SAFETY AND HEALTH ISSUES RESULTING FROM HOARDING
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Fire hazard:
--combustible materials near stove, radiators, heating vents, electrical outlets, extension cords, lamps
--resident may be a smoker

Blocked exits:
--inability for emergency personnel to enter home
--inability for resident to exit home in case of emergency

Risk of falls:
--resulting from cluttered pathways throughout home
--particularly risky with elderly and residents using canes and walkers

Physical harm caused by items falling from piles of clutter

Lack of routine home maintenance:
--toilets and sinks may become inaccessible and unusable
--loss of heat, running water, refrigeration
--non-working smoke alarms

Structural damage to building from increased weight and volume of clutter

Risk of eviction and homelessness

Impaired functioning
--poor hygiene and grooming (depression, cluttered bathtub)
--poor nutrition (inability to use stove and refrigerator)
--inattention to medical needs (cessation of medications and routine medical exams)
--inadequate financial management (non-payment of bills; inability to locate in clutter)
--difficulty cleaning around clutter
--sleeping on floor instead of bed

Increased health problems
--unsanitary conditions resulting in molds, bacteria, dust and dirt (exacerbating asthma and other pulmonary conditions, allergic reactions, headaches)
--mice, rat, roach, bedbug infestation
--hoarding of animal feces and decomposing animal remains (hanta virus, tapeworm, psittacosis, cat scratch disease)

--in severe situations, service providers should take precautions by wearing masks, gowns and gloves when entering homes

Mental health problems
--isolation: inability to socialize at home; over-identification with objects
--anxiety
--depression
--dementia (will need additional assistance)
--psychosis (delusions, hallucinations, paranoia, bipolar disease, schizophrenia)
--obsessive-compulsive disorder
--attention-deficit/hyperactive disorder
--difficulty with decision-making
--need for control
--inability to organize
--inability to problem-solve
--fearful (that others will obtain their information; forgetting or losing items)
--uncomfortable with space created as home is de-cluttered
--perfectionistic tendency to gain control over environment
--denial or minimization of problem