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Providing a Health and Wellness Resource Guide to Senior Patients in Western Connecticut

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Providing a Health and Wellness Resource Guide to Senior Patients in Western Connecticut

Pooja Desai

Family Medicine Clerkship, March - April 2018

Robert Larner College of Medicine at The University of Vermont

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Lack of Knowledge Regarding Community Resources Available for Senior Patients in the Western Connecticut Health Network

- ▶ With a gradual improvement in health-care services, life expectancy has increased and thus the percentage of the elderly population.
- ▶ Senior patients (>60 years) have a higher prevalence of chronic diseases, physical disabilities, mental illnesses, and other co-morbidities, when compared with younger patient populations. (1)
- ▶ 80% percent of senior patients have at least one and 50% have at least two chronic conditions. (2)
- ▶ In the Primary Care setting, prevention and control of health problems of elderly patients necessitates a multifaceted approach incorporating active collaboration of health, social welfare, rural and urban development, and legal sectors.
- ▶ A community based geriatric health-care program should start with the development of a comprehensive policy so as to include not only medical aspects, but other social determinants of health as well. (3)
- ▶ In order to effectively coordinate care for senior patients, physicians and other health professionals must be aware of the resources available in their community.

Public Health Costs

- ▶ Although most Primary Care offices conduct falls risk assessments, fall injuries continue to be a leading cause of morbidity and mortality in elderly patients.
- ▶ According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention one in four Americans aged 65+ falls each year. Falls result in more than 2.8 million injuries treated in emergency departments annually, including over 800,000 hospitalizations and more than 27,000 deaths. (4)
- ▶ Elderly patients struggle with chronic disease management.
- ▶ A 2014 Connecticut Hospitalizations study showed that heart disease was the leading cause of hospitalization for ages 65 and older. The lowest rate of hospitalizations was for ages 5-14 (1,378 per 100,000) and the highest for ages 65 and older (26,761 per 100,000). (5)
- ▶ Assisted living and nursing facilities cause a huge financial burden on patients and their families.
- ▶ A 2013 study showed that nursing facilities in Connecticut charge an average daily rate of \$390/day, summing to an average annual rate of \$142,200. These figures show a 3.6% increase in charges over the past five years in the state. (6)

Community Perspective on Issue and Support for Creating Resources Handout

- ▶ **Dr. Thomas Whelan**
Family Medicine Physician, Brookfield Family Medicine

“Medical management of elderly issues should go way beyond which pill to take. Wellness for the elderly is usually a coordination of available resources, including doctor visits, but especially knowing the available resources will assist me and our practice.”

- ▶ **Kevin Hartman**
Program Manager, Accountable Health Communities, Danbury Hospital

“There are so many factors that influence clinical outcomes in patients. Up to 50% of the cost of care comes from the five social determines of heath: housing instability, food insecurity, utility needs, interpersonal violence, and transportation needs. By providing patients with these resources, we will improve clinical outcomes.”

- ▶ **Maureen Farrell**
Director of Community Wellness, Regional YMCA of Western CT

“With my public health background, I’m always looking at population health. I’m working with the Western Connecticut Health Network on different strategies to address health needs in our community. We’ve found that the efforts we make now for prevention do improve future clinical outcomes. Educating physicians on what community resources are available is important because it all starts with the doctors, as they’re the ones that patients have confidence in. Doctors can help senior patients get to a place where they can find more help.”

Intervention and Methodology

- ▶ Lack of awareness of available resources for senior populations was a common complaint during my patient encounters over the course of the family medicine rotation.
- ▶ Through dialogue with the providers at Brookfield Family Medicine, local social workers, health program managers at Danbury Hospital, and the Directory of Community Wellness at the local YMCA, I found that identifying available senior resources was an important need in the community and that providing an educational handout would be a useful resource for all providers in the practice.
- ▶ My interviews and research guided the creation of an informational handout on the available resources for senior patients.
- ▶ Resources incorporate many aspects of health, including fitness and wellness, housing, socialization and recreation, medical needs, medical equipment and technology, support groups, and transportation.
- ▶ Resources are located in the major cities in Western Connecticut.
- ▶ This handout is written with accessible language.
- ▶ Handout was given to all patients ages 60 and older.

WESTERN CONNECTICUT COMMUNITY RESOURCES

SENIOR PATIENTS

BROOKFIELD FAMILY MEDICINE

Welcome,

Here you will find community resources and information centered on health and wellness, medical necessities, medical equipment and technology, support services, and transportation available for seniors in the Western Connecticut area. The services below are located in Connecticut, but similar programs are offered in nearby states. The services are listed in no particular order and are by no means an exhaustive list. Brief descriptions and phone numbers are provided for your convenience. We encourage you to use the online resources for a more complete list.

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Online Resources

<https://ageswellct.org/senior-resources/>

The Age Well CT initiative's mission is to promote healthy aging in the community. Please look at their weekly calendar of events, which include fieldtrips, seminars, fitness classes, and more. In addition, their website provides advice on how to approach difficult conversations with loved ones, such as talking to a parent about giving up driving.

www.danburyseniors.org

This website is a great starting point for determining what community resources work best for you. Many of the programs listed in this document were found using this resource and we recommend contacting their call center for questions regarding any of the resources provided. They are also able to mail out resources to those who do not have access to the internet.

<http://wcasa.org/about/overview>

The Western Connecticut Area Agency on Aging, Inc. (WCAAA) is a private, non-profit corporation that serves as a funding source for services designed to maintain seniors in the community. A brief description of the programs they offer are listed below, but we encourage you to explore all their programs at this website.

