

Sage Community Health Education Class Reaches Out to Troy Seniors with Services

How has the economic downturn affected seniors in our community? What do senior citizens fear most when it comes to their health? What do local community resources have to offer in the face of these challenges?

Those questions will be answered and issues addressed – and a bit of pet therapy from local Certified Therapy dogs enjoyed – when **The Sage Colleges** Community Health Education class hosts a Community Health Fair for Senior Citizens from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. on Wednesday, April 15, 2009, at the Rensselaer County Troy Area Senior Service Center, 19 Third St., Troy. The health fair is a service-learning project for students at Sage's Russell Sage College, which is in Troy near the senior center.



Sage Community Health Education students surveyed Troy seniors about their concerns in advance of the Health Fair, and the organizations on hand April 15 will help Sage students address those concerns. On the list to attend are Seton Health, with representatives from the Home Health Care program and Outpatient Physical Therapy; Maurice Padula, Senior Consumer Frauds Representative from the New York State Office of the Attorney General; Soldiers Heart local program for Veterans; Attorney Donna Cole Paul, who specializes in healthcare proxies, estate planning and trusts; Kris Carpenter from Home Instead Senior Care; local massage therapist Gretta Savage; the Center's exercise guru Elio LeMaro, who runs exercise classes for seniors and offers support and guidance to seniors for starting and continuing an exercise program, among others.

Fitness and the availability and affordability of home health care aides are important issues in seniors' lives. The home health aide industry in particular is expected to be stretched to the limit as the population of Americans 65 and older increases exponentially. The population of Americans over 65 is expected to more than double to 88.5 million by 2050, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, and funding cuts are on the horizon, said the center's director, Sue Aluck.

The Health Education Fair for Seniors is part of a commitment to service learning by The Sage Colleges with campuses in Albany and Troy. The center is a gathering place for anywhere from 40 to 135 senior citizens a day. Students, some of whom are studying to become health educators, nurses, community health professionals, occupational and physical therapists will, along with local organizations, sponsor booths on topics seniors said they were interested in: massage, dance, preventing falls, prevention, strategies for memory enhancement, yoga, humor and health.

"Our goal is to promote the health of local senior citizens, support the Senior Center and local businesses and strengthen the relationships between the community, Sage and The Troy Senior Center," said Diane Bossung, Community Health Education professor at Russell Sage College.