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DECISIONS

Help aging loved ones make the best healthcare, financial and living choices

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By Jane Adler

Moving a parent to assisted living is a difficult decision. But the clues that a parent may need more help are often evident. Here are some signs to watch for:

1. Falls or declining health. Falls are the leading cause of death from injury among people 65 and older. A parent who falls may need more help. And parents with a chronic health condition such as congestive heart failure may need to be monitored.

2. Poor grooming. A parent who isn't showering or doesn't see the need for it may be having trouble or their cognition may have changed, according to Shelly Smith, health care administrator and assistant executive director at Park Place of Elmhurst, a retirement community operated by Providence Life Services. "It's a telltale sign," she says.

3. Not eating meals. This may be another sign that a change is needed in living arrangements, Smith says. Some clues: The elder is losing weight, or the refrigerator is full of old food.

4. Cognitive issues. Watch for a change in decision-making abilities, advises Johanna Zandstra, vice president of operations at Providence Life Services. Is the parent able to make financial decisions, or even simple ones about daily life? A noticeable change can be a red flag.

5. Poor housekeeping. This can include lots of clutter, piled-up mail or signs of home neglect.

6. Less sociability. Seniors who become depressed can isolate themselves and stop seeing friends. A transition to assisted living can be difficult, but usually results in the elderly person becoming more socially engaged.

7. Car problems. Watch for nicks or dents on the car. Does the person tailgate, or react slowly? Proceed with caution.

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How to Quarterback Care for an Older Parent

Help is on the way for caregivers

By Jane Adler

Caregiving for an elderly parent is a tough job.

For two years, Barbara Cooper did little else than supervise her father's care as his health deteriorated. Her parents lived together in an apartment but her mother couldn't handle the situation.

Her father didn't want to move to a care facility, so Cooper hired aides to watch him 24 hours a day. She was responsible for monitoring the aides, setting up schedules, paying them, and many of the other tasks to keep the household running. "It was a lot of work," says Cooper, a busy artist whose work includes a suspended sculpture at the Paulina stop on the CTA's Brown Line. "It wasn't working out."

It's estimated that 34.2 million adult children provide unpaid care for their elderly parents and relatives. These adult children are often responsible for everything from arranging doctor's appointments, grocery shopping and paying the bills to crisis management.

The situation is one many adults don't plan for or expect. The toll can be measured in lost work hours along with an added dose of stress. "You worry all the time," Cooper says.

Luckily, a growing number of services are available to help caregivers. Assisted living and other care facilities offer another alternative. Many of the buildings have a robust menu of services that can help relieve the pressure on family members.

Geriatric case managers are a good place to start. These professionals can assess the elder's needs and guide a family through the labyrinth of senior care alternatives. CJE SeniorLife, for example, is a local nonprofit organization that has case managers on staff.

Home care agencies are another resource. These companies provide in-home care including household duties and some help with daily activities.

The Alden Network offers a range of services and senior living facilities. These offerings include short-term rehabilitation and post-acute care, assisted living, memory care, independent living, skilled nursing and ventilator care. A new campus, Alden of Huntley, is underway in northwest suburban Huntley. It will include a 79-unit Huntley Horizon Senior Living Community for independent living, a 110-bed Alden Estates of Huntley for short-term rehabilitation care, and Alden Courts of Huntley for memory care.

"Alden Courts of Huntley will offer a memory care model that is different than the rest," says Emily Rickman, administrator at Alden Courts of Huntley Memory Care and Alden Estates of Huntley Short-Term Rehabilitation. "We will utilize an aging in place model of care delivery coupled with evidence-based therapeutic programming to offer memory care programs to improve quality of life. Alden Estates of Huntley will specialize in orthopedic recovery and post-acute care in an amenity-filled environment in which patients can heal quickly and safely before returning to home."

Providence Life Services provides a range of services to help adult caregivers. The nonprofit has seven senior living properties in the Chicago area. It also provides home health and home care services, as well as hospice care. The services are available to residents of the Providence buildings as well as to those who live at home in the wider community. "Someone may not be quite ready to move to assisted living, but may need a little more supervision," says Johanna Zandstra, VP of operations at Providence Life Services.

TAKE A BREAK

Respite care can give families a break.

Gail Dunlap's mother lived with her family for 12 years. At first, her mother had a mother-in-law's suite in a big house where they all lived in Downers Grove. After the kids had grown up and left home, Dunlap and her husband, along with her mother, downsized to a condominium.

Even though Dunlap works full time, she noticed her mother wasn't doing much. "She was staring at the TV all day," Dunlap says.

