Executive Summary

An evaluation was conducted in early 2018 on the Healthy Home program, a free care coordination program for seniors living in rental properties. The Wellness Collaborative, located in Elkins, WV and consisting of the

Randolph County Housing Authority, Davis Health System, the Randolph County Senior Center, Cortland Acres Housing Association, and the Elkins-Randolph Public Health Department, were responsible for launching the program. It is now active at seven housing sites in Randolph and Tucker counties, and currently serves over 130 participants.

The aim of Healthy Home is to improve the health and well-being of seniors by providing care coordination and onsite programs using a housing-based model. A Core Team of a Wellness Nurse and Program Coordinator gets to know each participant, provides them with a thorough wellness assessment, helps them to craft a “Health Action Plan” (HAP) and connects them to educational programs and resources in the community that can help them meet their goals. The presence of the Core Team in the home setting means they can respond quickly to changes in a person’s health or well-being. HH staff communicate with doctors as needed, encourage compliance with care plans and medications, and help residents keep their appointments. Care coordination during transitions from ER, the hospital, or a nursing home is another key service component.

Participants in the HH program had overwhelmingly positive responses to their experiences. Besides helping participants connect with community programs that address social determinants, program staff bring a wide variety of programs to the housing units (financial management, comedy clubs, socialization, flu shots, and much more). Loneliness and social isolation are common health risks for seniors.
more) and deliver evidence-based preventive programs and life coaching. Residents who set goals, develop strategies, and report on their progress achieve better health. As one HH participant summarized: “We would be lost without the program.”

As an example of HH impact, “Carolyn” was recently hospitalized and diagnosed with diabetes and prescribed insulin. Prior to discharge, a referral was made to Healthy Home. The HH Program Coordinator met with Carolyn at home.
Chronic Disease Self-Management (CDSM) programs provide valuable information and peer support to seniors dealing with diabetes, hypertension or COPD.

After discharge and the Wellness Nurse followed up the next day. Carolyn felt overwhelmed and lost on how to manage this new disease. Staff worked with her to develop an eating schedule and compiled a list of her favorite foods that would not spike her sugar levels. She also made a referral to the local hospital’s dietician. The Wellness Nurse continued weekly home visits to coach Carolyn on glucose monitoring and diet. Carolyn soon became confident with managing her diabetes and has learned to control her sugar levels. She also began attending chair exercise class in her building 2 times a week. Now, Carolyn is setting new goals — to lose weight and no longer be insulin dependent.

The Wellness Collaborative has given Randolph County a foundation for collaboration on health issues. Regular meetings of the four main members (Randolph County Housing Authority, Davis Health System, Randolph County Senior Center, and the Randolph-Elkins Health Department) facilitate the development of other programs that will benefit the county. Because HH is a community effort, it has a higher probability of sustainability than an agency-specific effort would have. The HH program is still in the early phases of demonstrating quantitative impact in terms of improved health and cost savings, but trends and qualitative data point towards promising early findings and opportunities for the program to continue to improve and grow.

For more information on Healthy Home:
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