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Aging in Place: The Village to Village Model

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Future and recent retirees (e.g., people age 50 and up) and elders (typically people over age 70 who have been out of the workforce longer), face tough issues as retirement income dwindles related to investments and 401(k)s, impacts on home equity, and ongoing challenges associated with publicly financed long-term supports. Key challenges for traditional financing, organizing and delivering long-term supports and related services (i.e., chronic care management and health and wellness) include:

- **Demographics** - Increasing demand for long-term supports and limited capacity to meet that demand, both financially and operationally, comprise one of our nation's most significant domestic challenges.
- **Public Financing** - States and the federal government are struggling to fund Medicaid (default long-term support financing) and are exploring new strategies.
- **Private Financing** - The recent economic downturn has impacted older Americans' income and assets. Retirement savings losses are staggering – estimated at roughly \$2 trillion. Many older Americans are considering more affordable alternatives to access long-term services and supports.

Village Model

Health and Wellness - Prevention, timely and affordable health care and health care management are critical to maintain independence and a sense of well-being - factors that impact peoples' ability to and comfort with remaining in their own homes. Villages address health wellness through relationships with hospitals, medical house call services, medical advocacy, health and wellness classes, support groups and membership events.

Members pay monthly or annual dues which cover the costs associated with a one-stop shop for receiving assistance. Village staff ranging between one to six people coordinates or deliver most any service or type of assistance a member needs. Some services are delivered by volunteers who have been trained on issues such as confidentiality and have undergone background checks. Other services are delivered by vetted vendors with whom the Village has negotiated a discount for its membership. Villages also offer membership-plus programs to assist low-income individuals to participate.

To date there are approximately 56 Villages operating in about 20 states, with another 120 communities in some phase of development as of July 2010.

The Village model is a new, grassroots community approach for people who are planning for future support needs or who currently need assistance to remain at home. Self-governing organizations, also known as Villages, help elders remain in their neighborhoods and homes by coordinating and delivering programs and services. Four key focuses of assistance and support are:

Core Services - transportation and transportation coordination, grocery shopping, community event organization, and information and referral services and geriatric care management.

Concierge Services - Avoiding the development of "menus" of services other than a short list of core benefits (see above), Villages deliver whatever a member wants and needs to feel safe and comfortable in their homes as well as connected to the community. Avoiding a traditional program model allows Villages to deliver services in a highly consumer driven manner.

Community Building - These are services that foster meaningful community engagement and independence. Examples include in-home supports, such as home health care, volunteerism and civic engagement, and community activities.

Village to Village Network

The Village-to-Village (VtV) Network is a partnership between the Beacon Hill Village and NCB Capital Impact. The mission of the Village-to-Village (VtV) Network is to enable communities to establish, and effectively manage, aging in community organizations initiated and inspired by their members.

The goals of the VtV are to:

- Promote the Village model as a community approach to aging for replication nationwide and conduct research to better understand the movement and report findings to nationwide community organizations and government.
- Develop technical assistance tools and strategies for delivering technical assistance to create a nationwide learning community to support the diverse and unique needs of communities interested in developing Villages.
- Develop strategies to engage important partners at the national and local levels including vetting preferred service providers, development of cooperatively purchased services and engage other community approaches to aging.

VtV Network has five key areas of operation:

1. Project Management - Focuses on day-to-day coordination of work between BHV and NCB Capital Impact as well as long-range planning;
2. Website - The website will serve as the hub for all operations. Fresh content will come from the partners as well as materials submitted by members but vetted by partners and creates the online learning community promoting peer to peer learning between Villages;
3. Direct Technical Assistance - Delivered via email, one-on-one phone calls, topical audio-conferences, and on-site TA;
4. Development of TA Tools - These include issue briefs, manuals similar to NCB Capital Impact's Cooperative Playbook, Beacon Hill Village's Village Manual, and flexible tools tailored to Village business operations similar to NCB Capital Impact's Affordable Assisted Living Financial Feasibility Tool; and

FIGURE 1: Village Spread



Source: Beacon Hill Village TA Database and NCB Capital Impact Analysis

5. Data Collection and Analysis - This task focuses collection of data on participating Village Network members and analysis of our TA work. This data would be used to inform a VTV quality improvement strategy to ensure we maintain value and relevance in the TA market.

With over 37 million people aged 65 and older, Village is another viable option for addressing older adults who prefer to age in-place and remain connected to the people and the communities they love.

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