

Caregiver Stress Reduced by Their Loved One Attending Adult Day Health Care

Clinical results are in and they show that Adult Day Health Care (ADHC) not only benefits the participants, but also their caregivers! Fairfax County caregivers were among those who recently participated in a Penn State University's Daily Stress and Health Study of family caregivers, or DaSH, which was conducted to better understand how adult day services impact caregivers' stress levels. The study showed changes in stress hormone levels in caregivers on the days that their loved one attended adult day services when compared to the days that they did not attend. The research also showed that caregivers had fewer care-related stressors and more positive experiences on the days their loved ones were in adult day services, which had a positive effect on their emotional well-being and reduced caregivers' risks for illness.

"It was very exciting for me to see scientific evidence about our program," said Adult Day Health Care Program Manager Jennifer Robinson. "This research confirms what we've been hearing all along from our caregivers."

It's not a secret—stress causes many negative effects on a person's health (depression, pain, anxiety, high blood pressure, problems with learning and memory, chronic health problems, etc.). Caregivers are faced with an inordinate amount of stress when caring day in and day out for a loved one with impairments. This study demonstrates that the support that caregivers receive from programs like the Fairfax County Health Department's Adult Day Health Care provide statistically significant benefits. It is one of the first studies to show ADHC's positive impact on caregivers through scientific evidence—the tracking of stress hormone levels in caregivers' saliva on the days participants attend ADHC.

"We were thrilled that caregivers from Fairfax were able to participate in this study," said Jennifer. "They helped to illustrate the importance of our program."

The Adult Day Health Care program may be a good choice for loved ones who need care and supervision during the day due to changes in cognitive and/or physical function, yet wish to continue living at home. In addition, the program offers peace of mind for families who cannot leave their loved ones home alone during the day. If you or someone you know is a caregiver who may benefit from their loved one attending ADHC, please call 703-750-3316 or visit us on our website at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/hd/adhc.

To see more information on the DASH, view this online webinar: <https://meeting.psu.edu/p5broqvv2xq/>

