



The Chairman's Corner

by

Matt B. Murell

Matt.Murell@ColumbiacountyNY.com

COLUMBIA COUNTY OFFICE FOR THE AGING: EVERHOME COLUMBIA

10/12/2022

Columbia County Office for the Aging Administrator Kevin McDonald and his team are expressing excitement over a recently instituted non-for-profit pilot program designed to help county seniors remain in their homes.

Known as EverHome Columbia, Inc., Administrator McDonald and his staff explain that the program's goal is to demonstrate how a combination of in-home services and technology can be used to support the opportunity for Columbia County residents to safely age in place.

Although currently in its pilot stage, in the first six months or so EverHome has already made an impact on the lives of the handful or so enrolled individuals and their loved ones. The pilot will last 18 months and serve 400 or so families. For those interested, contact the county Office for the Aging at 518-828-4258.

Once someone has qualified for the program, an EverHome Life Care Coordinator will perform a comprehensive assessment and identify needs, prior to implementing a tailored care plan. Then comes the real meat-and-potatoes of the EverHome program: monitoring the daily activities of the individual on a 24/7 basis using technology to track real-time health data, while along the way, seniors are reminded of such things as their medication times.

The Life Care Coordinators, also known as Geriatric Care Managers, are licensed by New York State and have many years of aging and health care expertise, with special training in conducting assessments, arranging care services, monitor care and troubleshoot problems, and with assisting in the transition to home from a healthcare facility.

Those considering the program may also view testimonial videos at <https://everhomecolumbia.org/news/category/videos>

In one of the videos, a 91-year-old woman and her daughter discuss some of the thoughts they had on the advisability – or not -- of mom remaining in her home before they learned of EverHome. In those days, the daughter served as her mom's caregiver, thereby essentially tying her life to that situation. Following EverHome coming into their lives, the daughter has been able to live her life while secure in the knowledge that mom is able to conduct her life in a more stable fashion.

One barrier, Administrator McDonald points out, is that “older people really don't want to use technology.” However, in the aforementioned video, the daughter explains her mom had “never touched any technology whatsoever and she picked it up very easily. Before EverHome, I could never really leave her.”

Another feature of the EverHome Columbia program, said Administrator McDonald, is to help cut down on such things as what may ultimately be unnecessary trips to the ER, important at a time when the healthcare profession has been stretched to the limits.

As county EMS Coordinator PJ Keeler has stated, "We are in the middle of a major health crisis that is worse than the COVID-19 pandemic. It can take one-three hours for an ambulance to offload at the ER. I want to be part of anything that will keep people in their homes that do not need to be in the ER."

Above all, though, the idea is to keep seniors safely in the comfort of their homes, the emphasis on safety.