



Mayor's Initiative on Aging:

to *life!*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

Based on the 2006 county profile provided by the Florida Department of Elder Affairs, there are 447,317 seniors over the age of 60 living in Miami-Dade County. Of those older adults, there are currently 80,938 that fall below the poverty level and 356,189 are minorities. In addition, this county has 88,861 senior residents that are medically underserved and 89,501 living alone. These statistics underscore the great need in our community for services and programs that benefit the elderly and support preventative measures to good health and overall wellness.

For a period of two years, Mayor Carlos Alvarez worked in partnership with the Alliance for Aging (AFA) and the Miami-Dade County Health Department's Consortium for a Healthier Miami-Dade to implement the Mayor's Initiative on Aging (MIOA) *To Life!* The initiative included three components that focused on promoting wellness and safety for adults 55 and older and for service providers who serve them. The components were signature events, media promotion, and a short-term research study.

In March 2005, Mayor Alvarez asked the Alliance for Aging, Inc. (AFA) to be a partner of the MIOA. As the focal point for senior services in the community, AFA provides South Florida with quality services for senior citizens. The Alliance was designated in 1989 as the Area Agency on Aging for Miami-Dade and Monroe Counties. As an Area Agency on Aging, the Alliance is charged with the responsibility of serving as the focal point to which elders, their caregivers and the general public can turn for information, referral, assistance and answers related to aging issues. AFA provides a range of services in the homes and communities of seniors through a network of local service agencies. When approached by Mayor Alvarez, the Alliance applauded his dedication to the elderly and agreed to be the fiscal agent and dedicate a staff member to work with the Mayor's Office on the project.

Mayor Alvarez also approached the Consortium for a Healthier Miami-Dade and asked them to join the initiative. In 2003, the Miami-Dade County Health Department recognized the need for the community to join forces to combat the increasing rates of chronic disease in our community. A meeting of community partners was called in September 2003 and the Consortium for a Healthier Miami-Dade (Consortium) was established. The guidance for the Consortium comes from Healthy People 2010 (HP 2010) which is the nation's prevention agenda. The two main goals of HP 2010 are to increase the quality of years of healthy life and eliminate health disparities. The Consortium has an Executive Board and six Sub-Committees: Elder Issues, Health and the Built Environment, Health Promotion and Disease Prevention, Marketing, Oral Health, School Based Issues, and Worksite Wellness.

By June 2005, the Miami-Dade County Health Department's Consortium for a Healthier Miami-Dade – Elder Issues Sub-Committee became the Mayor's Initiative on Aging Planning Committee to assist with the various aspects of the initiative. A representative from the Mayor's Office and one from the Alliance for Aging were named co-chairs of this sub-committee. Over 50 members and many months of dedication went into the planning and implementation of the three components of this project. Within the Elder Issues Sub-Committee, two different committees were created: 1) Marketing, Event Planning, Sponsorship and Operations and 2) Education, Prevention and Research. In addition, the members of the Consortium's Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Sub-Committee were invited to participate in the MIOA Planning Committee to share their expertise and provide input for the health/safety education and research study. The initiative was implemented in January 2006.

Projected Goal and Objectives

The goal of the initiative was to create, during the course of one year, a promotional wellness and safety campaign that would reach adults in Miami-Dade County 55 and over by providing educational information and promoting the benefits of healthy living and positive aging.

The plan was to create a series of promotional, educational and fitness activities exclusively for older adults with a minimum of one event each month for 12 months and a public awareness campaign designed to:

- Promote disease prevention
- Educate on the importance of maintaining a fit and healthy body and mind
- Promote programs that enhance quality of life
- Encourage positive aging
- Promote the importance of regular check-ups and self examinations
- Increase knowledge of available resources and rights
- Promote safety, injury prevention and self-care
- Encourage participation in the wellness expos and initiative events

The free events would include an array of activities:

- Distribution of health and fitness information
- Dissemination of information on federal, state and local programs
- Nutrition education and consultations
- Interactive fitness activities
- Free health and fitness screenings
 - Blood pressure
 - Body mass index and fat composition
 - Cholesterol
 - Glaucoma
 - Diabetes
 - Bone density
 - Glucose
 - Balance
- Distribution of information on community services/activities for the elderly
- Nutrition education and consultations
- Illness prevention information and immunizations
- Safety information
- Promotional giveaways

In addition, it was envisioned that professionals and caregivers would also be reached through the MIOA by providing free accredited professional training workshops that would offer more information to those that serve and work with the elderly.

Although discussions of a research study surfaced during the planning stages of the initiative, it was not until after the implementation of the signature events and the promotional aspects of the MIOA that the planning of the short-term research study began.

Implementation and Accomplishments

On November 2005, the unveiling of the Mayor's Initiative on Aging was celebrated at the Vida Sana Association's Miami-Dade Cardiovascular Leadership Forum. The event took place at the Miami Museum of Science & Planetarium.

The implementation of this initiative was made possible through the commitment of those that sponsored and worked diligently side by side to put together this successful community project. From January 2006 to May 2007, over 2,600 seniors attended a series of wellness expos that were held in different areas of Miami-Dade County. Low-income seniors were able to access health screenings and received information regarding available resources. Interactive fitness activities, mini lectures on nutrition for disease prevention, healthy snacks/lunch and raffles were also part of the expos. An event was held for visually impaired older adults focusing on the prevention of eye disease and the importance of early detection. MIOA Planning Committee members and their agencies participated as exhibitors at all events and provided free services to the attendees.

The free accredited educational workshops offered for the professionals that serve older adults included topics related to improving senior safety and injury prevention, nutrition, disaster and hurricane preparedness, prevention of medical errors, pain management, prevention of elder abuse, neglect and financial exploitation. These accredited trainings were attended by over 350 professionals from a variety of different disciplines which include, but were not limited to, healthcare providers, government and non-profit agencies, social service professionals, attorneys, law enforcement officials, and fire fighters.

Through a media promotion campaign, and with the collaboration of the partners, sponsors, and private/public participating agencies, the Mayor's Initiative on Aging educated, trained and served seniors, caregivers and professionals in Miami-Dade County, and spread the message of positive aging. Furthermore, senior centers, educators, student interns and volunteers made the MIOA short-term Research Study a success.

Based on the results from the research report, which has been included separately as part of this final report, the study showed that older adults could be engaged in and retained in a short multifaceted health promotion program. The intervention group participants self-reported general overall improvement in their health status. This was confirmed by improvement in the participants' balance and muscle strength. In addition, the participants reported improvement in their self-perceived mental health status. The researchers stated that they may attribute the findings to the social interaction of being part of a group that met for two sessions a week at the senior centers to attend the Tai Chi exercises and nutrition and risk factors education sessions. Moreover, the researchers reported that there was a marginally significant improvement in the scores of the assessment used to measure the intervention group's balance.

