

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Planning for a balanced life: Create a plan to
ensure independence and safety

Start the new year by preparing for future needs of the frail elderly

(CITY – Date, 2008) – The U.S. Census Bureau projections indicate that between the years 2010 and 2030 the elderly population in the United States will rise from 13 percent of the total population to almost 20 percent with over 71 million elderly. Centenarians alone, the fastest-growing age group, are set to double within 10 years and top one million by 2050. With these figures in mind, proactive planning for the frail elderly becomes essential in order to ensure adequate care in future years.

My Agency is encouraging seniors and their families to take a fresh look at their circumstances this new year. We believe it is important for people to be armed with information on potential needs for the frail elderly and are assisting the public in crafting their own “care plans” in an effort to ensure independence and safety at home in the years to come.

Take stock: assess the independence of a loved one.

A functional assessment is critical when creating a checklist of a loved one’s needs and assists in creating an appropriate care plan. Normal aging, disease, and hospitalization can contribute to a decline in independence. The information obtained from a functional assessment can assist in crafting a plan for in-home

care services such as meal preparation, nursing care, homemaker services, personal care, or continuous supervision.

A simple test can be helpful in assessing functional level for assistance in remaining at home:

The simple scale shown below is based on M. Powell Lawton's Instrumental Activities of Daily Living Scale and is helpful in determining what is specifically needed to adequately perform activities of daily living. For each area of function listed for the frail elderly person, apply the associated number with the description that best fits the person's functional level. When completed, add the scores together. The lower the score, the more one has needs that require daily care. This assessment can also assist professionals in determining what care is needed, and whether or not it can be provided at home or if a move to a facility is warranted.

Ability to Use Telephone

- | | |
|---|---------|
| 1. Operates telephone on own initiative: looks up and dials numbers, etc. | 3 |
| 2. Dials a few well-known numbers | 2 |
| 3. Answers telephone but does not dial | 1 |
| 4. Does not use telephone at all | 0 _____ |

Shopping

- | | |
|---|---------|
| 1. Takes care of all shopping needs independently | 3 |
| 2. Shops independently for small purchases | 2 |
| 3. Needs to be accompanied on any shopping trip | 1 |
| 4. Completely unable to shop | 0 _____ |

Food Preparation

- | | |
|---|---------|
| 1. Plans, prepares and serves adequate meals independently | 3 |
| 2. Prepares adequate meals if supplied with ingredients | 2 |
| 3. Heats and serves prepared meals, or prepares meals but does not maintain adequate diet | 1 |
| 4. Needs to have meals prepared and served | 0 _____ |

Housekeeping

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Maintains house alone or with occasional assistance (e.g., "heavy work-domestic help") | 4 |
| 2. Performs light daily tasks such as dishwashing, bed making | 3 |
| 3. Performs light daily tasks but cannot maintain acceptable level of cleanliness | 2 |

- 4. Needs help with all home maintenance tasks 1
- 5. Does not participate in any housekeeping tasks 0 _____

Laundry

- 1. Does personal laundry completely 2
- 2. Launders small items – rinses socks, stockings, etc. 1
- 3. All laundry must be done by others 0 _____

Travel

- 1. Travels independently on public transportation or drives own car 4
- 2. Arranges own travel via taxi, but does not otherwise use public transportation 3
- 3. Travels on public transportation when assisted or accompanied by another 2
- 4. Travel limited to taxi or automobile with assistance of another 1
- 5. Does not travel at all 0 _____

Responsibility for Own Medication

- 1. Is responsible for taking medication in correct dosages at correct times 2
- 2. Takes responsibility if medication is prepared in advance in separated doses 1
- 3. Is not capable of dispensing own medication 0 _____

Ability to Handle Finances

- 1. Manages financial matters independently (budgets, writes checks, pays rent, pays bills, goes to bank), collects and keeps track of income 2
- 2. Manages financial day-to-day purchases, but needs help with banking, major purchases, etc. 1
- 3. Incapable of handling money 0 _____

Total Score _____

Contact **MY COMPANY** for help in assessing a frail senior’s situation, for more information, and for resources. With a little planning, frail elderly can safely remain in the comfort of home—and maintain a feeling of independence.

About My Company (Add company boilerplate here.)

My Company is . . . and was founded in . . . and its mission is . . .

Further information can be found on **My Company Web site**.