



Senior Center Activities Promote Health and Well Being Outcomes for Individuals and Communities

Due to our county's current financial landscape, communities and municipalities increasingly make difficult decisions that result in reduced funds for Senior Centers. One strategy to sustain funding for centers includes optimizing existing Senior Center strengths while increasing capacity to meet current critical community wide challenges. This strategy would demonstrate that Senior Centers are well placed, well known and have great potential for impact on the health and well being of older adults. With a shift toward increased best practice and research based programming, Senior Centers could validate their impact on the following older adult health and well-being outcomes:

- Established Social Networks
- Reduced Isolation
- Improved Strength and Balance
- Maintained Cognitive Health
- Positive Nutrition Status
- Active Health Promotion and Chronic Disease Management

By bringing an updated vision for Senior Centers to community collaborative efforts and discussions on issues of aging in place, continuum of care initiatives, and vital community needs, Senior Centers could:

- Be recognized as an important link in community aging in place strategies
- Hold an important place in Washtenaw County's continuum of care efforts
- Maintain a vigorous corps of senior center volunteers to meet critical identified areas of community need

The following chart offers examples of research based outcomes and corresponding potential senior center programming.

Health Outcome Areas	Senior Center Activity
<p>Established Social Networks</p> <p>Seniors with friends and social network affiliation live longer http://www.ahealthyme.com/topic/srfriends</p> <p>"Being part of a social network of friends and family is one of the most dependable predictors of longevity" http://www.ahealthyme.com/topic/agingclass4</p> <p>Socializing can help elderly women stay sharp http://todaysseniorsnetwork.com/socialization_elderly_women.htm</p> <p>Typical senior center group activities may encourage female over male participation http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/content~content=a790198564&db=all</p> <p>Senior centers adapt to meet the needs of the changing senior demographic. http://www.ncoa.org/strengthening-community-organizations/senior-centers/nisc/tomorrows-senior-center.html</p>	<p>Activities that encourage social networks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Welcoming atmosphere for seniors to gather, relax, and converse. ▪ Games, card playing, special events ▪ Regular newsletter to connect seniors with news of community and each other. ▪ Congregate meals ▪ Men’s groups and activities ▪ Communication workshops ▪ Coffee bar
<p>Reduced Isolation</p> <p>Social isolation and under stimulation may be associated with a wide range of psycho physiologic effects in elderly people http://www.psychosomaticmedicine.org/cgi/content/abstract/45/5/395</p>	<p>Opportunity for interaction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Existence of a neighborhood senior center ▪ Transportation to center ▪ Congregate meals ▪ Center newsletter ▪ Center outreach

<p>Reduced Isolation cont... Increasing minority staff and diversity of programming increases minority participation at senior centers. http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/content~db=all~content=a903356134?words=aging%20in%20place,senior%20centers</p> <p>Although depressed persons may not want to do anything or see anybody, isolation and inactivity make depression worse http://www.helpguide.org/mental/depression_elderly.htm</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Travel and day trips with others in the same peer group ▪ Social events ▪ Book clubs
<p>Improved Strength and Balance</p> <p>Physical activity allows people to live longer and healthier lives http://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/everyone/guidelines/olderadults.html</p> <p>Any frequency in moderate exercise performed in midlife and late life has been associated with reduced odds of having of MCI (Mild Cognitive Impairment) http://archneur.ama-assn.org/cgi/content/abstract/67/1/80</p>	<p>Variety of exercise and activity classes of all levels</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Balance and Fall Prevention programs ▪ Line dancing ▪ Yoga ▪ Tai Chi ▪ Nintendo Wii ▪ Chair or floor exercises ▪ Walking group ▪ Sporting events and contests ▪ Art/Music ▪ Strength Building exercise classes
<p>Maintained Cognitive Health</p> <p>Lifelong learning has proven health benefits for both body and mind. http://seniorliving.about.com/od/lifetransitionsaging/a/lifelonglearning.htm?p=1</p> <p>Focus group results support the effect of learning on seniors' mental, physical, and social health; increased self-esteem; and ability to express ideas and be heard. http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/custom/portlets/recordDetails/detailmini.jsp?_nfpb=true&_ERICExtSearch_SearchValue_0=EJ507723&ERICExtSearch_SearchType_0=no&accno=EJ507723</p>	<p>Lectures and classes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Foreign Languages ▪ Computer Literacy ▪ Brain Health and Exercises ▪ Current Events/ History ▪ Financial and Legal Issues ▪ Employment Readiness Class ▪ Other

