

August 15, 2023

AFPHS News



News:

New: Supporting Older Adults in Rural Communities

TFAH is excited to share a [new brief on the challenges, opportunities, and model programs for age-friendly public health in rural communities](#). It offers recommendations on how the public health sector can promote healthy aging and support older adults and caregivers in rural settings. The brief is made possible with funding from The John A. Hartford Foundation and was primarily written by Aaron Guest, PhD, Arizona State University.

New Local Health Department AFPHS Recognitions

Congratulations to the [Glendale Health Department](#) in Wisconsin on becoming an Advanced Age-Friendly Public Health System. And congratulations to the [Orange County New York Department of Health](#) on becoming a recognized Age-Friendly Public Health System.

Events and Opportunities:

Age-Friendly Public Health Systems (AFPHS) Monthly Trainings

TFAH's 2023 AFPHS training series provides guidance on implementing each of the AFPHS 6Cs ([based on the 6Cs Framework](#)). Each session highlights specific examples of public health programs, policies, or other activities that align with the 6Cs and advance healthy aging as a core function.

The public health sector is a leader in initiating health policy changes in local communities. Essential to the change process are community health assessments and community health improvement plans that can and should include older adult health and well-being. The National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) has recently revised its Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships (MAPP) process that many local health departments use with their community partners to assess and prioritize public health issues. And, in partnership with TFAH, NACCHO developed a [healthy aging indicators guide](#) to help communities assess older adult health issues and align resources across sectors.

The August AFPHS training will focus on the newest version of MAPP, the new indicators guide, and highlight how one local jurisdiction is incorporating healthy aging in its

community health improvement planning process.

Speakers for this session include:

- Anna Clayton, National Association of County and City Health Officials
- Ryan Mims, Florida Department of Health in Walton County

This session will be held on **August 17 at 3 pm ET**. Register [here](#).

Build your expertise and healthy aging knowledge! Individuals who attend 6 or more AFPHS monthly trainings will be designated as AFPHS Champions. More than 80 people across the country have been recognized as Champions to date. Visit the [AFPHS Recognition Program page](#) for more information.

Using an Equity Framework to Evaluate & Improve Medicaid Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) – *Wednesday, August 16, 2023, 2:00 pm ET*. Justice in Aging developed an HCBS Equity Framework to support stakeholders in making equity a primary focus at every stage of home and community-based services (HCBS) program design and implementation. This webinar will describe how Justice in Aging’s HCBS Equity Framework can help advocates and other stakeholders think about the ways that equity is embedded in HCBS. Presenters will walk through the Framework and provide examples of improving equity in policies, program rules, and decision points. Register [here](#).

New Public Health Curriculum to Advance Health Equity for People Living with Dementia – *Wednesday, August 23, 2023, 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm ET*. The Alzheimer's Association's Healthy Brain Initiative (HBI), in partnership with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Emory University, is holding a webinar to announce the launch of the new, free, interactive public health curriculum on health equity and dementia. This curriculum is designed for public health professionals, students, and educators to deepen their knowledge of the intersection between health equity and dementia. Register [here](#).

Partnering with Community Health Workers to Support Dementia Caregivers: Opportunities for Public Health – *September 12, 2023, 11:30 am – 1:00 pm ET*. The BOLD Public Health Center of Excellence on Dementia Caregiving is hosting a webinar to share a dementia-specific training for community health workers (CHW), focusing on their role in supporting family caregivers of people living with dementia, and how public health agencies can partner with CHW programs to support caregiving initiatives. Register [here](#).

Reducing the Risk of Cognitive Decline

UsAgainstAlzheimers is offering new classes through their Brain Health Academy. These virtual classes are designed to equip healthcare providers and wellness professionals with the knowledge and resources to help people reduce their risk of Alzheimer’s and related dementias. The remaining schedule for 2023 is:

- Depression and Dementia- September 20, 2023
- Smoking and Dementia- October 18, 2023,
- Alcohol Use and Dementia- November 15, 2023

All courses are from 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm ET. Learn more [here](#).

