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Are your parents not quite ready for residential aged care?

Maybe home care is the answer.

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| **Example**  Until a year ago, Joan was an active, independent woman enjoying her senior years. She loved to tend her garden, bake for her family and neighbours, watch football and read. Her daughter visited once a week with the grandchildren, but essentially Joan was happy to spend time on her own in her comfortable surroundings and familiar neighbourhood.  Then Joan had a fall. A stay in hospital followed, and she also lost her licence and the ability to drive. As her daughter lived some distance away, residential aged care seemed the only option. However, being fiercely independent, Joan was adamant that she would return home and would not consider a move into residential aged care. |

**This scenario is more common than you may think and presents a dilemma for both the older person and their family. The thought of having to move into residential aged care when it becomes difficult to manage everyday tasks at home can be overwhelming for the individual and their family.**

However, this may not be necessary or even the best option. Enabling an elderly person to remain in the familiar surroundings of the family home is often a more favourable arrangement. It can allow the individual to maintain a sense of independence and control over their choices.

### An alternative to residential aged care

Home care can help your parents remain independent in their own home for as long as possible. Because everyone’s needs and circumstances are different, a range of home care services are available. Some options are subsidised by the government, others are not. Four options are outlined in this article and we’d be delighted to discuss any with you in greater detail.

### Types of home care available

There are four types of home care available:

1. Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP)
2. Home Care Packages (HCP)
3. Private Care
4. End of Life Care at Home

### 1 Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP)

(Home and Community Care (HACC) Program in WA)

As people age, the type of help provided through this service – such as meal preparation, housework, shopping, or driving to appointments – may be all that’s required. The resident is mostly able to cope at home and doesn’t yet require higher levels of support.

This assistance is subsidised and regulated by the government. To access the service, an assessment is conducted by the Regional Assessment Service (RAS) to determine the services required to best support the individual or couple to remain independent and safe within their home.

To be eligible for this type of care, your parent/s must be at least 65 years of age.

Your parent/s would need to contribute to the cost of services received if they have sufficient financial resources to do so. An arrangement with the service provider can be made if they are unable to pay fees due to hardship.

### 2 Home Care Packages (HCP) Program

If the CHSP is not suitable or becomes unable to meet higher level care needs, a Home Care Package may be accessed.

This program provides similar services to the CHSP, as well as additional care services to meet more specific and complex care needs. The services are tailored and co-ordinated to meet individual requirements.

There are **four levels** of HCP; the subsidy provided by government and the types of care provided are increased at each level of care.

• **Level 1 – basic care needs**

– shopping, socialisation, housework

• **Level 2 – low-level care needs**

– personal care, meal preparation

• **Level 3 – intermediate care needs**

– medication supervision, incontinence support

• **Level 4 – high-level care needs**

– dementia support, nursing care, mobility assistance

All HCPs allow your parent/s to exercise choice and control over the services they elect to receive. This is known as **Consumer Directed Care (CDC).** In consultation with your parents and broader family, the government approved home care provider will formulate an appropriate **Care Plan** to meet your parents’ specific care needs.

For example, an individual on a Level 2 HCP (low level care needs) may receive the following services each week:

* Personal care – assistance with showering three mornings per week.
* Housework – light housework once per week, such as vacuuming, mopping, dusting, changing sheets, and washing.
* Shopping – assistance with shopping once per week.

To be eligible for this service, your parent/s must be an older person requiring co-ordinated services to remain in their home. These services are also available to younger people with a disability, dementia or other care needs not able to be met elsewhere.

Dependent upon the home care package level your parent/s have been assessed to receive, an amount of money will be paid directly to the chosen Home Care provider by the government. Your client will need to make a co-contribution towards the cost of this care which will depend upon their level of assessable income as determined by the Department of Human Services.

An arrangement with the service provider can be made if your parent/s are unable to pay the fee due to hardship.

### 3 Private Care

There are various private organisations that provide nursing care and other services within the home. They are not subsidised or regulated by government and vary in price and the services offered.

For example, some organisations provide 24-hour nursing care within the home, while others offer gardening, housework, shopping and meal preparation.

### 4 Palliative Care Support Program – end of life care at home

Many people wish to spend their last days in the familiar surroundings of home with family and friends, rather than in a hospital or hospice.

To support this choice, the Palliative Care Support Program was established to provide end of life care in the home, focusing on support of the patient and their family. It attends to the physical, psychosocial and spiritual concerns of those involved.

A package of 48 hours of care is funded by the government following approval by the Community Palliative Care Team. A range of services can be accessed and include nursing care, counselling, meals, transport, short term respite and domestic assistance.

If your parents wish to remain in their home rather than move into a residential aged care facility, there are a variety of options to support them. It is worthwhile exploring these options early – planning ahead gives you time to make the best decisions possible. Please call me on 07 5437 9900 to make an appointment to discuss any of these options.