

# Adult Day Self-Care Newsletter

September 2023

## National Adult Day Services Week: September 17-23, 2023

Forty years ago this month, then-president Ronald Reagan issued a [proclamation](#) establishing a special week to honor Adult Day Care Centers. He acknowledged the very real benefits provided by your programs: “Day care centers enable individuals to obtain the care they need without being forced to live in institutions, and they offer needed respite to families whose infirmed relatives live with them.... Adult day care centers and their dedicated professional staffs serve many health maintenance functions, provide vital medical care, including medication monitoring, therapies, and health education, and provide invaluable opportunities for social interaction to [older] Americans.”

You can find more on the *National Adult Day Services Association* [website](#).

## Adult Day Services: What do we know?

Frequent readers of this newsletter know that research on Adult Day programs is limited. In our [September 2022 issue](#), we reported some facts on who uses Adult Day Services.

A [new study](#),<sup>1</sup> published in 2023, looks at staffing and outcomes in Adult Day Services. They compared programs providing specialized care to people with Alzheimer’s Disease and related dementias with adult day health centers that do not offer these services, noting that programs not specifically serving people with dementia still report that 27% of participants have a dementia diagnosis. Programs designed for people with dementias have participants with greater physical needs, more aides and licensed nurses on staff, and fewer social workers and activity staff. The study shows more hours<sup>2</sup> worked by activity staff was associated with fewer falls, hospitalizations, and emergency room visits. However, the authors note it could be that programs with more activity staff have participants with fewer physical needs.

<sup>1</sup> Spetz, J., & Flatt, J. D. (2023). Alzheimer's Disease services, staffing, and outcomes in adult day health centers. *J Am Med Dir Assoc*, 24(5), 645-652. doi: 10.1016/j.jamda.2022.11.017. (open access)

<sup>2</sup> calculated as “average hours per participant day”



The study authors stress that dementia “is among the major public health challenges of our century. By 2050, the number of people living with dementia in the United States is expected to rise to 16 million, with unpaid caregivers being expected to provide most of the care. Staff at ADHCs will continue play a vital role in providing support for persons with ADRD and their caregivers.” They conclude with the recommendation that Adult Day staff need training in the care of people living with Alzheimer’s Disease and related dementias, regardless of whether a program offers specialized dementia care.

## Safety Issues

Adult Day Centers provide a safe, supervised location for older adults with social and physical needs. With more than a quarter of Adult Day participants living with dementia, specific safety issues arise. Program staff need to be vigilant to keep participants safe.

**Falls:** In general, older adults have an increased [risk of falls](#), due to vision impairment, foot problems, frailty, medication effects, and balance issues. Certain dementias and conditions add to the risk. To reduce falls, assess fall risk and mobility on admission and monitor daily for changes. Encourage the use of comfortable non-slip footwear. Provide needed assistance when walking and during other motor tasks. Scan the environment frequently for potential safety issues, such as trip hazards.

**Wandering:** Restlessness, pacing, and attempting to leave the program environment may result from many causes, including memory loss, physical or emotional discomfort, anxiety or fear, and even medication side effects. In addition to monitoring the security of the program environment, staff can help by trying to understand the factors that underly the behavior and by providing engaging physical and social activities.

**Eating:** Eating-related safety concerns include ingesting non-food items, choking, eating off another person's plate, burns from hot liquids and foods, not following a prescribed diet, and dehydration from not enough water.

**Assault:** Physical harm to staff and other participants can result from combative behavior, when someone lashes out physically, or from a catastrophic reaction, where violent actions are the result of a severe emotional response. Staff training is essential to prevent and diffuse these difficult situations.

## For More Information

You can find detailed information on these safety issues in our manual, *Foundations of Dementia Enabled Care in Adult Day Programming*, and our set of seven related training videos, which are available on our website (see below).

### Care2Caregivers Website

Check out the [Adult Day Resources pages](#) on our website, which include our *Foundations* manual, videos, and other resources. Once on our website click on the Professional Resources tab on the website banner to find the drop-down menu.

Other general information resources are also available, including a variety of links, videos, and downloadable brochures. Stay tuned for our upcoming COPSA webinars and other events.

As always, you can access the Self-Care resources on our website for free. Use our NEW link:

**Self-Care for Professional Caregivers**  
<https://care2caregivers.com/professional-resources/self-care/>

### Upcoming Caregiver 2023

Safety issues for Caregivers  
September 26, 2023 1:00pm  
Click [HERE](#) to register

Truth Telling & Memory Loss  
October 25, 2023 1:00pm  
Click [HERE](#) to register

For more info email Mary Catherine:  
[lundqumc@ubhc.rutgers.edu](mailto:lundqumc@ubhc.rutgers.edu)  
or call Care2Caregivers at 800-424-2494



visit our website [www.care2caregivers.com](http://www.care2caregivers.com) for information on caregiver support groups

**1-800-424-2494**