

Pulse

NNORCS are A-OK with CAC

Making neighborhoods more livable for seniors

In an aging section of Gary, Indiana, older residents are banding together to make their neighborhood safer—partnering with police, establishing a 24-hour crisis hotline, organizing cleanup projects, and building support networks to monitor their health and well-being.

The project is one of five in Indiana coordinated by UIndy's Center for Aging & Community through a state-funded program called Communities for Life.

Communities for Life builds on the concept of “neighborhood naturally occurring retirement communities,” or NNORCs, small geographic areas where people age 60 and older happen to live in high concentrations.

NNORCs provide opportunities to create community-based programs that help older adults live independently in their own homes and manage their own affairs, a more satisfying and less expensive alternative to institutional settings and bureaucratic programs.

The work began in 2007, when the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration's Division of Aging contracted with the Center for Aging & Community and provided \$885,000 in funding to support initial studies and planning for NNORC-based projects.

CAC selected projects proposed by local agencies in Indianapolis, South Bend, Gary, Huntington, and Linton. The Division of Aging provided an additional \$500,000 for these communities to take action on key concerns identified by the residents.

“The great thing about this model is that it can be tailored to each community,” says LaNita Garmany, Communities for Life project director at CAC.

The principles can be applied to urban and rural settings alike. In Greene County near Linton, transportation and fitness programs will address the residents' call for greater mobility and independence. In Huntington and South Bend, participants are developing home safety programs and information and referral services.

Indianapolis's Martindale-Brightwood neighborhood is tackling safety issues with in-home assessments and modifications, fall prevention seminars, and a product pantry with smoke detectors and night lights.

Communities for Life partners include the Huntington County Council on Aging, Gary Community Health Foundation, REAL Services of South Bend, Generations agency on aging in Vincennes, and Martin University in Indianapolis. CAC is awaiting word on further funding that could expand the program to other communities.

Contact LaNita Garmany at garmanyl@uindy.edu or (317) 791-5941.

Unpleasant topic. Promising results

Leading the fight vs. pressure ulcers

Pressure ulcers—also known as bedsores—are one of the most common health issues facing Indiana's long-term care patients, but positive signs are emerging from a statewide education program coordinated by UIndy's Center for Aging & Community.

More than 160 hospitals, long-term care centers, and home healthcare providers are participating in the first round of the Indiana Department of Health's Pressure Ulcer Quality Improvement Initiative.

CAC leads a consortium of service agencies and advocacy groups in providing training and resources to help healthcare staffers reduce the frequency and severity of the condition among their clients.

Participating facilities and providers will present results in August, but the early returns are encouraging, says Jennifer Bachman, senior projects director at CAC. One facility reporting 68 ulcers among its 30 residents last year has almost eliminated the problem since training began.

Contact Jennifer Bachman at bachmanj@uindy.edu or (317) 791-5936.

Points



Happy feet, healthy feet

Studying games' effects on fitness

Interactive video stepping games like Dance Dance Revolution (above) can be a fun addition to a productive fitness regimen, according to initial findings from a study in UIndy's Krannert School of Physical Therapy.

Students in a research course this year ran a six-week program in which 30 subjects met for three 45-minute sessions a week to play the popular arcade game, a sort of disco hopscotch that involves stepping in time with pulsing music and directional arrows.

Previous studies have examined the game's effects on kids, but the UIndy project, designed and overseen by assistant professors Anne Mejia Downs and Stacie Fruth, was the first to look at adult subjects.

Results from an earlier pilot study, presented at the American Association of Physical Therapists national conference, suggested that regular DDR activity could improve blood pressure, body mass index, and oxygen uptake. More recent data showed improvements in balance and mood, with active heart rates that meet recommended levels for moderate exercise.

Further analyses will look for changes in weight and resting heart rate, another key fitness measure. Some sub-

jects reported sleeping better and said the game aspect helped them stick with a schedule of regular exercise.

Contact Anne Downs at adowns@uindy.edu or (317) 788-3524, or Stacie Fruth at fruths@uindy.edu or 788-3315.

Women: to your health

New nursing programs address needs

Tackling the need for advanced nursing care—and Indiana's dismal record on women's health—UIndy is launching two new options for graduate students.

Women's Health Nurse Practitioner is a new specialty track in UIndy's two-year Master's in Nursing program. It prepares nurses for leadership and advanced clinical practice and focuses on women's health issues.

Nurse practitioners are especially valuable in medically underserved rural communities—nearly half of Indiana counties—but the Hoosier state ranks last in the number of nurse practitioners per capita.

Indiana women have some of the nation's highest rates of smoking and death by cancer. On the 2007 National Women's Law Center Report Card, Indiana ranked 40th on such factors as access to health services, prevalence of chronic illness, and reproductive health.

Also new in UIndy's School of Nursing is the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner certificate, the state's only university-affiliated forensic nursing certificate program. It prepares students for the unique physical, psychological, and legal/evidentiary needs of sexual abuse victims.

Indiana law requires every county to develop a sexual assault response team, but most counties do not have nurses trained to provide this care.

The new options complement innovative women's health programs at UIndy, such as the state's only Nurse-Midwifery master's program. Other graduate specialties are Family Nurse Practitioner, Gerontological Nurse Practitioner, Nurse Educator, Nursing and Health Systems Administration, and an MSN/MBA dual degree program.

Visit <http://nursing.uindy.edu/msn> or call (317) 788-2128.