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Bridging the Gap Between Milton Seniors and Community Resources

Item Type	Presentation;Presentation
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Download date	2026-05-19 18:45:38
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Link to Item	https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.14849/1777

BRIDGING THE GAP
BETWEEN MILTON SENIORS
AND COMMUNITY
RESOURCES



Sulekha Kilas

Milton Family Medicine – Milton, VT

Family Medicine Clerkship

May-June 2025

Problem Identification



Loneliness

- Recent surveys show that about half of U.S. adults report feeling lonely, with some of the highest rates found among young adults.¹
- While older adults in rural areas tend to have larger social networks than those in urban areas, they also experience higher levels of loneliness, suggesting structural barriers to connection.²

Digital Access

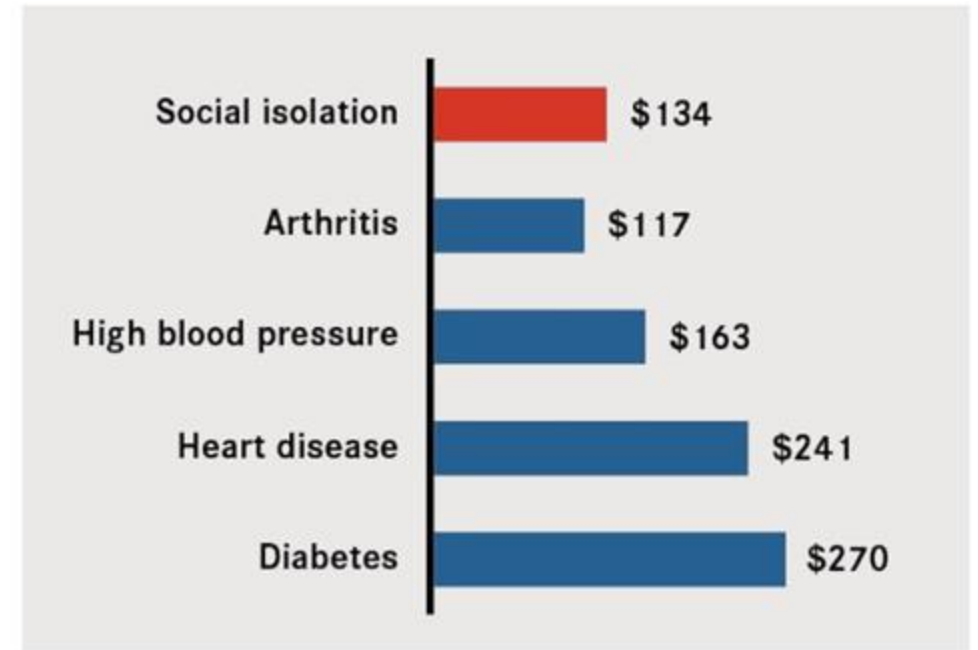
- Much of the information older adults need—such as news, personal finance, and healthcare—has moved online, although many still rely on traditional media.³
- Those without internet access must depend on others, and even with access, low digital literacy can make it difficult to navigate or understand online content.³

Public Health Cost



Chronic social isolation is linked to serious health issues such as heart disease, depression, and a 50% increased risk of mortality.⁴

This increased spending among isolated seniors is driven by higher inpatient costs, longer stays, more frequent use of skilled nursing facilities, and greater mortality.⁵



Monthly Medicare Cost Increase for Social Isolation and Selected Chronic Conditions⁵

