



Geriatrics: Healthcare Resources for Older Adults

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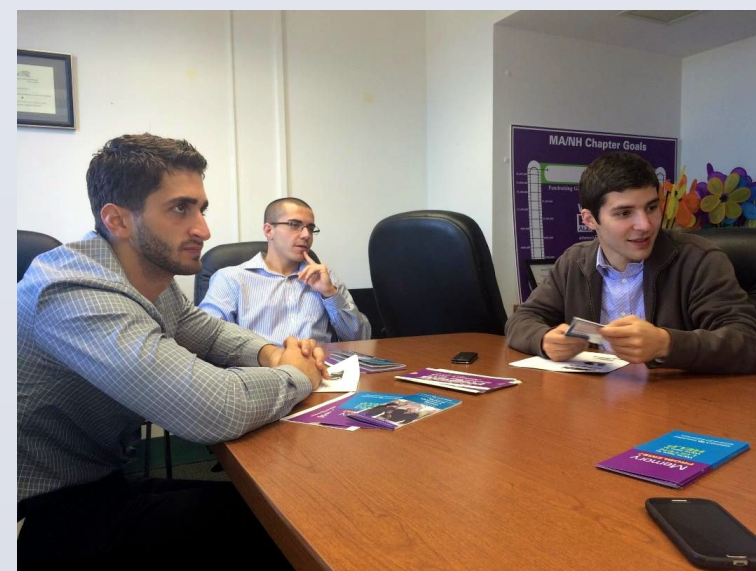
Introduction

The elderly population, defined as people aged 65 and older, is rapidly expanding. Currently, the city of Worcester has 22,724 seniors; there are nearly 40 million seniors across the United States and this number is expected to double by the year 2040. Moving forward, this population will require significantly greater healthcare resources tailored to the specific needs of seniors across a wide clinical spectrum. This project focused on specific health challenges faced by Worcester elders, including falls, cognitive decline, and end of life care, as well as current resources available to address these challenges.

Goals

1. To learn about community resources and modes of care available to elders across a broad clinical spectrum.
2. To assess risk factors for falls in the elderly community and discuss methods of prevention.
3. To observe clinical healthcare providers supporting the elderly in multiple care settings.

Our Experiences



Clockwise from top right: attending a briefing on Alzheimer's disease; preparing for Fall Prevention Bingo at NEDC; and visiting the Worcester Senior Center



Resources and Services



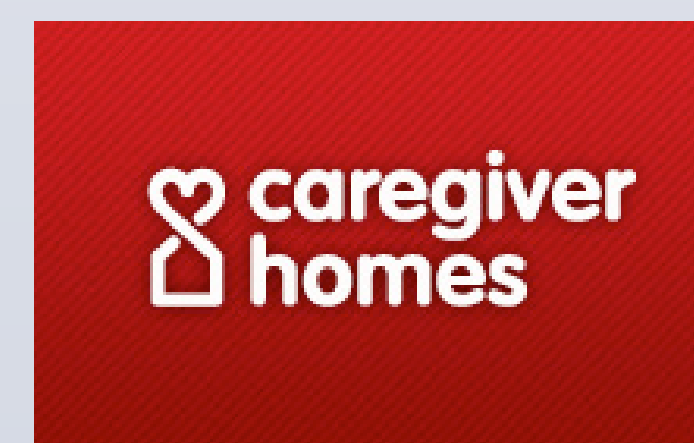
www.worcesterma.gov/ocm/elder-affairs/senior-center/

- The Worcester Senior Center hosts programs, services, and activities for the elderly community to aid in their overall well-being.
- Services include: exercise classes, legal services, arts and crafts, social gatherings, health education classes, Alzheimer's counseling, and more.
- During our time here we participated in the Senior Health Fair, attended a strength and balance class focused on fall prevention, and spoke with seniors about the role the center plays in their lives.



www.ESWA.org

- Elder Services of Worcester Area, Inc. (ESWA) offers essential services to elders, younger disabled individuals, and their families to ensure their clients can obtain care in a home setting for as long as is required.
- Services include: case management, home care, protective services, meals on wheels, financial management/consultation, health care information and referral, and options counseling.
- We went on home visits with ESWA case managers and nurses, observing firsthand the various services offered to elders and their families.



www.worcesterhomecare.com

- Worcester Home Care, Inc. (WHC) provides personal care services for seniors and younger disabled individuals, assisting in activities of daily living to allow clients to retain their independence and live in the housing of their choosing, while supporting clients' caregivers so that they may provide the best care possible for their loved one.
- On home visits, we observed services offered by WHC staff, and spoke with family members supported for by WHC to provide care for their loved one.

Resources and Services



<http://www.htnr.net/ichabod-washburn-hospice-worcester>

- The Ichabod Washburn Hospice Residence is an outlet for end of life care that emphasizes patient comfort and quality of life. Care focuses on patients' physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health.
- While at the Ichabod Washburn Hospice Residence we were able to tour the hospice residence and gain a glimpse into the care provided to patients when they near the end of life.