The *To Life!* DVD and the Tai Chi Train-the-Trainer program were essential aspects of the MIOA Research Study Component. It allowed for sustainability in the multi-language community of Miami-Dade County at no extra cost to the seniors or the centers/programs. Thirteen staff members from community service agencies participated in the MIOA Train-the-Trainer program and were certified as Tai Chi instructors. The training sessions also included nutrition and risk factor information from the *To Life!* DVD and how to provide instruction to older adults. During the course of the program, it was noted that there was a lack of Creole speaking Tai Chi instructors. Efforts were made to enroll Creole speakers in this training. The program has now two certified Tai Chi Creole Speaking Instructors. Given that many of the senior centers/programs often lack funding to implement regular fitness and wellness activities, the purpose of the program was to provide training to senior centers and programs staff and to encourage use of the DVD in their centers. Presently, the Alliance for Aging is incorporating the Tai Chi Train-the-Trainer instructors and the *To Life!* DVD into their Health & Wellness Program to continue promoting fitness and wellness throughout the agencies that they fund in Miami-Dade County. The Tai

Chi exercises were very popular in the Miami Beach-North Shore Youth Center Senior Program. The center has hired a Tai Chi instructor to continue the exercise classes beyond the MIOA Research Study.

As of April 2007, and with the support of Health Foundation of South Florida, a core planning group identified a potential collaborative community model to increase access to Tai Chi exercises and research studies in the health benefits of Tai Chi. The Miami Tai Chi Working Collaborative Model is presently proposing to link the Mayor's Initiative on Aging Train-the-Trainer Program to the University of Miami's Department of Physical Therapy. They are currently considering the possibility of conducting a multi-level research project to document the health benefits of Tai Chi exercises for cardiovascular disease, arthritis, diabetes, and fall prevention for the low-income and hard to reach older adults. The project organizers reported that the South Florida Physical Therapy Association has also shown interest in participating in the project. By linking the Mayor's Initiative on Aging Train-the-Trainer certification program, enlisting many of the MIOA participating agencies, sponsors and other new funding sources, there is the possibility of creating and documenting a long-term (longer than the MIOA Research Study) clinical research study model with specific outcomes and that would provide low-income seniors access to the health benefits of Tai Chi exercises.

Recognizing the need for expanding wellness preventive services to older adults and as the MIOA comes to an end, Health Foundation of South Florida (HFSF) is planning to launch a Healthy Aging Strategic Initiative over a period of approximately five to seven years. With the support of Mayor Carlos Alvarez and community aging service providers, it is the intention of HFSF to establish a Healthy Aging Collaborative of South Florida to:

- Expand the adoption of evidence-based senior health promotion programs
- Increase capacity to promote healthy aging within and across three settings (health care settings, senior centers and senior service providers, senior housing)
- Increase the walkability of neighborhoods where high concentrations of seniors live
- Effect change in public policy to support healthy aging strategies

HFSF envisions that the intended outcomes of measurable impact will be measured at the individual level (e.g. level of functioning and quality of life) and at the community level (e.g. healthcare costs, health promotion programming, and inter-system coordination). In addition, HFSF also wants to establish technical advisory and leadership committees that can provide expertise and counsel during the planning process, facilitate leadership and community wide commitment and participation, as well as, leverage additional resources. It is recommended that the many agencies that collaborated with the planning of the Mayor's Initiative on Aging continue their unified efforts as they carry on with the promotion of wellness and safety among the elderly population of Miami-Dade County.

Also, recognizing the community efforts and the accomplishments of the initiative, the Florida Department of Elder Affairs selected the Mayor's Initiative on Aging: *To Life!* as a best practice and was invited to present at the 2007 Best Practices Exchange Conference held in Orlando, Florida. The MIOA Research Study Component Report was also accepted as a poster presentation at the AcademyHealth's 2007 Annual Research Meeting.

In conclusion, Healthy Aging, as defined by the National Council on Aging (NCOA), can be attributed to education, behavior modification and supportive environments. NCOA has identified four main areas of need and focus: 1) community partnerships 2) physical activity 3) chronic disease management, and 4) fall prevention. As a community, we must strive to reach more segments of the senior population by providing information and opportunities that will improve their quality of life. It is our responsibility to find the support and funding that will assist seniors in maintaining desirable and independent lifestyles. The goal of this report is to serve as a guide to other communities and agencies as they work to implement successful public/private initiatives to serve seniors.

EXECUTIVE REPORT

One of the three components of the Mayor's Initiative on Aging included a series of promotional, educational, and signature fitness events for adults 55 and over in Miami-Dade County. All events were free to the public and featured health education, disease prevention, low-impact interactive fitness activities, nutrition education, safety information, and screenings for cholesterol, blood pressure, diabetes, glaucoma, balance, and bone density. In addition, event attendees received information on federal, state, and community programs and services. Furthermore, free accredited workshops that focused on the health, well-being, and safety of older adults were offered to professionals and para-professionals. At every event, Mayor Alvarez reinforced the importance of wellness, safety, fitness, disease prevention, and positive aging.

The second component of the initiative was developed to promote the wellness and safety of older adults in Miami-Dade County. A local television station and Miami-Dade Television assisted with the production of educational television segments and public service announcements. Health prevention tips were incorporated in bus and train posters, radio talk shows, printed materials, and web pages. A dedicated telephone line provided information on upcoming fitness/wellness events and classes, directed seniors to existing service providers, and offered access to a free 24-hour nurse line. Miami-Dade County Public Library System also assisted with the dissemination of wellness and safety information.

The last component involved a short-term research study that involved educators, service providers, sponsors, and senior service facilities interested in promoting health and wellness. The study was created to:

- Determine the feasibility of implementing a wellness program in local senior centers, parks or independent living facilities

- Evaluate the impact of a wellness program on the self-reported quality of life, health status, low-impact physical fitness measures, and clinical indicators

- Determine the potential for integration and replicability by other community based organizations

- Produce and disseminate an educational DVD ensuring the sustainability of the fitness activities and disease prevention education sessions provided through the study

- Generate an academic research report that would provide information to other academic researchers

SIGNATURE EVENTS

January 2006

The MIOA was launched to the public with a very successful opening ceremony celebration followed by an educational forum that focused on the Medicare Modernization & Improvement Act and the new Medicare prescription benefits. The event was attended by over 1,800 older adults. Speakers included Carole Green, Former Secretary of the State of Florida Department of Elder Affairs; Josefina Carbonell, Assistant Secretary for Aging-U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; Dr. Rene Rodriguez, President of the Interamerican College of Physicians and Surgeons; and Yanira Cruz, President of the National Hispanic Coalition on Aging.

The kick-off event was held in the Miami-Dade County Auditorium and was sponsored by the

Medicare Access Network and Miami-Dade County Park and Recreation Department. Senior centers requested and received free transportation from Miami-Dade Transit for their residents and clients. The Medicare Access Network bus was parked outside of the auditorium for the attendees to visit. During and after the event, on site informational assistance and consultations were provided to alleviate many of the concerns that seniors had regarding the new Medicare plans. In addition, the seniors participated in interactive Tai Chi exercises and low-impact chair aerobics. The service providers and exhibitors at this event were the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services and the Alliance for Aging's Serving Health and Insurance Needs of Elders (SHINE) Program, SAK Foundation, and Alliance Qi Gong Taiji, Inc.

