



Maximizing Health Care for Older Adults

**Show Me Summit on Aging & Health
September 9-11, 2024**



Sara Nuxoll

- Patient Companion Program Coordinator, SeniorAge
- 1.5 years as Care Coordinator, SeniorAge
- 10 years in a Skilled Nursing Facility



Cora Scott

- **City of Springfield, Missouri
Director of Public Information &
Civic Engagement**
- **Co-creator of Give 5 Program**
- **18 years at Mercy Health**



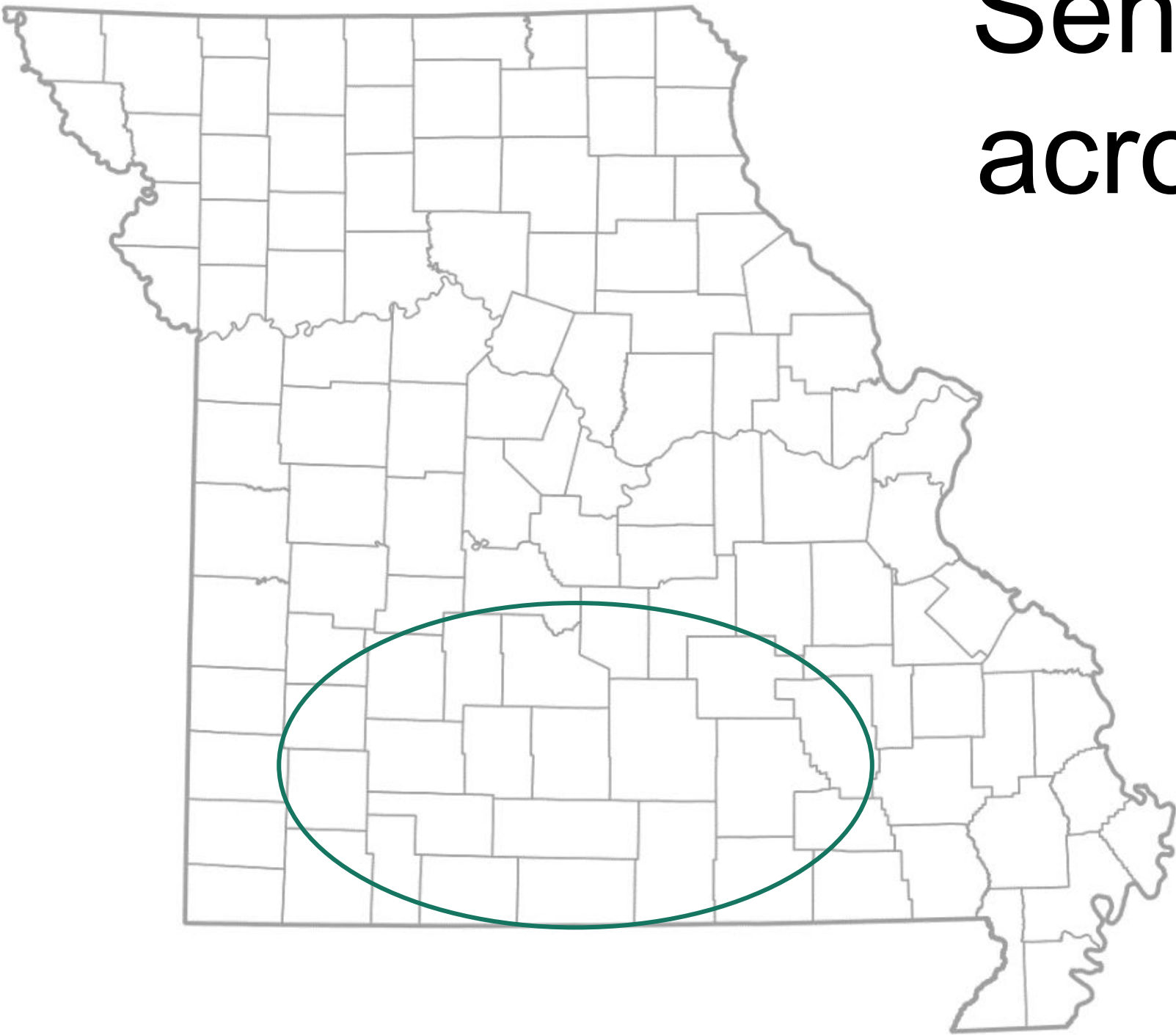


Greg Burris

- Executive Director – Give 5 Program, United Way of the Ozarks
- Founder of the Give 5 Program
- 6 years as President & CEO of United Way of the Ozarks
- 10 years as Springfield City Manager
- 25 years at Missouri State University