Dunlap arranged for respite care at Saratoga Grove, a retirement community in Downers Grove operated by Providence Life Services.

Respite care is a short trial stay. In Dunlap's case, it turned into a

permanent move. Her mother now lives in the memory care section of the community. "I am amazed at the difference in the quality of her life, and of mine," Dunlap says.

Senior living communities are adding services to further reduce the pressure on adult caregivers. Healthcare services are a top priority, eliminating the need for caregivers to arrange for doctor visits.

The Admiral at the Lake, a retirement community in Chicago, has physicians who visit weekly. A wellness nurse coordinates care for residents after a hospital stay.

An on-site therapy gym is staffed by trained physical and occupational therapists. Great Lakes Caring, a service company, has an office in the building. It offers home health, pet sitting, grocery shopping, companions and hospice care.

"We take a hands-on approach," says Mark Dubovick, health services administrator at the Admiral at the Lake. He adds that while the services are available in the building, residents are free to choose their own service and healthcare providers.

Providence Life Services has a weekly clinic for residents at its communities. A nurse is available to take blood pressures and check glucose levels. The nurse also answers medication questions and conducts general health assessments. "It's a good way to monitor residents and plug them into services," Zandstra says. Providence is also expanding its "house call" program, in which a doctor does rounds at a community.

"Someone may not be quite ready to move to assisted living, but may need a little more supervision."

-Johanna Zandstra, VP of operations at Providence Life Services.

Providing relief to adult caregivers can change family dynamics.

Dunlap has a different outlook on her mother since she moved her to memory care. "She is not the person she was and never will be again," Dunlap says. "But without having that day-to-day responsibility, I can look at her with the respect she deserves."

In Cooper's case, after her father died, her mother moved to the Admiral at the Lake. She started out in an independent living apartment, but after a fall and hospitalization now lives in the assisted living portion of the building.

"She's quite happy," Cooper says. Her mother has people around her and she gets her medications on time. There are lots of activities and opportunities to socialize, Cooper says. At the same time, her mother still has some privacy. She likes to listen to books on tape in her studio apartment.

The best part for Cooper: "I'm not worrying about my mother as much," she says. "It's a great thing." ■

Thinking about Moving an Elderly Parent to Assisted Living?

Here are 5 key questions to ask

By Jane Adler

Baby boomers may be contemplating a carefree retirement, but many face the prospect of caring for older parents. Instead of taking on added responsibilities, a move to assisted living is often the best answer for everyone.

Assisted living facilities provide help to elders who can no longer live alone safely. Residents receive meals and assistance with the activities of daily living such as bathing, dressing and taking medication. Assisted living is not meant for those who need around-the-clock nursing care.

Shopping for an assisted living facility takes time. An online search is a start, but in-person tours are a must, experts say. That's the only way to find out if the facility is a good match for an elderly loved one.

Here are five basic questions to ask before making the move.

1. What kinds of services are available?
Assisted living buildings will vary in terms of the amenities and services. Every facility should provide daily meals and some personal assistance. Ask about activities, advises Chris Zaug, assisted living resident services manager at The Admiral at the Lake, a retirement community on the North Side of Chicago that features independent living apartments, assisted living units and skilled nursing care. What programs will the elderly person participate in on a daily basis? The programs should include a range of activities to address social, physical, mental and emotional needs. "It's important," Zaug says.

Typically, assisted living buildings have different levels of care. Many buildings also have special units for those with memory problems. Ask what each level of care provides. A nurse usually conducts an assessment of the senior prior to move-in to determine the appropriate care level. Find out which level of care is being recommended and why.

2. What is the quality of care?
Assisted living facilities are licensed and regulated by the state. A licensed building should meet the minimum standards of assisted care. But this is a low bar, experts say. Ask if the facility is accredited by an outside group, such as the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF), an independent organization that sets high standards for care and service.

Another way to judge the quality of care is to evaluate the staff. "Find out how many individuals each staff member is responsible for assisting," Zaug says. A rule of thumb for adequate staffing is about one aide for every eight residents, though fewer staffers may be available overnight.

Higher levels of care should provide more staff attention, including for those in memory care. Ask about response time.

Staff turnover is another measure of the quality of care. High turnover rates can be an indication of a lack of consistency. Assisted living facilities are known for high turnover rates among hands-on caregivers. Sometimes a better benchmark is to ask how long the executive director of the

Retirement living building at Park Place of St. John, St. John, Indiana.

facility and other top administrators have been there. A long track record can be a sign of good service.

Talk to the staff. Ask how they like working at the facility. Do they seem happy to be there?

