***Sample Op-Ed – Multigenerational Housing***

*Use the op/ed below for submission to your local newspaper. Contact your newspaper's editor to find out how much advance notice you'll need to give. Add your name as the author and send it to your local newspaper. You'll be helping residents of your community learn what they can do to make their homes safer from fire.*

**(YOUR NAME, TITLE)**

**(YOUR TOWN/CITY)** Fire Department

Multigenerational housing is making a comeback. The number of Americans living under the same roof with at least three generations has doubled since 1980. It’s not unusual for three or more generations to live in the same household. According to estimates, between 50 and 62 million Americans live in a multigenerational home.

This kind of living arrangement provides a number of economic, family, and lifestyle benefits but increases my concern about fire safety. Home is where people are at greatest risk of fire. As **(TITLE)** of your **(YOUR TOWN/CITY)** Fire Department, I want to make sure that everyone, including residents living in multigenerational homes, takes precautions against fire.

According to the nonprofit National Fire Protection Association’s (NFPA) data, on average, seven people die in home fires each day. U.S. fire departments respond to roughly 360,000 fires each year. Home fires kill roughly 2,500 people per year.

**(NAME OF FIRE DEPARTMENT)**, NFPA and the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission recommend you take these simple steps to increase your safety at home.

* Make sure your home has smoke alarms. You need a smoke alarm on every level, inside each sleeping room, and outside each separate sleeping area. Interconnect the alarms so when one sounds, they all sound.
* Test your alarms at least once a month. Press each test button to make sure it is working.
* Plan your home escape. Share the plan with everyone in the family and guests.
* Smoke alarms may not wake up children. Older adults may not hear the smoke alarm. Assign someone to help children, older adults and people with disabilities escape.
* Make sure your home has bright lighting in stairways to prevent falls.
* Remove clutter to prevent trips and falls and allow for a quick escape.
* Install handrails along the full length of both sides of the stairs.
* The plan should include two ways out of every room and an outside family meeting place.
* If there is a fire, get outside quickly and stay outside. Then call 9-1-1.
* If you can’t get outside, call 9-1-1. Let the fire department know you can’t get outside. Wave a light-colored cloth or a flashlight form the window.
* If there is smoke, use your second way out. If you must escape through smoke, get low and go under the smoke.

Time and time again, the **(YOUR TOWN/CITY)** Fire Department has witnessed the life-saving impact of working smoke alarms and the effectiveness of making a plan to escape in case there is a fire.

If you have questions or concerns about smoke alarms or how to make a home escape plan, please contact the **(YOUR TOWN/CITY)** Fire Department at **(PHONE NUMBER)**, or visit nfpa.org/public-education, cpsc.gov/safety-education or **(YOUR LOCAL FIRE DEPARMENT’S WEB SITE)** for more information.