



The Impact of the Age Wave...

The largest population in the history of the world turns 65 years old in 2011. Frequently called the “age wave,” the increasing number of adults over 60, combined with the physical and memory challenges of aging, creates an unprecedented demand for services. Aging Baby Boomers’ lifelong traits of self-reliance, independence and indulgence will result in *a demand to stay in their home—or “age in place”*—as long as possible. New challenges and opportunities arise in meeting this goal.

While more and more seniors are opting to stay at home with a care companion, who’s often a family member, this approach does not address three crucial issues around caring for an aging loved one:

1. The socialization needs of the physically and memory challenged adult
2. Therapeutic treatments to bolster the care of the older adult
3. The exhaustion and accompanying illnesses that arise from being a full-time caregiver for a loved one with a serious chronic disease

Adult day care centers provide solutions for all these issues, enriching the quality of life for older adults while lessening the impact on their family caregivers.

According to the MetLife-funded *National Study of Adult Day Care in America*, released in October 2010, there has been a 35% growth in the number of adult day care centers in the U.S. over the past eight years, totaling more than 4,600 centers today. This study verified that adult day care centers are emerging as leaders in community-based care for individuals living with Alzheimer’s and other dementias. This is due to first, their emphasis on health care, being certified to care for those with Alzheimer’s and other memory challenges; second, their focus on socialization and stimulation that engages clients in activities that salvage fragments of their skills and generate positive emotions; and third, the physical activity programs designed to address cardiovascular disease and diabetes.

The study found that adult day services may allow individuals to delay nursing home placement, enabling families to preserve resources and enjoy peace of mind while their loved one receives quality compassionate care.

The research is also revealing that the benefits of adult day care are not just for the recipient of the services. Adult day services are a reliable source of support to caregivers in an emotionally and physically difficult time for them. The service allow caregivers to maintain careers and other lifestyle needs while their loved one receives professional and compassionate care. And support programs like educational offerings, caregiver support groups, and individual counseling provide spiritual, emotional, and informational support for family care-providers.