

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Mystic Valley Elder Services Wants You to Know
the Warning Signs of Alzheimer's Disease**

(Malden, MA)— Alzheimer's disease is a progressive, degenerative disease of the brain resulting in memory loss, impaired thinking, and personality changes. Brain damages influence the way people act and react. As comprehension falters, emotional and behavioral problems may soar. Not everyone with the disease exhibits behavioral problems, but these problems are a common indication of the disease.

The Alzheimer's Association lists ten warning signs of the disease:

1. Recent memory loss affecting job skills
2. Difficulty accomplishing familiar tasks
3. Struggling with finding the right word
4. Disorientation to place and time
5. Poor judgment
6. Problems with abstract thinking
7. Misplacing items
8. Altered mood or behavior
9. Changes in personality
10. Loss of initiative

Don't jump to the conclusion unusual behavior indicates a person has Alzheimer's disease. If several family members have been afflicted with the disease perhaps it is indicative of a genetic factor—although it could be a result of a dozen other conditions.

It is extremely important for anyone experiencing changes/impairments in memory, cognitive, or behavioral patterns to get a thorough physical and neurological evaluation. There is no individual test for Alzheimer's. The best approach is to undergo a series of tests to exclude other conditions.

There are many benefits to the evaluation. No one should suffer needlessly. With the onset of dementia every attempt should be made to determine the originating factor.

Dementia could result from depression, drug interaction, thyroid problems or hormone disorders, nutritional deficiencies, and systemic illnesses. Symptoms can be reversed or halted with early diagnosis and treatment.

Regardless of the final diagnosis, emphasis should focus on making the most of the individual's remaining capabilities. With a little planning, it may be possible to maximize the quality of a person's life.

The majority of people with Alzheimer's are 65 and older. Those with Alzheimer's disease typically live anywhere from five to 20 years after the diagnosis. Diseases of this type lead to a slow deterioration and disintegration of the human body. It is understandable why people often refer to this process as the "long good bye." Although the person may physically look the same as the disease progresses from early to middle stages, the very essence of the person slowly starts to disconnect and drift away.

Find out what services are available in the community and make a pact with each family member to accept outside help when the responsibility becomes too much to manage. Far too many families have ended up in a crisis situation because they insisted on providing care in isolation. Introduce services slowly, adding to the care plan when the need increases.

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About Mystic Valley Elder Services

Located in Malden, Mass., Mystic Valley Elder Services is a non-profit agency that provides essential home- and community-based care and resources to elders, adults living with disabilities, and caregivers who reside in Chelsea, Everett, Malden, Medford, Melrose, North Reading, Reading, Revere, Stoneham, Wakefield and Winthrop. Agency services include coordination of home care, transportation, Meals on Wheels, and information and referrals. For more information, please call (781) 324-7705 or visit www.mves.org.