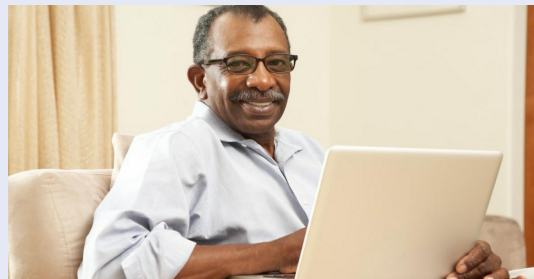


June 8, 2022

Age-Friendly Public Health Systems Learning and Action Network News



News:

The Value of Recognition

The [Age-Friendly Public Health Systems \(AFPHS\) Recognition Program](#) provides a unique opportunity for state and local departments of health to demonstrate their commitment to healthy aging and to supporting all residents across the life-span. Departments that become recognized can leverage recognition with both internal and external partners as well as potential funders. TFAH's AFPHS Recognition Program aims to honor work already being done, as well as encourage engagement in new efforts to address older adult health and well-being that are aligned with the AFPHS [6Cs Framework](#).

There are three levels of Recognition, and the first Departmental level simply requires submission of a [completed action plan](#). See which state and local health departments have already been recognized [here](#).

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day is June 15th

Elder mistreatment was severely exacerbated during COVID-19. All sectors must join together to prevent mistreatment and protect our older neighbors. The USC Center for Elder Justice offers [several tools and resources](#) to share in newsletters and on social media.

Events and Opportunities:

Age-Friendly Public Health Systems (AFPHS) Monthly Trainings

Food insecurity has increased among older adults approximately 60% during the COVID-19 pandemic. Rates have been especially high among Black and Hispanic older adults. Access to nutritious food is a key social determinant of health among older adults. Given the challenges with accessing food during the pandemic, many organizations and agencies have explored innovative ways to improve food security and increase access to nutritious foods.

The June AFPHS training will focus on nutrition and food insecurity among older adults. Speakers from the national and local levels will provide an overview of the issue and highlight strategies and initiatives being used to improve access to nutritious food among older adults.

This session will be held on **June 15 at 3 pm ET**. Register [here](#).

You can also view a recording of our May training on [Technology as a Social Determinants of Health](#) and read May's [blog post](#) *What's Public Health Got to Do With... Technology Access and Proficiency*.

Addressing Housing Accessibility through Cross-Sector Partnerships: A Closer Look at Home Modification Collaborations at Work – *Thursday, June 9, 2022, 2:00 pm to 3:00 pm ET*. The Housing and Services Resource Center is hosting a webinar to highlight partnerships across the housing, aging, and disability sectors, including assistive technology. Presenters will discuss how collaboration can help meet home modification needs of people with disabilities and older adults. Resources for educating consumers and identifying home modification services and funding sources in each state will also be shared. Register [here](#).

HIV and Aging: Effects on the Brain – *Friday, June 10, 2022, 2:30 pm – 4:30 pm ET*. Hosted by the National AIDS Treatment Advocacy Project, this session will include a review of the effects of HIV on the brain, the role of biomarkers, the role of aging in the brain, and the interactions between HIV and Alzheimer's disease. Register [here](#).

Public Health Opportunities and Challenges of Dementia Caregiving Conference – *Tuesday & Wednesday, June 14-15, 2022* Hosted by the BOLD Public Health Center of Excellence on Dementia Caregiving, this in-person and virtual conference is intended for BOLD public health programs; public health departments (local, state, tribal); service providers and/or community-based organizations serving dementia caregivers; researchers; and policy makers. Leaders and experts will share approaches and strategies on how to elevate dementia caregiving as a public health priority. More information [here](#).

Federal Partners Take on the WEAAD 6-1-5 Challenge! – *Wednesday June 15, 2022, 10:00 am ET*. On World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD), the latest data and resources you can use to promote elder justice all year long will be shared. This session will include speakers from the Administration for Community Living, the Elder Justice Initiative at the Department of Justice, Securities and Exchange Commission, the Social Security Administration, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB), and the Senior Medicare Patrol National Resource Center (SMP Resource Center). Register [here](#).

