

Northeast Ohio Seniors Are the Focus of Medical Mutual and Kent State's College of Public Health Partnership

With a three-year grant from Medical Mutual, the Kent State College of Public Health (CPH) is conducting a three-part project focusing on senior health and wellness. CPH will conduct a senior-focused community needs assessment (CNA) with the help of the area's Senior Center Research Consortium led by The City of Brecksville's Director of Human Services and CPH Adjunct Faculty member, Steve Paciorek, Ph.D. The consortium is comprised of over 20 senior centers, senior living, and aging agencies spanning several counties. The needs assessment will be distributed to people at more than 50 senior centers and aging facilities throughout the Northeast Ohio area by graduate students from CPH.

Sonia Alemagno, Ph.D., Dean of the Kent State College of Public Health said, "The purpose of the senior-focused community needs assessment is to collect, synthesize, and disseminate information that can help inform evidence-based solutions for improving health and socialization outcomes for our area seniors."

Dr. Alemagno pointed out that people aged 55 and older make up the largest demographic group in our region. She stated, "The Community Needs Assessment for Older Adults is a key component in helping us understand and meet the different needs of older people. By gathering information on their health, social life, and the environment they live in, we can determine what help they need most. These assessments give us a clear view of the challenges older adults face, like getting healthcare or feeling lonely. The assessment guides us in creating specific programming, services, and policies to support older people better and help them age successfully. Ultimately, this makes our community a better place for older people to live happily and comfortably."

In addition to the CNA, the collaboration will provide continuing education for community health workers serving seniors in the areas of falls prevention, senior abuse and neglect, nutrition and more. The partnership also brings bi-weekly visits from the newly established Mobile Flashes interprofessional student teams to deliver screening services and education to older adults. "Sending students out to the community provides not only a rich learning experience for our Kent State undergraduate and graduate students, but provides important social connectedness for seniors," Dr. Alemagno said.

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She added that each piece of the project is designed to increase awareness and positively impact senior health and wellness. And she concluded by saying, “We are grateful to Medical Mutual for recognizing the importance of senior health and supporting this innovative project.”

Christian Corzine, vice president, clinical services and operations at Medical Mutual added, “Being connected is at the core of our well-being. We are grateful for the opportunity to back Kent State and this project which allows us to support and promote social connectedness while empowering students to gather critical information that helps our communities respond to their residents' ever-changing health needs.”

According to the Ohio Department of Aging, there are more than 2.8 million residents age 60 and older in the state, and Healthy Northeast Ohio, an organization that is a neutral data repository for population health, indicates that there are nearly 625,000 persons age 65 and older in Cuyahoga County.

To learn more about taking the survey, contact Steve Paciorek, Ph.D., at spaciorek@brecksville.oh.us

To access the survey, type the following link into your search browser: bit.ly/seniorcentersurvey or scan the QR code below using a mobile device:



Please complete the survey by October 1, 2024.