



## **“Check on Your Elderly Neighbor” Campaign**

OVERVIEW: The Check on Your Elderly Neighbor Campaign was developed to provide neighbors the opportunity to connect with older adults in their community.

CHALLENGE: As a result of COVID-19, Stay at Home guidance was issued and identified older adults, age 65 and over, in a high-risk category according to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). Older adults were immediately isolated which made access to food and other important resources such as prescription medications and personal hygiene products critical. The vast impact of COVID-19 to the older adult population became to be a top priority for local government agencies.

SOLUTION: The “Check on Your Elderly Neighbor” concept was created out of necessity during the COVID-19 pandemic when older adults became immediately isolated by following guidance to stay at home. In response, the Orange County Office on Aging, in partnership with the County Emergency Operations Center, launched the “Check on your Elderly Neighbor” campaign with the goal of utilizing community spirit to reach out and assist older adults within local neighborhoods. An informational flyer was developed explaining the goal of the campaign and accompanied by a “Check on your Elderly Neighbor” postcard. The flyer was made available in eight languages and was widely distributed among organizations that serve older adults, posted on numerous social media outlets and websites, and promoted by members of Orange County’s Senior Citizen Advisory Council. The campaign was also shared at the State level and with other counties throughout the State as a promising practice for a grass roots response to serving a vulnerable population during a pandemic.

INNOVATION: The Check on Your Elderly Neighbor flyer and postcard is a universal way of identifying who and where the older adults are in the community while ascertaining and responding to their needs. Through this campaign older adults were offered the opportunity to connect with their neighbors through



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information provided on the postcard and reach out for assistance with basic needs such as grocery delivery, prescription medications pick-up, personal hygiene supplies, urgent errands, and mail pick-up. The campaign even offered daily check-in calls provided by neighbors or an Orange County contracted service provider. In addition to supplying these essential needs, this contact with the community assured elderly neighbors that they were not alone.

RESULTS: As a result of this campaign, many neighborhoods reached out to assist the older adults in their respective areas. We had 1,339 hits across social media platforms and probably more that utilized the Office on Aging website to access this campaign. This has likely reduced the demand on government funded programs such as meals on wheels, case management, and in-home assistance because neighbors are volunteering their own time to support. In the long term, this campaign will improve social connection and the safety and well-being of older adults in our communities by creating an awareness of who the elders are, what needs they have, and how neighbors can assist within their community.

REPLICABILITY: Other local government and organizations can easily replicate the “Check on Your Elderly Neighbor” campaign. In fact, the flyer and postcard are meant to be duplicated and used on a large scale. During regular meetings with the California Department of Aging and State Association meetings, the Orange County Office on Aging Director shared the “Check on Your Elderly Neighbor” concept with over 33 other counties and shared the tools and resources.

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