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# Congressman Dennis J. Kucinich

*Ohio's 10th Congressional District*

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Contact: Vic Edgerton (202) 225-5871

## **Kucinich Opposes Privatization of Ohio PASSPORT Program**

### **Elderly and Low Income Ohioans Would Lose Under Plan**

Washington, Dec 19 -

Congressman Dennis J. Kucinich (OH-10) and U.S. Representatives Fudge, Ryan, Kaptur, Sutton, and Senator Brown sent a letter to Governor John R. Kasich requesting that the successful Ohio PASSPORT program for low-income seniors and disabled persons not be privatized.

Kucinich led the effort with his colleagues in Congress to write Kasich upon learning that the state administration plans to submit proposals to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services for approval to restructure Medicaid to the detriment of seniors and disabled individuals on the PASSPORT program.

Ohio PASSPORT provides long-term care and support to Medicaid-eligible individuals in need in their own homes as a lower-cost alternative to nursing home care. Federally-mandated Area Agencies on Aging have successfully administered the growing Ohio PASSPORT program for over twenty years.

“Despite their expertise and skill in operating long-term care alternatives, the Ohio Governor’s administration is planning to restructure Ohio Medicaid in favor of corporate managed care alternatives. Such a switch would have a devastating effect on the quality of care received by Ohio PASSPORT participants, and it must be stopped,” said Kucinich.

The text of the letter is as follows:

December 16, 2011

The Honorable John R. Kasich  
Governor of Ohio  
77 South High Street  
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Dear Governor Kasich:

It has recently come to our attention that your administration plans to seek approval from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services in the coming months to consolidate five current Medicaid waivers<sup>[1]</sup> and to approve a Medicaid Integrated Care Delivery System. While we recognize that there is room to make service delivery more efficient under the current waivers, we are concerned that Area Agencies on Aging would lose their role as PASSPORT Administrative Agencies under the new plan.

The twelve Area Agencies on Aging in Ohio, each with multi-county service areas, have administered Ohio PASSPORT continuously for over twenty years. They have developed into hubs that serve the complex needs of the elderly in both efficient and quality ways. Through their public and private aging services networks, these organizations have earned a stellar record in reducing costs of long-term care to taxpayers by giving at-risk older and disabled persons the choices and supports needed to allow them to stay in their homes. Since the inception of Ohio PASSPORT, the ratio of persons in nursing homes to those receiving community-based care has decreased from 90:10 to 58:42<sup>[2]</sup> with Area Agencies on Aging at the helm.

Area Agencies on Aging in Ohio have well-established working relationships with health care and social service providers, including hospitals, nurses, rehabilitation specialists, senior centers, municipal offices on aging, community development corporations, and other organizations that serve the elderly. They are the primary "front door" (screening, intake, assessment, information, and referral) and care coordinators for seniors and the disabled. Additionally, they are the entities charged with implementing the federally-mandated Aging and Disability Resource Networks and administering the federal Older Americans Act funds for transportation, home-delivered meals, congregate meals, personal care, and supportive services.

The Ohio PASSPORT program continues to be a natural fit for Area Agencies on Aging. We encourage you to maintain the important role that Area Agencies on Aging play in the Ohio PASSPORT program in any proposed waiver restructuring efforts. Thank you for your attention to this matter and for your service.

Sincerely,

Dennis J. Kucinich  
Member of Congress

Marcia L. Fudge  
Member of Congress

Tim Ryan  
Member of Congress

Marcy Kaptur  
Member of Congress

Betty Sutton  
Member of Congress

Sherrod Brown  
United States Senator

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<sup>[1]</sup> PASSPORT, Assisted Living, Choices, Ohio Home Care, and Transitions

<sup>[2]</sup> Source: "Ohio's Progress Toward a Unified Long-term Care Budget," Ohio Department of Aging, December 2010