

ElderCare

Aging in Place With Visiting Nurse / Hospice Atlanta's Healthy Transitions™

It is estimated that by 2030 more than 1.2 million older adults will call the Atlanta region home. Consider that statistic in light of another well-reported fact: older adults prefer to age in place. Family caregivers are often a vital component of that process. According to 2008 Institute of Medicine report "Retooling for an Aging America: Building the Health Care Workforce", an estimated 44 million family caregivers nationwide are being asked to provide increasingly complex support services to frail and elderly loved ones wishing to live at home.

That alone is a challenge for families around the country and in metro Atlanta. But what happens when older adults live alone, either in their own home or in a senior living community, and have no family close by to help with their care? If new medications are prescribed, do they understand how and when to take them? Are they able to get regular and healthy meals? What if they can no longer drive and need to get to the doctor's office? If they require a hospital stay, how do they



BY MARY ARTHUR

transition back home successfully?

There is no one answer to these questions; no one solution to supporting the health of an aging population. However, as metro Atlanta's largest, nonprofit, geriatric care management, home health and hospice provider, Visiting Nurse / Hospice Atlanta is uniquely positioned to provide relevant services. Our programs evolve as the needs of the region evolve. It is part of our commitment to the future well-being of the region's aging population.

For example, our Healthy Transitions™ program, launched in 2008, is an innovative approach to helping frail elders age in place successfully at home. It improves the quality of life for frail elders and their family caregivers but it also has a larger mission: to contribute to decreasing health-care costs overall.

Healthy Transitions™ specializes in a team approach: hospital systems, senior living communities, patients, their physicians and family caregivers all have a role



Healthy Transitions™ offers both long term and short term support. We may develop an ongoing relationship with a client and their family that lasts for three or four years, or they may only need us for a brief phase of their care. Either way, our mission is to help them be stable, secure, confident and empowered in their home setting so that they can respond to changes in their health effectively and in a timely manner.

As a report from the Atlanta Regional Commission points out,

"older adults' preference to age in place challenges the notion that all older adults move to the country, the mountains or to sunny destinations when they retire." Older adults are here to stay and Visiting Nurse | Hospice Atlanta is one of the region's organizations dedicated to giving them quality, compassionate care at home.

Mary Arthur is Director of Visiting Nurse / Hospice Atlanta's Healthy Transitions™ Program and can be reached at mary_arthur@vnhs.org or (770) 936-1040.



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