

Headlines Averted Adult Day Health Times

SMART MONEY INVESTED
IN THE FUTURE OF AGING

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Headline Averted

ELDERLY MAN SHOT IN DRUG DEAL CROSSFIRE

While at ElderHealth Northwest's downtown Seattle adult day health program, a frail 80 year-old man told the center's staff that he did not want to go home because his son – with whom he lived – was dealing crack. He felt endangered in his own home.

Day health staff immediately called the police and Adult Protective Services and arranged for emergency housing. Staff members also found him a long-term placement in the community. At his request, the man never returned home to the dangerous

environment.

"This is not an atypical case," says Sara Myers, executive director of Washington Adult Day Services Association. "Day health staff advocate for their clients on a daily basis, often on true life-or-death issues."

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RISE IN SKIN BREAKDOWN

Winter weather wreaks havoc on elderly skin

Last December's snow storm provides a snapshot of what can happen to vulnerable elders when adult day health services disappear.

In Bellingham – an area hardest hit by the storm – several clients at St. Joseph Hospital Adult Day Health experienced skin breakdown issues during the time they were unable to come to the program to receive skilled nursing and occupational therapy services.

While homebound, an isolated elderly man with diminished nerve sensitivity experienced a significant skin tear on his arm which he attempted to bandage on his own. It was not until he returned to adult day health and received nursing care that the wound began to heal.

During the same time frame, a woman developed skin breakdown on her abdominal fold, and the

wound was not well attended to by her caretaker daughter.

A third client, who uses a wheelchair for most ambulation, acquired skin breakdown on her upper thigh. This injury was likely due to the lack of standing and walking that she is able to complete when she attends day health. Her skin has improved since she has resumed her occupational therapy services.

"Without adult day health," says Erika Stanley, program manager, "people don't see skin breakdown or they try self-remedies without checking in with health care professionals. We're very fortunate that our participants are back to their regular attendance and improving their overall health."

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ADULT FAMILY HOME ASSAULTS CONTINUE

Following brain damage from surgery to remove tumors, a woman in her 40s began attending an ElderHealth Northwest adult day health program. Her ability to speak was significantly impaired, but a day health social worker understood the woman's cry for help: she was the victim of ongoing sexual assaults by the owner of the adult family home at which she resided. The social worker called police and Adult Protective Services. As a result, the home was closed and the owner was prosecuted on rape charges.

Without adult day health, the woman and other residents of the adult family home would be subject to continued abuse.

All stories are true; names have been omitted to protect the subjects' anonymity.