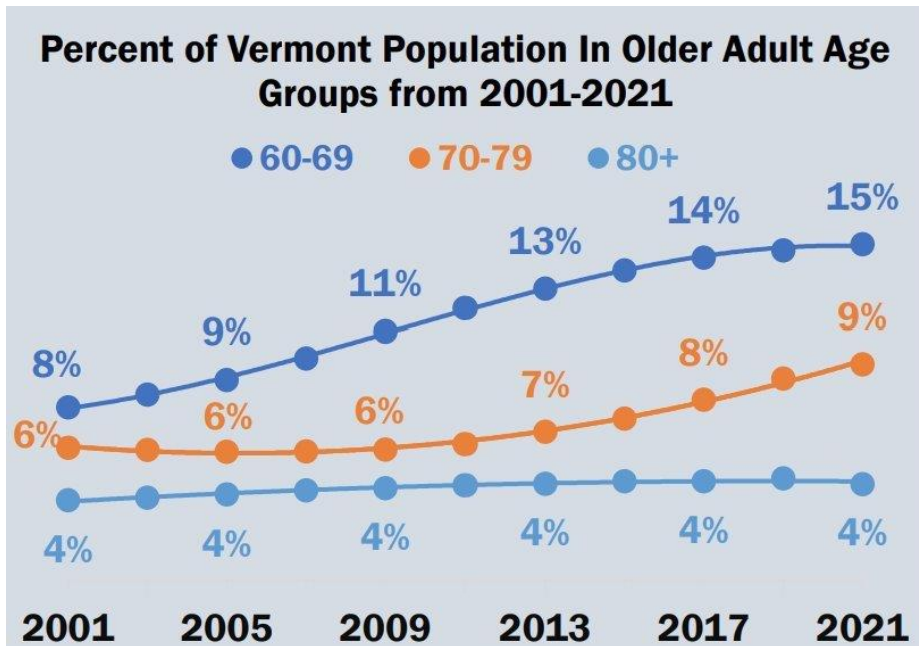
Community Perspectives

Therese Dinneen, *PHSO Care Management, RN*

- Patients include many older women who are widowed or single experiencing social isolation
- While eager to participate in community activities, they often have difficulty accessing event information because it is primarily available online

Jessica Schwartz, *Social Work Care Manager*

- Patients include those seeking free or affordable community resources
- They face similar challenges in accessing information, as much of it is only available online



*Vermont Older Adult Population*⁴

Intervention & Methodology

- Feedback from staff revealed that many senior patients faced challenges accessing online event calendars due to limited internet skills or connectivity
- Identified a clear gap: while some of the patients in Milton have access to community resources and activities, they often lacked reliable, easy-to-find information about when and where events were happening
- Created a printed, easy to read newsletter that includes local events and community resources
- It will be updated monthly and distributed in print directly to patients during clinic visits



3:00pm

BEGINNER CROCHET

Join us for our monthly crochet sessions where you can learn to create beautiful granny squares while making a difference! All materials, including yarn and tools, are provided.



Dates: 1st and 3rd Thursday monthly Time: 1:00pm - 3:00pm

OR

Dates: 3rd and 4th Thursday monthly Time: 5:30pm - 7:30pm



MPL BRIDGE

Friendly games all levels welcome, including beginners.

Dates: Every Wednesday Time: 1:00pm - 3:00pm

SILVER SCREENERS MOVIE MATINEE

Seniors can enjoy a relaxing afternoon while watching classic films on our big screen TV. Come alone or bring a friend!



Beverages and snacks provided.

Dates: Every 4th Thursday monthly Time: 1:30pm - 3:30pm

TECH HELP



Need help with technology? We have volunteers who can help. Registration is required for a one hour appointment.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

UPCOMING EVENTS

SUMMER SPECIALS



MILTON MUSEUM OPEN FOR THE SEASON



Explore intriguing, engaging & inspiring exhibits

Date: Saturdays May 3-Oct. 25

Time: 10am-2pm

Location: Milton Historical Museum 13 School St

MUSIC AT THE PARK

Click making dinner and head to beautiful Boscawen Park

Results:

Print Newsletter



Reflection



Evaluation

- To measure effectiveness, I would have kept track of the number of patients making use of the newsletter
- Would also adjust content based on patient feedback

Limitations

- Does not address other barriers to accessing community resources (travel, cost, etc.)
- Currently only available at the Milton Family clinic

Future Directions

- Screening for social isolation and challenges accessing online resources
- Expand newsletter distribution by making it available in multiple locations
 - Milton Public Library
 - Local Grocery Stores
 - Arrowhead Senior Center
- Ensure continuity by involving students rotating at the clinic who are interested in supporting the project and assisting the care management team

References

1. Office of the Surgeon General. (2023). *Our epidemic of loneliness and isolation: The U.S. Surgeon General's advisory on the healing effects of social connection and community* (SG Report No. 2023-01). U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
2. Rural Health Information Hub. (2024, June 12). *Loneliness and social isolation are common in rural America. Is "social infrastructure" the solution?* The Rural Monitor.
3. President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology. (2016, March 15). *Independence, technology, and connection in older age: PCAST report to the President* (Report No. PCAST-OSTP-2016-01). Executive Office of the President.
4. Vermont Department of Health & Vermont Department of Disabilities, Aging, and Independent Living. (2024). *Age Strong VT: Vermont's multisector plan on aging 2024-2034*. Vermont Department of Health.
5. AARP Public Policy Institute. (2017, October). *Medicare spends more on socially isolated older adults*. AARP.