



SENIOR UPDATE
 AREA AGENCY ON AGING
 ADVISORY COMMISSION ON AGING
 6955 FOOTHILL BLVD., SUITE 300
 OAKLAND, CA 94605-1907

January/February/March 2010

Senior Update

...The Eyes and Ears of Alameda County Seniors

Commission on Aging

Inside this issue:

Fall Prevention Center	1
Adult Day Centers	2
Avalon Village	3
Aging in Place	3
Face the Facts	4
Changes in the Law	6
Making a Difference	8
Senior Information	9

Fall Prevention Center coming to Alameda County Medical Center

Colleen Campbell, Senior Injury Prevention Coordinator

Alameda County Medical Center (ACMC) and the Senior Injury Prevention Partnership (SIPP) are proud to announce the Grand Opening of the Fall Prevention Center at the Highland Campus. Staff members from Highland and SIPP have been working together to create this unique service to address the number one cause of injury related hospitalizations of older adults in Alameda County, throughout California and the rest of the United States. As the burgeoning older adult population grows, so will the issue of falls and the need for fall prevention programs.

The majority of falls are caused by more than one contributing factor. These factors can be combinations of: risky behaviors, strength and balance issues, medications, and home safety. Many older adults experience multiple falls and never have the opportunity to be screened for potential causes.

Beginning in February 2010, older adults who are seen in Highland Hospital's Emergency Department, Clinics, or Inpatient and Outpatient services and determined to be at risk for a fall will receive a referral to the new Fall Prevention Center. At the Center they will be screened by a Physical Therapist for balance and strength issues, a medication review will be completed by the Pharmacy Department and Fall Risk Reduction Educators will provide information on safe behaviors and local resources for home safety modifications.

Using evidence based screenings and assessments, Fall Prevention Center staff will determine what factors are contributing to each patient's fall risk and make referrals to services such as Physical Therapy, Pharmacy, Podiatry, and Optometry to reduce or eliminate the identified

risk factors. "Fall Prevention is a public health priority in our County. By supporting fall prevention activities ACMC is contributing to meeting the needs of an aging population," said Wright Lassiter, Chief Executive Officer.

The goal of the Fall Prevention Center is to identify older adults who are at risk for a fall and provide them the services and interventions that will result in decreasing their fall risk and thereby reduce the number of preventable falls suffered by older adults in Alameda County.



Adult Day Programs

Caring, Health Enhancing and Socially Enriching

Maureen Dixon, Communications Director, Adult Day Services Network

When someone you love needs help with everyday chores, is beginning to experience memory loss, or has a number of chronic health conditions, you want to help. How can you make sure that the person you're caring for is safe, well-cared for, and has opportunities for stimulation and enjoyment? Adult Day Programs can be a huge help. Adult Day centers are daytime programs that help frail and disabled adults protect their health and independence, find joy and satisfaction, and continue to live at home. The programs provide health services, creative activities, a hot meal, and transportation to and from the program. These structured programs typically run six hours a day. Unlike senior centers which work well for people who can care for themselves independently, Adult Day centers work for people who need some extra assistance or supervision to remain safe and healthy. Adult Day centers also provide a much-needed break for caregivers or the ability to continue employment, for those in the workforce.

Three Kinds of Centers:

There are three types of centers: Adult Day Programs, Adult Day Health Care and Programs of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE).

- All centers offer opportunities for art and creative expression, mild exercise, intellectual stimulation, a hot lunch, and transportation to and from the center.

- 'Adult Day Health' also includes a nurse, a social worker, and physical, occupational and speech therapy.

- 'PACE' programs provides a comprehensive range of medical and in-home services in addition to an Adult Day Health services.

About the Adult Day Services Network

The Network is an association of nine agencies that collectively serve over 1,600 frail and disabled adults each year at 15 Adult Day centers across Alameda County. We work to promote access to community services, and to strengthen the quality of care provided at the Alameda County centers.