3. Who do I communicate with?

Placing an elderly loved one in an assisted living building takes much of the burden off the adult child, but it's important to keep the lines of communication open with the staff. Typically, the main point of contact is the executive director of the facility, especially if there's a problem. Park Place of Elmhurst is a retirement community in the western suburb that uses a variety of methods to communicate with families. The community sends out regular emails about activities and events, inviting family members to attend. Families also receive photo collages of the elder engaged in activities.

Every resident has a service plan that outlines his or her care needs. "We meet on a regular basis with the family to discuss the plan," says Shelly Smith, health care administrator and assistant executive director at Park Place of Elmhurst. The community is a part of Providence Life Services, a nonprofit organization with seven communities in the Chicago area. Meetings are also scheduled if the resident's condition or care needs change. "We don't want the family to be surprised," Smith says.

4. What happens if my elder needs more help?

More help can usually be provided by stepping up to the next level of care. Some families even decide to hire private caregivers to fill in the gaps or provide daily companionship to a frail elder. "By regulation, there is only so much care we can give," says Mark Dubovick, health services administrator at The Admiral at the Lake.

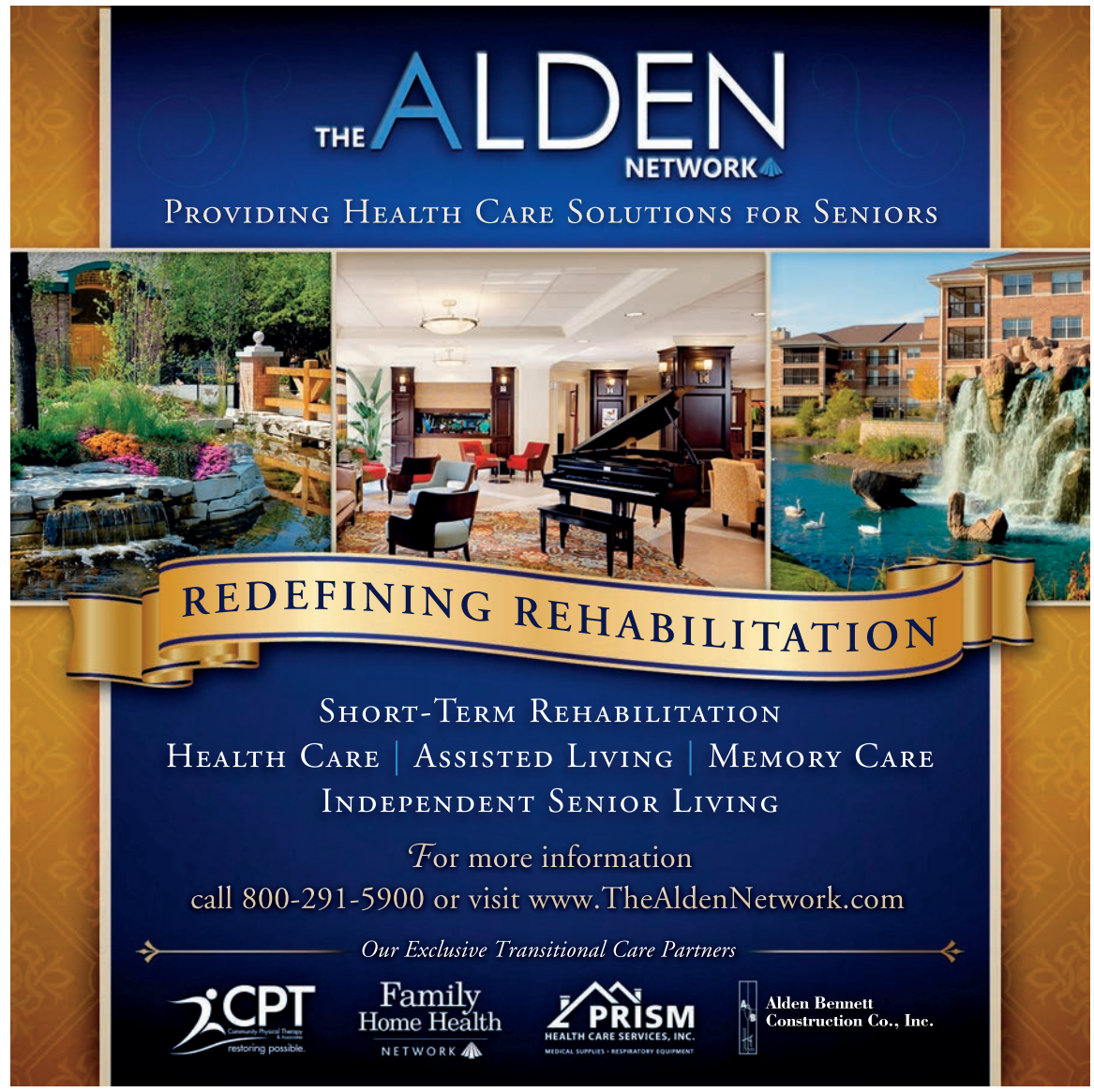
Elders who need around-the-clock nursing supervision must move to skilled nursing. The Admiral has two floors dedicated to skilled nursing care. This can help ease the transition from assisted living since the elder does not have to move to another facility. "If a resident needs more care, we discuss the options with the family," Dubovick says.

