



Connecting You to Community Services

December 8, 2008

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ELDERCARE LOCATOR ANNOUNCES ACTION PLAN FOR SENIOR HOMEOWNERS

-- Seniors Living on Fixed Incomes Are Struggling to Pay for Necessities Like Prescription Drugs and Food While Unsafe Living Conditions Are Neglected; 6th Annual "Home for the Holidays" Campaign Addresses Home Safety to Prevent Injury During Tough Economic Times --

Washington, D.C. – The Eldercare Locator, a public service of the U.S. Administration on Aging, in partnership with Rebuilding Together, announced a 3-point "Home Safety to Prevent Injury Action Plan" for the aging community today in response to the economic crisis that has squeezed the pocket books of elderly Americans. Millions of older adults live on fixed incomes and have seen a large percentage of their retirement funds disappear over the last year, leaving them short on funds to pay for day to day necessities like food, heat, and prescription drugs. Meanwhile, the homes of many older adults are being neglected, leaving seniors in unsafe environments which can lead to life-threatening situations, such as falls in their homes. According to the Home Safety Council, falls are the leading cause of home injury death among older adults, accounting for 52.5% of all home injury deaths for adults between the ages of 65 and 74. And yet, falls are often preventable with the proper information and simple, inexpensive home modifications.

The "Home Safety to Prevent Injury" Action Plan is being launched by the Eldercare Locator and Rebuilding Together specifically during the holiday season so that families gathering together can discuss the issue of home safety and take steps to prevent a crisis. The plan consists of (1) Reaching out to the Aging Services Network's close to 900 organizations to invite them to participate in a campaign to promote home safety and injury prevention with older adult family members over the Holiday season; (2) Publication of a Home for the Holidays "Preventing Falls at Home" brochure that outlines key indoor and outdoor dangers to assess in preventing falls, along with simple "fixes" for the problems; and (3) A media campaign to communicate the message to the public broadly.

“The current economic crisis has left many older adults in a dangerous position,” said Sandy Markwood, CEO of the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a). “Whatever nest egg they thought they had has been reduced dramatically. With today’s higher costs of living, their fixed incomes are making it difficult to pay the bills. The thought of installing a hand rail in the shower or repairing an uneven walkway is last on the priority list, yet it can save older adults from serious, sometimes debilitating injuries. This holiday season, we encourage American families to have a frank discussion with older relatives about the safety of their home environment. There are simple and not too costly solutions that can prevent injuries and help older adults weather this economic storm. The time to act is now.”

The “Preventing Falls at Home” brochure offers families a checklist of important items to assess in the home that can prevent falls, including stairway rails, non-slip strips in showers and bathrooms, proper lighting, outdoor walkways, and flooring safety issues. Many states and local communities have low or no-interest loans, tax credits or other programs for home modifications for those who are older or disabled. Many Area Agencies on Aging can direct consumers to a variety of resources for assessing the safety of a home and making the appropriate modifications to prevent falls.

“Economic conditions are difficult, but there are many things we can do to help older adults remain living in their homes safely,” said Gary Officer, CEO of Rebuilding Together. “At Rebuilding Together, we spend each day providing free home modifications and repairs, making homes safer and more accessible, and we are trying to help as many older adults as we can during this crisis.”

For more information on resources available in local communities, contact the Eldercare Locator at 800.677.1116 or www.eldercare.gov.

About Eldercare Locator

The Eldercare Locator is the first step to finding resources for older adults in any U.S. community and a free national service of the U.S. Administration on Aging (AoA) that is administered by the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a). Contact the Eldercare Locator at 800.677.1116 or www.eldercare.gov.

About Rebuilding Together

Rebuilding Together is the nation’s leading nonprofit working to preserve affordable homeownership and revitalize communities. Their network of more than 200 affiliates provides free rehabilitation and critical repairs to the homes of low-income Americans. Contact them at 800.473.4229 or www.rebuildingtogether.org.

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