



2025 ANNUAL REPORT

# Better Care. Better Aging.

Center for  
Better Aging 



HTC  
Healthcare Transformation  
Collaboratives



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Communities across the country are grappling with how to support a growing older adult population within systems that were not designed for longevity, continuity, or coordination. The Center for Better Aging was created in response to that reality, with a clear focus on building care models that are durable, person-centered, and rooted in community.

This annual report reflects a year of steady progress toward that goal. It captures the work of strengthening systems, aligning partners, and translating vision into execution at a time when healthcare and social service networks are under increasing strain. More than a summary of activity, it tells the story of what is possible when care is designed around people rather than programs.

The Center for Better Aging serves older adults across Chicago's South Side through an integrated model designed to address longstanding health inequities and a life expectancy gap of more than twenty years between South Side communities and more resourced areas of the city. Anchored at St. Bernard Hospital and implemented in collaboration with trusted healthcare and community organizations, our work focuses on reducing barriers, improving continuity of care, and ensuring older adults receive the support they need across settings. This is not a short-term initiative. It is a long-term commitment to strengthening how care is delivered and experienced.

What makes this work different is not any single service, but how the system operates as a whole. The Center for Better Aging functions as a coordinating backbone, aligning clinical care, social support, and community partnerships into one integrated model. Data and accountability are paired with trust and relationships, ensuring care is both measurable and human, and designed to respond to real-life needs.

Throughout this report, you will see evidence of reach, utilization, and systems built to support long-term impact. These measures matter. They demonstrate progress, stewardship, and the capacity to responsibly expand this model to reach more older adults. But behind every data point is a person who

was able to access care more easily, receive support sooner, or feel seen during a vulnerable moment. That human impact is what grounds our work and guides our decisions.

This past year was focused on strengthening foundations. We aligned partners, refined workflows, and invested in the infrastructure required to operate with quality, accountability, and sustainability. These efforts are not always visible, but they are essential to building a model that can endure and grow responsibly.

This work would not be possible without the deep commitment of our community partners. From healthcare providers and social service organizations to senior buildings, faith institutions, and neighborhood-based groups, our partners bring trust, insight, and proximity that no single organization can replicate. Their collaboration ensures this model remains grounded in community realities and responsive to the people it is designed to serve.

As you read this report, I invite you to see it not only as a reflection of progress, but as an example of what is possible when care is designed around people and strengthened through partnership. The need for coordinated community-rooted care for older adults will continue to grow. The Center for Better Aging is committed to meeting that need with intention, accountability, and a model built to endure.

I am deeply grateful to our Board of Directors, care teams, staff, community partners, and supporters whose leadership and dedication make this work possible. Thank you for taking the time to learn about the Center for Better Aging and the community we serve.

With appreciation,



**Estrelitta Harmon**  
Executive Director  
Center for Better Aging



## Letter From the Executive Director

## Mission Snapshot

### Our Mission

To transform health outcomes, nurture well-being, and reduce inequities for adults over 50 in Chicago's Greater South Side community through whole-person care.

### Our Purpose

To empower people to age well with confidence and independence.

### Our Promise

To provide comprehensive and compassionate care for older adults wherever they are on their aging journey.

### CBA in the News

Follow our work in and out of the community at [centerforbetteraging.org/news-resources](https://centerforbetteraging.org/news-resources)



## CBA Foundations

### What is the Center for Better Aging (CBA)?

The Center for Better Aging (CBA) sets a new standard of care for Chicago's South Side. Incorporated in 2022 following a comprehensive community needs assessment led by St. Bernard Hospital, CBA was shaped by direct alignment with residents, healthcare providers and community and faith-based organizations. That fact-finding process identified critical gaps in specialty care, particularly for adults over age 50, and underscored the urgent need for coordinated, age-focused services on the South Side.

In June 2023, CBA formally launched as an Illinois Healthcare Transformation Collaborative (HTC) anchored at St. Bernard Hospital to help older adults navigate a fragmented, rushed, and impersonal system of care. The HTC program, created by state law and administered by the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services, supports locally integrated networks of health and social service providers working to reduce care gaps and healthcare disparities, expand access to community-based and preventive care, and address health-related social needs. CBA is the only center in the region dedicated exclusively to the unique physical, social, and emotional needs of adults 50+. Its core mission is to provide comprehensive and compassionate care for older adults wherever they are on their aging journey.

The organization's primary differentiator is its innovative "All in One Healthcare Hub" model, which employs a **whole person** care approach. This integrated strategy seamlessly blends essential services including primary care, urgent care, a geriatric certified Emergency Department (GEDA), diagnostics, and pharmacy services into a single, convenient ecosystem to address the complex and intertwined needs of older adults.

