

## Oakland University partners with Auburn Hills Senior Services for prevention focused program

Oakland University and the **City of Auburn Hills Senior Center** have teamed up to develop a program to help optimize the physical health and fitness of senior citizens who are at future risk for physical decline.

“Health care demands of an aging population often critically stress resources of communities and health care systems,” said **Dr. Chris Wilson**, assistant professor of physical therapy at Oakland University.

“There is an urgent need for prevention services for the highest-risk, community-dwelling older adults. Current home care medical models have focused on those already unable to leave the home safely as opposed to early intervention to prevent someone from becoming homebound in the first place.”

The collaborative program is also being conducted as a research study entitled “Prevention Focused Home-Based Physical Therapy Utilizing Community Partnership Referrals.”

Wilson and **Dr. Sara Arena**, an assistant professor in the Physical Therapy Program in Oakland University’s School of Health Sciences, worked with Karen Adcock, director of Senior Services for the City of Auburn Hills and Debra Colling, the health and wellness coordinator and community liaison for Senior Services, to develop the project.

“The Auburn Hills Senior Services Department reached out to our program director to see about collaborating on a project,” Arena said. “As we were exploring ideas, our vision evolved into this research project. It makes sense, because the profession of physical therapy is focusing more and more on primary and secondary prevention models of care.”

The project, which is funded via a prevention research grant provided by the university’s School of Health Sciences, will be enrolling an initial five participants in the fall of 2016 and expanding to additional participants in 2017 and beyond.

“We are actively seeking additional funding and are optimistic that we will be growing this project beyond the current five funded participant spots,” Arena said.

In order to qualify for the program, participants must be 65 or older, reside in Auburn Hills, and must not have had any serious recent medical history or received recent physical therapy.

Qualifying participants will receive six free physical therapist visits in their home for evaluation and an individualized health and exercise program.

“Participants will be educated on topics related to health improvement, including safe exercise, balance, home safety, smoking cessation and optimal nutrition habits, as well as increasing their knowledge of currently available City of Auburn Hills Senior Center community resources,” Wilson said.

In addition, participants will receive a free automated blood pressure cuff and wearable activity monitor from Tractivity.

“This program is designed to help optimize the health and fitness of senior citizens who are at future risk for physical decline,” Wilson said. “The goal is to keep these individuals living safely at home and in the community.”

The project will be administered by a licensed physical therapist.

For more information about the program, contact Karen Adcock or Debra Colling at (248) 370-9353.

**About Oakland University**



*Michael Thomson, 67, of Auburn Hills, has his blood pressure checked by Dr. Sara Arena, an assistant professor in the Physical Therapy Program in Oakland University’s School of Health Sciences.*



*Dr. Chris Wilson, assistant professor of physical therapy at Oakland University, assists Auburn Hills resident Katherine Thomson with step exercise.*

Oakland University is a doctoral research university located on 1,443 acres of scenic land in the cities of Rochester Hills and Auburn Hills Oakland County, Michigan. The University has 133 bachelor's degree programs and 136 graduate degree and certificate programs. Oakland is a nationally recognized public university. Academics include programs in the College of Arts and Sciences, School of Business Administration, School of Education and Human Services, School of Engineering and Computer Science, School of Health Sciences, School of Medicine, and School of Nursing.