Stories from the Field: Partnerships for Achieving Health Equity – *Wednesday, June 15, 2022, 1:30 pm – 2:30 pm ET*. This Dialogue4Health session will feature panelists from three multi-sector partnerships in Michigan, Arizona and California, that are working to address the social determinants of health and improve equity in their communities. The panelists for this session are alumni of the Leadership Academy for the Public's Health, a program of [PHI's Center for Health Leadership & Impact](#). Register [here](#).

Intergenerational Programs Potpourri: Tips and Strategies to Develop Engagement Opportunities Between Generations – *Tuesday, June 21, 2022, 3:00 pm ET*. During this webinar, Generations United will provide a primer on intergenerational programs, including types of programs, current trends and tips for local organizations developing intergenerational programs. Attendees will also hear from four organizations on their intergenerational programs and learn how they can replicate similar opportunities. Register [here](#).

engAGED June Office Hours – *Wednesday, June 22, 2022, 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm ET* This office hours session will focus on reaching rural older adults with technology. Presenters from the Older Adults Technology Services (OATS), AARP, and the Aroostook Agency on Aging will highlight how they are helping older adults living in rural areas connect to and engage with technology. Attendance will be capped at 30 participants. [RSVP here](#).

Research Centers Collaborative Network Aging, Race, and Health Disparities – *Tuesday & Wednesday, June 28-29, 2022*. The Research Centers Collaborative Network of the National Institute on Aging is hosting a workshop that will include two sessions:

"Frameworks and Methodological Approaches for Health Disparities Research" and "Biologic, Physiologic, and Health Care Implications." Register [here](#).

Science and Community: Introducing the SuperAgers Initiative – *Thursday, June 30, 2022, 2:00 pm – 3:00 pm ET*. Hosted by the American Federation for Aging Research, this session will describe the SuperAgers Initiative, an innovative effort focused on both celebrating and studying the scientific basis of exceptional longevity. A living SuperAger will share their “secrets” of healthy longevity. Register [here](#).

2022 Award for Excellence in Program Innovation: Call for Nominations
[The Aging and Public Health Section of the American Public Health Association](#) has several awards that highlight aging issues and recognize those who have taken positive action in support of older adults. One of these awards – the Archstone Foundation Award for Excellence in Program Innovation – focuses on identifying best practice models in the field of aging and health. A special emphasis is placed on programs that have effectively linked academic theory with applied practice in the field of aging and public health. Applications are now due **June 13, 2022**. [Learn more about this award opportunity](#).

Funding Opportunity – The **[GusNIP Nutrition Incentive Program](#)** presents the opportunity to bring together food and health care sector stakeholders to build understanding of how to improve the health and nutrition status of participating households. The National Institute of Food and Agriculture requests applications for the GusNIP Program to support and evaluate projects that would increase the purchase of fruits and vegetables among income eligible consumers participating in the United States Department of Agriculture Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, as well as reduce food insecurity and related health care costs. Proposals are due on **June 30, 2022**. [Learn more about this funding opportunity](#).

Milbank Memorial Fund's Leadership Programs – These programs are designed for legislative and executive branch state and large-county government officials who are committed to improving population health and include the **[Milbank Fellows Program](#)** (MFP) for senior leaders and the **[Emerging Leaders Program](#)** (ELP) for rising leaders. These programs, all costs for which are covered by Milbank, provide a unique opportunity for participants to engage with colleagues from across the country, as well as with Milbank's broader state leadership network, to enhance their leadership skills, learn from experts about pressing health policy topics, and improve their capacity to advance population health reforms in their communities.

Resources:

COVID-19

Older Adults Are Receiving Treatment for Pandemic-Related Mental Health Issues

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused multiple mental health challenges among older adults. These issues include general confusion about what was going on, fear, anxiety, and isolation. The Geropsychology Program at Baker Street Behavioral Health, a care provider based in Paramus with locations across northern New Jersey, has seen an [increase in older adults seeking help to address these issues](#). But, according to Carrie Ditzel, the clinical manager for the program, "[T]hat's the beauty of it. The stigma is not so bad that people aren't seeking that help."