**Hear from Dionne** to learn more about her experience with CBA.

### Why is the Center for Better Aging important?

Chicago has a twenty-year gap in life expectancy between neighborhoods—the largest in any major city. This number has widened due to the COVID-19 pandemic. CBA serves as a champion for older adults who have too often been left behind by the healthcare system. We believe that older adults can live longer and healthier lives when surrounded by coordinated and compassionate care.

### What does the Center for Better Aging do?

CBA builds and maintains an ecosystem of partners to care for older adults by supporting them to stay active, independent, and connected.

- **Clinical Expertise:** Geriatric specialists who listen longer and dig deeper.
- **Resource Navigation:** Social workers who help members navigate housing, food access, and insurance.
- **Social Connection:** A community hub for fitness, education, and friendship to combat isolation.

### Who does the Center for Better Aging serve?

CBA's system of care serves twenty-two ZIP Code areas on Chicago's South Side. We serve older adults with health issues including heart, brain, and mental health conditions.

**75% Medicaid recipients**

**20% Medicare participants**

**5% Self-pay clients**

## CBA Core Pillars in Action

### New Tools for Compassionate Care

CBA bridges clinical care, behavioral health, and social supports into a first-of-its-kind aging model in Chicago created through the State of Illinois' Healthcare Transformation Collaborative program.

- Integrated clinical care anchored at St. Bernard Hospital, including community-based wraparound services.
- Enhanced digital infrastructure with a focus on enabling data, tech, and analytics capabilities to improve the quality of care and provide values-based care integration.

### A New Health Ecosystem for the South Side

More than 160,000 older adults on the South Side of Chicago experience preventable health challenges driven by chronic disease, functional decline, and fragmented care systems. CBA builds a community health ecosystem to proactively address health concerns.

- Addresses wellness needs with a focus on closing gaps and improving well-being and ability for South Siders to age in their homes and communities.
- Established a Medicare “safe haven” with an independent licensed insurance broker available Monday - Saturday from 9am until 5pm for face-to-face benefits support – walk-ins welcome!

### A Team of Experts Who Care

Chronic conditions like diabetes, hypertension, and cognitive decline can appear a decade earlier in underserved communities. Our team of experts works together under one roof to serve older adults in the community.



Addressed shortage of clinical providers with the clinical expertise to focus on the unique needs of aging adults by recruiting and training eighteen providers in 2025.



Care teams engage in daily huddles in order to discuss participant changes in condition and status, and proactively address upcoming patient events and concerns.



Patients receive access to individualized care from a physician, social worker, pharmacist, and even dietician, all in the same visit - a model which supports care coordination.



### Better Aging, Together

Whole-person care for older adults can improve the quality of care and patient outcomes by consistently coordinating care, and addressing health-related social needs (HRSN) such as housing stability and food security.

- **CBA's 1st Intergenerational Service Project:** Together with children and their parents, CBA assembled more than 350 care packages, delivered them to local senior buildings, and provided education during Open Enrollment.
- **CBA Clinical Team's 1st HRSN Fair:** CBA collaborated with key partners to help increase awareness of social needs and help provide direct access to resources.

### A New Era for St. Bernard

St. Bernard Hospital continues to innovate and transform into a premier care institution on Chicago's South Side.

- **A Grade Safety Rating** from the Leapfrog Group demonstrating ongoing commitment to the quality of care consistently provided.
- **New Geriatric Certified Emergency Department (GEDA)**, first of its kind, and the only designated ER on the South Side of Chicago.

## Trust is Our Treatment. Community is our Care Setting.

Dear Center for Better Aging,

I want to thank you for caring for me and bringing me back to life. When I came to the clinic I was on fourteen different medications, and I didn't know why. Thanks to Dr. Mahajan and Dr. Z I'm down to seven medications and feeling better than ever.

From the time I check in until I leave everyone is warm and friendly. I am asked about social needs, how I feel, or if I need anything, and I mean anything. I never knew that we shouldn't clean our ears with Q-Tips or bobby pins because this is what I have always done. I was explained why I shouldn't and the damage that can happen within the ear canal that I didn't know about. For the first time I had my ears cleaned by NP Williams and it was different, but I felt good afterwards.

I have been to other senior clinics; however, none have compared to the service and compassion that I receive at the Center for Better Aging. I am listened to, cared for, and know that I am part of a family that wants me to be here for another 88 years.

In this day and time, we must have a place that cares for older adults and know what we need and how to deliver, and that place is the Center for Better Aging.

