

Age-Friendly Public Health Systems

Communicating

Communicating, translating, and disseminating public health information to promote and support older adult health, both to partners and the public, is a key function of age-friendly public health systems.



One essential function of public health is to empower and mobilize the public and key partners through communication. This role was brought front and center during the COVID-19 pandemic and underscored the value of the public health sector, the methods of communication, and the importance of ensuring information is delivered by trusted messengers and is both culturally and linguistically appropriate.

Effectively communicating important public health information to a variety of audiences is crucial for supporting healthy aging. For example, public health practitioners and organizations must develop and understand the best communication channels for older adults and their caregivers to receive information, not only to support these populations in practicing healthy behaviors, but also to communicate with them in time-sensitive cases. Effective communication with older adults and their caregivers should include considerations of channel, language, and health literacy level, as well as leverage partnerships to ensure the maximum amount of reach possible.

In addition to communicating with older adults themselves, the public health sector should prioritize translating and disseminating research about healthy aging to partners, as demonstrated by CDC's Healthy Brain Initiative. In this program, CDC officials work with the Alzheimer's Association to develop resources to promote brain health across the life course, including resources tailored to the needs of the specific populations of older adults, such as American Indian and Alaskan Native elders.

Trust for America's Health's 6Cs Framework for Creating Age-Friendly Public Health Systems (AFPHS) organizes public health roles in aging services. Public health can enhance healthy aging outcomes by:

- ✓ Creating and leading policy, systems, and environmental changes to improve communication to and with older adults and their caregivers, as well as with partners about the importance of older adult health and well-being.
- ✓ Connecting and convening multi-sector partners to improve communication reach and recruit new collaborators through outreach.
- ✓ Collecting, analyzing, and translating relevant and robust data on older adults to identify health and social needs of the population and highlight areas for potential intervention.
- ✓ Coordinating existing services to communicate the vast array of resources available to older adults and their caregivers.
- ✓ Communicating important public health information to older adults, caregivers, and partners through established channels, in addition to using linguistically and culturally tailored approaches.
- ✓ Complementing existing health promoting programs by communicating with partners to identify gaps in support and promoting available services.



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