SeniorAge serves senior adults (age 60+) across 17 counties in Southwest Missouri



Greene County at a Glance

- **Population: 303,293**
- **Age 65+: 17.3% (52,469)***
- **[Note: SeniorAge serves those age 60+]**
- **Mix of rural and urban areas; Springfield is the regional hub**
- **Health Systems located in Springfield: CoxHealth, Mercy, Jordan Valley Community Health Center, Burrell Behavioral Health and Ozarks Community Hospital**

Why is the Patient Companion Program needed?

The Story of Bill



The Story of Barbara



The Story of Dan



Scenario #1

**Imagine this telephone
conversation (which may sound
familiar to some of you) . . .**

**Me: Mom, how did your doctor
appointment go?**

Mom: *It was fine.*

Me: What did the doctor say?

Mom: I don't remember a lot of what she said. She said I should stop taking one of my medications?

Me: Which one?

Mom: I don't recall. Maybe the
pink one.

**Me: Did you ask about your toe
that has been causing you
problems?**

Mom: No. She's very busy and I
didn't want to bother her.

What happens tomorrow in Scenario #1?

Mom calls the doctor's office

- “What medication should I stop taking?”
- “I need to make another appointment to have the doctor look at my toe.”

Scenario #2

**Mom has cataract surgery today.
Family lives in another state (or family
cannot take time off from work).**

Scenario #2

**Mom shows up at the hospital for
cataract surgery.**

Scenario #2

Since Mom does not have a “Plus One” with her, the hospital sends her home.

What happens tomorrow in Scenario #2?

Scenario #2

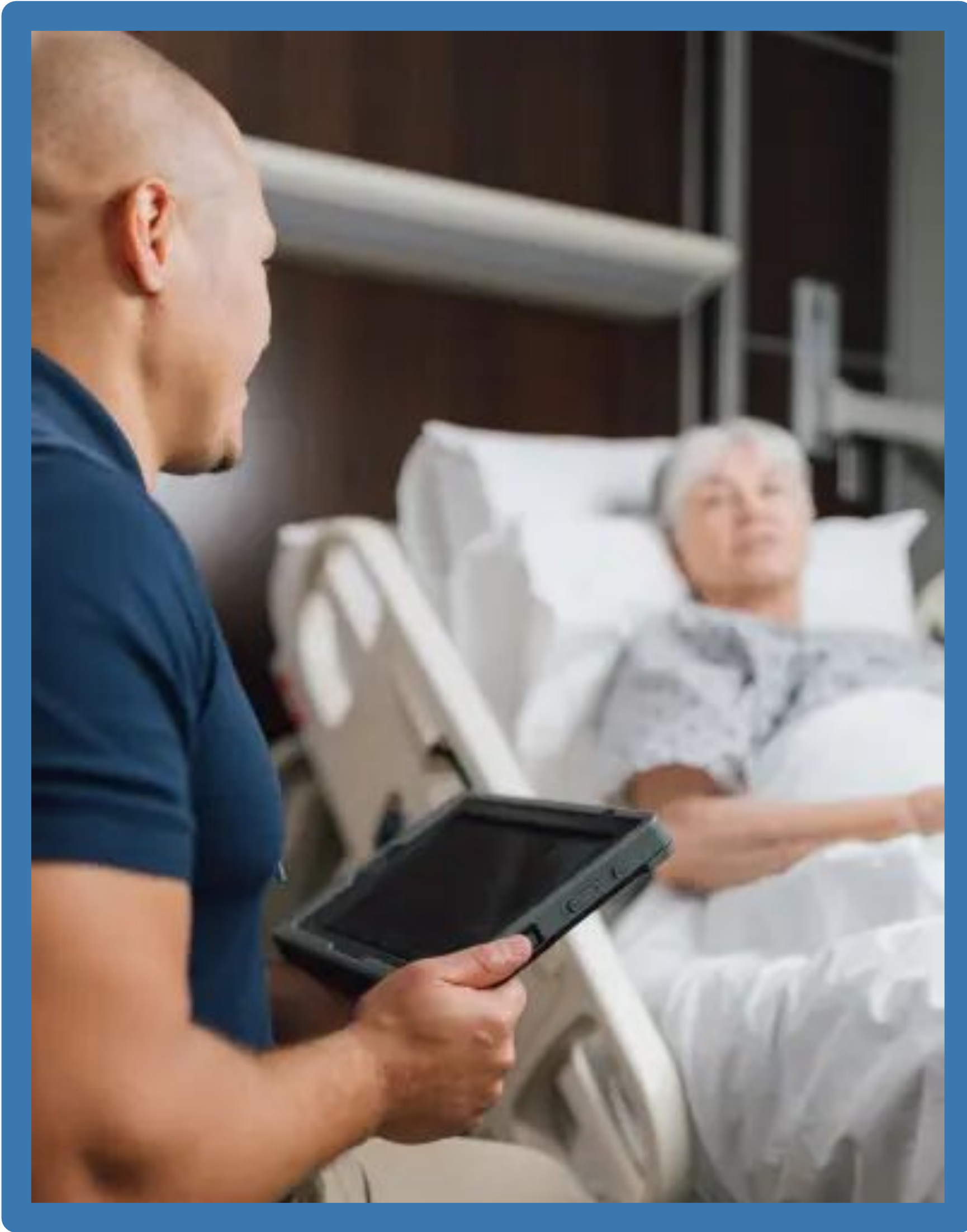
Mom's pride is hurt.

