



Photo courtesy of Poway ADHC
Activities at the Poway ADHC include age-appropriate exercise classes.

DAILY DOSE

Adult Day Health Centers Among New Models for Aging Care

BY JOYCE THORNE

Every day in the U.S., 10,000 baby boomers reach age 65, about twice the rate of the previous generation. By 2030, 18 percent of Americans will be at least 65, according to **Pew Research Center** projections.

The challenges of a growing older population are straining traditional care resources, and more families are turning to adult day care programs to alleviate stress and give loved ones a chance to get expert care and therapy.

The business of adult day health care centers (ADHCs) is growing in San Diego County. Some programs are medically based, serving people with Alzheimer's and dementia, frail adults, and people recovering from surgery or other traumatic conditions. Other adult day care programs are non-medically based.

Financial Efficiency

Providers tout the cost effectiveness of adult day care in addition to providing important benefits.

Rates and hours at local ADHCs vary, but some charge between \$70 and \$135 a day, \$350-\$675 a week and \$1,400-\$2,700 a month, based on a five-day week, Monday-Friday.

That compares to seven-day assisted living and/or memory care, which can

range from \$3,500-\$6,000 a month and up, depending on accommodations.

"Consumers and reimbursement sources have done the math and recognize that adult day health care services make economic sense," said **Kathryn Holt**, owner of **Poway ADHC**. "Adult day health care services allow families to stay in their own homes much longer and often permanently vs. selling the family home to pay for mom or dad to live permanently in a 24-hour care facility."

"Another huge cost benefit to society as a whole is that consumers of adult day health care services have a greatly reduced incidence of hospitalizations and emergency room visits. It is within the scope of the daily program and services that illnesses are often identified before they reach a critical level."

The largest source of reimbursement for adult day health care services is from Medi-Cal, followed by private long-term care insurance companies who have long understood the cost benefits of paying for a day program vs. 24-hour care, Holt said.

Medicare still does not recognize the need to provide adult day health care services as a covered benefit, she said.

"With the aging demographics in our society and growing awareness for the fact that adult day health care services are

the most cost-effective option available, I believe we will see this change in the future," Holt said.

Vital Interaction

Many family members find themselves caring for their children as well as their medically fragile parents.

"In some cases, the family members work and it is unsafe for their parents to stay home alone," said **Molly Kintz**, MSW, program director of **Loving Care ADHC** in Mission Valley. "A day program that offers health care is a great option."

"In other cases, the family needs respite. We also have some individuals that do not have family. They must rely on our services as well as other services such as In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) in order to live safely on their own."

Lisa Tyburski, director of business development, **George G. Glenner Alzheimer's Family Centers Inc.**, emphasized the importance of specialized day care for her center's clients.

"A day program also allows the individual with Alzheimer's to continue to live in their home, which is so often desired, yet they benefit from the opportunity for vital socialization and interaction which is so important to brain health."

"We have seen a rise in the number of participants as of late," she said. "Our

centers (Hillcrest, Encinitas and Chula Vista) are thriving. But I wish more people realized that adult day care is an option when it comes to Alzheimer's care."

Lauren Stockdale, MSW, administrator of **Silverado Encinitas**, said her day care program is a great first step in memory care.

"Families often feel they are not ready to move their loved one into a memory care community on a long-term basis, but want to experience the environment and care Silverado can provide."

Among the benefits are behavior management, medication oversight and comprehensive care. People just starting to experience mild cognitive impairment or in the early stages of dementia often receive cognitive and social stimulation that they might not experience at home.

Kintz said centers are required to provide nursing, physical therapy, occupational therapy, social services, therapeutic activities, dietary services, mental health services, meals and transportation. She said Loving Care ADHC also offers music therapy, intergenerational therapy, and gardening.

At Poway ADHC, innovative programs include chair yoga, chair tai chi, laughter yoga, pet therapy, speech and language therapy as well as English as a second language instruction.