5. What's the cost?

Assisted living is expensive. The median monthly cost in Illinois is $3,720, according to the 2017 Genworth Cost of Care Survey. Pricing varies, however, and higher levels of care will cost more. Memory care, for example, starts at about $6,000 a month, sources say. Find out what's included in the basic care package. How much time can my parent expect to spend daily with an aide? Ask what the higher levels of care cost and what each includes.

Medicare does not pay for assisted living. Illinois does have an assisted living program for low-income seniors in so-called supportive living buildings, which are partially supported by Medicaid funds. Most assisted living is paid for by the resident with savings, or payments from long-term care insurance. Adult children often chip in. Other sources of help may be available, such as veterans' benefits. Ask the building administrator about the various options. ■

For details on 24 new senior living communities in the Chicago area, visit ChicagoBusiness.com/Decisions



New Senior Living Communities Open Locally

By Jane Adler

Most families want their elderly loved ones to live nearby. Here is a roundup of new senior living facilities in the Chicago area.

WEST

HarborChase of Naperville, Naperville. The building has 69 assisted living and 32 memory support apartments. One- and two-bedroom units include full kitchens.

Maple Glen, Glen Ellyn. This memory care community opened last summer. It can house 65 residents with a mix of private suites, shared rooms and units with shared bathrooms. Hourly and respite care is also available.

Travanse Living at Wheaton, Wheaton. The 80 units include 60 assisted living suites and 20 memory care units. The community features a restaurant, bistro and dining terrace, as well as a library, spa, therapy gym, courtyards and other amenities.

Lakeview Memory Care, Bloomingdale. This community opened last spring and can accommodate 65 residents. It has an enclosed courtyard and outdoor walking paths. Hourly and respite care is also available.

Harvester Place, Burr Ridge. This memory care community opened in 2016 and has space for 82 residents. It is operated by Anthem Memory Care.

Silverado Senior Living, St. Charles. Expected to open this summer, this new memory care community has 90 apartments. The facility will include a large outdoor courtyard, bistro, salon, country store and spa.

Aspired Living of Westmont, Westmont. This property opened in late 2017. It has 107 units and offers assisted living and memory care.

SOUTH/SOUTHWEST/SOUTHEAST

Heartis Village of Orland Park, Orland Park. This 96-unit building opened in March and offers assisted living and memory care. It features all-day dining, a therapy gym, fitness center and other amenities. Memory care residents have access to their own private courtyard.

Porter Place, Tinley Park. Operated by Anthem Memory Care, this memory care community opened in 2016. It can accommodate 82 residents.

Grace Point, Oak Lawn. This community has room for 82 residents suffering from memory loss. It is planned to open this spring and is operated by Anthem Memory Care.

Park Place of St. John, St. John, Ind. Sponsored by Providence Life Services, the community is just over one year old, offering retirement living, skilled nursing and rehabilitation. Phase II will break ground this spring for 54 new retirement living apartments, expected to open in the summer of 2019.

NORTH/NORTHWEST

Belmont Village Lincoln Park, Chicago. Designed for assisted living and memory care residents, the seven-story building will have 149 apartments and is expected to open in July 2019.

Artis Senior Living of Lakeview, Chicago. A new five-story assisted living and memory care facility is being built at West Addison Street and North Ashland Avenue. The building will have 140 units and is projected to open in 2019.

The Sheridan at Green Oaks, Lake Bluff. This community features 206 units of independent living, assisted living and memory care. It opened last April.

The Sheridan at Park Ridge, Park Ridge. Opening next fall, this facility will have 100 units of assisted living and memory care. It will include a variety of amenities and services, such as physical therapy and physician visits.

Arboria of Long Grove, Long Grove. This community has 60 assisted living apartments and 40 units of memory care. It opened last May.

Clarendale of Algonquin, Algonquin. Opened in 2016, the community has 186 apartments of independent living, assisted living and memory care. Other Clarendale communities are open in south suburban Mokena and in Schererville, Ind.

