

# *The* Gatekeeper Program of Oklahoma County

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The Gatekeeper Program of Oklahoma County is a community-wide effort to identify and assist vulnerable older residents in need of help. Our elderly population is growing fast. Many of them are healthy, active people involved with family and friends, church or community groups. But many others are not so fortunate. They may live alone and have little contact with others. If they become ill, or unable to function independently, they can easily go unnoticed and unattended.

“Gatekeepers” serve as the eyes and ears of our community. They may be mail carriers, meter readers, members of neighborhood associations, pharmacists, church groups, package delivery service staff, etc. They are people who

typically come into contact with an elderly person consistently enough that they are able to recognize when something is amiss with the older resident. The Gatekeepers are trained to identify signs of trouble, and to contact the Gatekeeper program on behalf of the person in need.

Once a Gatekeeper has called with a referral, an entire team of professionals in the social, senior, and mental health services fields can be accessed to provide help. After an initial visit to identify what assistance is needed, they begin working to link the person to services. Some case management is provided when needed for very complex situations.

The Gatekeeper Program strives to help our older citizens to improve and stabilize their situations so that they can continue to be self sufficient for as long as possible.

