Somerville-Cambridge Elder Services
Planning for Health & Independence

Annual Report 2017
Elder service agencies have long taken an in-home approach to helping people age in place, and shifting perspectives in the public health field are primed to highlight our role in helping people maintain health and wellness. This increased focus on the health benefits of elder services is part of a larger effort to better quantify how environmental and social conditions—also known as Social Determinants of Health—can influence a wide range of health risks and benefits.

In the big picture, organizations such as the Offices for Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (ODPHP) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) are aiming to improve public health and health outcomes by targeting key Social Determinants of Health for improvement.

Access to healthy food, transportation, and a safe environment—these are all considered important Social Determinants of Health, and these are all areas where Somerville-Cambridge Elder Services (SCES) makes a difference every day in our community.

In a very real sense, SCES directly supported public health over the past year when our Meals on Wheels drivers made nearly 250,000 deliveries, when our Home Care program facilitated essential in-home assistance for 1,306 clients, and when our Adult Protective Services program assisted 258 people who were facing elder abuse, neglect, or financial exploitation.

We are proud to be part of what’s increasingly being recognized as the best way forward for improving public health, and our intent is to take on a bigger role in promoting a healthier community.

The Commonwealth is currently transforming how it provides services for many older adults. With the stated goal of providing a more coordinated approach for MassHealth members, the state is moving toward a managed care model, where groups of doctors, hospitals and other providers work together to coordinate care.

We agree that a more holistic approach to health is best, and we’re optimistic that the transition will continue to recognize the valuable and unique perspective that elder service agencies bring to the discussion.

The track record so far is promising:
In recent years we’ve established a very successful Hospital to Home partnership with Cambridge Health Alliance to coordinate services that can reduce unnecessary readmissions and support the needs of individuals with complex medical needs.

SCES is also expanding wellness programs that are directly related to public health, such as our recently launched Type 2 Diabetes prevention program. Funded by Medicare, the yearlong wellness-support program is based on studies that indicate people with prediabetes who lose just 7 percent of body fat had a 58% reduction in their chance of developing the disease.

Another example is our recently launched Nutrition Therapy program, which provides personalized in-home support to help people with certain diagnoses improve their health through food choices and lifestyle changes. Funded through Medicare, this program has been shown to reduce symptoms and lessen reliance on medication, and it has been much in-demand since its launch.

This is just a small sample of the impacts that SCES has on local Social Determinants of Health, and much of this year’s Annual Report is dedicated to illustrating how our mission meets what are increasingly being recognized as vital needs in our community.

Looking ahead, public health policy is transitioning toward greater emphasis on factors outside of the doctor’s office. Having worked with older adults to maintain health and wellness in their homes for more than four decades, we agree that’s a wise approach, and we look forward to being part of that solution.

We are proud to be part of what’s increasingly being recognized as the best way forward for improving public health.

Paul Hollings, SCES Executive Director
Helping people navigate the challenges of aging is central to our mission at Somerville-Cambridge Elder Services (SCES), and our ongoing partnership with Cambridge Health Alliance (CHA) has shown great promise in mitigating a common hazard for older adults.

Policymakers are increasingly aware of the connection between living environment and health outcomes. In that context, conditions where people live, work, and play are known as Social Determinants of Health. One example is access to community services that fill essential needs for older adults who wish to Age in Place. Connecting older adults with those resources has always been central to our mission at SCES.

Meals on Wheels, Home Care, and medical transportation—these are common examples of community-based Long Term Services and Supports, which are needed at some point by two-thirds of people over the age of 65.

The SCES Aging Information Center is a free service that helps people access those resources by providing expert advice, guidance, and referral service. The center is a one-stop point of access for more than 35 programs offered at SCES, and also maintains extensive knowledge about area programs that can help with aging and disability issues.

SCES also facilitates a wide range of assistance through the Home Care program, which provides everything from personal care to home modifications, with the goal of meeting people’s needs at home. Available for those who meet eligibility requirements, Home Care served 1,306 people over the past year.
Social Determinants of Health:

**Nutrition**

Malnutrition is a widespread concern that can weaken everything from the immune system to the ability to handle daily tasks. The Nestle Nutrition Institute estimates that 22.6 percent of people over age 65 are malnourished, but many instances go undiagnosed and untreated.

Somerville-Cambridge Elder Services has long been mindful of this important issue, and provides several popular programs that help meet this vital need.

SCES Meals on Wheels served more than 1,300 clients during the past year, helping many older adults who might otherwise struggle to obtain and prepare warm meals. The connection between health and meals delivery was underscored by a recent Health Affairs study, which found people receiving delivery of medically tailored meals had 1.5 fewer emergency room visits over a 19-month period, with people receiving standard meals seeing a reduction as well.

SCES provided 65,760 meals through 12 congregate meal sites, and also partnered with the Greater Boston Food Bank to provide grocery supplements to roughly 350 eligible households each month through the Brown Bag program.