Mom decides she will not have the
cataract surgery.

What does a Patient Companion do?

Primary Roles for Patient Companions:

1. Companionship and support (emotional and/or physical)
2. “Plus One” for a medical procedure
3. Accompany during medical check-up to record guidance and encourage communication.



Patient Companion Program

What do Patient Companions do?

- Speak prior, make a plan, and accompany qualifying seniors to medical appointments
- Provide relational and emotional support for the patients
- Take notes and record instructions from the medical professional
- Help patients and medical professional communicate more effectively

Companions For Whom?

- **Age 60+**
- **Vision/Hearing impaired**
 - **Mobility issues**
 - **Without caregivers**
- **Family not available to attend**
- **Mild confusion / Memory loss**

How?

- **Standardized forms are used to gather and record doctor recommendations, medication changes, treatment options and other critical information.**
- **Information is provided to the patient and can also be reported to caregivers and/or family, if requested by the patient.**

Challenges

- **HIPPA**
- **Communication with hospital systems**
- **Reaching those in need**
- **Transportation – Companions are not able to transport.**
- **Building/Maintaining a volunteer base**

Successes

- **Working towards partnerships with healthcare networks**
- **Collaboration with Give 5**
- **The SeniorAge name and reputation**
- **Existing customer base (Senior Centers, Home delivered meals, Information and Assistance)**
- **Using established transportation program to serve patients who qualify**

Healthcare Providers

How have healthcare providers reacted to the Patient Companion Program?

Reaction from Healthcare Providers?

They love it, but . . .

Reaction from Healthcare Providers?

**. . . they need to fully understand
the program**

Why do healthcare providers like the program?