Azpira Place of Lake Zurich, Lake Zurich. This 120-unit assisted living building with a mix of studio and one-bedroom apartments opened in May 2017.

Grandbrier of Prospect Heights, Prospect Heights. This assisted living and memory care facility has 101 units. It opened last May and includes a resort-style fitness center and movie theater, among other amenities.

Emerald Place, Glenview. This memory care community recently opened and can accommodate 82 residents. It is operated by Anthem Memory Care.

Travanse Living at Grayslake, Grayslake. Opened in 2016, this community has 96 units, for assisted living and memory care residents. It has several dining venues and other amenities such as a bistro, courtyard and display kitchen.

Northbrook Inn, Northbrook. This memory care project opened last year and can accommodate 69 residents. Hourly and respite care is also available.

Waverly Inn, Arlington Heights. Independent living and memory care are offered at this community scheduled to open this spring. It can accommodate 72 residents and has two cottages featuring four units for independent living residents.

Alden of Huntley, Huntley. Alden of Huntley, Huntley. a new 15-acre community, featuring 79 units of independent senior living, including ranch-style villas, 110 beds for short-term rehabilitation care, and a memory care community. The independent living section of the project is open. The rehabilitation and memory care sections are due to open this spring.

Building Boom Gives Consumers More Senior Living Choices

By Jane Adler

Local families have a growing number of senior living options to choose from when an elder needs extra help and can no longer live alone.

Ann Marie Lilja had to find an assisted living community for her father who couldn't manage by himself any more in his longtime home. He moved in with his daughter for a month, but Lilja works full time and couldn't take care of him.

After looking at several assisted living buildings, she settled on Aspired Living of Westmont, a new facility in the western suburb. "It was fresh," Lilja says. The apartments were bright and the hallways were wide. The building had lots of amenities including a movie theater and a card room. "I really liked the quality," Lilja says.

Her father moved to Aspired Living last August and has settled in nicely. "He even started a poker club," Lilja says with a laugh.

A senior living building boom is underway in the Chicago area. In fact, about 4,000 new units of seniors housing are under construction here, the most of any big city in the country, according to the National Investment Center for Seniors Housing & Care.

The large number of new units has increased competition among providers, putting some downward pressure on rental rates, sources say. That means consumers may be able to snag some good deals.

Many new buildings offer both assisted living and memory care.

Most of the new construction is in the suburbs. But several projects are underway in the city where seniors housing is harder to find.

A new five-story assisted living and memory care facility is being built near the corner of West Addison Street and North Ashland Avenue, site of the former Bert Weinman Ford dealership. The building will have 140 units and is projected to open in 2019. It is a project of Artis Senior Living of McLean, Va., which also has plans to build a memory care facility in north suburban Wilmette.

A new assisted living building is under construction in Lincoln Park. The 149-unit Belmont Village Lincoln Park is being built on the old Children's Memorial Hospital campus, a six-acre site that is being redeveloped. The 149-unit building is a project of Belmont Village Senior Living, a Houston-based company that has other assisted living projects in the Chicago area.

Belmont partnered with Chicago-based Harrison Street Partners and purchased the Nellie Black building on the hospital campus. The Nellie Black building was built in 1932 and originally served as housing for nurses and interns.

There was interest in saving the old building, but the plan was found to be impractical. The old building was demolished and is being replaced by a structure that replicates the architectural design of the original building.

Expected to open in July 2019, Belmont Village Lincoln Park represents several trends seen in other new senior living communities. The building is LEED certified, a designation for environmentally friendly structures. "Concern for the planet is something new in seniors housing," says Patricia Will, Belmont Village founder and CEO.

Other trends in the latest wave of senior living buildings include high-end finishes, multiple common areas spaces and luxury-type amenities. Aspire Living of Westmont, for example, features a restaurant and bistro, a demonstration kitchen, movie theater, technology center, fitness facility and yoga studio, library, and salon and spa.

Apartments are getting larger. The two-bedroom units have been the first ones to lease at Aspired Living of Westmont and Heartis Village of Orland Park, which opened in March. "We added a greater percentage of two-bedroom apartments to accommodate couples," says Maria Oliva, COO at Pathway to Living, the Chicago-based operator of the properties.

With so many senior living options, it's best to tour buildings, ask questions and keep notes. Barb Morris made a spreadsheet comparing the features and pricing of the 10 assisted living buildings she toured for her in-laws. It was no longer practical to keep the elders in their home.

The family settled on an apartment at Saratoga Grove, a retirement community in Downers Grove operated by Providence Life Services.

Morris says the choice was easy because her in-laws had lived for 60 years in Downers Grove and didn't want to leave the community. "We have incredible peace of mind," she says. ■