



PO Box 312
Westminster, VT 05158
(802) 722-3607

Choices, Choices, Choices

Who among us regardless of how many resources we have, wish to spend their final days in a nursing home or a hospital? How many of us would make alternative plans if given a choice? And how many of us have been taught that decisions about long-term care must be made by medical professionals? It is time for people to start questioning for themselves: "What is best for me?"

With the State of Vermont's push to allow more people to remain in the community as they age yet require some assistance, the most important thing to consider is that if you begin to plan early enough all choices may be yours to determine. However, when you are in a crisis there is not much help we can give you.

The Council on Aging for Southeastern Vermont receives countless calls on our Senior HelpLine when families are already in crisis. Someone took a fall, broke a hip, or else the family home has become a burden that cannot be handled. Often when an elder contacts us for help with long-term care options it is far too late for many good choices. Housing options, caregivers available in one's community, perhaps an adult day program could have or would have been able to be arranged with more time.

We all want to determine how we live our lives. What is defined as quality by one person may be different for another. Agency staff are willing and able to help elders and their families begin the process of looking at long-term care options and asking the key questions before there is a crisis.

If you are aware of someone who has not made any long range plans, is becoming more frail and could benefit from a fruitful discussion about options, please let them know there is help. Planning ahead could mean the difference between being in total control of your life and being put in the position of having medical professionals and others make those decisions for you.

For more information, please call the Senior HelpLine : 1-800-642-5119.

*Joyce A. Lemire, Executive Director
Council on Aging for Southeastern Vermont, Inc.*