



Presentation Title: SeniorBSafe

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I. Formative Evaluation – Planning

A comprehensive community risk assessment in 2016 identified slips/trips and falls, fires, and poisoning to be among the major risks. Gwinnett County Fire and Emergency Services (GCFES) has conducted safety visits to reduce home injury risks for older residents through proven engineering solutions and on-site education.

On average, 69% of the GCFES fire responses are to one- and two-family dwellings. Many of the homes are 20 to 40 years in age and lack residential sprinklers and operable smoke alarms. The SeniorBSafe (SBS) program was to have a positive impact on our senior community by addressing a multitude of needs that impact our seniors daily. Through the SBS program, fire educators conduct home surveys and identify potential risks for seniors.

Fire educators met with partners in the community, such as Gwinnett Senior Services, Friends of Gwinnett Seniors, Gwinnett Citizens Fire Academy Alumni Association, and Gwinnett County Community Services. They helped to help establish a list of potential older candidates for home safety visits.

In 2012, GCFES performed a comprehensive risk assessment for Gwinnett County that revealed two distinct areas of need within the service area: a lack of detection and early warning of fires in key low-income areas, and a growing senior community with a variety of health and life safety concerns. As a result of this study and with funding from an FY16 Fire Prevention and Safety Grant from DHS/FEMA, GCFES created and implemented the SeniorBSafe (SBS) program. SBS focuses on fire and injury prevention among the County's senior community.

Our goal for the FY16 Fire Prevention and Safety Grant was to conduct a minimum of 500 home safety visits. However, good fiscal management resulted in cost savings that allowed us to increase this number to more than 670 home visits by the conclusion of the grant in February 2019.

II. Process Evaluation – Implementation

Working in teams of two when possible, personnel completed an initial inspection report. The initial inspection report collects information, including participant information, home exterior (visible street numbers, fall, and fire safety), carbon monoxide alarms, family room/hallway (cords, tripping hazards, television tip-over prevention), cooking appliance (power, behaviors, lids and oven mitts), bedroom and bathrooms (unplugging small appliances, smoking materials, exits, closed doors, grab bars, transitional seating, non-slip surface), self-reporting of previous falls, and medication (storage, understanding of dosing, check for medications that impact fall risk, "file of life").

After launching the SeniorBSafe program, it became apparent that GCFES did not have the necessary experience to ensure the proper installation of grab bars. Our Legal Department had some liability concerns

about including this crucial fall prevention intervention, considered by the public health community to be a proven best practice. By establishing a close partnership with Home Repair Ministries, we were able to delegate this responsibility to a group that had access to members of the community and expertise to customize installation for each resident. To date, more than 70 homes have had grab bars retrofitted through this partnership.

Each occupant receives a copy of the original home survey checklist upon request after the survey. The fire educator enters a copy of the home survey checklist into the fire education records management system (RMS) upon returning from the visit. Fire educators revisit SBS participants 6-12 months later to confirm there are no issues with the equipment, or there has not been a life change. Fire educators may review the initial home survey and notes about residents before conducting a follow-up visit in 6-12 months.

III. Impact Evaluation – Short-Term Results

In 728 post-visit surveys in 2018:

- 1,293 residents in 670 homes were visited (the goal was 500 homes)
- 110 residents received grab bars
- 78% of the participants had existing smoke alarms
- 62% of the smoke alarms were older than ten years
- 1,035 smoke alarms installed
- 20% had existing CO alarms
- 686 CO alarms installed
- 301 heat-limiting cooktop sets installed
- 94% of seniors reported attending food while cooking; they are cooking an average of two meals per day

Many of our residents were unfamiliar with all of the services offered by GCFES. Although this program intended to reduce risks among senior members of the community, it has had an impact on entire families by allaying their concern about the safety of their older loved ones. Through advertising and working with community partners, frequently, we are contacted by family members to solicit help for their aging parents and relatives. Anecdotally, SeniorBSafe has helped improve community relations, as evidenced by emails and phone calls to staff, senior fire department management, and county leaders.

IV. Outcome Evaluation – Long-Term Results

GCFES is anticipating a decline in cooking-related fires in homes with senior residents, an increase in smoke and carbon monoxide alarm activations resulting in the earlier notification of an emergency, and a decrease in the severity and frequency of fall-related incident in homes with senior residents.