

Several mental, social services now available locally

By Annita West

For the Progress

In addition to Dr. Nestor Praderio's psychiatric office at Care Regional Medical Center, other mental and social services are offered in both Aransas Pass and Ingleside.

Loving Adult Day Care has been providing services in Aransas Pass for several years. Located at 1506 W. Wheeler Ave., it is open Monday through Friday. Services there are for adults who are physically, mentally or functionally impaired. Meals and snacks are provided, which is important for some of the clients who do not eat well when unsupervised. Transportation is provided for the local area.

One of the most important opportunities provided by Loving Care is socialization and companionship by just having someone with whom to visit. Television is available, but there are also crafts, ping pong, outings and bingo. Many clients come daily, but others may only come occasionally.

These services are covered by Medicaid for clients who qualify. Some are private pay, which is \$30 per day. This is a place where families caring for a loved one suffering from Alzheimer's disease or dementia can find respite care. When supervision is needed so that the caregiver can run errands, go to medical appointments or just have a few hours to relax without worrying about the safety and care of their loved one, they can turn to Loving Care.

According to Susan Morton, LVN, there is room for more adults on a full-time or daily basis. Call 361-758-3001 for more information or an appointment to discuss services.

Adults who need these services but also require nursing or medical care can find that help at Lexington Place Nursing and Rehabilitation at 1661 W. Yoakum Ave. in Aransas

Pass. Social services available include dementia assessment and psychosocial and psychiatric evaluations. Individual therapy is also provided if needed.

Another local program available for family caregivers of persons with Alzheimer's disease and dementia will begin again on May 14 at Praderio's Psychiatric Consulting Services office. This program will teach stress management techniques and relaxation and coping strategies and is available at no cost. It will meet weekly for 90 minutes for nine weeks in a group of not more than eight people. For more information or to register, call 361-225-2295.

Texas Department of Health and Human Services has offices at 524 S. Commercial St., which also includes Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS). This office offers protective services for elderly, people with disabilities and children. When a report is made, an investigation takes place then appropriate services are provided.

Offices are made available for other service agencies that need to provide a convenient location. One of these is the Department of Assistive and Rehabilitation (DARS). Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Sasha Esparza meets with clients here so that they do not have to travel to Corpus Christi. DARS is an employment service, which offers job placement and/or vocational training. Anyone interested in these services must first call 361-878-3004.

Esparza will discuss the situation and ask for personal information then will set an appointment to meet in Aransas Pass. An application is made to determine eligibility for services followed by an evaluation by a provider chosen by the applicant from a list. After the evaluation, Esparza will make recommendations on what services best meet the needs.

The Women's Shelter of South Texas also offers free counseling

at this location. To receive this service, someone must first contact the Sinton Outreach Office at 102 Sehorn Ave. by calling 361-364-0661. After qualifying for services, they must request counseling in Aransas Pass. Linda MacIsaac, Licensed Professional Counselor-Intern, volunteers her time two days a week to provide the local counseling. MacIsaac will also offer in-home counseling for private-pay. To contact her for additional information call 361-238-0431.

Services for children and adolescents ages 3-17 are available through Coastal Plains Community Center. Community services are available to children with an emotional or behavioral disturbance and who are experiencing problems in the home, school and/or community. Contact can be made to the administrative offices in Portland at 1-888-819-5312, Aransas County Clinic in Rockport at 361-727-0988 or San Patricio County Clinic in Taft at 361-528-4516. For crisis intervention, call the crisis hotline at 1-800-841-6467.

Another resource for counseling can be found at the Aransas Pass and Ingleside United Methodist churches. This church based counseling service is available to persons who do not need psychiatric services. It is designed to help people who are uninsured, whose existing coverage does not provide mental health services benefits, are low-income and lack money to pay for counseling services or who would not receive treatment any other way.

The first meeting is free. The cost of a session with a counselor is based on what each person is able to pay. No one is denied counseling because they cannot pay. A meeting time and day must be set ahead of time with a counselor. For initial contact in Aransas Pass call 361-652-3573 and in Ingleside call 361-776-282.