

Knee Surgery Demands Rapid Response for Home Modifications

The Problem

Ms. H, a 64-year old low-income homeowner in Alexandria, had taken Inova Orthopedic's class to prepare for knee replacement surgery. But making the suggested accessibility modifications to her home was beyond her means and ability. Luckily, she knew about Rebuilding Together and reached out for help on her own four weeks before her surgery.

- Safe and Healthy
- Aging in Place
- Energy Efficiency

The Solution

By the time Ms. H had applied and been qualified for RT-AFF's free home repairs, her surgery was just days away, so an RT Express team scrambled to respond. Three days before her surgery, we assessed the home to scope out the needed repairs, and then a few days later, while Ms. H was still recovering in the hospital, our team of six skilled volunteers completed the following accessibility modifications to make the home safe for her return:

- Two comfort height toilets, upstairs and down
- Double stair rails on her stairs
- Grab bar for safe access to the shower
- Handheld showerhead for use with the shower chair, which she had bought
- Elevating her bed and couch for easier access post-surgery
- Securing loose wires that posed a tripping hazard

In addition, the RT Express team completed the following other repairs and energy upgrades as part of this half-day project:

- Adjustment to motion-sensor light for safer access to her front door
- Repair of the loose handle on the refrigerator
- Mounting a fire extinguisher in the kitchen
- Extending one downspout to correct an exterior moisture problem
- Sealing a hole in the siding to keep out moisture and pests, and reduce air leaks
- Replacing incandescent bulbs with LEDs to save energy

The Opportunity

Rebuilding Together's small teams of trained volunteers can diagnose and correct common health and safety hazards rapidly, reliably, and cost effectively. These repairs and accessibility modifications meet a critical need for many low-income patients undergoing hip or knee replacement surgery by reducing the risk of a fall that could set back their recovery.