<p>Maintained Cognitive Health cont... Four areas of learning which will help meet the evolving economic social needs of an aging population: for individual health, to strengthen community and family, for productive employment, and for self enrichment http://www.iadb.org/sds/doc/Edu&Tech20.pdf</p>	
<p>Positive Nutrition Status In later life eating well can be the key to staying mentally sharp, emotionally balanced and energetic, with a strong immune system and a positive outlook. http://www.helpguide.org/life/senior_nutrition.htm Participation in the congregate meals programs enhances the daily nutrient intake, nutritional status, social interactions and functionality of older adults. Improvements in these key factors for good health and quality of life generate the necessary environment for older adults to age successfully. http://nutritionandaging.fiu.edu/creative_solutions/participation_in_AoA_act.asp</p>	<p>Meals and programming</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Center as a county nutrition site ▪ Host potlucks ▪ Cooking Classes ▪ Gardening Classes ▪ Lectures/Activities on Healthy Eating: USDA’s Eat Smart Live Strong program ▪ Community Resources for healthy foods ▪ Community Gardening ▪ Resources for community food banks
<p>Health Promotion and Chronic Disease Management Evidence is mounting that an active exercise program for older adults is highly beneficial, even among the frail elderly. Prevention of disability and falls represents very large quality of life and health care cost benefits http://www.ars.usda.gov/research/publications/Publications.htm?seq_no_115=182385</p>	<p>Prevention and support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Health surveys, screening clinics ▪ Immunization and other preventive measures ▪ Evidence-based disease and disability prevention programs ▪ Educational presentations and lectures ▪ Chronic disease management support groups ▪ Targeted exercise groups ▪ Community resource identification and access

<p>Health Promotion and Chronic Disease Management cont... National survey data show that people over 65 years are...less aware of the effect of behavioral patterns on health http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/2200733</p>	<p>Workshops:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Massage-Health Benefits ▪ Brain Health ▪ Sexuality in Later Life ▪ Fall Prevention <p>Medical appointment transportation</p>
<p>Community Outcomes</p>	<p>Senior Center Activities</p>
<p>Highest Level of Community Involvement</p> <p>Although high-functioning older adults who participate in productive activities are less likely to become frail, only volunteering is associated with lower cumulative odds of frailty. http://psychsocgerontology.oxfordjournals.org/cgi/content/abstract/gbp105v1</p> <p>Volunteering produces significant health benefits http://www.nationalservice.gov/about/newsroom/releases_detail.asp?tbl_pr_id=687</p>	<p>Established volunteer culture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Members as essential volunteers at the Center ▪ Volunteer teams for vital community service projects ▪ Matching services for individual volunteer interests ▪ Information and education on the health benefits of volunteering
<p>Resource Center for Aging in Place</p> <p>Senior centers adapt to meet the needs of the changing senior demographic. http://www.ncoa.org/strengthening-community-organizations/senior-centers/nisc/tomorrows-senior-center.html</p> <p>Linkage to and use of community services was best predictor of senior center usage. Other predictors include older age, rural address, more social contacts, better mental health, and fewer ADL problems. http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/content~db=all~content=a904335739?words=aging%20in%20place,senior%20centers</p>	<p>Support for community living</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Access to opportunities for socialization and mental stimulation ▪ Information and access to Community Resources such as chore, weatherization, and other vetted in-home services ▪ Access to medical screenings and preventive care ▪ Access to transportation to senior centers and medical appointments ▪ Access to low cost, nutritious meals

<p>Resource Center for Aging in Place, Cont... Interventions and activities designed to promote affordable meal programs and educational health strategies address specific social and health needs and increase senior center participation. http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/content~db=all~content=a902897311?words=aging%20in%20place,senior%20centers</p> <p>Women who lived alone participated in center activities more frequently and, as a result, also created a social network that extended outside of the center environment. http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/content~db=all~content=a903438659?words=senior,center</p>	
<p>Community Continuum of Care</p> <p>Senior centers can be considered as a part of the long-term care continuum. Article includes barriers to service provision. http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/content~db=all~content=a904372957?words=senior,center</p>	<p>Access to health services available in local communities with peer encouragement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Health screening ▪ Flu and other vaccines ▪ Chronic disease education, prevention, management ▪ Targeted exercise groups ▪ Fall prevention