

Sample Press Release

Use the following fill-in-the-blank press release to announce and promote your **MUST for Seniors™ Program Activities**. Send your completed press release to local newspapers, radio, and television stations in advance of your event(s).

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: [Insert Contact Name,
Number and E-mail]

[XYZ ORGANIZATION] HOSTS COMMUNITY WORKSHOP TO EDUCATE OLDER ADULTS AND CAREGIVERS ABOUT THE *MUSTS* OF SAFE MEDICINE USE

-- Older Adults More Likely to Experience (Often Preventable) Adverse Drug Effects --

[Insert City, State] [Insert Date] — Most older adults live with at least one chronic condition, including arthritis, heart disease or diabetes, take multiple medicines and consult several healthcare providers. In addition, age-related changes that affect the way certain drugs work in the body, as well as noticeable communication gaps about medicines between patients and their healthcare providers, can set the stage for serious medicine use related problems, resulting in additional illness, hospitalization and even death. That's why [XYZ organization] is joining the **National Council on Patient Information and Education (NCPPIE)** to launch the **Medication Use Safety Training for Seniors™ program (MUST for Seniors™)** and provide important information about safe medicine use to older adults and caregivers in [City, State].

"Medicines are important therapeutic tools for living well in later life, but there are also risks, especially among older adults, who take more medicines than any other age group in the United States," said Ray Bullman, Executive Vice President, NCPPIE. "We hope this new program will encourage older adults and caregivers to learn about the medicines they use, be active partners in their healthcare, and routinely talk with their healthcare providers."

MUST for Seniors™ is an interactive initiative designed to promote safe and appropriate medicine use by giving older adults and caregivers the tools and know-how to avoid medication misuse, recognize and manage common side effects in consultation with their healthcare providers, and improve medicine use knowledge, attitudes, and skills to avoid medication errors. When used properly, medicines can treat or delay the onset or progression of many chronic conditions, and enhance quality of life by limiting loss of function and alleviating troublesome symptoms.

[XYZ Organization] will hold a **MUST for Seniors™** workshop on **[Insert Date, Time and Location]**.

"This is an important educational campaign, especially in light of the aging baby boomer population, which is expected to reach 71 million strong by 2030," said **[Representative, Title, XYZ Organization]**. "The use of multiple medicines - - prescription and over-the-counter medicines in addition to supplements and herbal remedies -- can result in potentially harmful drug interactions, so it's critical to open a dialogue among older adults, caregivers and healthcare professionals about these issues."**[OR include sentence about local impact of program]**"

Quick Facts: Older Adults and Medicine Use

- Older adults comprise 13 percent of the population, but account for 34 percent of all prescription medicine use and 30 percent of all over-the-counter (OTC) drug use.
- Most older adults - - 4 out of 5 - - live with one or more chronic conditions.
- Many take multiple medicines at the same time. A recent survey of 17,000 Medicare beneficiaries found that 2 out of 5 patients reported taking five or more prescription medicines.
- Older adults are at increased risk of serious adverse drug events, including falls, depression, confusion, hallucinations and malnutrition, which are an important cause of illness, hospitalization and death among these patients.
- Drug-related complications have been attributed to the use of multiple medicines and associated drug interactions, age-related changes, human error and poor medical management (e.g., incorrect medicine prescribed, inappropriate doses, lack of communication and monitoring).
- There is poor communication between patients and provider. Up to 40% of older patients who decided to skip doses or stop taking their medicine do not tell their provider.

For More Information

For more information about safely using medicines, visit the **MUST for Seniors™** web site at www.mustforseniors.org, or call [Insert phone number]. [Those interesting in registering for this free workshop should call NUMBER or send an e-mail to NAME at EMAIL ADDRESS by DATE.].

About NCPIE

Founded in 1982, the **National Council on Patient Information and Education (NCPIE)** is a non-profit coalition of over 100 diverse organizations. **NCPIE's** mission is to stimulate and improve communication of information on the appropriate use of medicines to consumers and health care professionals. **NCPIE** develops programs, provides educational resources, and offers services to advance the common mission of its members.

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References

Ferrini A, Ferrini R. 2000. Health in the Later Years. 3rd edition. Boston, MA, McGraw Hill.

Wilson IR, Schoen C, Neuman P, Strollo MK, et al. "Physician-Patient Communication About Prescription Medication Nonadherence: A 50-State Study of America's Seniors." *JGIM*. 2007 Jan;22(1):6-12.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and The Merck Company Foundation. "The State of Aging and Health in America 2007." Available at www.cdc.gov/aging. Accessed August 30, 2007.

Editor's Note: Feel free to use the following in your publication and/or online news content.

10 STEPS FOR SUCCESS: MANAGING YOUR MEDICINES

- 1. Know your medicines**, including drug names, reasons for their use, potential side effects, and how to take them safely.
- 2. Take your medicines exactly as directed.** Read all of the labels and written instructions before taking each medicine. Ask your pharmacist or doctor if you don't understand the directions.
- 3. Continue taking all of your medicines until the doctor says to stop.** Contact your provider if you experience side effects. If cost is an issue, ask about generic options or check available **drug-assistance programs** at <http://www.talkaboutrx.org/paps.jsp>.
- 4. Keep a current list of your medicines.** This should include all prescription and over-the-counter (OTC) medicines, sample medicines, dietary supplements and herbal remedies.
- 5. Dispose of unused medicines properly.** See <http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/news/press07/022007.html>
- 6. Store medicines in a cool and dry place.** That means keeping them away from the stove or direct sunlight and not using the medicine cabinet in the bathroom, which can be warm and damp.
- 7. Keep your medicines in one location** (away from children and pets) unless any need to be refrigerated.
- 8. Use only one pharmacy**, so your pharmacist can monitor which medicines you are taking. Take time to ask about possible interactions with OTC drugs or dietary/herbal supplements you use.
- 9. Ask your pharmacist or doctor before taking any over-the-counter (OTC) medicines** as Some can be harmful in older adults.
- 10. Talk openly with your healthcare providers** about the medicines and supplements you take. Review them together to identify potential risks, or to see if any can be reduced or stopped.
 - Do not share your medicines with other people, including family members.
 - Bring an up-to-date medicine list to all of your medical appointments.
 - Ask if there are simpler ways to take multiple medicines.

Source: MUST for Seniors™, www.mustforseniors.org .

National Council on Patient Information and Education (NCPIE) 2007