How to be Anti-Racist in the Everyday Practice of Public Health

The [How to be Anti-Racist in the Everyday Practice of Public Health](#) training course is designed to equip public health professionals with the skills to recognize and manage biases and promote more equitable health services. This training explores: 1) the myriad ways that racism and bias are operationalized in the everyday practice of public health; 2) why being explicit about microaggressions, bias, and racism is foundational to eliminating racial health disparities; and 3) practical strategies for addressing racism, bias, and microaggressions as essential aspects of everyday practice in public health. Learn more [here](#).

Resources:

[Brain Health](#)

New Medicare Pilot Program to Improve the Quality of Life for People Living with Dementia

A new pilot program from Medicare will test a standardized approach to providing coordinated care to patients with dementia. This new payment model – the **Guiding an Improved Dementia Experience (GUIDE) Model** – will provide a comprehensive package of care coordination and care management, caregiver education and support, and respite services. The GUIDE Model delivers on the **Biden Administration’s April 2023 Executive Order 14095 on Increasing Access to High-Quality Care and Supporting Caregivers**. It also advances key goals of the **National Plan to Address Alzheimer’s Disease**.

Alzheimer’s Disease Rates Across the Country

Results from a recent study published in the journal *Alzheimer’s & Dementia* indicate that states in the east and southeastern regions of the U.S. have the country’s highest rates of Alzheimer’s disease. Using cognitive data from the Chicago Health and Aging Project and the National Center for Health Statistics, researchers estimated the rates of disease among people ages 65 and older in a given area based on demographic risk factors, including age, sex and race/ethnicity. The states with the highest rates are Maryland (12.9%), New York (12.7%) and Mississippi (12.5%).

Screening for Memory Decline among Older Adults

A new report from the **University of Michigan National Poll on Healthy Aging** examines older adults’ use and awareness of cognitive screening and blood biomarker tests that can indicate early signs of decline. The poll found that 71% of adults ages 65 to 80 were familiar with cognitive screening such as memory tests, but 81% were not at all familiar with the newer blood biomarker testing, which detects the abnormal buildup of proteins in the brain that might be an early sign of Alzheimer’s disease. Two in five older adults (41%) indicated that they have received a cognitive screening test, and only 1% reported having had a blood biomarker test.

Housing

Revamping Zoning Codes to Provide More Housing

The governor of Vermont has signed the Housing Opportunities Made for Everyone (HOME) Act. This **new legislation is designed to revamp local and statewide zoning codes** and expand housing availability, affordability and housing-type options. By revising the zoning codes, there are “opportunities to create new and more dense housing in the places we want it, rehab previously offline units, and reform our land and zoning laws, all of which will begin to address this housing crisis” according to the commissioner of the Vermont Department of Housing and Community Development Josh Hanford.

Housing and Home Equity Guides for Older Adults

A new set of guides developed by the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau are focused **housing and home equity for older adults**. These guides contain information on managing changes in health, passing down homes to children/heirs, utilizing home equity for financial needs, and addressing the loss of a spouse/partner. Older adults can use these guides to make informed decisions about their homes and financial security.

Nutrition

Food Insecurity Linked to Poor Health Conditions

A recent report released from AARP examines food insecurity rates among adults age 50 and older in 2021. **Food insecure adults are more likely to have health conditions such as diabetes, high blood pressure, congestive heart failure, asthma, and depression**. Food insecurity tends to be more prevalent in Southern states. It is also most prevalent among older adults who are between the ages of 50 and 59. Having a lower income or lower levels of education were associated with being food insecure. Food insecurity was also more prevalent among Black, American Indian/Alaska Native and Hispanic older adults.

Eight New Self-Determination Projects for Tribal Food Program

Eight tribes now have contracts with the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Food and Nutrition Service for new Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations **Self-Determination Demonstration Projects**. This enables tribes to select and purchase foods for their food packages with tribal dietary preferences, supports indigenous agricultural producers and honors tribal sovereignty.

