

Division of Senior Services – A Helpful Resource

by County Vice Mayor Hal Valeche

As a senior citizen in Palm Beach County – and fortunately, there are more of us every day - I take great pride in the many services your county government offers through the Division of Senior Services (DOSS). DOSS offers a comprehensive range of programs to seniors age 60 and older to achieve optimal independence, and provide social and emotional well-being for both seniors and their caregivers.

DOSS programs encourage making informed choices that enhance quality of life and include nutrition, in-home services, and activities and care through their senior centers and adult day care centers.

The Nutrition Program provides well-balanced, diversified meals, fosters social interaction, and offers nutrition education and counseling. Meals are served Monday through Friday at 27 Congregate Meal Site locations. Reservations must be made at least one day in advance and if the senior does not drive, transportation is available through Palm Tran Connection, the county's door-to-door paratransit service.

In-Home Services are available to homebound seniors in need of long-term care that allows the senior to receive help in the home. Experienced staff members conduct in-home assessments to determine each senior's individual needs, and coordinate and manage any number of the following in-home services:

- Companionship – visits to a socially or geographically isolated senior
- Counseling – mental health counseling with home visits
- Respite Care – reprieve for the caregiver caring for an ill or impaired elder
- Chore – heavy house cleaning
- Escort – accompaniment and assistance to medical appointments
- Pest Control – help to rid the house of insects and other pests
- Homemaker – light housekeeping, shopping, errands and laundry services
- Personal Care – assistance with bathing, washing hair and dressing
- Home Delivered Meals – delivered to seniors unable to prepare their own meals and/or cannot shop for food, and do not have anyone to shop or prepare meals
- Interpreter – translating oral or written communication (English/Spanish/Creole)
- Shopping Assistance – transportation to and from store and assistance with shopping
- Emergency Alert Response – monitoring homebound frail elderly by means of an electronic device
- Specialized Medical Supplies – consumable, durable medical equipment and services

There are three Senior Centers in Palm Beach County. The North County Senior Center is located at 5217 Northlake Boulevard in Palm Beach Gardens. The center sponsors a wide range of classes, programs and activities, with a nominal fee for some of the classes. Hours are 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, with a hot lunch served daily for a small donation. Social events range from dances and holiday parties to trips and informal gatherings. Once registered, a senior can receive the monthly newsletter, which includes the activities and events calendar.

The North County Senior Center also includes one of two of the county's Adult Day Care facilities. The Adult Day Care Center serves individuals with mild to moderate dementia by providing structured, comprehensive, supervised care in conjunction with an individual care plan and emphasizes social and recreational activities in a group setting, with some health monitoring. Clients attending adult day care are those who usually do not need medical attention during the day, but may need supervision for safety and activities of daily living.

The Adult Day Care programs and case management services are available through a private pay option, and are a valuable resource for both seniors and their caregivers. In addition to providing quality, affordable services to Palm Beach County residents to help stabilize a senior and the family unit, the programs assist families who reside outside the county who are seeking services for their loved ones who live within the county.

With the largest number of people in Florida who are 85 and older, Palm Beach County recognizes the importance of offering services for seniors and options for caregivers and families on the best course of care for their family members. If you would like more information on these programs or would be interested in serving as a volunteer, please call the Division of Senior Services Administrative Office at (561) 355-4746

As always, if there is any way I can assist you, please contact me at (561) 355-2201 or by email at hvaleche@pbcgov.org.