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Elder Care Officially Becomes a Benefits Enrollment Center

by Deanna Dodson, Client Services Director

Elder Care is proud to announce that it has been selected to serve as a Benefits Enrollment Center (BEC) through the National Council on Aging's Center for Economic Well-Being. This new initiative will help older adults and individuals with disabilities connect with important benefits that can improve their financial security, health, and overall quality of life.

Through the Benefits Enrollment Center, Elder Care will provide personalized assistance to Medicare-eligible older adults and adults living with disabilities who may qualify for programs that help cover the cost of healthcare, food, and prescriptions. The program focuses on helping individuals apply for and enroll in key benefits such as Medicare Part D Extra Help (Low-Income Subsidy), Medicare Savings Programs, Medicaid, and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

All too often older adults who qualify for these programs are unaware that help is available. Elder Care's trained staff will provide one-on-one assistance to screen individuals for eligibility, guide them through the application process, and help ensure they successfully receive the benefits they qualify for. These programs can significantly reduce out-of-pocket healthcare costs, lower prescription drug expenses, and help individuals afford nutritious food.

The Benefits Enrollment Center model emphasizes a person-centered approach, recognizing that everyone's situation is unique. Staff work directly with clients to understand their needs and connect

them with multiple benefits whenever possible, helping older adults access support in one convenient location rather than navigating multiple agencies on their own.

"This program is an important step forward for our community," said Christina Bishop, Executive Director of Elder Care. "Many older adults live on fixed incomes and may struggle to cover basic expenses like food, healthcare, and medications. By becoming a Benefits Enrollment Center, Elder Care can help ensure that more individuals receive the assistance they need and deserve."

The program will also support outreach efforts across the community to ensure that older adults and caregivers are aware of available benefits and understand how to access them.

Individuals who would like to learn more about the Benefits Enrollment Center or schedule a benefits screening are encouraged to contact Deanna Dodson at ddodson@abouteldercare.org or by calling (918) 336-8500.



Saddle Up for the 28th Annual The Good, The Bad, and The Barbecue!

by Michael Colaw, Development Director

Dust off your boots and get ready for one of Bartlesville's most beloved traditions! The 28th Annual The Good, The Bad, and The Barbecue is riding back into town on Saturday, May 9, 2026, at the beautiful Hughes Ranch. This legendary evening brings together great food, lively entertainment, and a whole lot of community spirit, all to support the life-changing work of Elder Care.

Each year, this event transforms the Hughes Ranch into a western-themed celebration where guests can kick back under the big tent, enjoy a mouthwatering barbecue dinner from Dink's Pit BBQ, and take part in the always-exciting silent and live auctions. Whether you're bidding on unique items, visiting with friends, or just enjoying the atmosphere, there's never a dull moment.

Guests are encouraged to lean into the western theme, so dust off those cowboy boots, grab your favorite hat, and come ready for a great time. Whether you show up looking like a seasoned ranch hand or someone who clearly bought their hat five minutes before the event, you'll fit right in. And don't worry, around here, the only real outlaw behavior is getting a little too competitive during the auction.

Let's be honest, barbecue has a magical ability to bring people together. Add great company, live music, a little dancing, and the occasional "friendly" auction rivalry, and you've got yourself a pretty fantastic evening. It's the kind of night where people come for food and fun, and somehow end up cheering each other on during a bidding war over a vacation package or a handmade quilt.

Of course, the best part of the evening is what it supports. Every laugh, every bid, and every plate of barbecue helps Elder Care continue providing essential services to aging adults across our community. While guests are busy enjoying the evening, they're also helping ensure aging adults in our area can remain healthy, connected, and independent, which makes the whole event feel even better than that second helping of brisket.

The event begins at 6:00 p.m., and tickets start at \$100, making it one of the most entertaining nights of the year while also supporting an important cause. Every ticket purchased helps Elder Care continue providing essential services to aging adults and their families throughout Washington, Nowata, and Osage counties.

So mark your calendar, round up your friends, and prepare for a night of fun that's just a little bit wild west and a whole lot of community.

For tickets, sponsorships, or more information, visit www.abouteldercare.org/bbq or call Elder Care at (918) 336-8500. We'll see you at the ranch on May 9th.



Aging Well at Home

by Michael Colaw, Development Director

For many aging adults, there's no place like home. It's where memories are made, routines are familiar, and comfort comes naturally. Aging well at home isn't just about staying put; it's about staying safe, confident, and independent. And often, the smallest changes make the biggest difference.

As we age, everyday tasks can become more challenging. Simple adjustments around the home can help reduce risks and make daily life easier. Improving lighting in hallways and entryways, removing loose rugs, and adding grab bars in bathrooms are all effective ways to prevent falls. Even rearranging frequently used items to be within easy reach can go a long way in promoting safety and convenience.

