Improving the Health and Wellness of Caregivers and Older Adults Through Volunteering

Wednesday, May 1, 2019
CNCS: Who we are

• Federal agency that leverages service and volunteerism as a local, bipartisan solution

• Supports **80,000 AmeriCorps** members and over **360,000 Senior Corps** volunteers at **60,000 locations** across the country and engaged **5 million volunteers** last year

• Deliver results-driven service where it’s needed most
Programs and Initiatives
Objectives

• Highlight the most significant results of two longitudinal studies
• Discuss the health benefits of volunteering
• Discuss the health benefits to caregivers receiving respite support
• Learn how you can access these volunteers across the country
Our Programs - Senior Corps

RSVP
Diverse activities—from connecting Veterans experiencing homelessness to resources, serving in food banks and homeless shelters, and helping to build affordable housing

Foster Grandparents
Mentor, support, and help some of the most vulnerable children and young people in the United States

Senior Companions
Helps adults in their community who have difficulty with the simple tasks of day-to-day living maintain their independence in their own homes
Tampa Seniors See Improved Health When Volunteering, New Study Suggests

Benefits of Volunteering

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. — Have some free time on your hands? Think about volunteering in your community. It will do you good.
Senior Corps volunteers lead **happier, healthier lives** and **enhance the communities they serve**
Sustained improvements

After two years of service,

84% report stable or improving health
Improved health

78% with previous symptoms of depression...report fewer symptoms
88% who felt a lack of companionship
report fewer feelings of isolation
Volunteer Study

The issue: Questions addressed about Senior Corps volunteers

- Do the volunteers stay with the program?
- Who is most likely to stay with the program?
- What are the volunteers’ experience with training and support to perform their duties?
- How does health differ between those who stay and those who leave?
Volunteer Study

Study Design: How the questions are answered

- Developing and testing questionnaires
- Recruitment of first-time Foster Grandparents and Senior Companions from July – November 2015
Who is a Senior Corps volunteer?

- Not married
- Racially diverse female
- Some college or associate’s degree
- Group of adults with fewer volunteer opportunities
- At greater risk of health disparity
Volunteer Study

Do the volunteers stay with the program?

• 22 percent of first-time volunteers leave within the first 5 to 6 months
Who is most likely to stay with the program?

- Divorced
  OR: 1.78 (p = 0.0356)

- Difficulty climbing stairs
  OR: 1.90 (p = 0.0068)

- Did not complete high school
  OR: 0.28 (p = 0.0047)

- High school or GED
  OR: 0.62 (p = 0.0307)

- Self-rated health (good)
  OR: 0.63 (p = 0.0455)
Volunteer Study

What are the volunteers’ experience with training and support?

- Completely or very satisfied: 92%
  - 71% Stayers
  - 20% Leavers

- Somewhat satisfied: 8%
  - 0% Stayers
  - 10% Leavers

- Not very or not at all satisfied: 9%
  - 9% Stayers
  - 10% Leavers
Volunteer Study

What are the volunteers’ experience with training and support?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Stayers</th>
<th>Leavers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My volunteer experience is a good match for my skills</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My volunteer service is interesting</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My supervisor provides me with the support and information I need to</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>serve successfully</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- **Agree**
- **Disagree**
Volunteer Study

What are the volunteers’ experience with training and support?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Stayers</th>
<th>Leavers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My volunteer training is...</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support from people in the program is...</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The flexibility to manage my time is...</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The stipend from volunteering is...</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Not at all helpful**
- **Somewhat or a little helpful**
- **Extremely or Very Helpful**
Volunteer Study

How does health differ between those who stay and those who leave?

- Leavers: OR = 0.42 (p = 0.0057)
- Did not complete high school: OR = 0.45 (p = 0.0283)
- Income less than $20,000: OR = 0.29 (p = 0.0171)
- Income $20,000-$29,000: OR = 0.20 (p = 0.0025)
- Live alone: OR = 0.59 (p = 0.0450)
- Number of medical conditions: OR = 0.82 (p = 0.0287)

- Excellent/very good health at first follow-up

- Leavers: OR = 2.25 (p = 0.0613)
- Had health problems: OR = 7.65 (p < 0.0001)
- African American: OR = 2.14 (p = 0.0295)

- Fair/poor health at first follow-up

In summary, there is a significant increase in fair/poor health for those who leave compared to those who stay. Factors such as income, education, and living conditions also play a role in health outcomes.
Caregiver Study

The Issue: Questions answered about caregivers receiving respite

• How do caregivers’ need for seeking respite services align with the type of respite services received?

• What is the extent to which caregivers’ health and well-being change following the start of respite services?
Caregiver Study

Study Design: How the questions are answered

- Developing and testing questionnaires
- Recruitment of first-time caregivers seeking respite support from July –November 2015

Recruitment

Baseline survey
77 out of 102 eligible caregivers

Final Survey (9–12 months after baseline survey)
82% response rate
Caregiver Study

Who are the caregivers seeking respite support?

- Female of moderate income
- Married
- Some college or an associate’s degree
- Family member was a veteran or were on active duty themselves
- Caring for a spouse or a parent
- Duration of caregiving relationship ranged from less than six months to more than five years
- Other support services were recent, typically less than six months
Caregiver Study

How do caregivers’ need align with the type of respite services received? Female of moderate income

- Reasons that a caregiver might seek respite
- Personal time
- Household management
- Manage conflicts
Caregiver Study

How do caregivers’ need align with the type of respite services received?

- Senior Companion respite had the most impact on caregivers with critical need
- More benefits reported with personal time and household management
- Not much benefits reported with managing household conflict
Caregiver Study

Caregivers’ health and well-being change after respite services

![Bar chart showing the percentage of caregivers at follow-up in different health categories.](chart.png)

- **Excellent/Very good**: 68% (27% Good, 5% Fair/Poor)
- **Good**: 33% (53% Fair/Poor)
- **Fair/Poor**: 7% (40% Good, 53% Excellent/Very good)
Caregiver Study

Caregivers’ health and well-being change after respite services

- Improvement in social and emotional connectedness
- Percent of caregivers who reported feeling alone declined
- Percent of caregivers who reported they have people they feel close increased.
- Reduction in number of depressive symptoms
- More caregivers reported fewer depressive symptoms at follow-up
We learned much more!

Policy and practice: Beyond health and well-being, report looks at recruitment, motivation, satisfaction, retention, and more

- Who are the volunteers?
- How did individuals learn about FGP/SCP service?
- What motivated them to volunteer?
- Are there differences between those who stayed and those who left?
- Why do volunteers leave service?
- How do volunteers rate their experience with Senior Corps?
  - Stayers - 93% ‘completely/very satisfied’
  - Leavers - 74% ‘completely/very satisfied’
Connect with Senior Corps

SeniorCorps.gov/HealthyVolunteers

https://www.nationalservice.gov/stateoffices
Thank You!

SeniorCorps.gov/HealthyVolunteers