The Network has several core services:

- The Family Caregiver Support Program provides personalized information and assistance to caregivers, community education and outreach, and scholarships for caregiver respite, counseling and support groups.

- The Injury Prevention Program provides minor home safety modifications and trains Adult Day instructors to deliver an exercise program designed to reduce falls.

- Our Mental Health Initiative is working to enhance the care for participants with mental illness. For more information on the 15 Adult Day centers in Alameda County, or a free personalized consultation, please call us at (510) 883-0874 or see our website at www.adult-day-services.org.



Please see our new video, **Caring Hearts & Caring Hands**. Search for the title at www.YouTube.com.

"I could go shopping and not have to rush home because my mother was home alone; I could go for a doctor's visit. It was the small things that I could not do for many years."

Sophia S., Caregiver

"Because she's there and is talking with other people, and singing, and dancing and doing the exercises, it's made her stronger. Going there has made her more wanting to be in the world."

Frankie P., Caregiver

Avalon Village

Jill Cabeceiras, Executive Director



Avalon Village is an innovative, nonprofit organization that enhances the lives of people 65 and over in the city of Alameda. Founded by community residents, the Village provides services and programs that enable seniors to live a healthy and independent life – in their own homes and neighborhoods. Avalon Village is designed to make remaining at home a safe, comfortable and cost-effective alternative to institutional long term care facilities. Avalon Village gives residents the extra help they need to stay in their own homes, the benefits of a retirement community without leaving the comfort of home. Through partnerships with pre-screened providers, the Village offers its members access to household

and home maintenance services, as well as social and cultural activities.

Services include:

- Escorted transportation to and from medical appointments, errands, grocery shopping, and events
 - Household tasks
 - Social & cultural events
 - Referrals to pre-screened providers of home maintenance and repairs, plumbers, electricians, handyman, and computer technicians
 - Partnerships with respected local organizations for home services and health care needs, often with preferred discounts.
- Many services are included in the annual membership fee, with others provided at reduced rates. All memberships are good for one year from the month a person joins. Members must be 65 years of age or older: \$250 Individual, \$450 Household. Residents of moder-

ate means can enjoy the Avalon Village benefits through a reduced Membership Plus rate (\$100 Individual, \$150 Household) and credit towards programs and services. For more information, contact Avalon Village at 510-769-1312 or info@avalonvillage.org.

Other "Aging in Place" programs in Alameda County:

- Ashby Village (50+ residents of Berkeley and surrounding areas including Emeryville, Albany, and parts of Oakland) 510-204-2860, www.ashbyvillage.org, info@ashbyvillage.org.
- A Lelaind Community (ALC) (55+ affordable/transitional housing for active senior adults in the East Bay) 510-331-4900, www.alelaindcommunity.org, detra@alelaindcommunity.org.

Aging in Place

Sandra J. Johnson Simon, Commissioner

As we age, we can live life to the fullest. We can change the way that we age by staying active in the following areas: physical, intellectual, social and spiritual. Aging within these dimensions of wellness keeps us involved, alert and enjoying a productive life.

The following are some

healthy aging in place tips:

- Visit your doctor and dentist on a regular basis
- Eat a good balanced low salt diet
- Perform physical activities such as walking
- Maintain a healthy weight
- Do not abuse alcohol
- Drink six to eight glasses of water daily
- Attend a weekly worship service
- Do Not Smoke
- Find ways to reduce stress
- Laugh often
- Daily meditation
- Volunteer
- Enjoy loving relationships and good friendships.

Face the Facts: Topics to Discuss Now with Your Aging Parents

Printed with permission of Eldercare Locator, a public service of the U.S. Administration on Aging

As we age and live longer, *financial, legal, health care* and *long term care* issues affect families, not just individuals. The Eldercare Locator produced this guide to help families “face the facts” about these important topics. The overview below addresses some key areas of concern, suggested questions to ask, and ways in which families might initiate conversations about these often difficult to discuss topics with their aging parents.

Key Considerations...

