

Making a Difference

2020 Leon County Healthy Aging In-depth Summary

Relevance

Adults age 65 and older represent approximately 12% of the population in Texas whereas in Leon County that's nearly 25%. In addition, the group age 85 and older is the fastest growing segment of this population within Texas and across the United States. Of the more than 3 million Texans over 65, only 5% of that number live in residential care facilities, meaning they are continuing to live on their own with ongoing needs of educational information and resources to maintain their wellness.

Response

The 2020 program year was unlike any other as Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service along with other agencies, organizations, families and individuals responded to a different work, school and home environment due to the global response to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID19) pandemic. With its network across the state, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service was able to respond at the local, regional and state level with virtual educational efforts designed to reach individuals and families with resources and education to help them continue with aspects of their daily life related to health, safety, agriculture and youth development. Although our educational activities, outcomes and impacts may look different for 2020, we continue our efforts **to help Texans better their lives.**

Program efforts included:

- **Master of Memory Series** – 6-session program focusing on learning styles, how different things affect memory and strategies for improving memory and brain function; done virtually due to COVID; 25 individuals participated in at least 3 of the sessions; all sessions were recorded and shared with participants with many of them viewing sessions they missed
- **Nutrition Bulletin Boards at Senior Centers** – in lieu of face-to-face educational programs for senior centers, 3 different nutrition and health bulletin boards were compiled and exhibited at 3 senior centers, rotating the boards every month; approximately 60 individuals viewed the boards over a 3-4 month period
- **Medicare Seminar** – provided information about plans, what's available locally and what participants should consider when choosing Medicare components; 3 individuals participated live and via Zoom; program was recorded and posted on Extension website and Facebook pages, reaching 73 individuals
- **Balance/Fall Prevention Seminar** – helped participants better understand the causes of falls and provided steps they can take to reduce falls and improve their health and well-being
- **Facebook Posts and News Articles** – compiled and posted 22 Facebook posts that reaching 3,560 individuals; compiled and distributed 4 news articles to all 7 local media outlets, reaching an estimated 3,000 individuals

Educational programs of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service are open to all people without regard to race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, or veteran status. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating

Results

12 of the 25 (48%) *Master of Memory* series participants completed both the pre- and post-series evaluations. Of these, 77% were from Leon County, 15% were from Bell County and the remaining 8% represented Erath County. 67% of participants said they learned new information and 92% indicated they plan to use the information.

As a result of attending the *Master of Memory* series, participants demonstrated higher confidence levels in their ability to take steps to improve their memory functioning. Similarly, respondents indicated a reduction in negative attitudes related to memory and aging. Data also indicated that respondents had a significant increase in their understanding of risk factors that may be controlled to help memory function, including diabetes, depression, hearing loss, and vision loss.

Pre Yes	Statement	Post Yes	Change
62%	High blood pressure may negatively affect my memory.	100%	62%
31%	I worry a lot about what I forget.	38%	23%
69%	I need to talk to my health provider about any herbal supplements I take.	92%	34%
85%	Some forms of memory loss may be treatable or reversible.	100%	18%
77%	I can name at least two strategies to help me remember.	100%	30%

When asked to share what they had learned, comments included:

- Nutrition and exercise can help keep more alert.
- There are strategies I can use to improve my memory.
- Memory has to be 'exercised' to stay healthy.
- Information given provides tools to help improve/maintain our memory. Having tools gives a better sense of control and leaves a more hopeful attitude.

The bulletin boards at the senior centers were well received, providing nutrition and health guidance for improved wellness.

The seminars provided practical information for participants, helping them improve the physical and financial well-being of participants.

Facebook posts and news articles provided educational information and were especially helpful during the pandemic.


Acknowledgements

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VALUE

Elder Care



Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service elder care programs focus on "aging in place," an approach to using resources that allow the elderly who need assistance to continue living in their homes. Aging in place keeps elders engaged in their local community and supports property values and local tax bases.