

December 15, 2021

## Age-Friendly Public Health Systems Learning and Action Network News



### News:



Thank you to all who have opened, read, and taken advantage of the AFPHS Newsletter. We appreciate all that each of you do every day to enhance the health and well-being of those of us who are living longer lives. We hope you will consider joining the AFPHS trainings next year, always on the third Thursday of each month at 3:00 pm ET, where we will be focusing on the social determinants of health and how public health agencies and partners can work together to support and improve the conditions

and environments that can play a part in health and well-being.

Happy Holidays to you and yours!  
The AFPHS Team

### Events and Opportunities:

An Age-Friendly Ecosystem encompasses the lived environment, social determinants of health, the healthcare system, and a prevention and equity-focused public health system. These system components often operate in silos, despite working toward common goals and addressing common challenges.

The December AFPHS training will bring together several experts to define the Age-Friendly Ecosystem and discuss how each component can align with public health efforts to improve the health and well-being of older adults.

This session will occur on **Thursday, December 16, 2021, at 3:00 pm ET**. Register [here](#).

You can also view a recording of our November training [A Call to Action for Healthy Aging](#) and our latest [blog post](#) What's Public Health Got to do With....Healthy Aging.

**Special and Vulnerable Populations COVID-19 Forum** – *Friday, January 28, 2022, 2:00 pm ET*. The National Center for Equitable Care for Elders presents this webinar series that will address how COVID-19 has impacted health centers across the country and the special populations they serve. Previous sessions were held on September 2 and November 19, and the final date for this four-part series is March 25, 2022. Register [here](#).

**Conference on Caregiving Research – March 3 -4, 2022.** The Center for Research, Training, and Dissemination of Family Support for People with Disabilities Across the Life Course is hosting the Second Biennial Conference on Caregiving Research in Pittsburgh, PA. The theme for the conference is Building Bridges: Advancing Family Caregiving Research Across the Lifespan. National leaders in caregiving research, policy, and practice across the lifespan will come together to discuss the community, clinical and policy needs of family caregivers. More information is available [here](#).

## Resources:

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### COVID-19

#### **Death Rates among Older Adults due to COVID-19**

Older adults are the most vaccinated group but **one out of everyone 100 people age 65 and older** have perished due to the coronavirus. Of the nearly 800,00 deaths so far in the United States, 75% have been 65 or older. In comparison, the ratio is 1 in 1,400 death for people younger than 65.

#### **Perceptions of Nursing Homes during the COVID-19 Pandemic**

The John A. Hartford Foundation **asked older adults how the COVID pandemic affected their perceptions of nursing homes**. This poll is part of the *Age-Friendly Insights*, **a series measuring opinions on issues related to improving the care of older adults**. Some of the key findings from this survey include: 71% of older adults say they are unwilling to live in a nursing home in the future; 57% of older adults say COVID influenced whether they'd be willing to live in a nursing home; Nearly 90% of older adults say changes are needed to make nursing homes appealing to them; Black and Hispanic older adults are more likely to say nursing homes are unsafe.

### Ageism

#### **Age Friendly Radio Show**

A 30-minute radio show based in Calgary, Canada called **"Aged to Perfection/Old Enough to Know Better"** explores age-related issues in the Calgary community. New episodes air on the fourth Monday of each month at 11:30am and 8:30pm MST. Previous episodes can also be listened to at any time on Apple Podcasts.

#### **Countering Ageism Holiday Campaign**

**"Let's Get Old Together," a holiday advertising campaign aimed at countering ageism**, was recently launched by the Laura Geller Beauty cosmetics firm. The ad emphasizes that older adults are beautiful and powerful. Former supermodel Paulina Porizkova is featured in the ad.

### Health Equity

#### **Measuring Health Equity**

California used principles of health equity in its response to the COVID-19 pandemic. **To further their work on equity**, the state is currently working on legislation to establish a health equity fund, and Medi-Cal waivers to address health equity. They are also considering structural changes on both the supply and demand sides in order to achieve equity. This includes addressing the lack of racial/ethnic minority professionals in the healthcare workforce, and developing a single payer financing system or a unified financing system.

#### **Addressing Disparities in Housing**

The **Bipartisan Policy Center's Housing Council** has recently released **a new report that highlights some of the most striking racial and ethnic disparities in housing**. The report notes that housing is a basic necessity, and "stable, affordable housing is crucial for well-being and economic opportunities." The challenges experienced by racial and ethnic minority communities are explained throughout the report. The acknowledgment of these disparities is noted as "an essential first step in devising new, bold, and innovative solutions."

## The Connections between Health Equity and Housing Equity

[A recent Bipartisan Policy Center guest blog](#) written by [Housing Council](#) member Alfonso Costa, Jr. and Center for Active Design researcher [Sara Karerat](#) outlines the **importance of improving housing to support healthy communities**. This, according to the authors, will lead to a country in which everyone can attain the highest level of health possible.

### [Additional Resources](#)

#### **Mild Cognitive Impairment May Not Always Lead to Dementia**

Results from a recent study published in the journal *Neurology* indicate that [mild cognitive impairment \(MCI\) may not always lead to dementia](#). The study included 2,900 participants. Of these participants, 752 were diagnosed with MCI. During follow up with the participants that had MCI, 48% were cognitively normal. Researchers suggest that MCI should be viewed as a higher risk classification instead of an early stage of dementia.

#### **Impact of Diet on Cognitive Functioning**

Eating foods with greater inflammatory potential such as refined grains, added sugars, alcohol, and fried foods could lead to a higher risk of dementia and cognitive decline according to research published in the journal *Neurology*. [Consuming anti-inflammatory food](#) such as fresh vegetables, seafood, fruits, lean meats, eggs, herbs and spices was found to be connected to lower incidence of dementia.

#### **New Updates to Data on Population and Community Level Health**

[New data estimates for PLACES](#) are now available. PLACES provides model-based population-level analysis and community estimates to all counties, places (incorporated and census designated places), census tracts, and ZIP Code Tabulation Areas (ZCTAs) across the United States. This resource was developed through a partnership between the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Division of Population, the CDC Foundation, and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. This release includes two new measures: depression, and fair or poor health status among adults aged 18 years and older. In addition, enhancements have been made to the web application to provide users direct links to additional demographic, social, and economic data via county and place-level Census Profiles.

#### **Using Technology to Avoid Social Isolation**

It has been well documented that the COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on older adults, especially with regard to social isolation. Dr. Rosemary Kennedy, the Chief Health Informatics Officer at Connect America, shared her advice on [ways to help older adults avoid isolation through technology](#) in an interview for Psychiatric Times.

#### **Role of Local Leaders in Creating Socially Connected Communities**

Social well-being, "the strength of a person's relationships and social networks," plays a major role in health. A person's lifespan can be boosted by 50% due to strong social connections. [Local leaders can help addressing social isolation](#) using the following five strategies: 1) Design, maintain, and activate inclusive public spaces; 2) Prioritize connection in transportation systems; 3) Construct housing environments that build community; 4) Invest in inclusive practices and community-led solutions; and 5) Make social connectedness a community norm.

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