

What Are Adult Day Programs?

Adult day programs offer day-time care for frail seniors in a comfortable group setting. Often serving as an alternative to nursing home care, these programs provide social and health services, engaging activities, gentle exercise and meals--in a safe, caring environment. Transportation assistance is also available.

In the U.S. today, 80% of care for the elderly and disabled adults is provided by family members. Adult day programs help family caregivers maintain their balance by providing a safe, dignified place for their loved one to spend the day, and by allowing the caregiver to continue to work outside the home, attend to other household duties, or take a needed break.

Research studies have shown that regular attendance at an adult day program may decrease an individual's chance of falling or having an accident that would require a visit to a hospital or an Emergency Room.

Different Kinds of Programs

Adult day programs vary in type. Alameda County offers three types: Adult Day Care (ADC), Adult Day Health Care (ADHC), and a Program of All-Inclusive Care for Elders (PACE). Some programs are geared specifically toward elders; others also serve younger people who have some types of cognitive limitations. Many programs are geared to serve individuals with memory loss, Alzheimer's Disease or other dementias.

Programs provide engaging social and recreational activities, companionship, and meals, along with personal care for each participant. Individual care plans are developed for each individual. Activities may include art projects, gardening, reminiscence groups, bingo and trivia games. For many, the friendships that develop become an ongoing source of joy and meaning in their lives.

Adult Day Health Care programs also provide a medical component and are for those with more intensive health/therapeutic needs. Medical services include nursing care, physical therapy, speech therapy, and occupational therapy. A social worker and nurse are part of the program.

The Program of All-Inclusive Care (PACE) serves the very impaired and frail elderly who meet Medi-Cal eligibility criteria for nursing home-level care. Funded by Medi-Cal and Medicare, the PACE model of care assumes full financial responsibility for the health and health-related care needs of all enrolled participants. PACE program participants receive a wide range of social, medical and health services.