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Independence Day May Be an Eye-Opener for Adult Children

Medical Adult Day Care Provider Offers Advice for Recognizing Signs of Aging Parents

Frankfort--Fireworks in the sky might not be all the sparks that were flying when you took the kids to grandma's house this Fourth of July weekend. Often the holidays are a time when adult children discover that their parents aren't doing as well as the last time they went home, despite an aging parent's effort to hide a recent decline in his or her activities of daily living.

As parents age, it is up to the family members or a caregiver to notice changes in their behavior and their environment. Unfortunately, there are certain challenges that present themselves once the evidence is clear that changes have occurred.

"The majority of aging parents are reluctant to ask for or accept help," said Melissa Barnett, RN, Center Director of Active Day of Frankfort, the nation's largest network of adult day health services, in home care companies and out-patient rehabilitation centers. "Dealing with the parental pride can be painful and frustrating. In some cases, however, it's the adult children who are in denial. They refuse to see the necessity for action and therefore, let things get to a state of crisis before they react. Part of this problem stems from a lack of education on what constitutes a significant change or a need for assistance."

Here is a checklist of specific changes that adult children or caregivers should watch for at home:

1. Significant weight loss or weight gain. Take note of lack of food in the home, spoiled foods in the refrigerator or duplicate boxes of household items in the pantry.
2. Problems with personal hygiene, particularly dirty hair or smelly clothes.
3. Increased difficulty with mobility, such as climbing stairs or using a bathtub.
4. Obvious lack of housekeeping. Dirty dishes, piles of unopened bills, stacks of newspapers, unclean bathrooms and unmade beds are a few examples.
5. Changes in judgment, mood or behavior. Sleeping all the time may be a sign of over-medication.
6. Unusual, new or extravagant items on display in the home. Things that would be out of character.
7. Increased forgetfulness, lack of social interaction with friends, missed medical appointments.
8. Disorientation to time and place.

9. Problems with language and reasoning.
10. Difficulty performing familiar tasks.

If these signs are present, the first thing to do is report them to the rest of the family or to the caregiver. Next, have a conversation with your parent's doctor and schedule a visit when you can accompany them. Finally, educate yourself on your options for caring for a parent before you actually need these services.

Adult day health services are a lower cost alternative to nursing homes or assisted living communities. Adult day health services help elderly and disabled adults maintain maximum independence and quality of life by providing expert medical care, opportunities for socialization, nutritious meals, transportation and therapeutic activities.

For more information on aging adults and their needs, contact Active Day at 502-875-7555 or go to www.activeday.com.

About Active Day, Inc.

Active Day, Inc. was founded in 1995 with the goal of creating a nationwide network of community-based health care services to meet the needs of elderly, disabled adults and their caregivers. Since then, Active Day, Inc. has created the largest network of medical adult day health services centers, in-home personal care companies and outpatient rehabilitation facilities in the country. This network provides adult day health services to more than 3,000 clients per day.