

# STAY HOME SAFE PROGRAM

## UPDATED REPORT

DECEMBER 2025

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**Introduction:** The Stay Home Safe (SHS) Program is a partnership between Habitat for Humanity Detroit and Henry Ford Health that has been addressing housing as a social determinant of health (SDOH) since 2021. **This program focuses on fall prevention and aims to reduce falls, injuries, emergency department visits, hospital admissions, and cost of care by providing minor home safety repairs and modifications for low-income older adults in Wayne County, Michigan.**

Falls among older adults are a major challenge. Over 14 million older adults fall every year in the United States, and annually \$50 billion is spent on medical costs for falls (CDC 2024). Further, only 10% of homes meet the needs of older adults (Vespa 2020), and 80% of emergency department visits for fall injuries occur inside the home (Moreland et al 2020), making the home a key area of intervention to target fall prevention.

**Program Overview:** Henry Ford staff identify eligible older adult patients at-risk for falls and place referrals into the electronic medical record system. The referral automatically sends directly to Habitat Detroit each week. Habitat then contacts the patient, sends its construction team to evaluate the patient's home, and performs high priority home safety repairs/modifications to reduce the risk of falls. Habitat Detroit tracks all program intervention data, including a post-survey with participants, and sends all data back to Henry Ford as a closed-loop referral, so that Henry Ford can conduct analysis on the program's impact on patient health outcomes.

**Goal:** The SHS program is set up as a quality improvement research study with the goal of achieving a sample size of 500 patients who receive in-home fall prevention services. A sample of this size will strengthen the evidence on improved health outcomes related to ED visits, hospital admissions, and cost for falls. Ultimately the goal is to obtain data to determine if minor interventions that address housing can have a statistical impact on health outcomes for older adults, thus providing credible evidence to encourage insurance payors to support these services as a covered benefit.

**Eligibility Criteria:** To be referred to Stay Home Safe, the patient must be 55+ years old, live in Eastern Wayne County, is a fall risk and needs home safety repairs to prevent falls, the household income does not exceed 80% area median income, and the patient consents to participate.

Homes are assessed by Habitat's Certified Aging in Place Specialist (CAPS) construction team to determine the modifications that will impact fall risk within the funding limit allowed. Patients are eligible to receive up to approximately \$5,000 in fall prevention interventions. This typically includes installation of grab bars, motion lighting, handrails, flooring repair, porch repair, step repair, modular wheelchair ramps, bathtub cuts, and more.

**Results:** **The Stay Home Safe Program has served over 270 patients to date.** Formal analysis was conducted using data through June 2025 which included the first 198 participants served.

The demographics among the first 198 clients reveal that Stay Home Safe has a major impact among vulnerable populations. While all were low-income, 61% were extremely low-income (less than 30% AMI). The majority served (87%) were people of color, and 78% shared that an individual with a disability lives in their home. Participants had lived in their

home for an average of 29 years (range 1 year to 80 years), indicating aging housing stock. The program indirectly served all household members (386 total, of which 252 were over age 65), nearly doubling our impact.

The first 198 clients received a plethora of home repairs and modifications costing an average of \$549.25 per person: 624 grab bars, 419 combo smoke/CO2 detectors, 414 motion lights, 233 fire extinguishers, 131 raised toilet seats, 118 handrails, 63 non-slip flooring, 18 shower chairs, and more. In a post-survey, 97% were very satisfied or satisfied with their services, and 95% of clients stated they received services in a timely manner (80% of clients received repairs within 30 days of Habitat receiving the referral).

Importantly, 97% of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that this program reduced their fear of falling at home. Formal health outcomes analysis among the first 198 patients revealed 28 patients had a hospital encounter (ED visit or admission) for a fall in the pre-period which dropped to 15 patients in the post-period. The difference in this proportion is statistically different ( $p=0.042$ ) though the odds ratio = 0.519 (95% CI: 0.251 - 1.024) is trending towards statistical significance but is not yet reached ( $p=0.0609$ ). **These results indicate that the post-intervention group is 48.1% less likely to have a hospital encounter for a fall** compared to the pre-intervention group; however, a larger sample size is needed to strengthen statistically significant results.

**Recognition:** Our Stay Home Safe partnership was **published by the World Health Organization** in October 2025 as one of 11 initial global [Urban Health Case Studies](#) - and it was the only [case study](#) from the United States! It truly is a testament to our partnership and impactful work to be highlighted by the top global health entity.

**Conclusions:** Considering that these home safety repairs will help people prevent falls and age in place, there is potential to avoid expensive hospital visits and even assisted living facilities, and instead support generational wealth building through continued homeownership, which is especially impactful for people of color. Thus, SHS is contributing to improved health, housing, and racial equity.

**Need:** Progress in this program has been made possible with generous support from the Michigan Health Endowment Fund, Health Alliance Plan (HAP) CareSource, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan Foundation, and the National Council on Aging, and HUD. Habitat for Humanity Detroit is seeking ongoing partners to support the continuation of the program to achieve the sample size of 500. We are seeking additional funding in the amount of \$350,000 to support our efforts to achieve statistical significance with our program.