Weather-Related Emergency Preparedness

Emergency Preparedness for Senior Centers

King County Older Adults and Healthy Aging Unit and the City of Seattle’s Aging and Disability Services staff developed a **one-pager that highlights the preparedness levels of 38 seniors centers in Washington**. For cooling and heating site capacity,

55% and 58% indicated that they could serve as a cooling site or warming site, respectively. Fifteen percent indicated that they could offer extended hours for service, with 31% indicated staffing is the greatest barrier to offering extended hours. This research was supported by the Washington State Department of Health and a grant from the Trust for America's Health Age-Friendly Public Health Systems initiative.

Coordinating with Public Health to Address Weather-Related Emergencies

Weather-related emergencies are becoming more frequent. [Climate-driven emergencies like extreme heat, smoke from wild fires, and tropical storms impact everyone](#). State public health agencies can help ensure that weather-related prevention, readiness, and response are incorporated into planning. Some examples of this include informing the public of poor air quality related to wildfires, and working closely with the health care sector to monitor how many patients are presenting symptoms associated with exposure to smoke from wildfires.

The Cost of Extreme Heat

July has been noted as the hottest month in human history. The groups at the highest risk for adverse events from high temperatures include older adults, children, and people experiencing homelessness. The National Institute for Health Care Management has developed an [infographic that highlights the impact of extreme heat on health costs](#). Some additional resources and initiatives to help communities prepare for extreme heat include:

- [HEAT.gov](#) - shares information on current conditions, urban heat islands, and planning for heat
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) - provides information on extreme and this [CDC tracker](#) shows where rates of heat-related illness are highest

Additional Resources

Resources for Health Departments to Help Increase Physical Activity Among Older Adults

The Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (ODPHP) recently held a [webinar for health departments highlighting strategies to increase physical activity among older adults](#). ODPHP also has [Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans Midcourse Report](#) that includes strategies for engaging with older adults across different settings, including their homes. These strategies also include policy, systems, and environmental approaches. The [Move Your Way website](#) contain additional resources on promoting physical activity among older adults in the community.

New Population Health Data Available

The new [Population Level Analysis and Community Estimates \(PLACES\) data is now available](#). This data contains prevalence estimates of population health data on 36 health-related measures at all levels of geography (county, incorporated and census-designated places, census tracts, and ZIP code areas). PLACES provides nationwide data on chronic disease conditions, behavioral risk factors, and health outcomes that have a substantial impact on the public's health. These data can be used to understand the status and geographic distribution of health risks and diseases, identify and address health disparities and community context, and inform public health action, and the implementation of disease prevention policies and programs. The PLACES data have been expanded to include seven new disability measures - whether an individual has a disability and the type of disability (i.e., cognitive, mobility, vision, hearing, self-care, independent living, and any disability).

New Research Studies to Address Long COVID Symptoms

The National Institutes of Health has begun testing possible treatments for long COVID under its [Researching COVID to Enhance Recovery \(RECOVER\) Initiative](#). The causes of long COVID are unknown and it is a catchall term for about 200 widely varying symptoms. It estimated that between [10% to 30% of people have experienced some form of long COVID](#) after recovering from a coronavirus infection.

Nursing Homes Serving as Community Care Hubs

In 2022, the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine issued a major report that examined the sustainability of nursing homes. While several organizations are focusing on advancing the recommendations in this report, the Convergence Center for Policy Resolution is focused on rethinking the many elements of post-acute and long-term care for older adults. The Center brought together a wide range of stakeholder organizations and called for a "broad constellation" or care settings as a way to [examine new models of nursing homes and how nursing home services can be integrated into the community](#).

New Toolkit focuses on Better Understanding of Indigenous People Living with Disabilities

The National Indian Council on Aging introduced a new [toolkit](#) that is focused on

increasing awareness and knowledge of the needs of American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) people living with disabilities. According to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 30% of AI/AN adults have a disability, the highest rate of disability among any other race/ethnicity. The toolkit contains information about disabilities, tribes and resources.

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