clermont, Clinton, Warren and Hamilton counties contact the COA of Southwestern Ohio at 1-513-721-1025.

Who Else Pays For Home Health Care?

Home health care payment options include:

a) County tax levy services (Hamilton County has a home care program called ESP funded by a tax levy);
b) Private pay (some nonprofit providers offer a sliding fee, based on income);
c) Long-term care insurance and some group health care insurance policies may provide services; and
d) Medicare coverage of skilled home care is available to Medicare-eligible persons.

How Do I Become Eligible For Medicare Home Health Care?

Medicare will pay the cost of medically needed skilled services, home health aide services, medical supplies and equipment and medical social services if:

a) Your care requires part-time or intermittent skilled nursing, physical, occupational or speech therapy;
b) A physician/health care provider certifies that you need home health services, and
c) You are homebound.

To be considered homebound, you must be normally unable to leave home without the aid of an assistive device (such as a wheelchair) or the help of another person. See Pro Seniors' Medicare *Home Health Care Benefits* pamphlet for more information

What Can I Do If My PASSPORT Application Is Denied?

If your application for PASSPORT is denied, you can appeal the decision in writing or by calling the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services within 90 days of the date the notice was mailed. If your PASSPORT services are reduced or ended you must request a state hearing within 15 days of the date the notice was mailed in order for your PASSPORT services to continue while your appeal is pending. After the state hearing, further administrative appeal and court review are available.

Is Help Available To Appeal PASSPORT Decisions?

Yes. Ohio residents age 60 or older can contact Pro Seniors at (800) 488-6070 for help regarding their PASSPORT denials, reductions or terminations. Pro Seniors can provide information, advice, representation and/or referrals to Ohioans who wish to appeal their PASSPORT cases.

Pro Seniors helps older Ohioans solve legal and long-term care problems and fight Medicare fraud. Our Legal Helpline provides free legal information and advice for Ohio residents aged 60 and older.

This fact sheet provides general information, not legal advice. The law is complex and changes frequently. Before you apply this information to a particular situation, call Pro Seniors' free Legal Helpline or consult an attorney in elder law.

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