

Senior Services Levy allows seniors to age in place

University of Missouri researchers have found that a new strategy for long-term care called Aging in Place is less expensive and provides better health outcomes.

“Adults want to remain healthy and independent during their senior years, but traditional long-term care often diminishes seniors’ independence and quality of life,” said [Marilyn Rantz, professor in the Sinclair School of Nursing](#). “Aging in Place enables older adults to remain in the same environment and receive supportive health services as needed. With this type of care, most people wouldn’t need to relocate to nursing homes.”

Franklin County Senior Options has been providing older adults and their families the necessary services that make aging in place possible since 1993. The Franklin County Office on Aging administers this levy program on behalf of the Board of Franklin County Commissioners.

Through a large provider network Senior Options makes available home and community based care services for Franklin County residents age 60 and older, who have a demonstrated need for services that Senior Options can provide. Senior Options offers no medical care or cures, but for eligible seniors it is a substitute for a good friend or neighbor who offers a helping hand on a temporary basis like bringing over a meal, offering to grocery shop, or providing transportation to a doctor’s visit. For participants in Senior Options, the need for these simple forms of assistance is usually long-term and often becomes difficult for family, friends and neighbors to bear without assistance.

Franklin County residents, age 60 and older and their families can access a variety of services through Senior Options that support aging in place. These services can include: information and advocacy, case management, homemaker, medical transportation, adult day care, home delivered meals, minor home repair, personal care, emergency response systems, and respite care. Services are provided on a cost-sharing basis to those with a demonstrated need using a sliding

fee scale. Case Managers look at monthly income and liquid assets to determine, using the sliding scale, if the participant will be responsible for a portion of the cost of service.

The intent of Senior Options is to help older adults maintain their sense of independence, retain a good quality of life, and avoid or delay the need for institutional care. We support their strong preference for remaining in the community and aging in place.

In a four-year analysis of aging in place, the total care costs for residents were thousands less than traditional care options. Costs for living and health care never approached the costs for nursing homes and assisted-living services. In addition, the residents had improved mental and physical health outcomes.

Comparing institutional costs to Senior Options costs reveals dramatic savings for the taxpayer. The monthly cost of institutional care (semi-private room) is \$6,083, while the cost for five days/week of adult day health that allows the caregiver to continue working is around \$1,081 per month.

The five year Senior Services levy is the primary funding source for Senior Options. The Senior Services levy funds minimize out of pocket expenses for participants. Over 45% of participants contribute a monthly co-payment for their services. The current Senior Services levy expires at the end of 2012.

For more information on Franklin County Senior Options or the levy that supports our senior services, call (614) 525-6200.