

## **Narrative Proposal**

### **A statement of your interest in serving older adults involved with Adult protection Services.**

Axis Health System (AHS) is interested in providing services to older adults served by Adult Protective Services in Archuleta County to enhance, improve and expand the ability of APS to investigate abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

In normal circumstances, isolation can increase the risk of depression, anxiety, and suicide. According to the National Institute on Aging (NIA), older adults who live alone are especially vulnerable during this time. Of the one in three older adults who live alone, many have chronic health problems. In 2017 and 2018, 60% of suicides across the region were adults over 50 (Colorado Violent Death Reporting System, 2020). NIA research has linked social isolation and loneliness to higher risks for various physical conditions, including high blood pressure, heart disease, obesity, a weakened immune system, and even death. In the current pandemic environment where social isolation, fear, and stress are having a real impact, it is even more critical that we deliver services to the older adult population to minimize lasting effects and keep people from reaching the point of crisis. In rural areas where people have a strong sense of independence, being confined to home and reliant on others can be a disorienting lifestyle adjustment.

### **The services you plan to provide, the assessment process, and how you will provide them.**

AHS will provide social supports and activities for APS clients in their homes or the community weekly for approximately two hours per week. AHS will hire a qualified individual to provide these services in Archuleta County. The program will be under the direction of Anne DiZenzo, Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) with over 15 years of experience in serving older adults and dually-diagnosed individuals with intellectual disabilities and mental health issues.

AHS will provide supportive services that include documentation of screening for appropriateness of services and ongoing interactions. The AHS team member will help individuals access services such as medical, dental, and therapy as indicated and other community support and resources. The home visitor can help APS program participants improve their quality of life by providing accessible healthcare and supportive services in an elder-friendly community. AHS is committed to providing safe care and all employees will follow AHS Policy and Procedures related to pandemic safety measures. This includes masking, handwashing, and other COVID-19 safety precautions and measures taken for the safety of staff members and community members respectively.

### **A description of your philosophy, values, and service approaches toward providing the indicated service for the individuals you serve.**

Archuleta County Department of Human Services Companion/Home Visitation Provider for Older Adults  
Served by APS RFP

AHS' work with older adults aims to promote independence and dignity for the aging population, including those with physical, cognitive, and behavioral disabilities, by providing affordable and coordinated health care services. AHS has historically been at the forefront of innovation and has led or been a part of game-changing work to improve the health and well-being of the communities we serve.

AHS provides an individualized approach to support patients of all ages, races, ethnic backgrounds, and economic levels to access care. Predominant minority groups include people who identify as Native American and Latino/Hispanic. Very low-income white residents are the largest population served. Over 70% of AHS patients are un/underinsured, publicly insured, and/or very low income. All of these community members experience significant health disparities and a broad spectrum of challenging health conditions.

AHS provides specialized care for older adults, such as Medicare Annual Wellness Visits, chronic condition management, care navigation, social determinants of health screening, depression, and anxiety screening, integrated behavioral health services, as well as oral health care services for patients insured by Medicare through our sliding-fee scale option. For older adults, the integrated care approach has proven helpful in supporting patients in initially connecting with BH services when needed, reducing the stigma that can exist in accessing these services through traditional outpatient settings. During the COVID-19 pandemic, medical and Behavioral Health services have become even more critical for supporting the safety and well-being of older adults in the community.

AHS team members understand that older adults have medical and mental health issues that are often intertwined. Older adults often face mobility and transportation issues and may have complex medical challenges, overwhelming. Home visitation programs can help older adults concretely address issues to help reduce complexity. AHS's connection to community resources can help older adults solve day-to-day challenges, like navigating tax services, accessing Meals on Wheels, connecting with caretakers for pets, and other tasks that may feel too big to handle.

**Any other information to describe how your services will meet the needs and enhance the lives of the individuals served in this program.**

Older adults can face challenges, including ambulatory and cognitive limitations, independent living limitations, and self-care limitations. These challenges increase the risk of depression, anxiety, opioid addiction, and suicide. Research demonstrates that seniors under-utilize behavioral health and other services for many reasons, including lack of access, stigma, and shame. When isolated seniors don't seek needed care, their well-being decreases, and healthcare costs increase.

**Experience, Resume, References**

AHS has extensive experience providing services to older adults.

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Anne DiZenzo will serve as the new Peer Support position supervisor that will serve Archuleta County APS clients. In addition to Anne DiZenzo's expertise in serving older adults through the *Senior Reach* Program, she has provided behavioral therapy and psychotherapy to individuals with traumatic brain injuries, autism, dementia, and various significant mental health issues for the past fourteen years. She is skilled in providing support to teams and clients in individual and group settings.

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**Cost**

AHS will utilize the funds in accordance with the Elder Justice Act Section 2042(b) for APS programs. Hourly services, at the rate of \$25.00 per hour (which includes salary, benefits and fringe) will be submitted for monthly billing and AHS will be available approximately 2 – 8 hours per week. AHS will not exceed \$10,000, unless mutually agreed upon by Archuleta DHS and AHS.