



Use Case: B'FRIEND Initiative

Version 1.0 – August 16th, 2016

Overview

Every year, older adults in Baltimore City suffer over 4,000 serious falls that require a visit in the emergency department or an inpatient hospitalization. These falls frequently lead to death, disability, or loss of independence. To prevent injuries and suffering and to promote independence of older adults in Baltimore, the Baltimore City Health Department launched the Baltimore Falls Reduction Initiative Engaging Neighborhoods and Data known as BFRIEND.

The core idea of BFRIEND is to use data from CRISP and HSCRC case-mix data to understand falls requiring ED visit or admission in as close to real time as possible, and then leverage that insight to support preventive interventions that support the independence of older adults and reduce falls.

BFRIEND has the support of the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, the Maryland Department of Aging, and the Health Services Cost Review Commission. Start-up funding for BFRIEND has been provided by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

Over the last six months, the City Health Department worked with CRISP staff and attorneys to propose, take public comment on, and promulgate a regulation authorizing access to data from the health information exchange for the purpose of BFRIEND. This regulation provides the legal path under HIPAA for the city health department to have access to certain data for public health purposes – in this case to reduce falls among older adults in the city.

Background and Value

Nationally, falls among older adults are recognized as a major public health challenge. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, falls are the leading cause of injury death among older adults, exceeding motor vehicle accidents, poisonings, and fires put together. Many falls by older adults are preventable. It is estimated that improved nutrition, home modification, social engagement, and other community interventions can prevent a large proportion of falls. Special programs targeted to high risk seniors have prevented approximately one-third of falls. These efforts complement effective individual interventions, such as medication review, strength and balance exercise programs, and yearly vision screening. Through B'FRIEND, the Baltimore City Health Department, under the Health Commissioner's authority and the City Charter, will aim to prevent falls among older adults.

Use Case Description

A key aspect of B'FRIEND is the use of data to better understand serious falls by older adults in order to design innovative prevention efforts, implement them in the right places, and monitor their effectiveness. The specific use cases were developed with input from CRISP staff, and the CRISP attorney supported the city's use of a regulation to establish the legal authority to access the data for the specified purpose under HIPAA. Using the HSCRC case mix data, along with the CRISP-produced geographic location, this use case would allow for two types of analyses to be performed:



- Analyses to better understand serious falls among older adults, including geographic patterns and risk factors. With respect to geographic patterns, CRISP would share detailed maps on falls with the Health Department for the purpose of identifying locations where preventive services (such as exercise programs or pharmacy programs) should be placed. The city health department will not release any confidential or identifiable information to anyone related to these maps and analysis.
- Analyses to identify individuals in Baltimore City who have suffered a serious fall or are determined to be at high risk for a fall in order to offer the individuals' specific services to prevent a serious fall. Only health department outreach workers will offer the services to older adults who are identified as able to benefit. These services could involve housing improvements, physical therapy, exercise programs, referrals to medical care, referrals to nutrition programs, referrals to hubs of services for older adults in the city, engagement with programs affiliated with senior centers, and review of medications. Older adults will be able to choose to accept or refuse any services offered.

The regulation requires the Health Department to publicly report on B'FRIEND's progress.

The Health Department will support staff time at CRISP related to the project.

Health Department Responsibilities

The Health Department would have the following responsibilities to participate in this service:

1. Execute a Data Use Agreement with CRISP defining specific permitted uses of data.

Permitted Purpose Category

For a Public Purpose, as permitted or required by law (permitted purpose #1).

Opt Out Applicability

Individuals who have chosen to opt out of CRISP services will not be accessible via the CRISP services by the B'FRIEND initiative.

Approval

This Use Case Policy has been approved by the Clinical Advisory Board.

Chairperson

Dated

Dated