February 2006

In collaboration with the International Association of Hispanic Firefighters (IAHF) and Miami-Dade Fire Rescue Department, a train-the-trainer program was held at the Miami-Dade Fire Rescue Headquarters. The program titled "Mas Vale Prevenir," loosely translated as "it's better to prevent," became part of the Mayor's Initiative on Aging. Fifty participants attended an all day training session.

Thirty of the professional and paraprofessional participants were certified to teach the program or to train others in its implementation. Materials for the program included a video and calendar created by IAHF and funded by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

The train-the-trainer program was built on a research-based model for changing health behaviors and was developed specifically to reach Hispanic older adults through those that provide care and services to them. The primary goal was to reduce unintentional injuries, in particular, injuries caused by fire and falls. The program also included the distribution and installation of 1,000 smoke alarms in Miami-Dade County homes. A kit containing a video, fire and fall safety lessons and checklists, posters, and calendars with safety messages and reminders, was provided to all attendees.

MIOA Planning Committee members participated as exhibitors, shared information with the trainees, and promoted their community services. The exhibitors were: Alliance for Aging Inc., Alzheimer's Association, American Diabetes Association, Coalition to Prevent Abuse of Vulnerable Adults, Miami-Dade County Fire Rescue, Victim Response, Inc.-The Lodge, Easter Seals of Miami-Dade, and National Balance Centers, Inc.

March 2006

The Mayor's Office, the Alliance for Aging, Miami Area Geriatric Education Center (MAGEC) and Florida International University Center on Aging coordinated a free accredited symposium for the Mayor's Initiative on Aging. The event was held at the Florida International University Biscayne Bay Campus, Kovens Conference Center, and was attended by over 150 allied health professionals. The training sessions provided continuing education credits for nurses, dieticians, social workers, physical therapist, and occupational therapist.

Kathleen Blais, Ed.D., RN, Associate Professor, Director of Academic Programs, Florida International University School of Nursing, presented two of the three lectures. "*The Problem of Polypharmacy: It's Not Just Pills*" was offered to inform health professionals and policy makers about the importance of routinely assessing the medical substances (OTC, herbals, etc.) used by older adults and the need for strategies to insure the safe use of medicinal substances. Her second presentation "*Hurricane Preparedness: The Importance of Planning for Needs of Older Adults*" aimed at informing health professionals of the unique needs of older adults experiencing a hurricane and offered information on how to assist in the development of planning strategies to meet those needs.

The third lecture, "*Eat Better & Move More*," was provided by Nancy S. Wellman, Ph.D., RD, FADA, Professor, Director of the National Resource Center on Nutrition, Physical Activity & Aging, Stempel School of Public Health at Florida International University. This lecture was intended to broaden the views of health professionals in the area of nutrition and physical activity.

Participating agencies of the Mayor's Initiative on Aging Planning Committee exhibited their services and products at this event. Event exhibitors included: Alliance for Aging, Inc., Alzheimer's Association, Coalition to Prevent Abuse of Vulnerable Adults, Easter Seals of Miami-Dade, Florida Heart Research Institute, Forde's Functional Fashions Inc., Haitian American Nurses Association of Florida, Inc., Healing Breath Holistic Wellness Care, Humana, Masada Home Care, LifeMasters, Miami-Dade College, Miami-Dade Area Health Education Center, Miami-Dade County Health Department, Miami-Dade County Metropolitan Planning Organization, Miami-Dade County Public Library System, Pfizer-Vida Sana Association, Miami Jewish Home and Hospital for the Aged, National Balance Centers, Inc., VISTA Healthplans, and Victim Response, Inc.–The Lodge.

April 2006

Over 150 seniors attended the Miami Beach Senior Wellness Expo that was held at the North Shore Youth Center. Participants received free screenings for blood pressure, glaucoma, cholesterol, glucose, balance, and bone density. Interactive Tai Chi exercises and low impact chair aerobics were also offered along with the dissemination of wellness and safety information in English and Spanish.

As in January, this event focused on the Medicare Modernization & Improvement Act and the new Medicare prescription benefits. During and after the event, on site consultations were provided to alleviate many of the concerns that the seniors had with the new Medicare plans Medicare Part D.

The event exhibitors included: Alliance for Aging Inc., Serving Health and Insurance Needs of Elders (SHINE) Program, Alliance Qi Gong Taiji, Inc., Alzheimer's Association, National Kidney Foundation, Coalition to Prevent Abuse of Vulnerable Adults, Florida Heart Research Institute, H.C.A. and Affiliates–Aventura Hospital and Medical Center, Humana, LifeMasters, Miami-Dade Area Health Education Center, Miami-Dade County Health Department, Miami-Dade County Metropolitan Planning Organization, Miami-Dade County Public Library System, Miami-Dade County Transit Golden Pass Program, Miami-Dade County Fire Rescue, National Balance Centers, Inc., S.A.K. Foundation, Pfizer-Vida Sana Association, The Eye Institute, University of Florida/IFAS Extension, United Healthcare, Victim Response, Inc.–The Lodge, and VISTA Healthplans.

May 2006

Over 200 seniors attended the South Dade Wellness Expo that was held at Miami-Dade County Goulds Park and Gymnasium. Participants received free screenings for blood pressure, glaucoma, cholesterol, glucose, balance, bone density, and consultation on Medicare Part D. English, Spanish, and Creole materials with wellness and safety information were disseminated. The attendees participated in interactive Tai Chi exercises and low impact chair aerobics. Mayor Alvarez and staff from the Miami-Dade County Sports Commission held a press conference to announce the Senior Games that were going to be held for the first time in South Florida in November 2006.

The following MIOA participating agencies were exhibitors at the event: Alliance for Aging Inc., Serving Health and Insurance Needs of Elders (SHINE) Program, Alliance Qi Gong Taiji, Inc., Alzheimer's Association, American Diabetes Association, National Kidney Foundation, Coalition to Prevent Abuse of Vulnerable Adults, Community Health of South Dade, Department of Children and Families, Epworth Village, Florida Heart Research Institute, H.C.A. and Affiliates–Kendall Regional Medical Center, Humana, LifeMasters, Masada Home Care, Miami-Dade Area Health Education Center, Miami-Dade County Fire Rescue, Miami-Dade County Health Department, Miami-Dade County Metropolitan Planning Organization, Miami-Dade County Public Library System, Miami-Dade County Transit Golden Pass Program, S.A.K. Foundation, Miami-Dade County Team Metro, National Balance Centers, Inc., Pfizer-Vida Sana Association, The Eye Institute, University of Florida/IFAS Extension, United Healthcare, Victim Response Inc.-The Lodge, VISTA Healthplans, and Women's Preventive Services.

June 2006

Over 150 older adults attended the North Dade African-American Senior Wellness Expo held at North Dade Regional Library. The attendees received free screenings for blood pressure, glaucoma, cholesterol, glucose, balance, and bone density as well as Medicare Part D and nutrition consultations. English, Spanish and Creole materials with wellness and safety information were disseminated to the participants.

