

**Survey Conducted by the National Council on Aging's (NCOA)
National Institute for Senior Centers, Improving Health Team
With guidance from NCOA's Center for Healthy Aging**

January 2016

Purpose

The purpose of this survey was to assess the evidence based programs senior centers currently offer, as well as their successes, challenges, and barriers to providing evidence based programs. Additionally, the survey captured other health programming that centers offer and their relationship with hospitals and insurance companies, including reimbursement through Medicare or Medicaid. The survey data will be used to understand what resources from NCOA's National Resource Centers on Chronic Disease Self-Management Education and Falls Prevention can be accessed to better serve the senior centers.

Response

From October through November 2015, we asked 950 NISC member organizations about their role in improving health at senior centers. We have divided our report into two articles that will appear in the next two issues of the Senior Center Voice. The first article will focus on evidence-based programming, success stories, challenges and resources; the second article will focus other senior center health programming, hospital and insurance relationships, reimbursement and referrals.

199 individuals responded to the survey. When asked if their senior center had offered an evidenced based program in the last year, 83% (165) responded yes; 17% (34) responded no.

117 respondents provided more details about the evidence based programs they've offered, including the number of evidence-based programs offered, which varied from one to 13.

Evidence Based Programs Offered in the Last Year

(117 Senior Centers responded to the list provided in the survey.)

| Evidence-based Health Program | % | # |
|---|----------|----------|
| Chronic Disease Self-Management Program | 53.33% | 64 |
| A Matter of Balance | 50.83% | 61 |
| Diabetes Self-Management Program | 35.83% | 43 |
| Arthritis Foundation Exercise Program | 32.50% | 39 |
| EnhanceFitness | 20.00% | 24 |
| Walk with Ease | 20.00% | 24 |
| Powerful Tools for Caregivers | 17.50% | 21 |
| Stepping On | 12.50% | 15 |
| Tai Ji Quan: Moving for Better Balance | 10.83% | 13 |
| Fall Proof Balance and Mobility Program | 6.67% | 8 |
| Arthritis Self-Management (Self-Help) Program | 5.83% | 7 |

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|---|-------|---|
| Chronic Pain Self-Management Program | 5.83% | 7 |
| EnhanceWellness | 4.17% | 5 |
| Fit and Strong! | 4.17% | 5 |
| Stay Active and Independent for Life Strength and Balance Program (SAIL) | 3.33% | 4 |
| Tomando Control de su Salud (Spanish Chronic Disease Self-Management Program) | 3.33% | 4 |
| Active Living Every Day | 2.50% | 3 |
| Better Choices, Better Health (online Chronic Disease Self-Management Program) | 2.50% | 3 |
| Better Choices, Better Health-Diabetes (online Diabetes Self-Management Program) | 2.50% | 3 |
| Care Transitions | 2.50% | 3 |
| Resources for Enhancing Alzheimer's Caregiver Health II (Reach II) | 2.50% | 3 |
| Otago Exercise Program | 2.50% | 3 |
| Cancer: Thriving and Surviving | 1.67% | 2 |
| Community Stress-Busting Program for Family Caregivers | 1.67% | 2 |
| Healthy IDEAS (Identifying Depression, Empowering Activities for Seniors) | 1.67% | 2 |
| Healthy Moves for Aging Well | 1.67% | 2 |
| Strong for Life | 1.67% | 2 |
| Program to Encourage Active, Rewarding Lives for Seniors (PEARLS) | 0.83% | 1 |
| Programa de Manejo Personal de la Arthritis (Spanish Arthritis Self-Management Program) | 0.83% | 1 |
| Programa de Manejo Personal de la Diabetes (Spanish Diabetes Self-Management Program) | 0.83% | 1 |

Additional Evidence Based Programs Senior Centers told us they had held in the past year.

