

NEWS Release



Waterford at All Saints

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LOCAL EXPERT COMMENTS ON TOP ISSUES OF CONCERN FOR OLDER ADULTS

(SIOUX FALLS, S.D.)—"Older adults in Sioux Falls are affected by the same issues confronting others around the country who are over 50," says Marge Coalman, EdD, Wellness and Programs Director for Waterford at All Saints and a member of the International Council on Active Aging (ICAA). "Rising health care costs, drug recalls, and the obesity and mental decline resulting from lack of exercise are important issues here just as they are elsewhere."

The ICAA recently released a report on the top issues of concern to older adults, based on a poll of 210 ICAA members who are experts in government, senior housing, social services, and wellness centers. According to the poll, the following issues are most important to older adults:

1. The recall of pharmaceutical drug Vioxx—a pain killer prescribed and used by seniors for years—and the questions raised about the safety of Celebrex and other drugs in this same family of anti-inflammatory medications. According to Coalman, "Drug safety concerns continue to escalate with older adults, and many don't understand there are other options available to them." Waterford's professional Life Enrichment/Wellness staff support alternative management of pain and chronic health conditions with recommendations in the areas of diet, exercise, stress management, and alternative treatments. "Massage therapy and exercise programs, such as yoga and stretching classes, are among the most popular recommendations

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that often show an immediate reduction in pain and improved health and function,” states Coalman.

2. The prevalence of obesity (and the associated economic and physical costs) along with the "epidemic" of type 2 diabetes, which is linked to obesity.

3. The growing amount of research demonstrating that physical activity is a necessary component of successful aging, particularly the research on the benefits of physical activity to maintain or improve mental health and cognitive skills. “The evidence of improved cognitive function through regular physical activity continues to mount as does the positive effect of exercise in dealing with clinical depression,” notes Coalman. “When it comes to exercise programs, one size definitely doesn’t fit all. It’s essential that professional staff working with older adults develop individualized programs that address their specific needs,” she points out.

4. The impact on older adults of the Medicare Modernization Act of 2003 and the newly-released Medicare drug cards, and the confusion among many older adults about how these affect them.

5. Fad diets—particularly the confusion about low-carbohydrate diets—and recent nutrition research on supplements, "nutraceuticals," and diet composition that can help improve quality of life.

According to Coalman, older adults face additional issues, including limited transportation services, accessibility barriers in public and private spaces, and a lack of well-trained geriatric physicians. “There is an ongoing need for qualified nurses and other health professionals who understand and care about the older adult population. The national health care worker shortage will affect us all even more as the boomers age,” she says.

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Coalman adds, “The fastest-growing segment of the U.S. population is people over the age of 100. For all of us—including centenarians—the quality of the journey is far more important than the length of our lives.”

Waterford at All Saints opened in June 1996 and is currently home to more than 135 people. The resort-style retirement community offers a variety of services, including independent living, assisted living, and memory care.

The ICAA is the world's largest association dedicated to changing the way we age by uniting and working with professionals in the retirement, assisted living, recreation, fitness, rehabilitation and wellness fields. The council is one of more than 50 of the most prominent health and aging organizations working to implement the National Blueprint on Aging.