The attendees took part in interactive Tai Chi exercises, a lecture on the importance of proper nutrition for disease prevention, and raffles. A tour of the library was offered to the event attendees and they were invited to participate in their regular activities and programs. Some of these include basic computer classes, fitness and wellness activities, and the Talking Books Program for low-vision seniors.

The exhibitors at this event included: Alliance for Aging Inc., Serving Health and Insurance Needs of Elders (SHINE) Program, Alliance Qi Gong Taiji, Inc., Alzheimer's Association, American Diabetes Association, AvMed, Coalition to Prevent Abuse of Vulnerable Adults, Economic Opportunity Family Health Center, Florida Heart Research Institute, H.C.A. and Affiliates-Aventura Hospital and Medical Center, Humana, LifeMasters, Miami-Dade Area Health Education Center, Miami-Dade County Fire Rescue, Miami-Dade County Health Department, Miami-Dade County Metropolitan Planning Organization, Miami-Dade County Public Library System, Miami-Dade County Transit Golden Pass Program, National Balance Centers, Inc., Pfizer-Vida Sana Association, United Health Care, University of Florida/IFAS Extension, Victim Response, Inc.-The Lodge, and VISTA Healthplans.

July 2006

The West Dade Hispanic Senior Wellness Expo was held at Florida International University Park Campus and over 300 seniors attended. The participants received free screenings for blood pressure, glaucoma, cholesterol, glucose, balance, and bone density as well as Medicare Part D consultations. English and Spanish materials with information on wellness and safety were also provided. The attendees participated in interactive Tai Chi exercises, a lecture on the importance of nutrition for disease prevention, and raffles.

The exhibitors that helped to provide these resources and services included: Alliance for Aging, Inc., Serving Health and Insurance Needs of Elders (SHINE) Program, Alliance Qi Gong Taiji, Inc., Alzheimer's Association, American Diabetes Association, AvMed, National Kidney Foundation, Catholic Hospice, Coalition to Prevent Abuse of Vulnerable Adults, Community Health of South Dade, Epworth Village, Florida Heart Research Institute, H.C.A. and Affiliates-Kendall Regional Medical Center, Humana, Masada Home Care, Miami-Dade Area Health Education Center, Miami-Dade County Fire Rescue, Miami-Dade County Health Department, Miami-Dade County Metropolitan Planning Organization, Miami-Dade County Public Library System, Miami-Dade County Fire Rescue, Miami-Dade County Transit Golden Pass Program, LifeMasters, National Balance Centers, Inc., Pfizer, Department of Children and Families, Miami-Dade County Team Metro, Summit Healthplans, The Eye Institute, University of Florida/IFAS Extension, United Healthcare, Victim Response, Inc.-The Lodge, VISTA Healthplans, and Women's Preventive Services.

August 2006

Over 200 seniors attended the Little Haiti Senior Wellness Expo that was hosted by Emmanuel Baptiste Church. The former State of Florida Secretary of Health, M. Rony François, M.D., M.S.P.H., Ph.D. was the guest speaker. The attendees also received free screenings for blood pressure, glaucoma, cholesterol, glucose, balance, and bone density. The attendees also participated in an interactive Tai Chi class, a brief lecture on the importance of proper nutrition in the prevention of disease, and raffles. English and Creole materials with wellness and safety information were disseminated to the

participants. A sponsored lunch was also provided.

The following agencies participating as exhibitors and service providers for the event: Alliance for Aging, Inc., Serving Health and Insurance Needs of Elders (SHINE) Program, Alliance Qi Gong Taiji, Inc., American Diabetes Association, AvMed, National Kidney Foundation, Center for Haitian Studies, Coalition to Prevent Abuse of Vulnerable Adults, CHS Rx Pharmacy, Florida Heart Research Institute, Haitian American Nurses Association of Florida, Inc.-Miami Dade College, H.C.A. and Affiliates-Cedars' Medical Center, Humana, LifeMasters, Miami Jewish Home and Hospital for The Aged, Miami Lighthouse of the Blind, Miami-Dade Area Health Education Center, Miami-Dade County Department of Human Services-Elderly Services Division Helen Sawyer Towers, Miami-Dade County Health Department, Miami-Dade County Metropolitan Planning Organization, Miami-Dade County Public Library System, Miami-Dade County Transit Golden Pass Program, Summit Healthplans, Pfizer, Miami-Dade County Team Metro, The Eye Institute, University of Florida/IFAS Extension, Victim Response, Inc.–The Lodge, and VISTA Healthplans.

September 2006

The Mayor's Office, Alliance for Aging, and Miami-Dade Area Health Education Center coordinated an accredited medical symposium for physicians. The event was hosted by H.C.A. and Affiliates-Cedars Medical Center.

The first lecture titled *"Pain in the Elderly: Understanding & Treatment of Chronic Pain"* was conducted by Hubert L. Rosomoff, MD. - Medical Director for The Rosomoff Comprehensive Pain Center at Douglas Gardens and Dr. Renee Steele Rosomoff, BSN, RN, MBA - Programs Director for The Rosomoff Comprehensive Pain Center at Douglas Gardens. This lecture was intended to explain that the pain management approach must be capable of properly identifying the patients' problems whether sensory, perceptual, psychological, psychosocial, environmental, or biomechanical in order to reduce chronicity, prevent disability, restore function, as well as to return the patient to a productive lifestyle.

The second lecture *"Nutrition: The Way to Better Health-It Starts with You!"* was conducted by Gayle E. Dietz, MS, RD, LD/N. This lecture explained the newest dietary guidelines and identified age-related nutrition concerns for older adults. The final and third lecture was presented by Leilani Kicklighter, RN, ARM, MBA, DFASHRM, CPHRM, CHt., titled *"Prevention of Medical Errors"* and intended to meet the two-hour continuing education requirements relating to prevention of medical errors, error reduction, root cause analysis, and patient safety as part of the overall professional license renewal requirement.

October 2006

The Mayor's Office, Alliance for Aging, Miami Area Geriatric Education Center, Coalition to Prevent Abuse of Vulnerable Adults, and Florida International University Graduate Internship Program coordinated an accredited symposium for the Mayor's Initiative on Aging. The event was hosted by Miami Jewish Home and Hospital for the Aged at Douglas Gardens. Over 130 professionals attended the day long training where they received breakfast and lunch, compliments of the host. The training sessions provided continuing education credits for guardians, nursing home administrators, social workers, and attorneys.

"An Overview of Abuse and Neglect as Experienced by Vulnerable Adults" was presented by Detective Mary Jo LaMont, from Domestic Crimes Bureau, Criminal Investigations Division, Elderly Exploitation Unit of Miami-Dade Police Department. Her presentation offered a comprehensive overview of what constitutes elder and disabled abuse and neglect, how to recognize the early signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect, and the effective ways of dealing with the legal and practical difficulties of serving this vulnerable population. Detective LaMont also presented a segment on *"Attitudes and Aging"* intended to examine negative attitudes towards older adults and explain how the stereotyping of older adults hinders the effectiveness of elder service providers.