Health and Wellness

Food & Nutrition

Call 2-1-1 for Food Pantry locations in your area

[Community Action Committee of Danbury](http://www.communityactioncommitteeofdanbury.org)

Food Pantry located at New Hope Baptist Church. Open 1pm to 4pm every Thursday, 10 Aaron Samuels Boulevard, Danbury CT, 06810 (203) 748 – 4941 www.caad-cta.org

[Congregate Meal Site: Elmwood Hall](#)

Congregate meal sites provide hot and nutritious meals to the elderly or disabled adults in group settings. Elmwood Hall serves lunch five days a week at 12:00PM for those who are age 60 and older. Reservations required. 10 Elmwood Place

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This is a multi-purpose drop-in center, open 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., weekdays. Membership is free. Most classes and services are free, as well, with a minimal donation requested for certain programs, services, and events.

10 Elmwood Place
Danbury, CT 06810
203-797-4989
www.danburyseniors.org

Volunteering

Danbury SAVE

The City of Danbury SAVE (Seniors Adding Valuable Experiences) Program opened on July 1, 2016 for new volunteers. The SAVE Program connects Danbury senior homeowners with volunteer service in Danbury City Departments and Non-profits. The program began in 2008 as an opportunity to provide real estate tax relief to financially qualified Danbury homeowners age 65 and older to make it easier for them to remain in their homes and to give them an opportunity to share their time and skills. The Volunteer Center of United Way of Western CT administers the program for the City of Danbury. Each volunteer must provide 100 hours of service over the course of the fiscal year, but many of them provide well over this amount. <http://www.danburyseniors.org/city-of-danbury-save-program-accepting-volunteers-for-new-program-year-seniors-can-earn-property-tax-credits/>

United Way Volunteer Center

The Volunteer Center of United Way of Western Connecticut works to strengthen our region by connecting people to volunteer service opportunities and providing resources to nonprofit organizations. Please review the website or give them a call to learn more. 85 West Street
Danbury CT 06810
203-797-1154
www.uwwesternct.org

Beauty

Valerie's Mobile Hair

In home appointments – where the salon comes to you! For seniors, new mothers, homebound individuals, or those who simply prefer the convenience and comfort of in home salon services. 203-647-2835
www.valeriesmobilehair.com

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Medical Needs

Home Care Agencies (Medical and Non-Medical)

Medical Home Care refers to care provided in the home by a licensed medical professional, such as a nurse or physical therapist. Home health care professionals are only authorized to perform the tasks prescribed by the patient's physician. Examples of home health care are occupational therapy, wound care nursing, or physical therapy.

Non-Medical Home Care focuses on helping seniors with the daily activities they need to engage in life and remain safe and healthy. Family members or professional caregivers who do not have a medical license can generally perform these tasks. Examples include, bathing, toileting, light housekeeping, etc.

Danbury

[Amedisys Home Health \(previously known as Tender Loving Care\)](#)
30 Main St #405
Danbury CT 06810
203-730-9035

[Bright Star Care](#)
7 Old Sherman Turnpike #112
Danbury CT 06810
203-828-8291
www.brightstarcare.com

[Care One Health Services](#)
28 Ward Drive South
Danbury CT 06810
203-744-0059
www.careonehealthservices.com

[Comfort Keepers](#)
8 Germantown Rd. #7
Danbury CT 06810
203-798-0851
www.comfortkeepers.com

[Community Helping Hands](#)
58 Division Street
Danbury CT 06810
203-790-5577
www.communityhelpinghands.com

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[CT Caregiver Connection](#)
131 Deer Hill Avenue
Danbury CT 06810
203-790-8070
www.ctcaregiver.net

[CT Home Care Program For Elders](#)
State of Connecticut
800-445-5394
www.ct.gov

[CT Home Care Services](#)
155 Main St. Ste. 202A
Danbury CT 06810
203-828-9581
www.connecticuthomecareservices.com

[CT Nursing Services](#)
72 N St # 300
Danbury CT 06810
203-730-2739
www.ctnursing.com

[Danbury Nurses Registry](#)
68 Main Street
Danbury CT 06810
203-748-2420
www.seniorcareathome.com

[Family & Children's Aid](#)
75 West Street
Danbury CT 06810
203-748-5889
www.fcaweb.org

[Home Family Home Health Care](#)
59 Main St. Floor 2
Danbury CT 06810
203-792-3549
www.happyfamilyhomehc.com

[Live – Ins for the Elderly](#)

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Results

- ▶ The informational handout was given to providers at Brookfield Family Medicine and was positively received as a useful resource which would be beneficial to distribute amongst their patients.
- ▶ The handout is being hung up in patient exam rooms.

Effectiveness and Limitations

▶ Effectiveness

- ▶ A short survey could be created to evaluate the effectiveness of the informational handout. This could include
 - ▶ Patient response to the handout and its utility
 - ▶ Whether patients had attended any of the events or reached out to any site contacts

▶ Limitations

- ▶ There was limited time to assess the effectiveness and response to the handout.
- ▶ The handout does not include all available resources, as many are listed online. This may pose a problem for patients who don't have regular access to internet or smart phones.
- ▶ Patient motivation to try and implement these techniques is an important limitation.

Recommendations for Future Interventions

- ▶ Future interventions can expand the handout to include new resources, such as additional fall prevention and chronic disease management classes.
- ▶ Incorporating the handout into the practice's electronic medical record may facilitate distribution, as patients can leave with this along with their visit summary.

References

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- 4) “CDC Newsroom.” *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 22 Sept. 2016,* www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2016/p0922-older-adult-falls.html.
- 5) <http://portal.ct.gov/-/media/Departments-and-Agencies/DPH/hisr/hcqsar/healthcare/pdf/HospitalDischargenarr2014pdf.pdf?la=en>
- 6) http://www.ct.gov/opm/lib/opm/hhs/ltc/cost_of_ltc_in_ct_-_2014.pdf