Thank you,

Benni Lewis

*Testimonial submitted by CBA member Benni Lewis in March 2025.*



## CBA Key Program Highlights

### Improving Safety and Outcomes for Older Adults in the ER

A brand new Geriatric Certified Emergency Department (GEDA) including a new ambulatory clinic for older adults, opened at St. Bernard in 2025. This is the only GEDA on the South Side of Chicago.



#### Improved Safety and Outcomes:

Standardized geriatric screenings identify risks, preventing adverse events, and promoting better health for older adults.



#### Tailored Environment:

Physical changes, like a non-slip floor, better lighting, and available assistive devices make the Emergency Department safer and more comfortable for older adults.



#### Commitment to Older Adults:

This certification demonstrates our commitment to prioritizing high-quality care to our target audience.



#### Lower Healthcare Costs:

GEDA can prevent complications and lead to more efficient resources being provided with patients directly and within the community.



#### Better Care Coordination:

Trained teams ensure smoother transitions from the Emergency Department to inpatient care, home, or rehab, reducing recurrence.



#### Complex Care Focus:

Older adults can have multiple, interconnected issues. A GEDA equips healthcare teams to handle these complexities beyond typical emergencies.



#### Readmissions Reduction:

Through patient education, better care coordination, and the proactive prevention of chronic and acute illness, the care of older adults is more effective and sustainable.



#### Support for Caregivers:

GEDA connects patients with the right partners in our network, providing more support to full-time caregivers.

## Community Wellness and Impact

Featured nationally by America's Essential Hospitals as a model for healthy aging and whole-person care in safety-net communities.

- **18,500+ older adults and caregivers** have been served since launch through clinical care, screenings, wellness events, and caregiver education across Chicago's South Side.
- **Thousands of wellness screenings** and HRSN interventions conducted, deepening community reach via co-hosted Alzheimer's conferences and education in senior centers, churches, libraries, and community hubs.
- **2,000+ patient visits delivered**, maintaining a 70%+ show rate and improving continuity of care.
- **Expanded dementia education** through the Empowered Caregivers series, community workshops with the Kelly Library, and Memory Cafes across multiple neighborhoods.
- **More than 600 members** have enrolled with the Center for Better Aging since the clinic launched in July 2024.
- **Expanded partnerships** with the Southwest Regional Senior Center (DFSS) and Chicago Housing Authority (CHA) senior buildings to deepen engagement and education outreach.
- **230+ community events** hosted, tripling engagement year-over-year and expanding reach through churches, libraries, and senior buildings.
- **Two new initiatives** — the Caregiver Support Program (CVS Health Foundation) and Social Isolation Outreach Program — improve caregiver well-being and social connectedness.
- **More than 380 older adults** participated in fall-prevention and mobility programs, with 141 completing personalized fitness assessments; data revealed 77% were sedentary, driving new activity programs.
- **On-site Medicare education** and real-time benefits guidance in partnership with the Chicago Department of Aging.
- **More than 2,000 clinic visits** in 2025, maintaining a 70% show rate and strengthening continuity of care for older adults across the South Side.
- **More than \$20,000 in year-to-date Meds-to-Beds savings**, generated by filling and delivering discharge medications at the bedside to reduce unfilled prescriptions, prevent avoidable readmissions, and lower cost burdens for older adults.

**Hear from Willa** to learn more about her experience with CBA.

## Partner with Us

### Strong Partnerships Inside and Outside the Exam Room

The Center for Better Aging is a multi-sector collaborative that includes some of Chicago's longest serving safety net providers. This collaborative includes more than 40 organizations with significant community reach and case management expertise in serving the hardest to reach populations including uninsured, Medicaid, and Medicare enrolled.

CBA was established in 2022 after St. Bernard Hospital conducted a needs assessment engaging with residents, healthcare providers, community, and faith-based organizations. Fact-finding identified a community need to address gaps in specialty care, and specifically care oriented to those over age 50.

**Hear from one of our partners.**



## Healthcare Transformation Collaborative (HTC) Partners



**St. Bernard Hospital**  
Comprehensive inpatient and outpatient medical and behavioral health services, providing care since 1904.



**Chicago Commons**  
Adult day care and home care, serving communities since 1894.



**Chicago State University**  
Workforce development, serving the public since 1867.



**Smyl Fitness Rx**  
Tech-enabled screening for fall prevention and fitness.



**KemeticHlth**  
Risk assessment, care plans and care coordination.

Visit [centerforbetteraging.org](https://centerforbetteraging.org) to view a full partnership list.