- Find out what financial benefits are provided by your parents’ Social Security and pension. Determine if they are eligible for other financial programs.
- Be certain each family member has a living will. Know where all your parents’ insurance policies, wills, trust documents, tax returns, investment and banking records are located.
- Understand that Medicare generally does not cover long term care (e.g. nursing home or extended home care), and Medicaid pays only for low-income individuals.
- Investigate what type of long term care insurance coverage may be best for your parents or for yourself! Generally, premiums are lower when policies are pur-

chased at younger ages.

- Identify what community services are available that can help your parents maintain independence in the home for as long as possible — such as home modification programs that can install assistive devices (i.e., bathroom rails and entry ramps), and home health and chore assistance. Learn whether housing options are available to meet their changing needs.

Family members may not understand how their parents’ estate planning could impact their own financial status as well as that of their children.

Conversation Checklist

Families may avoid potential problems and be in a good position to deal with later life needs by understanding and being prepared to face the following issues.

Financial Organization

There are many financial resources that your loved one might already be receiving or be eligible for. Social Security is the federal program that provides retirees a regular income based on work history, and benefits to disabled workers. Long-time workers usually have pensions that are retirement compensation plans either fully managed by the employer, or involve employee contributions, such as Tax-Deferred Annuities (TDAs) or Individual

Retirement Accounts (IRAs).

Some people have “lost” a pension they earned, while others forget about a retirement account set up many years prior. Low-income and disabled individuals age 65 or older could also be eligible for monthly cash benefits through Supplemental Security Income (SSI).

Ask...

- What type of retirement income do you receive?
- Are pension savings from all jobs over the years being collected?
- Is there a need to apply for Supplemental Security Income benefits?
- Who can access your important financial information in case of emergency?
- Where do you keep these important documents?

Legal Preparation

Wills and power of attorney may not be topics your relatives want to discuss. However, these issues need to be addressed before it’s too late to make sure that their assets are properly taken care of and that their medical treatment preferences are known. A will directs how a person wants property to be distributed after death and appoints a trusted person to be the executor; and a durable power of attorney provides written authorization for a person you name to act on your behalf for whatever financial

Continued on p. 5

Face the Facts: Topics to Discuss Now with Your Aging Parents continued from p. 4

or health care purpose you spell out. An advance directive is a legal document that provides directions for your health care if you are unable to speak for yourself.

Ask...

- Do you have a will?
- Have you executed a durable power of attorney or considered who you might want to handle your finances or health care decisions in the event that you are unable to do so?
- Are important legal documents up to date?
- Where are these important documents kept?
- What other legal matters are you concerned about?

Health Insurance

Health care is a high-cost necessity, so it is crucial to know what is available to meet your family member's needs, and what they are eligible to receive. Most adults over age 65 are covered by Medicare, the federal health insurance program that helps pay medical expenses for older Americans and younger people with disabilities. But Medicare does not cover all needs, and Supplemental Insurance (also called Medigap insurance) might be necessary to cover additional health costs. Medicaid, on the other hand, is the federal and state insurance program that helps pay the health care costs of low-income individuals of any age.

Long-term care insurance is available through the private market to assist individuals to cover the cost of long-term care services such as home health and nursing home care. These policies are often expensive, however, premiums are usually lower if the policies are purchased at a younger age. Having a long term care insurance policy ensures that your loved one can make their own choices about what long term care services they receive and where they receive them.

Ask...

- As your health status changes, are you prepared to meet your long term health care needs?
- Do you have proper health insurance coverage (not too much or too little)?
- Are you comfortably able to pay for prescription drugs and other out-of-pocket health care costs?
- Who are your doctors and how can they be contacted?
- Where do you keep your insurance card, Medicare information, and other important health care documents?

Community Services

One of the most useful forms of help that adult children can provide for their parents is information about community resources that are available to enhance their independence. Services like home modification are available to help reduce the risk of accidents. Emergency response systems can summon help quickly.