Jfsworcester.org

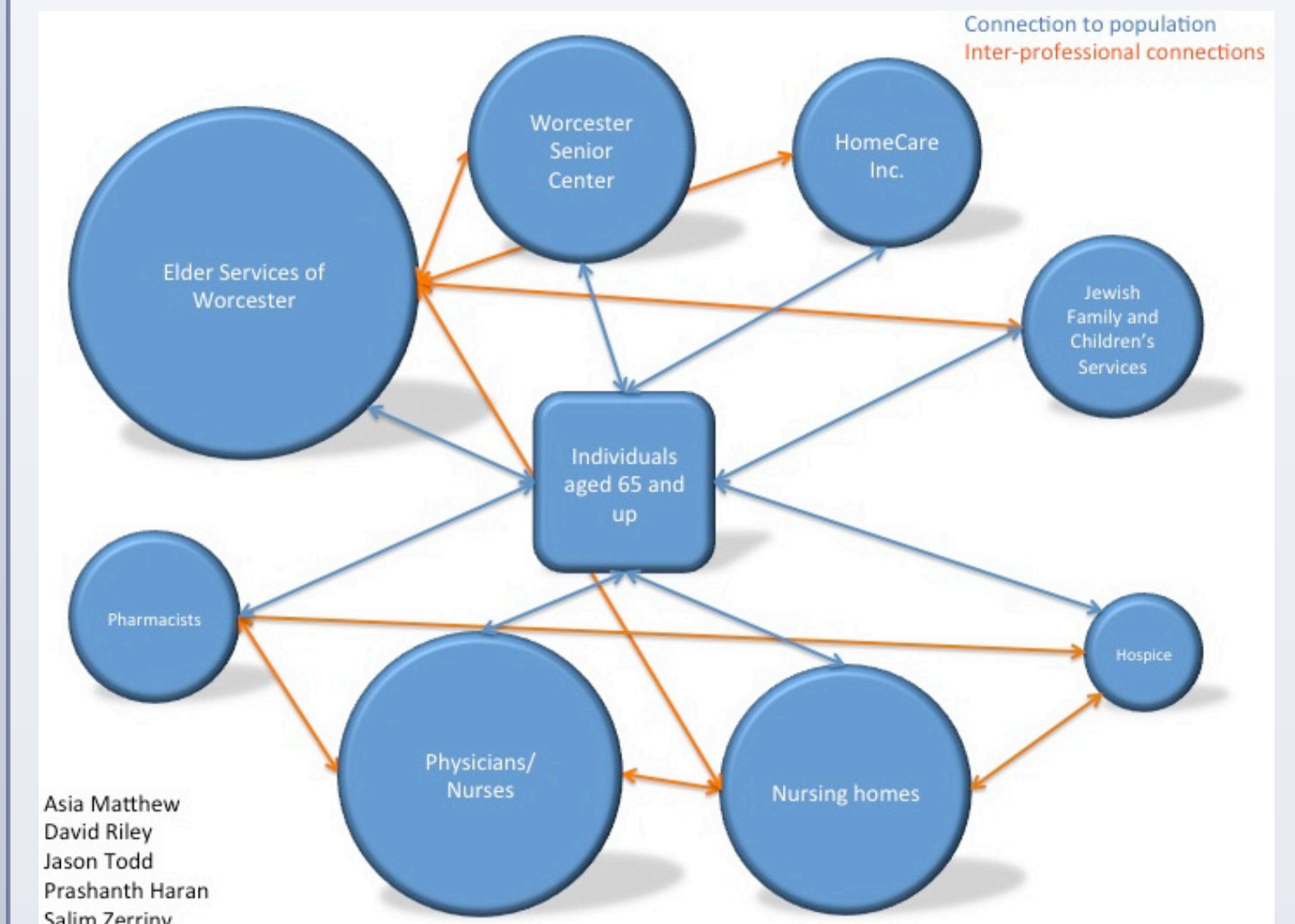
- JFCS Worcester provides a variety of social services to the central Massachusetts community. The JFCS guardianship and conservatorship programs support elders who are no longer to make decisions for themselves. Legal guardians make medical decisions on their clients' behalf, ensure care is provided, manage finances, and address end-of-life issues.
- We spoke with JFCS guardians regarding their roles and the challenges of caring for a patient population with significant cognitive deficits. In addition, we shadowed guardians as they visited clients in various nursing homes and consulted with health care providers in order to ensure clients' needs were met.



www.nedreamcenter.com

- The New England Dream Center's Social Day Care provides organized activities to keep Worcester's elderly mentally, physically, and socially engaged. The Adult Day Health Program is available to those who require additional assistance.
- We offered one-on-one fall prevention consultation to interested elders and led a fall prevention BINGO game to educate and engage participants.

Inter-professional Connections



Conclusion and Discussion

- There are a variety of community services and health care resources available to both the elderly and their caregivers in Worcester. Communication and collaboration between these many resources, as well as between elders and their many caregivers, is vital to maximizing their effectiveness and ensuring that Worcester's elders are receiving the best care possible regardless of need.
- Limited support and underutilization of these resources have contributed to decreased awareness of elder health challenges and potential solutions. In-person meetings between health care and service providers may bridge the gap between agencies and help turn potential benefit into positive real-life health outcomes for this rapidly growing population.

Acknowledgments

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