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Richardson, Erin K., "Implementing an Aging in Place Program with Emphasis on Home Safety and Accessibility for Community-Dwelling Older Adults" (2022). *OT Student Capstones*. 13.
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Implementing an Aging in Place Program with Emphasis on Home Safety and Accessibility for Community-Dwelling Older Adults

Erin Richardson, OTDS

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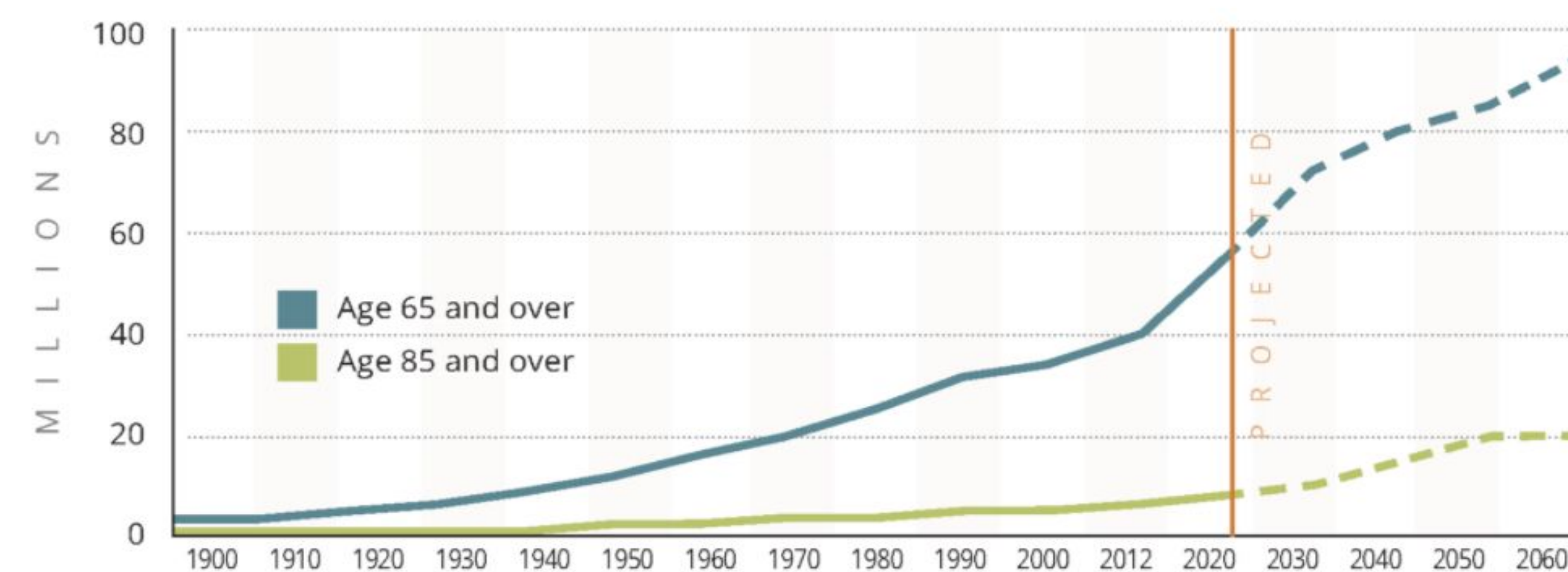


INTRODUCTION

By 2030, 1 in 5 individuals in the US will be over 65 and over increasing the demand for more aging in place programming. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) defines aging in place as “The ability to live in one’s own home and community safely, independently, and comfortably, regardless of age, income, or ability level.”

Population Age 65 and Over; Age 85 and Over

Selected years, 1900-2018, and projected years, 2020-2060



PROGRAM SITE

Rebuilding Together is a national non-profit organization whose mission is to provide safe and affordable housing for all. The Valley of the Sun affiliate services all of Maricopa county. Rebuilding together: Valley of the Sun conducts a *Safe at Home* program for older adults to live safely in their homes. The program emphasizes the four following areas:

Improved Accessibility	Reduce Falls
Increase Independence	Facilitate Aging In Place

SAFE AT HOME PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

A needs assessment of the current program was conducted to determine program needs for implementation. Program development included the following deliverables:

- Developed Volunteer Training
- Conducted Community Outreach
- Developed Application for Improved Readability
- Created Resource Handout for Clients
- Consulted on Home Safety Evaluations
- Updated DME for Program

Original Equipment	Updated Equipment	Rational
Mainstay handheld shower head	Moen handheld shower	The Moen handheld shower head has a pause button making it easier to manipulate and use while seated. The Moen version also has a longer hose (by 2 ft) and a universal cuff making it easier to grasp.
Drive Medical toilet safety rails.	Moen toilet safety rails.	The Moen option has a better safety rating from independent 3 rd party reviewers. The Moen option also is easier to take on/off, with height adjustable arms.
Carex Round Shower stool	Medline Aluminum Shower Stool	The Medline shower stool has a higher weight limit by 100 lbs. The Medline stool also has handholds to assist with maneuverability.
Medline Basic Elevated Toilet Seat	Vive Toilet Seat Riser with Handles	The Vive toilet seat has a higher weight limit and attaches directly to the toilet for increased stability and safety.

DISCUSSION

- Finding DME, grab bars, and other safety equipment at no or low cost is often challenging. Thus, programs like Rebuilding Together’s can meet a need that often goes unaddressed.
- The *Safe at Home* program demonstrates the demand for sustainable and accessible aging in place programming.
- Future programming should consider limitations such as time and financial resources to inform realistic implementation of sustainable programming.

IMPLICATIONS FOR OT

This capstone is an example of how OTs can develop and improve programs for older adults to safely age in place. OTs can assist with aging in place interventions to expand upon the intersection between safety and functionality within the home environment. Similar programming can help address the growing needs of the older adult population.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Jodi Lindstrom, OTR/L, ATP
Jenna Wasylak, CPD, CAPS
The Rebuilding Together Valley of the Sun team

REFERENCES

References are available upon request