Transportation services can help get to and from medical appointments.

Ask...

- Are there house repairs or modifications needed that will help you, such as installing bathtub railings, an emergency response system, or other assistive devices?
- Do you need assistance with housekeeping, shopping or personal care activities?
- If you become homebound, would you need home-delivered meals?
- Do you need transportation? What services are available in your community?
- Do you anticipate needing other living arrangements in the future?

Conversation Approaches

Prepare yourself to be open, honest and not argumentative. Be ready to listen and hear what is being said to you. Have some knowledge about the topic you're talking about.

Direct

If the care recipient is a 'no-nonsense, get-to-the-point' personality, openly express your concerns and ask questions.

Educational

For the relative who might need a delicate push, you might begin by sharing an experience of another caregiver you know.

Expert

For the relative who refuses to talk about personal issues, seek to make them the expert by asking for their advice about a particular issue.

For more information Call 1-800-677-1116.



Changes in the Law



Changes in the Law

Making a Difference: From the Community to the Commission and On

Amy Holloway, Information and Assistance Worker

Community advocates have pioneered movements for change and better services throughout the ages. Many local senior agencies may have started at someone's kitchen table, church pew, or neighborhood corner. Grassroots activism and legislative advocacy made it possible for us to have a federal Older Americans Act and accompanying Older Californians Act, funding vital programs such as In-Home Services, Nutrition Services, Transportation, Health Services, Adult Day Care, Alzheimer's Services, Exercise & Physical Fitness programs, and more.

The members of the Alameda County Advisory Commission on Aging are dedicated residents who pioneer through diverse professional, personal, and community endeavors. The Commission advises and provides information about senior concerns to the Area Agency on Aging and the Board of Supervisors. Several longtime members left the Commission when their terms expired in 2009.

Frank Rose served eight years on the Commission, most recently as Chair of the Public Relations Committee. Commissioner Rose worked on many activities pertaining to seniors, youth, and public safety. His leadership in the areas of nutrition and transportation included expansion of the Seniors Farmers Market Nutrition Program and establishment of Senior Shopping Shuttles. Through his dedicated service, Commissioner Rose encourages and inspires others to volunteer. In his January 2009

Senior Update article about volunteering, he noted that volunteering "is very powerful and without the energy it provides, it would be highly improbable to continue helping others when sometimes you need help yourself."

Nery Hartschen served eight years also, and for years led the Legislative Advocacy Committee and Senior Rally activities. She was inspired to become more involved with seniors as a caregiver for her husband and parents. Commissioner Hartschen worked to navigate the spectrum of support services and sought to share information with others. Eventually she became involved with AARP as Regional Leader from Marin to Monterey. She also serves on the California Senior Legislature and is a staunch advocate for health care reform.

Quincy Campbell, MD, outgoing Commission Chair, recently completed eight years of dedicated service as well. He became more interested in senior services as he assisted his wife who owned and operated a residential care facility for the elderly. The Board of Supervisors contacted him about getting involved with the county's long-term care committee. Dr. Campbell has played a central role in the development of the Commission's annual Healthy Aging Fair. He is also active with AARP, California Senior Legislature, and the Ethnic Health Institute. His concerns include elder abuse, housing, economic stability, and health care.

Community leaders take a cue from their hearts and minds to make a difference for us all. At the First Annual Senior Healthcare Policy Forum, State Senator Loni Hancock noted that as we face challenges, due to budget cuts, there is opportunity for us to mobilize for improvements. She also noted the need to "grow the pie", to put new revenue on the table, to support all services. Whether we connect through the telephone, the local senior center, or in Sacramento, there are opportunities for us all to come together and grow together.