Another lecture titled *“The Process and Procedures of Reporting Abuse, Neglect, or Exploitation in Miami-Dade County”* was presented by Angela Salazar, Senior Human Services Program Specialist, Department of Children and Families. The presentation provided a step-by-step explanation of the process followed by State of Florida 11th District, Department of Children and Families-Adult Protective Services, in assisting suspected victims of abuse, neglect, and exploitation. This session highlighted the process of reporting to the Florida Elder Abuse Hotline, as outlined for professionals and the general public in the Florida Statutes.

A fourth presentation titled *“Financial Exploitation: Civil and Criminal Consequences”* was conducted by Terry Abrams Berger, JD and explored, in detail, the signs and preventive techniques associated with financial exploitation of vulnerable adults.

Also, a section with a panel of experts discussed concerns with the prevalence of abuse, neglect and exploitation and provided an opportunity for participants to ask questions based on the perspectives of their own disciplines. The panelists included Terry Abrams Berger, JD; Detective Mary Jo Lamont; Angela Salazar, Department of Children and Families and Jean Sherman, EdD, RN - Director, University of Miami Center on Aging & Disabilities who acted as the moderator.

The following MIOA Planning Committee members were also exhibitors at this event: Alliance for Aging Inc., Serving Health Insurance Needs of Elders (SHINE) Program, Coalition to Prevent Abuse of Vulnerable Adults, Miami Jewish Home and Hospital for the Aged, Miami Lighthouse for the Blind, Miami-Dade County Fire Rescue, Miami-Dade County Police Department, Miami-Dade County Public Library System, State of Florida Attorney’s Office, State of Florida Department of Children and Families, Summit Healthplans, Victim Response Inc.–The Lodge, and VISTA Healthplans.

November 2006

In partnership with the Miami-Dade Park and Recreation Department and the Mayor’s Initiative for Aging, the Miami-Dade Sports Commission presented the inaugural year of the Miami-Dade Senior Games. Athletes and players, age 50 and over, competed to celebrate healthy and active living.

The Miami-Dade Sports Commission was created to promote healthy and active lifestyles for Miami-Dade County residents over the age of 50. The Commission is responsible for determining qualifiers for the Florida Senior Games State Championships within the guidelines provided by the National Senior Games Association and the Florida Sports Foundation to provide the senior community with the incentive to train and compete in a true Olympic-style sports competition. As a qualifier for the Florida Senior Games, athletes can participate in sports such as Archery, Badminton, 3 on 3 Basketball, Bowling, Dominoes, 5k Road Race, Tennis, and Track & Field.

At the Celebration of Athletes Dinner held at Miccosukee Resort & Gaming, a group of seniors from the Miami Beach North Shore Youth Center Senior Program participated in the games by performing a demonstration with synchronized Tai Chi exercises. The seniors that were part of the performance learned these exercises as part of the Mayor’s Initiative on Aging Research Study and received medals for their participation.

VISTA Healthplans sponsored health fair was also part of this event. The following exhibitors were part of the health fair: Alliance for Aging Inc., Serving Health and Insurance Needs of Elders (SHINE) Program, Alliance Qi Gong Taiji, Inc., Alzheimer’s Association, Coalition to Prevent Abuse of Vulnerable Adults, H.C.A. and Affiliates-Kendall Regional Medical Center, Humana, LifeMasters, Miami Lighthouse for the Blind, Miami-Dade County Health Department, Miami-Dade Public Library System, Miami-Dade Transit Golden Pass Program, The Eye Institute, Summit Healthplans, and University of Florida/IFAS Extension.

January 2007

Over 100 participants attended the Senior Wellness Expo for the Visually Impaired that was held at

the Miami Lighthouse for the Blind. The participants received free screenings for blood pressure, glaucoma, and bone density. They participated in interactive Tai Chi exercises, received information on wellness, safety information, and available services/programs for the visually impaired.

The host provided a complimentary lunch for the attendees. The exhibitors at this event included: Alliance for Aging Inc., Alliance Qi Gong Taiji, Inc., AvMed, Coalition to Prevent Abuse of Vulnerable Adults, Community Action Agency, H.C.A. and Affiliates-Cedars Medical Center, Humana, Miami Lighthouse for the Blind, Miami-Dade County Health Department, Miami-Dade Metropolitan Planning Organization, Miami-Dade County Public Library System, Miami-Dade County Transit Golden Pass Program, Summit Healthplans, The Eye Institute, The Sterling Aventura, Miami-Dade County Team Metro, University of Florida/IFAS Extension, and VISTA Healthplans.

February 2007

H.C.A. and Affiliates-Kendall Regional Medical Center held the Grand Opening Celebration of their new medical building. Seniors from the “h2u Los Saludables” Program took part in free health screenings and the panel discussions with physicians Drs. Dario Pancorbo & Roberto Gutierrez titled “*Myths and Truth of Good Health*” and Dr. Pablo Acebal titled “*Latest Surgery Techniques*” that were moderated by well-known television and radio personalities. There were also presentations on healthy eating habits, giveaways, trivia challenges, and tours of the new facility. Mayor Alvarez addressed the participants reminding them of the importance of regular medical check-ups for disease prevention. The grand opening event allowed the community to see first hand the great medical services available in their area. Also, the attendees were challenged with getting motivated to take better care of themselves by exercising more by participating on the Kendall Regional’s Mall Walkers Program.

May 2007

The last MIOA Wellness Expo was coordinated through the Alliance for Aging’s Health & Wellness Program, H.C.A. and Affiliates-Aventura Hospital and Medical Center, and VISTA Healthplans to celebrate Older American’s Month. The event was hosted by Michael Ann Russell Jewish Community Center and included free health screenings, dissemination of information and resources, and interactive low-impact fitness activities.

The final event of the Mayor’s Initiative on Aging Closing Ceremony was held at H.C.A. and Affiliates-Cedars Medical Center. The purpose of this event was to recognize and present awards to all the sponsors, partners, participating agencies, interns and volunteers that assisted with the multiple aspects of the initiative. The Tai Chi Train-the-Trainer participants and seniors from the Miami Beach-North Shore Youth Park Senior Program performed a synchronized Tai Chi exercises demonstration for attendees.

MEDIA PROMOTION

The goal of this component was to use all media sources to promote the importance of positive aging, wellness, safety, healthy eating, physical activity, and regular medical check-ups. The objectives were to highlight the signature events, encourage wellness and safety through radio, television, printed materials, e-mail, and web pages. Another objective was to establish a dedicated telephone line providing the choice to have access to a free 24-hour H.C.A. and Affiliates Nurse Line and/or directing the public to Miami-Dade County’s 311 information line for more resources on existing elderly community services and upcoming events. The information disseminated by the dedicated phone line was linked to the information and calendar of events on the web page also promoting senior wellness

activities offered by Miami-Dade County Park and Recreation Department and Miami-Dade Public Library System.

