**October 10,2023 Supporting Older Adults and Their Families**

Sub-group: **Adaptive and Assistive Technology**

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***Area of Focus:*** *Promote the adoption and use of adaptive and assistive technologies that can enhance the independence, safety, and quality of life for older adults, such as home automation systems, wearable devices, and telehealth solutions.*

***Existing Efforts and Recommendations:***

*BOLD ACT Grant: Support disabled and older adults in leading safe, healthy, and fulfilling lives.*

**What is Assistive/Adaptive Technologies:**

1. Textbook answer: any item, service, strategy to help individuals do what they would like to do in the environment they would like to do it in. Items such as high tech: screen readers/speech devices; low tech: zipper pulls/buttoners/medication aides; smart home technologies: google/Alexa

**Recommendations:**

1. Digital Access: Need to increase access to mobile/smart home technologies for individuals and family members and caregivers
2. Digital Access: Make things low and no cost for technologies and for monitoring services or find funding to pay
3. Technologies to support in care givers and care giving
4. Assistive Technology needs to be recognized as a medical necessity (or in same category of medical necessity).
5. Possible grants to set up pilot projects for assessments and use of artificial intelligence and smart home/remote supports

**Challenges/Issues:**

1. Public Awareness:
   1. How do people know about AT/Adaptive technologies? Who provides this? Who funds this? How do they access it?
2. Digital Access:
   1. Lack of digital access across NC, specifically in the rural areas and/or individuals who are seniors and/or hesitant to adapt to smart home technologies
   2. All AT is not digital and may be low tech to help someone stay home
   3. Need to increase access to mobile/smart home technologies for individuals and family members and caregivers
   4. Make things low and no cost for technologies and for monitoring services or find funding to pay
3. Funding of devices: lack of funding now/no funding/insurance doesn’t consider AT as a medical necessity. Where and how do we go from here?
4. Communication and other devices in residential areas:
   1. This is very limited now. Options are not available and cannot be funded
5. Caregiver Support:
   1. Technologies to support in care giving as well as technologies to support our care givers such as mental health and support for care givers

**Research Needed**

1. Assessments and use of artificial intelligence and smart home/remote support
2. More info on digital access across NC
3. Happenings in other states