

APPENDIX B

Examples of Program Material

Program Guidelines

York County Fire & Life Safety Williamsburg, VA

Implementation Guidelines

Preparation:

1. Investigate resources in your community.

A helpful place to start can be as simple as the telephone book. Listings under medical supplies and home health agencies are appropriate. Contacting any of these agencies results in very eager cooperation and provides additional resources.

The Internet offers limitless information. The following is only a sample of resources available:

- National Council on Aging (www.ncoa.org)
- SeniorCom (www.senior.com)
- AARP (www.AARP.org)
- National Institute on Aging (www.nih.gov/nia/health)

The National Institute on Aging offers free booklets including The Resource Directory for Older People, Aging Research Practice, Promise, & Priorities, and The National Institute on Aging: Research for a New Age.

2. Develop a resource list.

The resource list is a vital component of the program. After a problem has been identified and a recommendation has been made, the resource list provides options to complete the recommendations.

Provide several resources under each heading to avoid any inference of preferential treatment of a company. Contacting agencies desired on the resource list is recommended. A phone call to the companies can be followed by a form letter explaining the program and requesting permission to place their name on the list. These agencies will offer brochures and additional information to assist the program.

3. Establish operational procedures.

The program is initiated through personnel recognizing a need while on a call or through the public requesting a home screening. If a fall occurs but there is no need for transport, then the screening can be performed while the crew is already there. The home screening can be scheduled for a more appropriate time if the fall occurs late at night or at a time when system resources are low. If the patient is transported, they usually will be entering the home health system so that services such as physical therapy and home health nursing can ensure a proper environment. See the operational procedures included to assist as a guideline.

4. Fall Prevention Evaluation Form

Refer to the copy provided. Note use of numbers in parenthesis to indicate reference to additional information on the back of the form. Also asterisks are utilized to indicate the need for a doctor's order. The order allows services such as physical and occupational therapy to be obtained as well as to allow for insurance coverage of certain items. These forms should be made in duplicate to allow a copy to go to the resident and a copy for the department.

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5. Training personnel.

A core group of motivated individuals on each shift should be trained first and then they can sell the concept as they train their shifts. Utilize the Fall training video to present the basic knowledge of environmental changes which can improve safety.

Explain the elements of the Home Safety Checklist and the importance of leaving one copy of this form with the recommendations made along with the resource list. The duplicate copy is forwarded to a resource person for follow-up.

Additional program options

- Advertise program locally to allow senior citizens to access the program before they fall.
- Give presentations at senior groups or church groups.
- Investigate area sidewalks, curbing, and ramps to locate trip hazards. These can be painted yellow so as to highlight the change of surface. This is helpful for people with any eyesight impairment.
- Prepare Public Service radio announcements with Fall Prevention Tips such as:

If a person is holding onto furniture or walls while walking, they are at risk for falls. Use of a walker or cane with training by a physical therapist can lessen this risk.

Use of power failure lights prevents walking in the dark. These simple devices can be installed in electrical outlets and are especially helpful near stairs.

A person who is unsteady on their feet may be at risk for a fall in the bathroom. Use of a tub seat or shower chair may help avoid slips.

Outdoor stairs can be slippery especially when wet. Strips of tread can be placed on the steps to decrease the risk of slipping.

Often a person can have trouble getting up from sitting. Raising their bed or using an elevated toilet seat will make this task easier.

Sudden changes in surfaces such as curbs or ramps can cause a loss of balance. When painted yellow, these surface changes are easier to identify.

One cause of dizziness results from a sudden change in position. Clenching hands and wiggling toes prior to standing reduces this form of dizziness.

A person's balance can be worse when walking in the dark. Use of nightlights or having a lamp near the bed can improve safety when getting up in the middle of the night.