



CAREGIVER FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES ASSESSMENT

BEST PRACTICES: HEALTHCARE SERVICES



Health Care services may be argued as the most important service needed for care recipients. For caregivers, however, there are specific services and practices in health care that provide optimum support to the caregiver.

The Caregiver Friendly Communities Assessment scored this domain on hospital-related services contributing to healthcare, outpatient services available, and access to pharmacies with enhanced accessibility, such as home delivery and 24-hour service.

1. Hospital Services

Some hospitals have emergency departments organized specifically to serve older adults. These can be especially helpful for caregivers. Furthermore, some hospitals have systems that follow the Acute Care for the Elderly (ACE) model guidelines or have an ACE unit.

Recommended Practice: check with area hospitals for the existence of elder care units and advocate for adoption of the ACE model or emergency departments for older adults.

Sample Program:

- **Acute Care of the Elderly (ACE)** is a specialized program that addresses the needs of hospitalized older adults in a multidisciplinary team approach to prevent functional and cognitive decline and to improve outcomes and satisfaction. The ACE program identifies older adults at risk and creates an individualized care plan to reduce hospital complications, length of stay, delirium rate and unnecessary medication use. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8DXM219HXjI>

2. Outpatient Services

The accessibility and array of outpatient services available to care recipients is an important support in the role of a caregiver. Physical and occupational therapy available for free or at



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reduced-cost and in-home both make caregiver roles easier. Additional services available to support caregivers with the healthcare of their care recipient include: palliative services, hospice programs, geriatric assessment programs, in-patient geriatric psychiatry services, and in-home physician visiting services. ***Recommended Practice: catalogue the existing supportive services available in the community, identify gaps and work with hospital systems and other community partners to extend these services where needed.***

Sample Program:

- The “**Improving the Quality of Life and Quality of Care of Oncology Family Caregivers**” training program from the National Cancer institute educates oncology professionals to effectively improve support and resources for family caregivers. Three of the courses were evaluated with positive results in education, resource development, assessment tools and institutional change (Ferrell, 2013). Similar training materials available online: <https://www.cancernetwork.com/view/caring-family-caregiver-tools-and-training-healthcare-professionals>

Resources:

- **Hospice Care.** The Michigan Home Care and Hospice Association provides resources for caregivers of patients with a terminal illness. Care is directed by the patient and family and includes inpatient care; home visits by nurses, home health aides, chaplains or social workers; medications to manage pain and other symptoms; and bereavement counseling. <http://www.mhha.org/mihospice/>

3. Pharmacy

Caregivers are often responsible for ensuring their loved ones stay stocked on all their medications. The list can be long and having a pharmacy within close proximity, that offers higher accessibility such as home delivery can be an added support to caregivers.

Recommended Practice: catalogue the existing pharmacies in the area to identify gaps; build partnership with existing pharmacies to support development of 24 hour pick-up, home-delivery and drive-through pickups.

Sample Program:

- A number of pharmacies now offer free home delivery and online prescription filling services: <https://www.moneytalksnews.com/free-prescription-drug-delivery/>