

PACE OF SOUTHWEST MICHIGAN CELEBRATES 5 YEAR ANNIVERSARY AND NATIONAL PACE MONTH

St. Joseph MI – PACE of Southwest Michigan (PACESWMI) is celebrating its 5-year anniversary and the many lives that have been enhanced by their services. PACE, which stands for Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly, is a unique option for older adults who wish to remain in their home as they age. PACE keeps older adults in their home by coordinating their medical and therapeutic treatment, providing in-home assistance, and by offering social interaction at their Day Center.

Nationally, there are 239 PACE centers serving more than 40,000 PACE enrollees in 31 states. PACE of Southwest Michigan opened in September of 2012 and has served over 280 participants. They opened their doors in September of 2012 and enrolled 64 participants during their inaugural year, with current enrollment at 165 and growing. They serve individuals over 55 years of age, that live within Berrien and parts of Cass and Van Buren counties, who qualify for nursing home level of care (as deemed by the State of Michigan), and who can live safely in the community. A recent study found that in the PACE of SWMI service areas, there are more than 3,500 seniors struggling with health issues that are jeopardizing their ability to stay living at home.¹

Likely candidates who could benefit from the PACE model of care include those who are having difficulty managing appointments, finances, medications and health conditions. Often, PACE participants have declining ability to perform duties, such as meal preparation, housework, or transportation, and an increased need for assistance with bathing, dressing and moving around their home. They often also experience an increase in falls and visits to the ER or urgent care.

Typical PACE services include:

- Adult care with nursing; physical, occupational and recreational therapies; meals; nutritional counseling; and social work
- Medical care provided by a PACE physician who is familiar with the history, needs and preferences of each participant
- Home health care and personal care/chore service
- Pharmacy medication management and disbursement (as a Medicare Part D provider)
- Socialization at the center to decrease isolation/boredom and provide safe exercise and activity
- Transportation to the Day Center and medical specialty appointments
- On-site audiology, dentistry, optometry, podiatry, and speech therapy
- Durable medical equipment, supplies and lab tests
- Respite care

Dr. Erika Nearpass, Medical Director at PACE states, “The rising cost of healthcare coupled with fragmented healthcare options can make it difficult for families to find the best, most cost-

effective care. PACE is an evidence-based program with a record of decreasing hospital stays and nursing home utilization, and increasing the coordination of prescriptions and care. PACE plays a significant role in the overall care of our seniors while supporting their choice to remain in their home.”

“We have come a long way in five years,” says Therese Saggau, Executive Director at PACE. “With the creation of our Optimal Care program, the implementation of the participant satisfaction survey, and extended collaboration with our community partners, we are continuously finding new ways to enhance the care we provide to our participants.”

PACE of Southwest Michigan Celebrates National PACE Month

National PACE month will be celebrated for the first time this September. The observance recognizes the work of Programs of All-Inclusive care for the Elderly, which coordinate and provide all needed preventive, primary, acute and long-term care services so older adults can continue living at home in their community.

The theme of the first National PACE Month is “Delivering Independence,” celebrating the role of PACE drivers in promoting independence for seniors.

“Only in a fully integrated model of care like PACE could transportation play such an important role in keeping seniors with long-term needs living safely in the community,” said Shawn Bloom, president and CEO of the National PACE Association (NPA). “PACE drivers don’t just offer curb-to-curb transportation. They enter the enrollee’s home to help them to the van and are trained to look for changes in the home environment or in the level of assistance an enrollee needs. By identifying changes quickly, the PACE program can plan assessments, treatments and interventions immediately before larger issues surface.”

“Every senior enrolled in PACE meets the requirement for nursing home care, yet 95 percent of PACE enrollees live in the community,” said Therese Saggau, Executive Director of PACE of Southwest Michigan. “PACE is an innovative model that continues to adapt and change as public policy, technology, and even the seniors who we serve change. PACE is successful because it is based on building relationships between enrollees and the members of the PACE interdisciplinary team.”

¹Demographic Market Assessment by Zip Code for PACE of SW MI, U.S. Census Bureau 2015 American Community Survey 5 Year Estimate