Social Engagement

Helping Older Adults Connect through Broadband

The [April webinar for enAGED](#) focused on bridging the digital divide to increase social engagement of older adults. The latest [blog post](#) highlights some of the key points from this session and focuses on strategies to connect older adults to affordable broadband. Tips on how the Aging Network can provide older adults with the resources needed to get connected to technology are also noted.

New Cross-Sector Initiative to Reach Those Impacted by Social Isolation

The Administration for Community Living recently established **Commit to Connect** to address the public health impact of social isolation and loneliness. This cross-sector initiative is focused on reaching people who are impacted by social isolation and loneliness. USAging runs the Commit to Connect Coordinating Center, which is designed to build a nationwide network of champions at the local, state and national levels who are committed to addressing social isolation and loneliness. Some of the activities planned for this initiative include developing communities of practice, developing technical assistance resources, and hosting a Virtual Summit in partnership with engAGED.

The Moderating Effect of Social Support Between Loneliness and Depression among Older Adults

Results from **a new study** indicate that loneliness was linked to depression among older adults. Among 1,532 community-dwelling adults aged 65 years or older, support from spouses, family, and others helped to relieve depression among the age segments studied. The study also highlighted that the importance of caregivers for a person's well-being grows later in life. Having regular contact with family members and spousal support was one of the recommended ways to prevent depression based on the findings.

Assistive Technology Addressing Social Isolation

A new brief from the Administration for Community Living describes the role of assistive technology in addressing social isolation with older adults in Illinois. This approach involved innovative partnerships at multiple levels, and included distribution of technology devices to older adults and people with disabilities.

Caregiving

States Addressing Challenges Experienced by Caregivers

Addressing the health, economic, and social challenges experienced by family caregivers has become a priority at the state level. With funding from The John A. Hartford Foundation and the Michigan Health Endowment Fund, cross-sector state teams participating in Helping States Support Families Caring for an Aging America have developed strategies to identify and reach family caregivers. The **four strategies that have been identified** from this initiative are: 1) embed processes to identify family caregivers through state agencies and public-private partnerships, rather than waiting on family caregivers to self-identify; 2) prioritize stakeholder education to ensure that approaches for identifying family caregivers are responsive to specific state and community context; 3) tailor outreach strategies and build trust to reach specific caregiver populations; and 4) leverage caregiver assessments, surveys, and tools to support identification, data collection, and service delivery.

Examining State Policies that Support Family Caregivers

While there are some laws that provide aid to family caregivers, systematic supports, which includes respite and financial support, remain limited. **A new study by researchers at the Gillings School of Global Public Health, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill**, examined state policies to support family caregivers over time. They found that the landscape of state policies has improved between 2014 and 2019, but only a few states provide financial supports as recommended by the National Academy of Medicine (NAM), and Medicaid and Medicare benefit restrictions hinder accessibility. The states that ranked the highest for policies aligned with the NAM recommendations are the District of Columbia, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, and Washington.

Additional Resources

Free Brain Health Academy

UsAgainstAlzheimer's new Brain Health Academy offers evidence-based courses designed to equip health and wellness professionals with the knowledge and resources to help people reduce the risk of Alzheimer's and related dementias, while improving overall health outcomes. The 2022 Academy series includes six courses covering the science and interventions for key modifiable risk factors for dementia, including nutrition, sleep, social isolation and loneliness, physical inactivity, and hypertension. Courses are open to anyone but geared toward professionals involved in health and wellness.

Improving the Direct Care Workforce

The demand for direct care workers continues to rise as fewer family caregivers are able to provide care. [A new Milbank Memorial Fund guide](#) outlines the range of levers that states can deploy to improve the economic security of the direct care workforce. The recommendations in the guide were also reviewed in a [recent webinar](#) led by Milbank Memorial Fund program officer Kate McEvoy.

Commercial Determinants of Health

Alex C. Liber of Georgetown University's Lombardi Comprehensive Cancer Center presents the idea of [commercial determinants of health \(CDoH\) and its positive impact on health](#). CDoH currently focus on markets that harm health, but they should be expanded to refer to the interface between commerce and health where there can be positive public health consequences. Liber notes that "This wider view of the CDoH encourages advocates to consider additional approaches to solving the problems where health and commerce collide."