One of the major projects of the media promotion component was to enlist over 60 physicians from Pfizer's Vida Sana Association and H.C.A. and Affiliates to develop a health related message to use in wellness promotional posters and/or videos. The posters were displayed in buses, trains, and community agencies while videos ran the "healthy tips" as television public service announcements broadcast by the MIOA Presenting Sponsor.

Besides covering MIOA Wellness Expos and Workshops and airing footage of the event activities, Miami-Dade County Television produced and broadcast public service announcements. Through the public service announcements, Mayor Alvarez directed the public to the initiative's dedicated phone line (305) 375-3333 and the web page: www.mayorsinitiativeonaging.com. Moreover, the station produced and directed an educational DVD *To Life!* to distribute as part of the research study component of the initiative. The lessons on Tai Chi exercises that were part of the DVD also became part of Miami-Dade TV public programming.

The presenting sponsor, Univision Channel 23, produced and broadcast over 15 segments for their "Miami Ahora" show. Through these television segments, Mayor Alvarez and guest speakers provided information on the Mayor's Initiative on Aging and on wellness and safety. The topics included: prescription benefits information, fire safety and fall prevention, prevention of cardiovascular disease, medication management, cancer, senior nutrition, mental health, senior emotional well being, medical hurricane preparedness, the prevention of adult abuse, access to services through the sponsors and the local area agency on aging. Univision, MIOA Presenting Sponsor, also regularly ran a calendar of community events provided by the participating agencies of the MIOA and aired public service announcements of the physicians conveying the health tips.

Members of the Consortium for a Healthier Miami-Dade-Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Sub-Committee assisted with the selection of educational materials to be distributed to the public as part of the wellness and safety promotional campaign. The members also ensured that the information on nutrition and risk factors that were included in the educational *To Life!* DVD was accurate and up-to-date.

RESEARCH STUDY

The Mayor's Initiative on Aging Research Component Report was submitted by Nancy Borkowski, DBA, CPA, FACHE, Associate Professor and Dean of Academic Affairs, South University, West Palm Beach, FL; John Abdirkin, M.D., Professor, St. Thomas University, Miami, FL; and Seok-Ho Song, PhD, Assistant Professor, St. Thomas University, Miami, FL. Their complete report has been included in a separate section of this document. The MIOA Research Study Component Report has been accepted as a poster presentation at the Academy Health's Annual Research Meeting in June 2007. In addition, by invitation, the preliminary results of this study were presented at the Florida Department of Elder Affairs' 5th Annual Best Practices Exchange Conference in February 2007.

Background

In spring 2006, discussions of a community-based research component of the Mayor's Initiative on Aging began among staff of the Mayor's Office, Miami-Dade County Health Department Consortium for a Healthier Miami-Dade's Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Sub-Committee, St. Thomas University, Miami-Dade Area Health Education Center, Health Foundation of South Florida, VISTA Healthplans, Alliance for Aging, Florida Heart Research Institute, United Way of Miami-Dade, and Dietz & Associates.

After months of planning and securing funding, the MIOA Research Component began in August 2006 and ended 12 weeks later in November 2006. The implementation of the study was made

possible by the entities mentioned above and by nursing student volunteers from St. Thomas University; healthcare professionals from Holloway Rehabilitation & Pain Center and Orthopedic and Spine Rehab of South Florida; student interns from Florida International University Florida Department of Health Dietetic Internship Program Miami-Dade Region, and Miami-Dade College; volunteers from Miami-Dade County Fire Rescue Department; and participating senior centers' staff and volunteers.

The sponsorship of this research study was made possible by Health Foundation of South Florida, VISTA Healthplans, The American Heart Association–South Florida Chapter, and the Dade Community Foundation. In-kind contributions were provided by the Florida Heart Research Institute, Miami-Dade County Health Department, Miami-Dade Area Health Education Center, Alliance for Aging, Dietz & Associates, and the Miami-Dade County Mayor's Office.

Goals

¹Conduct a community-based exploratory study to assess whether or not a multifaceted short-term health promotion program was effective in engaging and retaining older adults in wellness promotion classes and low-impact exercises.

Assess whether the study's interventions had an impact by comparing the physical health and physiological pre and post measurements and screenings of each participant within the control group (100 participants at four sites) and intervention group (100 participants at four sites) and then between the groups

Assess and compare (pre and post) self-perceived health status of the participants within the control group and intervention group and then between the groups

Develop and implement a "Train-the-Trainer" program that will ensure the sustainability of the program

Produce a *To Life!* DVD and make available free of charge for educational purposes based on the interventions of the study

Share methodology used and lessons learned from the study with public and private agencies on aging considering implementation of this type of program within their local communities

Activities to Meet the Stated Goals

Identify eight senior centers, programs or independent living facilities that would participate in the study as either an intervention or control site

Select four centers as the control group and four centers the intervention group

Meet with the selected centers' directors to explain the program and assess their level of interest and availability of space for classes

Interview 25 participants from each center to assess and select those who were willing to voluntarily participate in the study, be physically able to participate, be willing to commit to a 12-week program, and attend the pre and post screening and measurements

¹Given that Tai Chi exercises are widely practiced by the elderly in China to promote health, relaxation, flexibility, balance, and endurance and that other research studies have shown positive outcomes with the elderly, the organizers chose this low-impact exercise for the MIOA intervention group. In addition, Tai Chi was also included in all MIOA signature events with the intention of promoting its practice among local senior wellness programs.

Create a 12-week schedule for the control and intervention groups that would include pre and post physical health and physiological screenings and measurements as well as subjective measurements with respect to the participants' health status

Create an intervention plan to provide 30-minute weekly nutrition and risk factors education classes over an eight-week period

Create an intervention plan to provide 30-minute weekly Tai Chi exercise classes over a 10-week period

Identify instructors for the educational sessions and healthcare professionals to conduct the pre and post physical health and physiological screenings and measurements.

Coordinate with the educators, healthcare providers, and the senior centers to facilitate communication and compliance with schedules

Develop and coordinate the Train-the-Trainer program and Tai Chi certification

Coordinate with Miami-Dade Television for the production of the *To Life!* DVD

Hire Tai Chi instructors to performed for the *To Life!* DVD

Create a bilingual nutrition and risk factors education presentation to include in the *To Life!* DVD

Create scripts in English and Spanish for the Tai Chi exercises for the *To Life!* DVD voice over

Write and submit funding proposals

Expected Outcomes

This community-based exploratory study had the following general expected outcomes:

Report findings from the pre and post measurements of the participants within the control and intervention groups regarding:

- Balance and muscle strength

- Perceived health status

- Knowledge of risk factors for heart disease and proper nutrition

- Clinical indicators: weight, body mass index, blood pressure, cholesterol, and glucose levels

Document the engagement and retention of the intervention group participants

Produce and disseminate a DVD based on the interventions of the study's multifaceted short-term health promotion program ensuring the sustainability of the fitness activities and wellness promotion education

