



# Media Release

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**For Immediate Release**

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## **DHS Seeks Adult Family Home Providers in South and Southeast Arkansas**

Elderly residents in south and southeast Arkansas are in need of Adult Family Homes that can offer care for people who aren't ready for nursing homes, the Department of Human Services (DHS) Division of Aging and Adult Services (DAAS) announced Wednesday.

The Adult Family Home (AFH) program is a new concept in Arkansas that has been used in many other states for several years. The goal of the program is to help people stay out of nursing homes by offering a family-style living environment in single family homes that have been certified by DAAS to help care for the elderly.

"The move to an Adult Family Home is an alternative for those seniors who don't need to live in a skilled nursing facility or nursing home, but need someone to watch over them fulltime," said Krista Hughes, director of DAAS. "When an elderly person can no longer live alone, this program provides needed support and care in a warm and personal home setting."

Adult Family Homes serve up to three clients who are over age 65, functionally impaired, cannot live alone and are at imminent risk of death or serious injury. Residents live in the Adult Family Home and receive help with personal care, medication reminders, supervision and transportation to appointments. Services are provided in a home-like setting that includes a private bedroom, semi-private bathroom, home-cooked meals and a common living area.

The establishment of Adult Family Homes under the Medicaid-funded Elder Choices Home and Community-Based Services Waiver program is part of a movement to offer Arkansas seniors as many care options as possible. Care is paid for by Medicaid while room and board is paid for by clients or their families.

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Clients in the Adult Family Homes program have medical needs that would require them to live in a nursing home if this program were not available. Supervision, care and services, including ensuring the resident's health, safety and welfare, are required by the provider 24 hours a day.

AFH providers help residents with bathing, grooming, preparing meals, eating, toileting, walking, transferring and many other tasks. Providers must sign an occupancy agreement with the client that clearly describes the rights and responsibilities of the client and provider.

Serving as an Adult Family Homes provider is an important responsibility. The certification process involves many steps including interviews, training, drug tests, criminal records checks and home inspections to ensure the home meets program standards for structure, environment and safety. In general,

- Providers may serve AFH clients who are not a family member, spouse or legal guardian.
- Providers cannot be employed by a corporation, partnership or individual to operate an AFH, nor have ownership interest in a home health corporation.
- Providers may operate no more than one AFH at the same time.
- The costs of obtaining any required information or documentation for certification are the provider's sole responsibility.
- AFHs must meet applicable local business license, zoning, building and housing codes, and state and local fire and safety regulations.
- After the initial home visit, DAAS may make announced or unannounced visits to determine the provider's ability to provide care for clients.

For more information or to learn how to become an Adult Family Homes provider, contact Ramona Sangalli with the DHS Division of Aging and Adult Services at 501-320-6579.