

Moving to an assisted-living facility

By Diane Goble
Correspondent

Most of the time a move to a new home is filled with anticipation and excitement. Ideas for new furniture and drapes, dreams of paint colors and feng shui occupy your thoughts ... but what if your next move is into an assisted-living facility?

What if you or a family member is no longer able to live independently? It's another one of those end-of-life issues no one wants to talk about.

Sylvia — who is 84 — had a bad fall last year, hitting her head on the coffee table, and has been through a nasty bout with throat cancer this year, but is back to playing golf once a week and attending senior luncheons at Sisters Community Church. She was afraid macular degeneration would render her blind and unable to drive, but cataract surgery has given her a new lease on life.

"I hope to be able to 'age in place' and would prefer not to move in with any of my children or have to go into assisted-living," she says. "I

have talked to my children and they've agreed to respect my wishes."

Have you had the conversation about what to do for mom or dad if something happens to them and they can no longer live alone? Have mom and dad had the conversation with each other? This is a parent-child conversation, a sibling conversation, a sibling-spouse-grandchildren conversation, and then there are step-families involved. It's really not something that should be put off until it becomes necessary, because it affects everybody in the family in some way and tends to cause arguments at already stressful times.

What if you fall and can't get up? That happened to 86-year-old Norma. She tripped and fell, hit her head and broke her hip. She woke up some time later in a puddle of blood, managed to drag herself across the floor and was able to reach her phone to call 911. Following surgery, with Medicare rules, patients go into rehab for 30 days (Norma called that facility an institution) but she still isn't able to get around without a

walker. Her children put their heads together and helped her find a comfortable assisted-living arrangement and she has accepted that this is now her home.

"As long as I can still do my quilting, I'm perfectly happy right here," Norma said. Her children all live out of town, but they visit often, stay at Norma's house and even bring her home while they are in town.

We may hope to take care of each other until the end, but things don't always turn out that way; especially with dementia. Bob, who is in his late 80s and cries frequently, seems quite confused about where he is.

"My wife arranged it," he says. "I didn't have anything to say about it."

His wife, however, has a bad hip and can barely manage on her own. Can a couple both afford to be in assisted-living? It often happens that the money runs out taking care of the first spouse, leaving the survivor medically bankrupt with few resources.

Bill visited his wife every day for a year in the assisted-living home. After she passed



ISTOCK.COM/CATHYUEULET

away, the octogenarian just kept coming to visit the other residents and eventually his health deteriorated enough that he moved in himself. He can still get around on his motor scooter to visit his friends at their usual hangout in town when he feels up to it. It was simply a natural transition for him and he says he "enjoys the freedom it gives me because I can't walk very far anymore."

What if you are alone with no family or friends to rely on? Donna, an energetic 86-year-old who still lives independently, walks everywhere she can, and plants a bountiful vegetable garden every year, has no intention of going into assisted-living. She lost her husband and only son many years ago. She still has a brother in Central Oregon but she relies

on her friends for support. She has all her paperwork in order and says, "When it's my time, just let me go. I'm ready!"

Several of the people interviewed for this article reside at Absolute Serenity's new "Anna's Home" off Adams Avenue or "Helen's House" on Rope Street. Owners David and Leah Tolle will soon open their third facility, "Pennington's Place," next to Anna's Home. They encourage local artists, musicians, and community members to stop by to visit, and share their talents and hobbies with their residents.

The Tolles meet their clients at their point of need and aim to enrich their daily lives through community involvement.

For more information, call 541-549-1726.

Absolute Serenity Senior Care

Enriching the lives of those we serve, one day at a time.



David & Leah Tolle, Owners

Personalized, attentive care • Family setting
Private rooms with half bath • Activities
Meals, housekeeping & laundry included

Now taking reservations for
Pennington's Place, opening January 2016

541-848-3194

Helen's House ~ 119 N. Rope St., Sisters
Anna's Home ~ 192 E. Tall Fir Ct., Sisters
Pennington's Place ~ 182 E. Tall Fir Ct., Sisters
email: absoluteserenity@gmail.com

Absolute Serenity

Absolute Serenity adult foster-care homes cater to seniors that may be independent or need assistance with daily activities; they also help care for those who need end-of-life care. Much like an assisted-living community, they offer the same services — but with a home environment: Home-cooked meals, family dining, private rooms with half-bath, wheelchair accessibility, services catered to each individual and their preferences, a safe and secure environment, and a place to call home. Not just a room, not a number, not lost in the mix and not just another senior but a part of a family.

Absolute Serenity has local artists performing for residents, walks, board games, puzzles, movie nights, outings, bi-weekly exercise and dance with Shannon from SPRD, bi-weekly church service,



cooking, food prep, cleaning and many other specific activities to meet each individual's needs.

They are taking reservations for a new Pennington Place home.

Your Care

Your Care has built a skilled team of professionals to offer accessible, exceptional medical care to our Central Oregon community.

Eric Wattenburg, MD is the owner and medical director of Your Care.

Phillip Burrer, MD has recently joined the Your Care team seeing our walk-in/same-day medical care patients as well as our patients with occupational medicine workers comp scheduled appointments.

Anita Henderson, MD chose family medicine as her specialty because it seemed to offer the best opportunity for treating the whole patient. She approaches wellness and illness from a holistic perspective, and works to include the patient's family as an integral part of the care plan.



Lisa Steffey, DO focuses on urgent care and occupational medicine. She has additional certification in the area of workers compensation.

Tricia Couture, FNP has been practicing in Oregon for 14 years, the past seven of which have been in Central Oregon. She enjoys caring for people of all ages, but has particular passion for adolescents and student athletes.

GET MOVING™

Since 1952

Therapeutic Associates
PHYSICAL THERAPY
AT SISTERS ATHLETIC CLUB

PHYSICAL THERAPY | AQUATIC THERAPY | POST-SURGICAL
SPORTS SPECIFIC TRAINING | STRENGTHENING & CONDITIONING

541-549-3574

1011 Desperado Trail, Suite 201
Sisters, OR 97759

www.therapeuticassociates.com/Sisters