Patient Companion Program

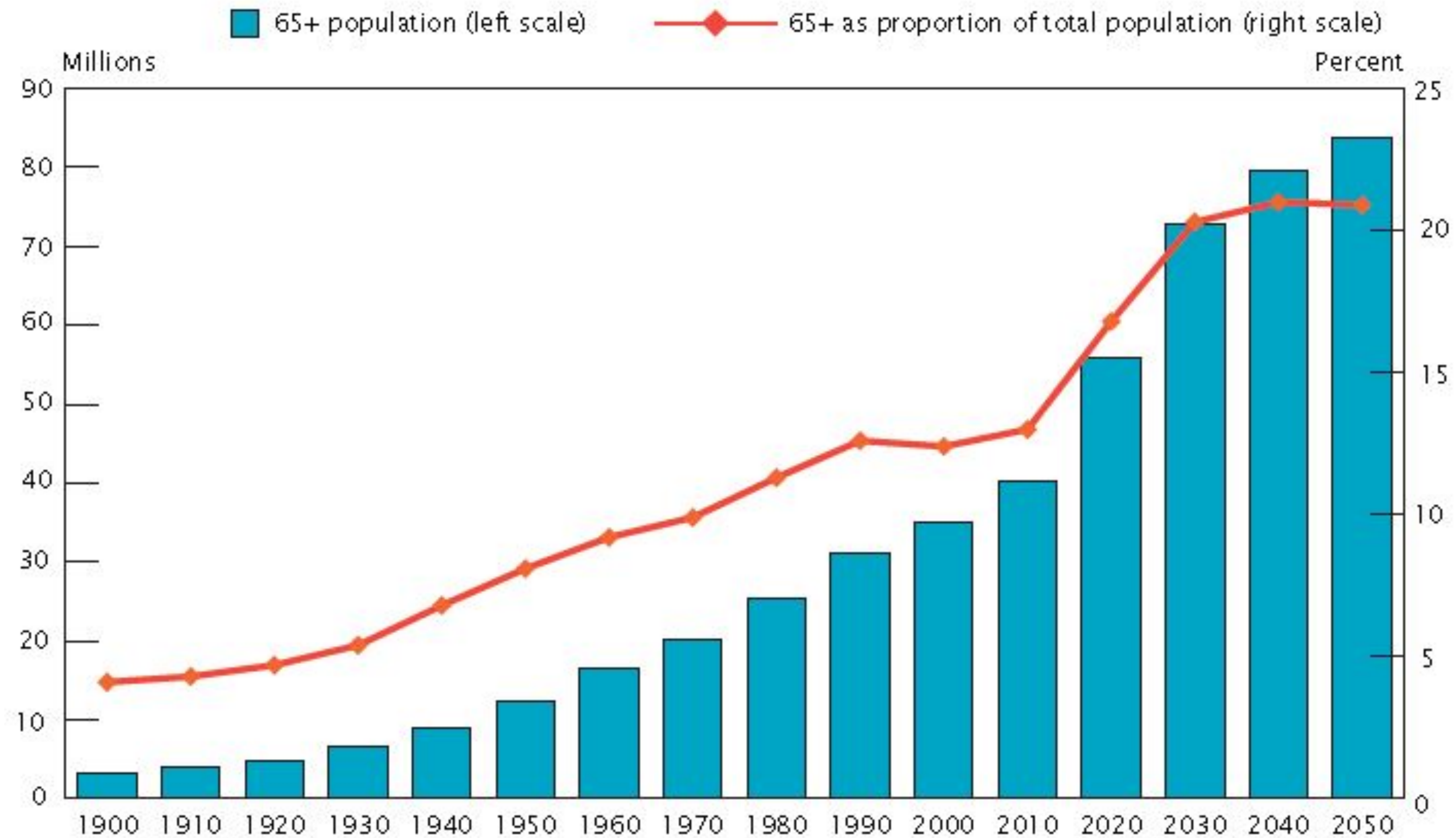
What do medical staff members and clinics/hospitals receive?

- Increased likelihood of patient compliance with recommendations
- Decreased recidivism for unnecessary extra appointments or readmissions
- A trusted advocate reinforcing and supporting care directives

**Sure, it's needed now, but what is
the future demand for the
Patient Companion Program?**

1. The Demographics

Population Aged 65 and Over: 1900 to 2050



Sources: 1900 to 1940, and 1960 to 1980, U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1983; 1950, U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1953; 1990, U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1992; 2000, U.S. Census Bureau, 2001; 2010, U.S. Census Bureau, 2011; 2020 to 2050, U.S. Census Bureau, 2012a; 1900 to 2010, decennial census; 2020 to 2050, 2012 National Population Projections, Middle series.

2. Increasing Life Spans

“A child born in the West today has a more than 50 percent chance of living to be over 105, while by contrast, a child born over a century ago had a less than 1 percent chance of living to that age.”

Source: The 100-Year Life by Lynda Gratton and Andrew Scott, pp. 2-3

**We believe the future demand
for the
Patient Companion Program
will be high.**

Do you agree or disagree?

Volunteers are the key!

Volunteers



- **Volunteer base: 25**
- **Active Volunteers: 15**
- **Volunteers range in age from 30-85 years old**
- **Variety of backgrounds: doctors, nurses, university professors, teachers, guidance counselors, accountants and even SeniorAge's former CEO**

Volunteer Recruitment

- Collaborating with established community volunteer recruitment initiatives and programs
- Presenting to churches and civic groups
- Promoting within SeniorAge's seven senior centers within Greene County
- Marketing & Advertising; earned media

Volunteer Onboarding

- **Application and interview**
- **Background check and EDL screening**
- **Initial training and refresher courses**

**But where will these Patient
Companion volunteers come
from?**

Option 1

Tap your existing volunteers

Option 2



GIVE 5



At the intersection of these 5 macro trends:

- WAVE OF TALENT ON THE MOVE
- LARGEST BOOMER HEALTH RISK
- STRENGTHEN OUR COMMUNITY FABRIC
- INCREASED IMPORTANCE OF VOLUNTEERISM
- LARGEST TRANSFER OF WEALTH AND KNOWLEDGE



“Couch Repellant”



Give 5 lets them

**see “behind the curtain”
and learn about their
community.**



Give 5 lets them

**do a “taste testing” of
volunteer opportunities
in their own backyard.**



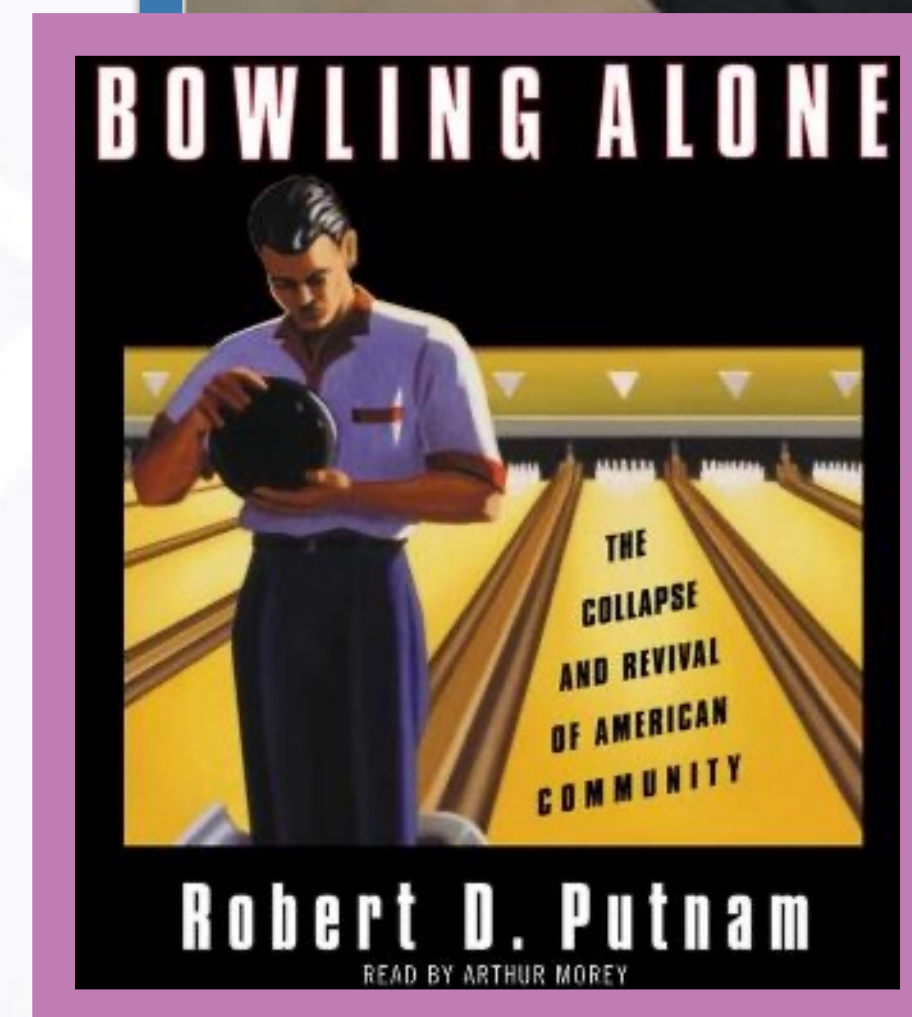
Give 5 lets them

**Understand the “why”
behind volunteering.**

Dr. Robert Putnam

“Once again, the civic leaders of Springfield, Missouri, are in the forefront of the national movement to reweave the fabric of American communities. Give 5 is a smart way to connect aging Boomers with non-profit volunteering opportunities. It’s a brilliant strategy to solve two growing social problems simultaneously—the dangerous isolation of older Americans and the dangerous isolation of younger have-not Americans. Communities across the land have much to learn from Springfield and the Give 5 program.”

– Dr. Robert Putnam



Give5Program.org



Option 3

Patient Companion Program



Fall of 2024

- Pre-Med/Pre-Health students will serve as patient companions
- **Missouri State University**
- **Stephen F Austin University**
- Researchers will measure the impact on patients, companions, and healthcare professionals

Patient Companion Program

Questions?



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