Share lessons learned from the implementation of the study's multifaceted short-term health promotion program with other public and private agencies on aging considering this type of program within their local communities

Implementation Process

Miami-Dade County residents 60 and over were eligible to participate in the study. The Alliance for Aging assisted with the selection of the senior centers, parks or independent living facilities that participated in the research study. The majority of the facilities chosen are partially funded by the Alliance. At the inception of the project, the organizers met with the directors of the pre-selected senior centers, parks or independent living facilities to explain the study and assess their level of interest. The selection requirements were the following:

Program would be well received by seniors and center staff

Level of motivation of the center director and/or independent living facility director

Willingness to assist with the information dissemination, schedule and program information, and follow-up process

Space availability to accommodate the low-impact physical and nutrition, and risk factors education sessions

Willingness to assign a staff member to support the program

Agreement to send a staff member to the Train-the-Trainer sessions

The pre-screening evaluations were performed by volunteers from the Miami-Dade County Fire and Rescue Department, the Alliance for Aging, Miami-Dade County Mayor's Office, and interns from Florida International University and Miami-Dade College. All ethnic and racial backgrounds were eligible to participate. Since the organizers were not successful in securing a Creole speaking Tai Chi instructor, eligible participants needed to speak or understand English and/or Spanish (Note: the recruitment of Creole speaking Tai Chi instructors was addressed in the Train-the-Trainer program). The control and the intervention group participants who volunteered to participate in the study were pre-screened to ensure that they would meet the general criteria for participation (see the Research Component Report for the detailed criteria for participation by participants in the intervention and control groups).

The intervention group would participate in structured 30-minute weekly educational sessions over an eight-week period and 30-minute weekly Tai Chi exercise sessions over a 10-week period. Although the organizers did not provide for any interventions at the control group sites, participants in the control group could choose to either participate or not in whatever educational classes or exercise programs available to them at the designated "control" senior centers.

For the self-reported health status of the participants, the researchers selected a self-administered questionnaire which is widely used and recommended as a suitable measure of subjective health status for specific populations, such as the elderly. For the balance and muscle strength measurements, the researchers selected two physical-performance tests. The tests included an assessment of a timed eight-foot walk at a normal pace and a timed test of five repetitions of rising from a chair and sitting down. An assessment tool for determining the participants' knowledge of risk factors for heart disease and proper nutrition for a healthy diet was developed in collaboration with the Florida Heart Research Institute, Dietz & Associates, Miami-Dade County Health Department Consortium for a Healthier Miami-Dade Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Sub-Committee and the Miami-Dade Area Health Education Center.

Using the above mentioned instruments, data was gathered as to the participants' pre and post self-perceived health status, balance, muscle strength, knowledge of the risk factors for heart disease, and proper nutrition for a healthy diet. In addition, each participant's weight, body mass index, blood pressure, cholesterol, and glucose levels results were collected.

Summary

The original objective of recruiting 100 seniors for the control group, four centers, and 100 for the intervention group for a total of eight centers was not successfully completed. Due to unforeseen circumstances, not anticipated during the planning phase of the program, a total of 132 participants were successfully recruited at the start of the program, with 77 participants in the intervention group and 55 participants in the control group. In addition, only five facilities remained at the end of the study (three intervention sites and two control sites).

From the two centers that participated as control group, 22 participants out of 50 or 36% completed the program. From the three centers in the intervention group 41 out of 75 participants or 53% completed the program. Much of the unexpected circumstances were attributed to lack of commitment/follow through of registered participants or center directors and from enlisting independent living facilities as part of the program (see section on Lessons Learned). Only data on participants who complete all the pre and post assessments/measurements were included in the final results of the research study. Incentives (i.e., goody bags) were distributed among the participants of intervention and control groups at the pre-testing but were not distributed at the post-testing, which may have attributed to the participants' completion rate.

Based on the results submitted by the researchers, and included as part of this document, showed the following:

Older adults could be engaged in and retained in a short multifaceted health promotion program

Intervention participants self-reported general overall improvement in their health status and this was confirmed by statistically significant improvement in the participants' balance (pre and post measurements) and a marginally significant improvement in their muscle strength (pre and post measurements)

Participants reported improvement in the mental component summaries of their self-perceived health status (The researchers stated that this may be attributable to the social interaction of being part of a group that met for two sessions a week at the senior centers to attend the Tai Chi and education sessions)

Note: Please refer to the Research Component Report of this document for a full description of the researchers' findings.

LESSONS LEARNED

Research Component

The organizers reported that during and following the recruitment process of senior service providers, senior centers and independent living facilities appeared committed to the study. Although the organizers conducted multiple site visits and had discussions with the center directors and staff in reference to the requirements for participation on the first day of the program, some locations had no shows or only a few participants. Throughout the control and intervention sessions of the study, the organizers also perceived a decrease in the level of commitment of some center directors and registered seniors. Even though the Miami-Dade County Health Department–Consortium for a Healthier Miami-Dade, Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Sub-Committee assisted with the curriculum and planning, the organizers recommended that a full-time coordinator and support staff should be hired and responsible for the overall supervision of the program.

The hiring of a dedicated program coordinator and support staff will ensure the appropriate:

Scheduling of assessments and measurements

Staff coverage at all sessions

Distribution and collection of all tools/forms

Follow up tasks, related to the senior centers, programs or independent living facilities are performed according to the goals and objectives of the study

Amount of time spent with the center directors (once a week for a period of one month) to explain the importance of issuing regular reminders for screenings, measurements, intervention weekly classes and the need to assign a dedicated staff to reduce attrition

Development of a centralized system for the distribution and collection of assessment tools

Even though intervention sessions were held on the same day and time, the organizers observed that it became a routine for some participants to attend the session and there was no need for reminders. It is recommended that until the participants get familiar with the routine of the educational sessions, regular reminders are personalized and become part of the requirements from the participating senior service providers. The organizers also recommended that when planning similar programs, the funding sources must include the following requirements from the participating senior service agencies:

Designate a staff member to the program's success that will work closely with the program organizers

Submit a plan of action that will ensure recruitment and regular attendance

Identify and gather seniors prior to the beginning of the program

Submit a list of recruited participants adhering to a minimum requirement

Promote the program and require the commitment of a certain amount of participants before the initial session

Organize a program demonstration

Submit weekly attendance sheets to the program coordinator with an agreed minimum requirement (low attendance will cancel the program at any given time)

According to the organizers, the recruitment of seniors from independent living facilities was not successful. At every independent living facility scheduled for the pre assessments or classes, only a handful of seniors attended. Many of them appeared to be in a hurry to do their errands and did not remember committing to the 10-week program. The organizers suggested that if similar programs are implemented in independent living facilities, more time should be allowed prior to the inception of the program. More demonstrations and program information should be distributed and regularly reinforced to ensure that seniors are willing and interested in participating in the program prior to the first session.

