



## At-risk older adults don't always ask for help.

There are many services designed to help older people enjoy safe and independent lives, however many are isolated, confused or afraid to ask for help. If they're struggling with early dementia or Alzheimer's, it's even more critical that they receive proper care before their condition worsens.

**A MEAL DELIVERY VOLUNTEER** noticed changes in a 78-year old man he talks with regularly. When the man appeared confused and stopped chatting, mowing his lawn or bringing in his mail, the volunteer made a referral.

**A POLICE OFFICER** emailed about a man caring for his mother at home. When the mother began wandering while the man was at work, the officer made a referral to get the man additional caregiving support.

**A PARAMEDIC** made a referral for an older woman and her developmentally disabled son. He became concerned after the woman had frequent falls and her son couldn't follow her instructions to call for help.

# GateKeeper

Watching out for  
older people in need.



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**scph.org**

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**Be the eyes and  
ears of an older  
person in need.**



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# What is the GateKeeper Program?

Older people who are living active, independent lives may find their ability to maintain their independence becomes more difficult as they experience increasingly serious and interrelated problems with social, emotional, mental, environmental and physical functioning. Summit County Public Health implemented the GateKeeper Program to identify these older people as well as those with suspected or known dementia

or Alzheimer's disease who are living alone, have an intellectual developmental disability or have a caregiver in need of support.



GateKeepers are not expected to assume the role of social workers or counselors. They're simply asked to keep a watchful eye while conducting their daily work and make a referral for those in need.

## **GateKeepers are everyday workers trained to identify at-risk older adults and caregivers.**

Employees like paramedics, pharmacists, bank tellers, home-delivered meal volunteers and apartment managers interact with older

people every day. They're often the first to notice when an older person needs extra help.

The GateKeeper Program trains these workers to notice the signs and make a referral...to preserve the older person's independence and enhance their quality of life.

## **What are the signs that an older person or caregiver needs help?**

GateKeepers are trained to notice the signs that an older person or their caregiver is struggling, such as:

- unkempt appearance
- strong odors on a person or in their home
- depression, confusion or forgetfulness
- wandering
- combativeness
- developmental disabilities
- caregiver stress
- financial or social problems
- neglected yard or pet
- home that needs repairs

## **How does the program work?**

Once a GateKeeper sees and makes a referral, it is reviewed by a nurse and social worker who discuss the action to be taken.

This may involve a visit to the person's home. During a home visit, an assessment begins and a plan is developed based on the findings and with input from the older person or caregiver.

Building trust and empowering the older person or caregiver to participate and approve their plan are key to the program's success, enabling the person to feel respected and heard. Our staff is highly skilled in establishing rapport and overcoming hostility, suspicion or fear. Referrals are made to other community resources.



## **Are you ready to help?**

If you know an older person who needs assistance or if you're interested in becoming a GateKeeper, please call **330-926-5650** or email us at [seniorservices@schd.org](mailto:seniorservices@schd.org).