But aging well at home isn't just about the physical environment; it's also about having the right support system in place. Elder Care's In-Home Services and Case Management programs are designed to meet individuals where they are. Whether it's assistance with daily tasks, help navigating healthcare and benefits, or simply having someone check in regularly, these services provide peace of mind for both older adults and their families.

Equally important is staying active and engaged. Maintaining strength, balance, and social connection plays a key role in preserving independence. Participating in programs like those offered through Elder Care can help individuals remain connected to their

community while supporting overall health and well-being.

Aging at home successfully doesn't require a complete overhaul. With a few thoughtful adjustments and the right support, home can continue to be a place of comfort, dignity, and independence for years to come.

If you or a loved one is interested in learning more about how Elder Care can support aging well at home, we're here to help. Call us today at (918) 336-8500 or email us at care@abouteldercare.org to schedule an appointment and find out how we can help you age well at home.



The Hidden Cost of Independence

by Michael Colaw, Development Director

For many aging adults, independence is everything. It means staying in your own home, keeping your routines, and living life on your terms. It's something to be protected and celebrated. But what we don't often talk about is the hidden cost that can come with trying to maintain that independence alone.

Behind the scenes, small challenges can begin to add up. Tasks that once felt simple, like carrying groceries, navigating stairs, or keeping up with household chores, can take more energy than they used to. There may be a quiet fear of falling, a hesitation to ask for help, or a growing sense of isolation. None of these is dramatic on their own, but over time, they can wear on both physical health and peace of mind.

For caregivers, the cost can be just as real. Family members often step in to fill the gaps, balancing their own responsibilities while trying to ensure their loved one is safe and supported. It's an act of love, but it can also lead to stress, fatigue, and burnout.

The truth is, maintaining independence doesn't have to mean doing everything alone. In fact, the right kind of support can be the very thing that protects it. Whether it's help with daily tasks, opportunities for social connection, or programs that strengthen mobility and confidence, support can extend independence, not take it away.

At Elder Care, we see independence as a partnership. It's about providing just enough support to help individuals stay in control of their

lives while reducing risks and easing the burden on families.

Because real independence isn't about doing it all yourself. It's about having the strength, confidence, and support to keep living the life you love.

If you or someone you love would like to learn more about maintaining independence at home, Elder Care is here to help. From in-home services and therapy to caregiver support and community programs, our team is ready to walk alongside you every step of the way. Contact us today at (918) 336-8500 and schedule a visit to learn how to stay happy, healthy, and independent at home.



More Than Recovery – It's Independence

by Baylor Reese, PT, DPT, Foundation Therapy Specialists

When most people think of physical therapy, they picture recovery after an injury or surgery. While that's certainly part of the story, at Elder Care's Foundation Therapy Specialists, therapy is about something much bigger: helping individuals maintain their independence and quality of life.

As we age, changes in strength, balance, and mobility can happen gradually. Often, these shifts go unnoticed until they begin to interfere with everyday moments, getting out of a chair, walking safely, or even getting down on the floor to play with your grandkids and back up again. They can also make it harder to keep up with an active lifestyle and fully enjoy time with friends and family. That's where proactive therapy can make all the difference.

Foundation Therapy Specialists focuses not only on recovery, but on prevention and long-term wellness. Through individualized treatment plans, our therapists work with everyone to improve balance, build strength, and increase confidence in movement. The goal is simple: help you stay active, safe, and independent for as long as possible.

For those living with Parkinson's disease, our specialized programs like PWR! Moves® and LOUD Crowd provide targeted exercises designed to improve mobility, speech, and overall function. PWR! Moves meets every Monday and Wednesday at 12:00 PM, while LOUD Crowd meets every Wednesday at 11:15 AM, offering consistent opportunities to build strength and

communication skills. These programs also provide something equally important: a sense of community and encouragement among participants who understand the journey, making each session not just therapeutic but uplifting.

One of the most powerful aspects of therapy is the confidence it restores. When someone feels steady on their feet again, they're more likely to stay engaged, whether that's attending social events, participating in activities at the EC Active Center, or simply enjoying a walk outside.

And the best part? You don't always need a physician referral to get started. With direct access to physical therapy, beginning your journey toward better movement and independence can be simple and convenient.

At Elder Care, we believe therapy isn't just about getting back to where you were; it's about helping you move forward with strength, confidence, and independence. Because maintaining your independence isn't just a goal, it's the foundation for living well.

Contact us today at (918) 766-0391 or foundation@abouteldercare.org to schedule your evaluation appointment.



The Good, The Bad, and The Barbecue

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