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| Healthy Steps | 9 |
| PATH Diabetes | 2 |
| Strong Women | 2 |
| Alzheimer program | 1 |
| Arthritis Foundation Exercise Programs | 1 |
| Bone Builders | 1 |
| Delay the Disease | 1 |
| Geri-fit | 1 |
| HealthRhythms | 1 |
| Healthy Eating | 1 |
| 3mv - Many Men Many Voices | 1 |
| MOB Spanish | 1 |
| Move with Balance | 1 |
| Osteoporosis wellness | 1 |
| Tai Chi | 1 |
| Tai Chi Better Balance | 1 |
| Tai Chi for Arthritis | 1 |

Of the 24 senior centers that have held one evidence-based program, the Chronic Disease Self-Management Program (9) was the most popular, followed by A Matter of Balance (7), Healthy Steps (2), Stay Active and Independent for Life Strength and Balance Program (SAIL)(1), Tai Ji Quan (1): Moving for Better Balance (1), Strong for Life (1), Tai Chi for Better Balance (1), Walk with Ease (1) and Geri-Fit(1).

The Kay Cenicerros Senior Center, CA shared an impressive personal success story regarding the Geri-Fit program. Their oldest member just turned 100 on October 30, 2015. "She takes Geri-Fit classes twice-a-week and uses 3-pound weights for most of the exercises."

Most of the respondents reported that they had been offering evidence-based programs for over five years 55% (64). Thirty percent (35), reported that they had been offering evidence-based programs for three to four years; 11% (13), one to two years; and 3% (4) less than a year.

Success Stories

When we asked for success stories many told us about successful outcomes, such as those reported from **Center in the Park**, Philadelphia. In FY2014 they processed 466 program evaluations, 92% of respondents indicated that they were satisfied with the class and 99% indicating they would recommend the class to a friend. The following outcomes are based on participants' responses of "a lot" or "somewhat" to each of the following: 93% reported participation helped them meet new people; 96% reported participation taught them how to make healthy choices; 97% reported participation helped them to think differently; 99% reported knowing how to make positive changes; 99% reported participation resulted in learning new information; 96% reported having more energy.

Cobb Senior Services in Marietta, Georgia told us about five evidence based programs they run. Attendees praised the programs saying they "Felt more like working out problems here." "It has been inspiring." "Great instructors." "Very thankful that I came, I was feeling so bad at first and doubted I could make it. But I am so glad I did. Only missed one time. "

Senior Centers reported having successful partnerships with hospitals, housing authorities, academia and other community organizations. The **Lexington County Recreation & Aging Commission, SC** has seven centers that provide additional programming through partnerships with the University of South Carolina, Midlands Technical College and local health care providers. The **Montpelier Senior Activity Center, VT**, partners with their local Area Agency on Aging to offer Powerful Tools for Caregivers and has partnered with local organizations to promote and host Chronic Pain Self-Management and Chronic Disease Management programs.

The **Olympia and Virgil Clarkson Lacey Senior Centers, WA** described a promotion that dramatically increased their evidence based program registration. The senior centers, community senior providers and Providence Health Systems host a "*Living Well - Living Long Expo*". During the large group sessions, physicians provide educational presentations. The shorter break-out sessions are focused on various exercise modalities and positive choices for healthy aging which includes introducing many of the various evidence-based programs offered at our Senior Centers and in the community. Following the Expo, attendance and registration for various programs increases dramatically.

Challenges when offering on-going evidence-based programs

Thirty percent (34) reported that they did not experience on-going challenges when offering evidence-based programs. One senior center stated that after participant recruitment, “interest is high”, another said “there were no challenges because of the commitment of the participants”.

Seventy percent (78) reported challenges administering on-going evidence-based programming. Twenty-four percent (18) wrote that on-going recruitment of participants was their biggest challenge. One center remarked “We have tapped out the market and have trouble getting enough clients to participate.” Twenty-two percent (17) commented on lack of ongoing funding. Respondents commented “that decreasing public sector funding is challenging for all senior center programs” and they hope for “third party reimbursement for evidence based programs”.

Respondents also reported the following challenges: recruiting trainers (10), difficulties with participants completing all sessions (9), difficulty finding available space (9), staff are stretched to find time to implement the program or to research to find the right program (6), lengthy documentation (4), maintaining trainer qualifications (3), coordinating availability of trainers and space and finding substitutes during trainers vacations (3), long participant wait list (3), EBP program guidelines cannot be tailored (2), length of the program too long (2), would like an on-going program (1), food limited to healthy choices (they “want sweets”) (2), limited marketing funds (1), cost for participants (1), and there is a lack of programs available for the blind or visually impaired (1).

What have been the barriers or obstacles to offering evidence-based programs?

