



NEWS COLUMN – Area Agency on Aging District 7, Inc.

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Important Discussions Over the Holidays

**Pamela K. Matura, Executive Director, Area Agency on Aging District 7
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It's the Holidays – and that time of the year when we look forward to visits and sharing time with family, friends and loved ones.

Sometimes, the Holidays can be a time of sadness for seniors. This can be contributed to memories of loved ones who have passed, or adjustments they are experiencing due to a current illness or medical condition, or a change in scenery if they have had to move from their home. It's also important to remember that most often, seniors truly appreciate those presents that don't cost anything – you and your time. A personal visit, bringing them a meal or taking them out to a nice dinner, or a special outing they might particularly enjoy are precious gifts that are truly priceless.

During the Holiday season, we also encourage families to pay particular attention to situations that might alert you to a decline in health – maybe it is a family member, a special friend, or neighbor. If so, perhaps they might need some help and assistance to remain safe and independent at home? Our Agency is here to help you find resources in your community that may be available.

Read the list below to evaluate whether your loved ones may need some assistance in order to remain in their homes safely. If you notice that some of the statements ring true for your loved ones or friends, call the Area Agency on Aging District 7. We can help identify resources in your community that may be available to help. Or, if you are a long distance caregiver living in our district and caring for someone outside our district, please feel free to also give us a call – we can find similar resources and assistance that are available in the area of the country where your loved ones reside. Look for:

- A decline in personal hygiene. Your loved ones may not feel up to completing daily hygiene or may seem to be unaware of hygiene needs.
- Falls or near falls, with or without injury.
- Increased clutter in the home or a general lack of cleanliness of the living environment.
- Difficulty cooking or preparing meals. This can include problems following recipes or directions, burned food, lack of awareness of whether they have eaten, lack of appetite, or relying on “junk food” that requires no preparation.
- Difficulty managing finances. You may notice bills piled up but unpaid, overdue bills, overdrawn checking accounts, lack of budgeting.

- A general decline in physical health. They may have lost weight and appear more frail. You may notice bruising or other injuries, increased forgetfulness, or less stamina for daily activities.

The Area Agency on Aging District 7 is available to provide information and answer questions about a number of care needs and options that are available. After speaking with a specially-trained nurse or social worker concerning your family member's needs, an in-home consultation to assess your loved one's situation can be provided at no cost to identify risks and determine what assistance or preventive measures could improve their quality of life. Call us toll-free at 1-800-582-7277.

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