

Delta County BUSINESS

Volunteers of America opens innovative health care program for area seniors

Volunteers of America, a non-profit association that provides human services to those in need nationwide, has opened an innovative health care program specifically for frail, elderly residents. This program, called Senior Community Care, is a PACE, or Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly. Senior Community Care will serve seniors living in Montrose and Delta counties.

At the core of the Senior Community Care PACE program are two health centers, located at 11485 Highway 65 in Eckert and 2377 Robins Way in Montrose. At these Senior Community Care centers, clinical and rehabilitative services are coordinated and participants visit, socialize and build meaningful relationships with doctors, nurses and other program participants. These centers will be open seven days a week.

The U.S. Congress authorized funding for PACE programs like Senior Community Care in 1986 as a more cost-effective model of care for the elderly that also supported most seniors' desire to live at home as they age. There are more than 50 PACE locations nationwide today. These

programs are regulated by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid and state agencies. Senior Community Care will provide a full spectrum of health care services, from primary to acute to long-term care for frail, elderly individuals certified by state and federal officials to require nursing home care.

"PACE programs are centered on the belief that it is better for the well-being of seniors with chronic care needs and their families to be served in the community whenever possible," said Gary Snider, executive director of Senior Community Care and a former official with Colorado's Department of Health Care Policy and Financing. "As we know, most seniors would prefer to stay home, connected with family and friends. Our program helps make this possible while also tending to their health care needs."

Senior Community Care is able to provide the entire continuum of care and services to seniors with chronic care needs while maintaining their independence in their homes for as long as possible. Care and services include:

- Adult day care that offers nursing; physical, occupational

and recreational therapies; meals; nutritional counseling; social work and personal care.

- Medical care provided by a PACE physician familiar with the history, needs and preferences of each participant.

- Home health care and personal care.

- All necessary prescription drugs.

- Social services.

- Medical specialists such as audiology, dentistry, optometry, podiatry, and speech therapy.

- Respite care.

- Hospital and nursing home care when necessary.

To be eligible for PACE a person must be aged 55 or older, certified by the state to need nursing home care, and live in the specific service area served Senior Community Care.

For more information about the PACE program and Senior Community Care, call Joni Reilly-Hall at 640-7058.