Many of the same challenges with administering an on-going evidence-based program are found when trying to implement a new program. Sixty-four percent (67) reported that limited funding for training and program start-up costs were an obstacle to offering evidence-based programs. Fifty-two percent (55) had limited staff time to coordinate and offer programs, fifty-one percent (53) had difficulty finding facilitators or instructors, forty-nine percent (51) noted limited funding for advertising or marketing and thirty-seven percent (39) wrote that low attendance was a barrier.

They also noted other obstacles, such as lack of available space (7), low attendance of some programs (3), no opportunity had been presented (3), limited staff (2), difficulty finding/keeping instructors (2), they’d like a progression of material (2), ongoing costs (1), limited research time to find programs (1), not accessible for visually impaired (1), transportation issues (1) and they would like to offer other exercise programs (1), and they’d like programs with shorter interventions (1).

What evidence-based program Technical Assistance did our member request? 107 respondents told us they were interested in these technical assistance topics:

| Answer Options | Response Percent | Response Count |
|------------------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Program sustainability | 70.1% | 75 |
| Integration with health care | 47.7% | 51 |
| Marketing/recruitment | 47.7% | 51 |

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| Offering multiple evidence-based programs | 42.1% | 45 |
| Program evaluation | 27.1% | 29 |
| Fidelity/quality assurance | 15.9% | 17 |
| Other (please specify) | 8.4% | 9 |

Other responses included information on funding programs (3), getting reimbursed (2), how to find training (2), connecting to Patient Centered Medical homes (1) help with finding new evidence-based programs (1), finding programs that are connected to the arts (1), one center would like to participant but felt they were too busy.

Senior Center Resources to Implement Evidence-based Programs

NCOA's Center for Health Aging has many resources to assist implementation of an evidence based program. Senior center professionals that are implementing their first evidence-based program along with those that have multiple programs will find strategies and lessons learned to foster success.

General resources for offering evidence-based programs from NCOA's Center for Healthy Aging and the Administration on Aging:

- Read more about the [basics of evidence-based programs](#), including what they are, the health and community-related benefits of implementing them and a list of programs that you can offer.
- Learn about [Older Americans Act Title III-D Program funding](#).
- See a [list of prevention programs](#) that meet the highest-level criteria for Title III-D funding.
- Explore the [key components of offering evidence-based programs](#), including program planning, program implementation, outreach and recruitment, evaluation, and sustainability.
- Find tips for [creating a business plan](#) for implementing and sustaining evidence-based programming.
- Learn about [successful practices for engaging people with disabilities](#).
- [View webinar recordings and download Power Point slides](#) from NCOA's Center for Healthy Aging:
 - [Successful Completion of CDSMP Workshops: Can Session Zero Make a Difference?](#)
 - [Offering Evidence-Based Programs in Rural Communities: Lessons Learned from Wisconsin](#)
 - [Using the Personal Touch to Put "Butts in Seats"](#)

Connect with other professionals implementing evidence-based programs:

- Join one of [NCOA's online communities](#) to connect with professionals across the country who are implementing CDSME and Falls Prevention programs.
- Sign up for NCOA's Center for Healthy Aging [monthly e-newsletter](#) for a collection of the latest research, announcements and events related to CDSME, falls prevention and evidence-based programs.

Resources for implementing CDSME programs:

- Read [CDSME success stories](#) from across the country.
- Customize [marketing templates](#) for your promotional print materials.
- Find [resources](#) for integrating CDSME with health care systems, including webinars, tip sheets, sample processes and agreements and planning and administrative tools.

Resources for implementing evidence-based falls prevention programs:

- Learn more about [evidence-based falls prevention programs](#), including as Matter of Balance, Stepping On and Tai Chi.
- Find falls prevention resources for [professionals](#).
- Connect to your [State Falls Prevention Coalition](#). Click [here](#) for a list of coalitions.
- Read [fall prevention success stories](#) from across the country.
- Share the 6 Steps to Prevent a Fall [infographic](#) and [video](#) with older adults to encourage them to join an evidence-based fall prevention program.
- Share the [Falls Prevention Programs: Saving Lives, Saving Money](#) infographic to share the impact of falls among older adults and the benefits and return on investment of evidence-based falls prevention programs.