Setting Up the System for Policy Change

Safe States Alliance
Annual Meeting
Iowa City
April 7, 2011
Falls Prevention in NC

- 2008: MOU with Department of Aging and Adult Services, Division of Public Health, and UNC Institute on Aging, and the Carolinas Geriatric Education Center
- 2008: Established statewide Coalition (currently 70 agencies, 200+ individual members)
- 2008-2009: Funding from DPH for capacity building
Falls Prevention in NC

• Spring 2010 Capacity building trainings:
  – Data Overview and Impact of Older Adult Falls
  – Fall Risk Factors: Why do Older Adults Fall?
  – Preventing Falls: Interventions that Work
  – Building Community Capacity for Falls Prevention
  – Spreading the Word: Community Awareness and Education
  – Laying the Groundwork: Building Effective Coalitions and Partnerships
Now we have 8!
Falls Policy Progress in NC

- Developed a catalogue of falls prevention policies
- Governor’s Proclamation and observation of Falls Prevention Awareness Week (2009 and 2010)
Falls Policy Progress in NC

• Inclusion in:
  – NC Institute of Medicine Report
  – Injury and Violence Prevention State Plan
  – State Aging Services Plan

• Now a Healthy North Carolina 2020 objective
Policy: A Natural Next Step

• Motivated, strong partnerships with aging community
• Many locals are familiar with fall data, causes, and prevention programming, but less so with policy
• NACDD Healthy Aging Opportunity Grant
Catch ‘Em Before They Fall: Preventing Falls Through Policy Change

Greensboro, NC  October 26, 2010
Asheville, NC  November 1, 2010
Charlotte, NC  November 15, 2010
Greenville, NC  November 17, 2010
Policy Workshop Structure

- Presenting the problem
- Providing examples of policies
- Guidance for action
Rate of Deaths due to Unintentional Falls Since 2000: N.C., 2000-2009

Analysis by Injury Epidemiology and Surveillance Unit
Percent of Population Age 65+ in North Carolina, 2000

The average for NC is 12.0%.
The range is from 6.3% to 23.6%

12% or less
12.1% to 13.0%
13.1% to 14.4%
14.5% to 15.9%
More than 16%

The average for NC is 12.0%.
The range is from 6.3% to 23.6%
Percent of Population Age 65+ in North Carolina, 2030*

The average for NC is 17.7%.
The range is from 10.5% to 35.2%

*Based on July 2006 population projections
What is Policy?

• Laws, regulations, rules, protocols, and procedures, designed to guide or influence behavior.
  – Can be legislative or organizational
  – Often mandate environmental changes and increase the likelihood of sustained change.
“It is far better sense to rely on a fence than an ambulance down in the valley.”
Why Policy?

- Public Policy
- Community
- Institutional
- Interpersonal
- Individual
- Physical Environment

How can you make a law saying you can’t fall down?
National FP Policy Successes

• PL 110-202 - Safety of Seniors Act
  Passed & signed into law April 2008
  • National Awareness Campaign
  • Education and training of providers
  • Community demonstration projects
• FY09 & FY10 CDC budgets increased
• Fall Prevention Awareness Day
• Collaborating with National Conference of State Legislatures to post state legislative initiatives

Slide courtesy of Lynn Beattie, National Council on Aging
State FP Legislation

- HI: Establish FP Task Force
- NY: Establish FP Council; appropriate $2.75M to adult home initiatives including FP
- WA: Appropriate $400,000 for senior FP pilot program
Other NC Falls Prevention Policies

• NC Hospital Association: Yellow wristbands for falls risk patients
• UNC School of Medicine: All med students must complete a unit on FP
• 35% of federal Title IIID funding must be used for evidence-based programs such as a Matter of Balance
Walk Wise, Drive Smart:
Stepping Up to a More Walkable Hendersonville, NC

- Conducted safety & walkability audits in 10 city neighborhoods
- Identified hazards with potential to cause falls or motor vehicle injuries
- Worked with City of Hendersonville to make repairs & create senior-friendly routes

http://www.walk-wise.org/
Santa Barbara Task Force: Promoted Walkable Communities

• Needs Assessment Results Showed Many Falls Occur In Community

• Conducted Walkability Audit, Reported Safety Hazards to City, CalTrans

• ~75 Sidewalk Improvements Constructed

• Won Support of Supervisors to Expand Audits

Courtesy of Dr. Jon Pynoos, Fall Prevention Center of Excellence
Nevada County Coalition
Enabled EMS to Refer Older Adults Who Fell to Public Health Nurses

- Referral Form for Patients 50+
  Not Transported to Hospital
- Circumstances of Fall Noted
- EMS Fax Form to Public Health Nurses
- Nurses Call Patient With FP Resources, Visit Home to Assess For Fall Risks

Courtesy of Dr. Jon Pynoos, Fall Prevention Center of Excellence
Many Choices
Which is the best one?
Choose Solutions with Impact

- Laws/regulation
- Services/money
- Taxes
- Loans/subsidies; insurance
- Campaigns
- Inducements/sanctions
- Capacity-building
- Learning tools

- Universal or selective?
- Active or passive?
- Transformational or incremental?
- Readiness & fit?
Your turn!

• Time to give your policy planning a jump start!

Stay active, stay strong, stay standing…
WHO YA GONNA CALL?

Falls Busters!
Falls Busters!

- Community level falls prevention campaign
- Your task:
  - Identify policies to support Falls Busters campaign
  - Two “outside” policies
  - Two “inside” policies
  - One to change “hearts and minds”
What We Learned

• Improved understanding of community readiness for policy action
• Not so fast there!
• Difficult to move away from individual-level interventions
• Cover less material
What We Learned

• State needs to identify policy priorities
• Ensure right mix of partners
Next Steps

• Continue to build and foster local coalitions
• Build relationships with local and state policy makers
• Gain better understanding of supporters for more effective media
• Identify 3-5 key FP policies to pursue at the state level
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