INTRODUCTION

Did you know that a fall is one of the most endangering events an older adult can face in their life? Did you know that 1 in 4 older adults reports falling each year? As Schweitzer Fellows and medical students, we are addressing falls risk in eastern North Carolina by implementing a falls prevention and education program centered at the Pitt County Council on Aging, while fostering interdisciplinary collaboration with PT.

FALLS PREVENTION INITIATIVES

1. HEALTH FAIRS - Attend health fairs in Pitt County and disseminate educational materials related to falls prevention.

2. WORKSHOPS - Lead 1 hour falls education workshops at senior centers and assisted living facilities, with a focus on home safety, medications, lifestyle medicine, and mobility equipment.


4. SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH – Screen for SDOH needs in the community and provide access to relevant resources. Also assist the Council on Aging with follow-up home calls and home visits as an initiative to screen for environmental falls risks.

FALLS RISK ASSESSMENT TOOLS

We will utilize the following measures to track participant progress pre- and post-workshop and/or exercise program (a Matter of Balance):

- Falls Risk Assessment Tool (FRAT) identifies falls risk and risk factors
- Activities-specific Balance Confidence (ABC) scale measures confidence in performing various activities without losing balance
- Mini-BEST (Balance Evaluation Systems Test) is a performance measure consisting of four categories (anticipatory, reactive postural control, sensory orientation, and dynamic gait)
- The workshop survey helps us gain a better understanding of community needs and SDOH screening

RESULTS/DISCUSSION

As of July 2024, we have conducted:

- 3 falls prevention workshops in the community, 2 at community/senior centers and 1 at an assisted living facility
- Total of 68 participants ages 60+ years
- 12 SDOH needs identified and will be addressed
- 1 four-week A Matter of Balance course as Master Trainers
- Total of 8 participants ages 60+ years

So far, feedback by participants + staff has been VERY POSITIVE

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

- Continue to host falls prevention workshops in the community and attempt to include caregivers
- Conduct 2+ A Matter of Balance program sessions
- Create falls educational posters to be distributed at our prior sites and any others that may benefit from this
- Brainstorm a computer-based program that can tailor falls prevention strategies based on individual characteristics and preferences
- Help the Eastern NC Falls Coalition and Council on Aging plan for Falls Prevention Week in September!