

**Allegheny Department of Human Services  
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**Public session to address environmental health concerns**

**Are you concerned about pesticides in your foods, microorganisms in your drinking water, pollutants such as radon and carbon monoxide in your home? These are just some of the environmental hazards that can affect the health of older Americans.**

**As we age, our bodies become more susceptible to environmental hazards and we accumulate a lifetime of exposures. Usually, a person's immune system diminishes with age. Often the older person's immune system response is reduced due to multiple medications or chronic conditions.**

**You can have a voice in these issues. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, with the public's help, is developing an Aging Initiative to study and prioritize environmental health threats to seniors. The initiative will also examine the effect a rapidly growing aging population will have on our environment. (By 2030, the number of U.S. seniors is expected to double to 70 million. Allegheny County has one of the nation's highest populations of seniors.)**

**The Aging Initiative will encourage seniors to volunteer in their communities to reduce hazards and protect the environment for future generations. The initiative will be developed through an open, participatory process that will shape a National Agenda on the Environment and the Aging.**

**Six public meetings across the country will be held this year based on the findings of a December, 2002 National Academy of Sciences workshop called "The Differential Susceptibility of Older Persons to Environmental Hazards." At the meetings, the EPA will ask for input from all stakeholders, including seniors, to ensure the development of a comprehensive National Agenda on the Environment and the Aging.**

**In Pittsburgh, a Public Listening Session to shape the National Agenda will be held from 2 to 4 p.m., Wednesday, April 23, 2003. Join the EPA at the Pittsburgh Athletic Association, Pennsylvania Room, First Floor, 4215 Fifth Ave., Oakland.**

**There is no cost to attend.**

**"Older adults exercise a greater voice in the direction of their government and vote in larger numbers than other segments of the population," said Mildred Morrison, administrator Allegheny County Area Agency on Aging. "This is another opportunity for them to express their opinion."**

**Participants will identify environmental health threats that affect older persons and develop**

**practical interventions to prevent exposure to these hazards; examine the effect that a rapidly aging population could have on the environment; and encourage seniors to volunteer to reduce hazards and protect the environment.**

**For more information on the EPA Aging Initiative, please call (202) 564-2188.**