Nutrition counseling, discounted nutrition supplements and a popular Farmers Market coupon program round out the SCES roster of nutrition-related efforts in our community.
Social Determinants of Health: Transportation

Reliable transportation is an important component of Aging in Place, and it is also a challenge for many older adults who have given up driving. Roughly 50 percent of older adults have poor access to public transit, causing them to attend 15 percent fewer doctor appointments, according to data compiled in one AARP study.

SCES has several programs that help meet this vital need. SCES Home Care can provide transportation for medical appointments, grocery shopping, and social activities; the program provided 32,708 rides for 609 local older adults over the past year.

People over the age of 60 who are not enrolled in MassHealth or receiving Home Care can receive assistance through our Medical Escort program, which matches volunteers with older adults who need assistance traveling to medical appointments. This great program fills a vital need, and is always seeking volunteers who are available during the day.

Limited free cab service is also available in Cambridge and Somerville to transport older adults to medical appointments.

Roughly 50 percent of older adults have poor access to public transit, causing them to attend 15 percent fewer doctor appointments.

—AARP Study
A safe living environment is crucial for good health, but roughly 10 percent of older adults experience some form of elder abuse.

Elder abuse can be physical, emotional, sexual, or financial. It affects elders across all income levels, cultures, gender, and race, and by most estimates fewer than one in 14 incidents of elder abuse is reported. The Adult Protective Services program at SCES is on the front lines of combatting this problem, with case managers who investigate reports of abuse and work with older adults to mitigate risk factors. The program served 258 local older adults over the past year, who were referred to the program by the Statewide Elder Abuse Hotline (1-800-922-2275).

SCES is also working to spread awareness on this topic. In each of the past three years, SCES has partnered with the Cambridge Council on Aging to distribute information about recognizing and reporting elder abuse; this past year that effort included a series of seminars on the topic for the Cambridge Police Department.

Loneliness is a common problem for older adults, and there is a growing body of research that indicates it carries real health risks.

A 2012 study by the University of California found that 43 percent of people over age 65 were lonely, and that it may be predictor of serious health problems. Other studies in recent years have linked social isolation to disrupted sleep patterns, higher stress, and accelerated cognitive decline.

SCES partners with local volunteers in several ways to help mitigate this risk factor. Our New Friends program pairs friendly volunteers with older adults who would appreciate a regular visitor. Many of our New Friend participants have been together for years, becoming good friends over time.

Spiritual Caregiver is an interfaith program that offers extensive training to volunteers who then work with older adults facing depression, loss, or other spiritual concerns of aging.
Social Determinants of Health: 

Housing

Secure and affordable housing is central to the concept of Aging in Place, but a wide range of challenges face many older adults in this department.

Elder displacement, due to the rising cost of living, is a growing concern in our community. Somerville-Cambridge Elder Services recently responded to this trend by adding a Housing Specialist, who can help identify housing opportunities and facilitate the application process.

SCES also works with elders at risk for homelessness, providing one-on-one advocacy through our Protective Services and Connect programs for older adults facing eviction. Clutter—also known as hoarding—is a common housing issue, and SCES provides peer counseling to help.

The new Otis Street initiative is a collaboration where SCES refers at-risk elders to suite-style bedrooms at a building operated by the Cambridge Housing Authority.

SCES has also provided emergency assistance with rent or relocation through the Little Necessities Fund.

Remembering Ligia Taylor

SCES Board Member
1993-2017
Volunteer
Advocate
Friend

Born in São Miguel (Açores), Ligia was a longtime Somerville resident and SCES board member, variously serving as President, Vice President, Clerk and Treasurer over 23 years.

We remember Ligia as the soul of strength and kindness; volunteering to support her church and many community causes, yet always finding time to care for and connect with others.

“So long as the memory of certain beloved friends lives in my heart, I shall say that life is good” – Helen Keller

Explore What’s Possible
Somerville-Cambridge Elder Services Programs

People often don’t know where to turn for help with aging, disability or caregiving issues. Somerville-Cambridge Elder Services (SCES) has been a clearinghouse for information and programs that can help since 1972. SCES helps older people remain safe and independent in their own homes by providing a wide range of supportive services. In addition, SCES offers information and advice to caregivers, family members, and community members.

Information and Resource Center
Adult Family Care helps people receive the care they need from friends and family, by providing training, compensation and ongoing support.

Aging Information and Resource Center
Aging can be complicated. But our Elder Care Advisors are experts on aging, caregiving, and disability issues—and can facilitate access to resources that can help.

Community Living Options provides personalized support and care management for caregivers and older adults challenged by healthcare decisions, choosing assisted living/nursing homes, caregiver stress, hospital-to-home planning, and memory disorders.

Elder Care Advice Counselors provide free short-term information for older adults that can help identify services to maximize independence and quality of life.

Family Caregiver Support offers caregivers information about services, provides educational programs and short-term individual or family consultation.