Lack of Affordable Housing for Older Adults

Being able to afford housing for older adults depends on where they live. [Affordable housing should cost no more than 30% of one's income](#). Average rent that is considered affordable for an older adult on Social Security is \$238. The average rent nationwide is \$1,061 for a one-bedroom unit. Senior housing attorney at Justice in Aging Patti Prunhuber recommends the following six specific actions be taken to reverse these trends:

1. Expand all HUD-assisted affordable housing programs, including vouchers, public housing, the Housing Trust Fund and the Section 202 housing program targeted to low-income older adults;
2. Fully fund the federal Housing Choice Voucher program to expand access to rental assistance to all renter households who qualify, and adopt similar rental assistance programs at the state level;
3. Preserve and protect the existing federally assisted housing stock whose affordability restrictions are expiring to prevent the loss of hundreds of thousands of affordable housing units.
4. Establish stronger renter protections, including banning discrimination against voucher holders so that landlords can't arbitrarily refuse to accept a voucher for the stated rent;
5. Require a greater percentage of new and rehabilitated units be physically accessible to meet the growing needs of older adults with disabilities; and
6. Enact the SSI Restoration Act of 2021 to bring the federal benefit rate for SSI recipients up to at least the federal poverty level.

Low Engagement among Older Adults with Benefit Programs

Several policy changes during the pandemic have expanded access to programs such as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) but [many older adults are not enrolled in these programs](#). One in 5 eligible adults do not apply for the EITC, and less than half of eligible older adults are enrolled in SNAP. Many older adults do not know that they qualify for these benefits; only 48% of eligible older adults are enrolled. The AARP Foundation has been successful in helping 136,896 older adults file for EITC in 2021, and 50,000 signed up for SNAP.

Self-Neglect as a Form of Elder Abuse

Self-neglect is a growing issue among older adults, and it is often unreported. It is defined as "an act or omission, which results in a serious physical or emotional injury to an elderly person or financial exploitation of an elderly person; or the failure, inability or resistance of an elderly person to provide for himself or herself one or more of the necessities essential for physical and emotional well-being without which the elderly person would be unable to safely remain in the community." [Self-neglect is a form of elder abuse](#), but many older adults will not report it because of the fear that they will lose their independence, or be placed into an assisted living facility.

Progress in Health Care for Older LGBTQ Adults

A recent study conducted by the Northstar Geriatrics Workforce Enhancement Program at the University of Minnesota and Rainbow Health revealed that [85% of respondents were confident that they would receive culturally sensitive services](#), such as family planning and sexual health screenings. In 2012 only 18% and in 2002 only nine percent expressed the same confidence in receiving culturally sensitive services.

Additional results from the [Minnesota 2022 LGBTQ Aging Needs Assessment](#) note that LGBTQ older adults are more likely to live alone and serve as a caregiver.

Tips for Staying Safe in Extreme Heat

As we prepare for warmer temperatures, the Department of Health and Human Services Ready.gov has some [tips on preparing and staying safe](#) :

- Find air conditioning.
- Avoid strenuous activities.
- Wear light clothing.
- Check on family members and neighbors.
- Drink plenty of fluids.
- Watch for heat cramps, heat exhaustion, and heatstroke.
- Never leave people or pets in a closed car.

Challenges Accessing Long-Term Services and Supports among Older Adults in Rural Communities

It is estimated that there will be an increase in older adults in rural communities, more than in urban areas. With that expected trend, more rural residents with age-related disabilities will need home and community-based services (HCBS). Meg Traci, research associate professor at the University of Montana Rural Institute for Inclusive Communities, [urges states to adjust their spending and invest more money and workforce development in rural HCBS](#). Traci shared that “If your state doesn’t expand Medicaid, you’re limiting the number of people who have the option to live in their homes when they need HCBS or other supports. States that expanded Medicaid gave more people the opportunity to have the health plan that pays for what they need.”

Culturally Competent Methods for Effective Communication about Public Health Emergencies

During public health emergencies, it is important to be able to effectively answer questions and concerns. In immigrant communities and with communities where languages other than English are spoken, [culturally competent strategies](#) are necessary to ensure everyone has the right information. Three of these strategies are to: 1) identify the trusted leaders in these communities; 2) understand how these communities prefer to communicate; and 3) adapt resources in various languages that are easy to understand.

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