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Adult Day Care - An Alternative to Nursing Home Placement

Isolation is often a great danger to elders living independently and, as an alternative to moving into a nursing facility or assisted living facility, many elders have been able to remain living at home with the assistance of adult day care programs.

Adult day care programs are community-based and provide a safe, supervised alternative to seniors who are unable to live on their own, but do not yet require 24-hour skilled nursing. They are an important step for individuals between living independently in their own home and round-the-clock care in a care facility. Not only are adult day care programs therapeutic for the senior, often postponing or even eliminating the need for nursing home care, but

they also provide much-needed respite to family members caring for their loved ones.

Adult day care centers provide a variety of recreational and social activities, allow seniors to enjoy the support of their peers, provide personal care/ assistance with Activities of Daily Living (ADL) and they provide nutritional, health and social services. Some programs provide more intensive health and therapeutic services for seniors with severe medical problems and may even provide physical or occupational therapy. Transportation, counseling, caregiver support groups and education are other options that are often available depending on the program. It is important when choosing a

center that you talk with the staff, with other participants and with other family members to ensure the particular program is able to meet your needs, or the needs of your loved one.

The cost of adult day care varies depending on the program. The average is somewhere around \$50 per day (or \$250 per week). Some programs accept Medicaid which means if you or your loved one otherwise meet the income and resource requirements. Medicaid may pay for all or a portion of the cost of day care. Other sources of funding available include Federal Older American's Act funds (available through area agencies on aging), scholarships from Caregiver Resource Centers and public and private grants.

If you are unable to stay alone during the day, or if you are currently caring for someone and struggling to balance your caregiving responsibilities with your employment outside the home, adult day care could be the solution.

Most adult day care centers operate Monday through Friday during normal business hours. Some programs, however, offer services in the evening and on weekends. For more information on adult day care programs in your area, Michigan residents should contact Senior Resource Advocates, (800) 489-6107. You can also obtain additional information by contacting your local Division of Aging or Area Agency on Aging office.