Home Care provides services to older residents of Cambridge and Somerville who need assistance so they may continue to live independently and safely at home. ECOP, Choices, and Caregiver respite programs are also available.

Health & Wellness programs enhance the quality of life of older people and younger people with disabilities. Includes fall prevention, disease self-management and light exercise.

Hospital to Home improves communication and coordination between consumers and their health care providers by providing consumers with tools and support as they transition from the hospital, rehab or SNF to home.

Long-Term Care Ombudsman provides advocacy for residents of nursing and rest homes in order to improve their quality of life and care.
Medical Advocates matches older adults with volunteers who become familiar with their medical issues and accompany them on doctor visits. In addition to providing advocacy as needed, the volunteer helps ensure the older adult understands diagnoses, prescriptions and instructions.

Medical Escort matches frail older adults with a volunteer who accompanies them to medical appointments.

Memory Disorder Service provides in-home consultation to families, caregivers, and older adults dealing with the effects of memory problems.

Money Management matches trained and insured volunteers with older adults who need help paying bills, writing checks, balancing their checkbooks, budgeting monthly income, and running bank errands.

Nutrition Services includes Meals-on-Wheels, which delivers meals to older participants’ homes; Congregate Meal Sites, which serve hot lunches in senior centers and elder housing buildings; Nutrition Counseling; Nutrition Supplements; and the Brown Bag Program, which provides groceries to low-income older adults once a month.

Options Counseling assists older adults and people living with disabilities in making informed choices about services, supports, and settings in which to receive care, through an interactive decision-support process. Options Counselors meet with individuals on a short-term basis in hospitals, rehabs, or community settings.

Protective Services investigates reports of elder abuse, neglect and financial exploitation; provides case work; and coordinates services necessary to eliminate or remedy the effects of abuse.

SHINE (Serving the Health Insurance Needs of Everyone) offers free information and assistance regarding health insurance and benefits to older adults, Medicare beneficiaries with disabilities, and their caregivers.

SeniorPet helps older adults defray the burdens of pet ownership by providing food, supplies and other assistance for pets.

Take Charge provides older adults choice in the way they receive services and who provides them. With the help of SCES staff, older adults hire, train, schedule and supervise their own workers to assist with personal care and homemaking tasks. Workers can be partners, friends, neighbors, or any family member (except a spouse).

Volunteer Programs provide companionship and assistance for older adults.
**FY 2017 Agency Statistics**  
**July 1, 2016 - June 30, 2017**

**People Served:**
- State Home Care Program: 1,306
- Enhanced Community Options Program (ECOP): 332
- Choices Program: 364
- Senior Care Options: 1,827
- Adult Family Care: 301
- Protective Services: 258
- Meals on Wheels Program: 1,321
- Brown Bag: 350/per month
- Community Meal Sites: 792
- Family Caregiver Support Program*: 69
- Nursing Home Ombudsman Program: 5,237 resident visits
- Options Counseling: 114
- Benefits Screening/Counseling (SHINE): 292
- Little Necessities Fund: 217

*Includes Memory Disorder Services and Elder Care Advice

**Health/Wellness & Prevention**
- More than 80 individuals registered for the following SCES sponsored programs:
  - Ageless Grace
  - Prevent Type 2 Lifestyle Change Program
  - Simple Cooking for Your Health
  - Stay Strong, a Fall Prevention Program
  - Tools for Better Quality Life: Movement, Meditation and Nutrition

**Nutrition**
- Meals on Wheels: 246,485 meals served
- Congregate: 65,760 meals served

**Number of Volunteers**
*SCES has more than 350 volunteers, who offer assistance in the following programs:*
- Brown Bag
- Caring Neighbor
- Cambridge Connections
- Elder Fair
- Health Care Assistance
- Holiday Bagging
- Kate’s Cafe
- Medical Advocate
- Medical Escort
- Money Management
- Music & Memory
- New Friends Program
- Nursing Home Ombudsman
- Nutrition Meal Sites
- Office Volunteers
- SeniorPet
- Spiritual Caregiving
- Thanksgiving Meals on Wheels

**Revenues by Source**
- State-EOEA 59.4%
- Medicaid & Medicare 31.5%
- Federal Awards 2%
- Programs Fees & Donations 5.3%
- Investments .9%
- Subtenant & Other .2%
- Charitable Donations & In kind .7%
Somerville-Cambridge Elder Services is operated by a local volunteer Board of Directors, a majority of whom, by law, are older people.

Elizabeth Aguilo (President)  
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Mary Ann Dalton, Assistant Executive Director  
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Rachel Berry, Home Care Director  
Stephanie Becker, Protective Services Director  
Tiffany Bruschi-Barber, Director of Program Development  
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Deb McLean, Community Meals Program Director  
Jen Shaw, Director of Human Resources

Community Relations

Donald Donato, Director of Planning & Development  
Nathan Lamb, Director of Outreach and Community Relations  
Margarida Mendonca, Community Relations Support Specialist  
Colleen Morrissey, Community Relations Specialist