For partnership opportunities, send us a note via our [contact us form](#).

## CBA Leadership

### Center for Better Aging Team

Estrelitta Harmon, Executive Director

**Penny Wilson Hill**, Director of Strategic Partnerships and Community Engagement

**Tracy Thomas**, Director of Population Health and Care Innovation

**Nubia Chaidez**, Director of Regulatory Operations

**Nyree Essence Orleana Modisette**, Executive Operations Manager

**Robert Aldrete**, Director of Member Engagement and Growth

**Nina Smith**, Human Resources Generalist

### Board of Directors

**Charles Holland**, President

**Dr. Terrance Walless**, Secretary

**Dr. Joseph West**, Finance Chair

**Estrelitta Harmon**, Director

**Erica M. Collins**, Director

**Dr. Elmer Gentry**, Director

**Mark L. Smith**, Community Member

*Nila Diab served as Director through November 2025*

### Community Advisory Council

The Community Advisory Council ensures our work stays community-driven, inclusive, and responsive. We welcome new members who want to make a difference.

Darren Martin

Brianna Hobbs

Treasyri Williams Wood

Diane Glenn

Aldine Wilson

Kawana Dudley

Phanessa Ingram

Marva Arnold

Nancy Edwards

Lemali Vargas

David Anderson

Sharon Pincham

Shari Lewis

# Financial Summary

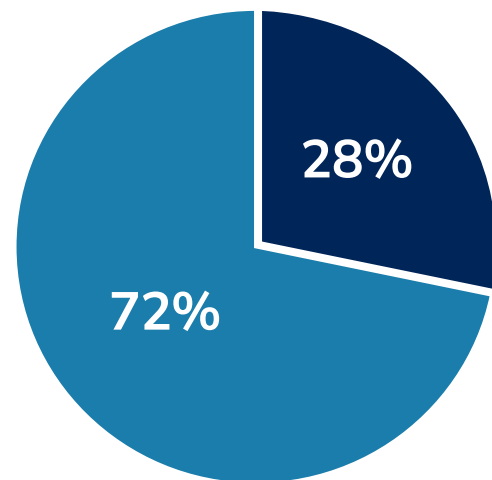
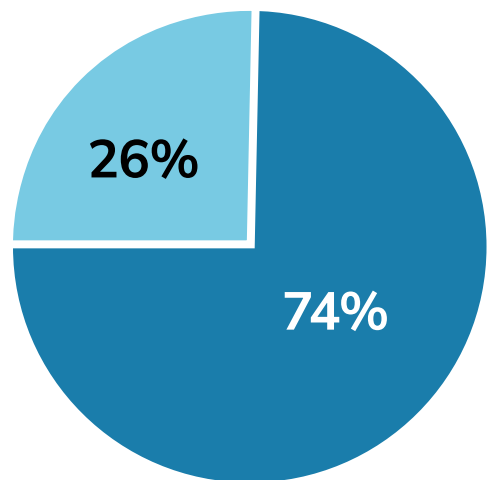
## Total Revenue

Source	Amount
HFS Revenue	\$ 37,115,390
CVS Health Foundation	\$ 206,000
National Council of Aging	\$ 144,989
Illinois Department of Health	\$ 26,015
Molina Healthcare	\$ 75,000
Humana	\$ 50,000
Ackermann Fund	\$ 30,000
Providence Bank and Trust	\$ 20,000
Alzheimer's Association	\$ 10,000
Henrietta Lange Burk Fund	\$ 10,000
Blue Cross and Blue Shield	\$ 5,000

## Total Expenses

■ Program Expenses \$ 14,078,530.00  
■ Operational Expenses \$ 4,860,602.00

■ Total Expenses \$ 18,939,132.00  
■ BEP Spend \$ 7,439,374.00



Audited financial statements are available on request at [centerforbetteraging.org/contact-us](https://centerforbetteraging.org/contact-us).



CBA was like a breath of fresh air when I went there. They were very helpful, and they really cared about my health. They are like family.”

Testimonial submitted by CBA member Andre Lee in December 2025.



## An important expression of our gratitude and appreciation for our Funders

Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services  
(Healthcare Transformation Collaboratives program)

CVS Health Foundation

Humana of Illinois

Molina Healthcare of Illinois

BCBS of Illinois Sponsorship

Providence Bank & Trust Foundation

National Council on Aging/ACL's Administration  
on Aging Innovation Lab

Henrietta Lange Burk Fund

IDPH Ticket for the Cure

Alzheimer's Association Illinois Chapter

G.A. Ackerman





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**Center for  
Better Aging** 