A Few Community Advocacy Contacts:

- Local legislators, aging services departments and commissions
- Alameda County Commission on Aging, 510-577-1966, www.alamedasocialservices.org
- Disability Rights of California, 1-800-776-5746, www.disabilityrightsca.org
- Gray Panthers, 510-548-9696, www.gpcal.org
- Senior Services Coalition of Alameda County, www.seniorservicescoalition.org
- St. Mary's Center, 510-923-9600, www.stmaryscenter.org
- United Seniors of Oakland and Alameda County, 510-729-0852, www.usoac.org

Senior Information

Alameda County Senior Information Program



2010 SSI and CAPI Benefit, no Increase for 2010

In January 2010, there will be no cost of living adjustments for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Cash Assistance Program for Immigrants (CAPI). There will be no federal increase in benefits and, although California supplements SSI benefits with the State Supplementary Payment (SSP), the 2009-2010 state budget permanently suspended the cost of living adjustment for SSP. SSI is a federal program that provides a monthly cash benefit to eligible seniors, blind and disabled people who meet income and resource criteria. CAPI provides benefits for aged, blind or disabled immigrants who are not eligible for SSI. January SSI/SSP maximum payment amounts will remain

\$845 per month for a single aged or disabled person and \$908 per month for a blind individual. A qualified couple may receive \$1,407.20 per month and if the couple are both blind, they may receive \$1,554.20 per month. For persons living in housing without cooking facilities and those residing in Residential Care Facilities, benefits can be higher. To be eligible for SSI, one cannot have more than \$2,000 in liquid assets if single, and no more than \$3,000 for a couple. Eligible persons may have a burial plot, auto, owner occupied home, and up to \$1,500 set aside for burial (per eligible person). In certain instances, one can work and still receive

benefits. Along with a cash allowance, those receiving SSI/SSP receive medical coverage under Medi-Cal. However, SSI recipients in California are not eligible for food stamps. CAPI benefits for individuals are generally \$10 less than the allocation under SSI/SSP. Similarly, CAPI benefits for couples are generally \$20 less than SSI/SSP. However, CAPI recipients may be eligible for both Medi-Cal and food stamps. Since these benefit programs are complex, please contact Social Security for personalized SSI information at 1-800-772-1213 or www.socialsecurity.gov. For CAPI information call 1-800-648-0954. You may also contact the Area Agency on Aging at 1-800-510-2020 for general information.

Volunteer Tax Assistance

The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) and Tax Counseling for the Elderly (TCE) programs provide free assistance to individuals with limited income and/or over the age of 60 who need help in completing federal and state income tax returns. Assistance is generally available from February 1 through April 15th and is provided at most senior centers and some library branches. There are several ways to find a location near you: call the IRS at 1-800-829-1040, check the State Franchise Tax Board website www.ftb.ca.gov, call AARP at 1-888-227-7669, or check their website at www.aarp.org/money/taxaide.

Census 2010

The U.S. Census counts every resident in the United States, and is required by the Constitution to take place every 10 years. The 2010 Census will help communities receive more than \$400 billion in federal funds each year for things like hospitals, job training centers, schools, senior centers, public works projects, and emergency services. The data collected by the census also help determine the number of seats your state has in the U.S. House of Representatives. In March of 2010, census forms will be delivered to every residence in the United States and Puerto Rico. When you receive yours, just answer the 10 short questions and mail the form back in the postage-paid envelope provided. If you don't mail the form back, you may receive a visit from a census taker, who will ask you the questions from the form. Any personal data you provide is protected under federal law. For more information call 1-800-923-8282.

Call Information and Assistance at (800) 510-2020 or (510) 577-3530



Senior Update
Area Agency On Aging
Advisory Commission on Aging
6955 Foothill Blvd, Suite 300
Oakland, CA 94605-1907

Phone: 1-800-510-2020
Fax: 510-577-1962

PRSR STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
SAN LEANDRO, CA
PERMIT NO. 45

We're On The Web!

http://www.alamedasocialservices.org/public/services/elders_and_disabled_adults/aaa.cfm

Senior Update Editorial Board: S. Johnson– Simon,
C. Steiner, F. Howell, J. Hunt, S. Stadmire, G.
Tucker, K. Bridges, A. Holloway, and M. Schulz