Based on the observations of the organizers, some of the centers that are designated meal sites should be encouraged to find incentives to engage the majority of their seniors in regular physical and wellness educational activities. For example, due to lack of physical space, some senior facilities are set up to provide meals and may offer optional elected fitness, wellness and recreational activities as part of their activities; but the greater part of the activities are typically not fitness oriented. They observed that many of the seniors arrive and gather in the dining room area to socially interact, play games or participate in other activities that may not necessarily promote the regular participation in physical activity or wellness education. They also reported that a majority of the participants are in the routine of arriving at the center approximately 45 minutes before the served meal and leave immediately thereafter.

In contrast, the organizers observed that community centers or parks facilities that offer senior programs have different settings:

Participants receive meals and attend regular fitness and educational activities as a group

Participants attend the center to participate in physical and education activities, arrive mid-morning, bring their own lunch or snack, and stay in the facility until early afternoon

For this study, incentives were distributed only at the inception of the program. To encourage participation, the organizers recommended that a series of incentives and recognition opportunities should be created for the program and used throughout the program. This practice will ensure a significant amount of seniors will:

- Register for the program
- Attend pre and post assessments and measurements
- Regularly attend the intervention sessions

The organizers also suggested that the program (planning and implementation) needed to be offered over a longer period of time. The minimum time recommended was at least three months. They considered that the first month should be used to ensure the participation of the center staff, the attendance of the interested participants and by establishing a routine schedule of the classes with regular follow up reminders.

Initiative in General

The organizers noted that since the initiative was financially supported through sponsorships, the necessary funds to execute the initial events and develop marketing materials were not available until a few months into the implementation of the program. Later into the initiative and after media exposure, sponsorships funds were easier to secure.

The organizers recommended that when creating or implementing a similar project, great consideration should be given to the amount of staff needed to implement such a large endeavor. They shared that the hiring of a full time event planner and event support staff should be considered in order to carry out the following tasks:

- Secure event location, sound system, communication devices, chairs, tables, podium, and risers
- Coordinate event exhibitors by addressing their specific needs, hiring low-impact exercise instructors, and securing guest speakers
- Gather and package wellness and safety information materials and healthy snacks for the “goodie bags” to disseminate to seniors at each event
- Transport event supplies and displays, coordinate set up, post event breakdown, and cleaning services
- Provide assistance to senior centers and Miami-Dade County Transit with the arrangements for bus transportation for seniors to and from monthly events
- Recruit and manage event volunteers
- Ensure proper event security and emergency paramedics coverage

The organizers emphasized that unless the appropriate staff is secured, the events should not take place every month. This would allow for more time to properly plan and attend to other duties such as:

- Develop and coordinate wellness and safety resources and materials needed for media campaign related to bus and train posters, speakers for television shows, sponsored public service announcements, and wellness and safety information for distribution
- Identify and secure event sponsors
- Develop and execute sponsorship agreements

- Generate invoices and process payments
- Create script for telephone line and recording
- Coordinate and execute all aspects of the research component
- Coordinate production of To Life! DVD
- Create and manage quarterly web page updates
- Coordinate and staff monthly initiative planning committee and sub-committee meetings

During the planning process, a participant's registration form and registration process was discussed among the planning committee members. Suggestions included: encouraging pre-registration at senior centers or on-site registration. In order to track the number of participants, it was suggested that a registration or passport form be developed for all attendees. Unfortunately, the registration process of participants was not implemented. The actual count of participants was obtained from the number of requests submitted by the senior centers to the Transit Department for the transportation of their seniors to an event and from the actual transportation count. For the professional workshops, the count of participants was conducted at the event registration table.

Due to the lack of gerontologists in Miami-Dade County, one of the goals of the MIOA was to further educate the doctors and provide them with more training and knowledge regarding older adults and the issues that tend to arise in patients 55 and over. Over 400 physicians were invited to participate in a free accredited symposium, however, only five doctors attended. A month before the event, an invitation was faxed and mailed to physicians' offices. It is recommended that when attempting to provide continuing education credits to physicians the invitation should state that a designee, such as a nurse practitioner or physicians' assistant, could attend if the physician is unable to attend. The attendance of other health professionals might facilitate the dissemination of information to doctors' offices and hopefully get back to the physicians themselves. It is also recommended to send out invitations for a similar event at least three months in advance and that a reminder be sent one each month thereafter.

THE FUTURE

As mentioned in the 2007 State of the County Address, Mayor Alvarez's services for seniors are highlighted as his main focus for the upcoming years and will continue to be a priority focus during his tenure. As such, he will continue to support the partnerships formed during the Mayor's Initiative on Aging as they continue to explore and expand public/private partnerships. Service providers are encouraged to continue their collaborative efforts when planning wellness expos and community events using the existing network of providers from the Consortium for a Healthier Miami-Dade and Alliance for Aging Health & Wellness Program.

Through the existing aging services network and future funding sources, the following tasks are envisioned:

- Provide technical support to the Alliance for Aging as they embark on expanding the Mayor's Initiative on Aging To Life! DVD-Train-the-Trainer Program through their Health & Wellness Program ensuring the sustainability of the program

- Provide technical support to the Miami Tai Chi Working Collaborative Model as they attempt to expand the Mayor's Initiative on Aging's Train-the-Trainer Program and plan the multi-level research project to document the health benefits of Tai Chi exercises for cardiovascular disease, arthritis, diabetes, and fall prevention for the low-income and hard to reach older adults.

Assist service providers to identify best practices and potential funding to address the issues the elderly population with transportation, injury prevention, employment, volunteerism, and housing as identified by the Florida Department of Elder Affairs

Continue to promote the prevention of falls and the abuse of vulnerable adults

Partner with the Miami-Dade County departments, community agencies, and sponsors to assist with home repairs for low income seniors

Assist other communities with the development and implementation of a similar initiative

As mentioned on the executive summary, as the Mayor's Initiative on Aging comes to an end, Health Foundation of South Florida (HFSF) plans to launch a Healthy Aging Strategic Initiative allocating funding to the initiative over the next few years. With the support of Mayor Alvarez and in collaboration with local service providers and the U.S. Administration on Aging, HFSF plans to use evidence-based practices and funding to address "Healthy Aging" as defined by the National Council on Aging which can be attributed to education, behavior modification, and supportive environments. The four main areas of need and focus are: 1) community partnerships 2) physical activity 3) chronic disease management, and 4) fall prevention.

It is the intention of HFSF to establish a Healthy Aging Collaborative of South Florida, expand the adoption of evidence-based senior health promotion programs, increase capacity to promote healthy aging within and across three settings (health care settings, senior centers & senior service providers, senior housing), increase the walk ability of neighborhoods where high concentrations of seniors live, and effect change in public policy to support healthy aging strategies. The intended outcomes of measurable impact will be measured on the individual level (level of functioning and quality of life) and on the community level (health care/health care costs, health promotion programming and inter-system coordination). In addition, HFSF also wants to establish technical advisory and leadership committees that can provide expertise and counsel to the planning process, facilitate leadership and community wide commitment and participation, as well as, leverage additional resources.

Miami-Dade County Mayor Carlos Alvarez invites the aging services network to join him in his ongoing efforts to improve the lives of our seniors.