

White Paper

National Home Safety Crisis and the Need for Standardized Home Assessments (April 13, 2015)

INTRODUCTION

The Living In Place Institute™ is an educational organization committed to increasing knowledge and awareness for professionals about improving accessibility and safety in all homes, therefore allowing all current and future occupants to Live In Place in comfort and safety, regardless of their age or needs.

There are approximately 126 million homes in the US. Very few of those homes were built with accessibility and safety features to allow all individuals to live in place comfortably and safely, regardless of their age or needs.

Current building codes combined with current design principles and methodologies have not adequately provided an acceptable level of home accessibility and safety. Safety only in public areas, not private homes, has been increased through legislative actions, such as those associated with the Americans with Disability Act (ADA). However, even ADA prescribed requirements are not comprehensive enough to allow for adequate personal safety in our homes.

PROBLEM

Lack of accessibility and safety in our homes has created a social and financial national crisis. Falls alone cost \$37B per year and is increasing dramatically. The magnitude of human tragedy caused by unsafe homes is unacceptable and the frequency of accidents is increasing exponentially, fueled by the unprecedented growth in our at-risk older population. While safety risks are a concern for older adults, all ages are daily exposed to unnecessary home hazards. A national policy of zero tolerance of unaccessible and unsafe conditions must be adopted to ensure home safety, independence and dignity.

The current lack of definitive knowledge and data about current home accessibility and safety conditions has resulted in design and product decisions based on assumptions. A mass assessment of current home conditions is imperative to determine design and product changes that would best address our national crisis. To date there has been no assessment tool available to perform this type of standardized, comprehensive high level data collection.

Providing
education to
make all homes
accessible,
comfortable and
safe for everyone
regardless of their
age or needs

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SOLUTION

The solution is to improve individual home conditions for accessibility and safety in all homes, to allow all individuals to Live In Place comfortably and safely, with independence and dignity, regardless of their age or needs.

The first step to improving home accessibility and safety is to conduct thorough home accessibility and safety assessments using a standardized, comprehensive checklist report. The report must be an easy to use, interactive electronic tool including photos and notes. This report is called the Home Accessibility and Safety Assessment Checklist™ (HASAC™) and can only be used by specifically trained and approved Certified Living In Place Professionals™.

These highly trained and trusted CLIPP professionals will identify numerous home accessibility and safety concerns, in three categories, NOW, SOON and FUTURE.

The completed report can be sent to the homeowner electronically or in print and, as necessary, to other requested medical and non-medical professionals, including design and construction professionals who may directly assist the homeowner in designing and modifying their home to improve accessibility and safety, following the information and recommendations identified in the report. Through this process, independence and dignity through increased accessibility and safety becomes improved in all homes.

The second step is to make available this collected assessment data to influence designs and products that result in improved home accessibility and safety. This information is invaluable to not only the medical and building community but to other groups that have impact on home safety. These groups include but are not limited to:

Government Agencies:

Social Services
Planning and Development
Building Departments
Code Developers
Veterans Administration
Medicare - Medicaid

Private Sector Providers

Assisted Living Facilities
Transitional Providers
Medicare and Medicaid Providers
Health Care Insurance Providers
Legal Services Providers
Private Home Care Providers and
Consultants

Housing Industry

Home Design and Building Trade
Organizations
Product Developers
Product Manufacturers
Home Inspection Professional

CONCLUSION

Our national crisis in home accessibility and safety can be mitigated through CLIPP training and subsequent use of the Home Accessibility and Safety Assessment Checklist (HASAC). Quality and comfort of life is improved for individuals and families through the assurance that accessibility and safety conditions in their homes has been improved. Costs to our already overburdened care systems will be reduced. Health care and related industries can move from crisis response to proactive care for quality of life.