



Clarence H. Carter, Director

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**MEDIA CONTACT**  
**Tasya Peterson**  
**602-542-5204**

[TasyaPeterson@azdes.gov](mailto:TasyaPeterson@azdes.gov)

## **Healthy Aging Month highlights community support and services for Arizona's seniors**

**PHOENIX** – The Department of Economic Security (DES) is launching a new campaign in September to celebrate older Arizonans and their caregivers during Healthy Aging Month. The Division of Aging and Adult Services (DAAS) is partnering with agencies throughout the state to celebrate Healthy Aging Month and educate the community and seniors on the services available.

“Arizona is home to one of the largest senior populations in the country and caring for our seniors is a responsibility and a blessing for all they have done for us,” said Director Clarence Carter. “It takes a community-wide effort.”

DES works with Area Agencies on Aging and an entire network of community agencies to provide services, support, and resources to older Americans year-round. During the last fiscal year, DAAS and its partners helped nearly 300,000 older Arizonans remain independent by providing services like home-delivered meals, home care, caregiver supports, legal assistance, information and assistance. Many clients received extensive home and community-based services to help them remain in their homes and avoid more costly institutional care. When older citizens are allowed to stay in their homes as long as they are safe and comfortable, they not only retain their dignity and independence, it also reduces the burden on more costly public supports. DAAS spends an average of \$2,250 per year on each person it helps. That's 29 times less costly than one year of Medicaid funded nursing home care.

As part of Healthy Aging Month, DES recognizes:

**National Alzheimer's Month:** DES offers several services for caregivers of patients with Alzheimer's disease through partnerships with the Desert Southwest Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association, Arizona State University, and the Area Agencies on Aging. This coalition offers two specific services for caregivers: the [Care Partners Reaching Out, \(CarePRO\)](#), program and the new [EPIC program](#). Both programs offer classes and workshops for persons caring for loved ones with dementia such as Alzheimer's disease and related disorders.

**Grandparents Day (September 9):** According to AARP, in Arizona, nearly 70,000 children under the age of 18 live in homes where grandparents are responsible for their well-being. Because many older adults live on fixed incomes, resources for supporting these children are very tight. DES helps these families by providing information and assistance about services, case management, support groups, caregiver training specific to kinship care of children, and legal information about custody and guardianship.

**National Adult Day Services Week (September 16-22):** Each year DAAS assists approximately 15,000 seniors through intensive home and community-based services to help these citizens to remain in their

homes. DES also offers support networks for the caregivers of these seniors. Recently the Department implemented a new Caregiver Resource line through a partnership with the Arizona Caregiver Coalition. This new resource line launched in July and allows caregivers to access information about services and resources available to them. The Caregiver Resource Line number is 1-888-737-7494.

**National Fall Prevention Day (September 21):** Hundreds of older Arizonans experience preventable injuries due to falls every day. As part of Healthy Aging Month, DES is partnering with community organizations to bring awareness and educate older adults, caregivers and loved ones on how to prevent falls. DES is participating in the Arizona Fall Prevention Coalition's National Falls Prevention Awareness Day event on Friday, September 21. The event will take place from 9:30-11:30a.m. at St. Joseph's Hospital and Medical Center in Phoenix. Seniors and their caregivers can receive fall risk assessments, balance assessments and learn about easy and inexpensive ways to make homes safer.

DES also provides aid to adults who may be experiencing abuse or neglect through the Adult Protective Services unit. Most experts agree that elder abuse is underreported, and the Department believes that raising awareness throughout Arizona communities is the best way to both prevent abuse as well as ensure those who need help know how to get it. Reports of abuse, neglect or exploitation are anonymous and can be taken over the phone at 1-877-SOS-ADULT (1-877-767-2385) or [online 24 hours a day](#). The telephone hotline is open from 7:00a.m.-7:00p.m. Monday through Friday and 10:00a.m.-6:00p.m. on the weekends.

"The health and safety of our seniors is very important to us at DES," Director Carter added. "This should be the best time of life for older citizens, so it's important that we spread the word about the services we offer to make sure our seniors are living the highest quality of life possible."

For more information on the Department's services available for seniors, visit the [DES Division of Aging and Adult Services website](#).

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