



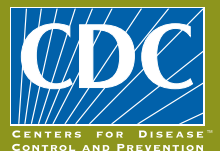
HEALTHY AGING

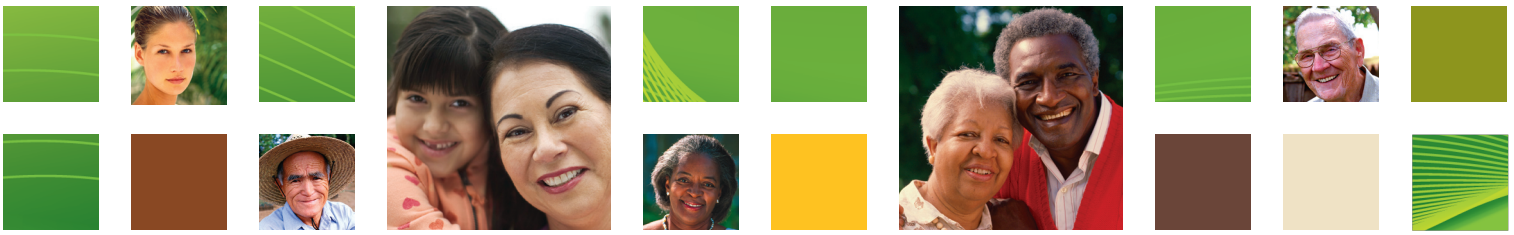
IMPROVING AND
EXTENDING QUALITY
OF LIFE AMONG OLDER
AMERICANS

AT A GLANCE

2009

NATIONAL CENTER FOR CHRONIC DISEASE PREVENTION AND HEALTH PROMOTION
IMPROVING HEALTH AND QUALITY OF LIFE FOR ALL PEOPLE





The Health and Economic Effects of an Aging Society

By 2030, the number of U.S. adults aged 65 years or older will more than double to about 71 million. The rapidly increasing number and diversity of older Americans has far-reaching implications for the U.S. public health system and will place unprecedented demands on aging services and the nation's entire health care system.

For example, Medicare spending has grown about nine-fold in the past 25 years, increasing from \$37 billion in 1980 to \$336 billion in 2005. If left unchecked, health care spending will increase 25% by 2030, largely because of the aging population.

Chronic diseases disproportionately affect older adults and are associated with disability, diminished quality of life, and increased costs for health care and long-term care. Today, about 80% of older adults have at least one chronic condition, and 50% have at least two. These conditions can cause years of pain and loss of function. Public health efforts can help Americans avoid preventable illness and disability as they age. Research has shown that poor health is not an inevitable consequence of aging. Effective public health strategies currently exist to help older adults remain independent longer, improve their quality of life, and potentially delay the need for long-term care.

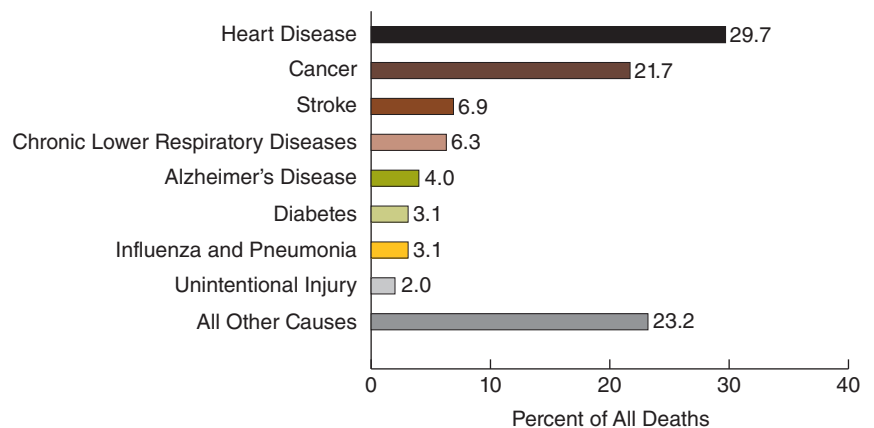
Critical Opportunities to Improve Older Adults' Health and Quality of Life

Our increased understanding of the critical factors involved in protecting and promoting the health of older adults has identified emerging public health issues that need to be addressed, such as the following:

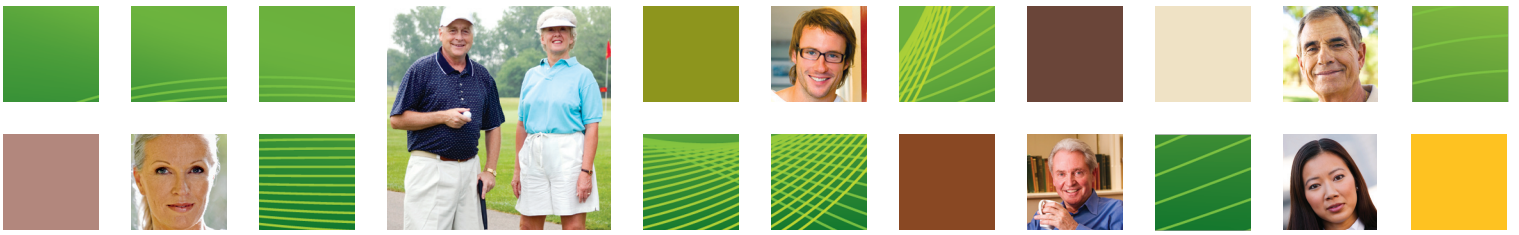
- Promote an up-to-date measure for the use of clinical preventive services.** Population-based data on the use of preventive services recommended for older adults, such as immunizations and regular health screenings, are currently monitored individually. A composite measure would better promote the services, improve data collection, and more effectively guide policy.
- Address depression.** Depression affects nearly 7 million older adults, but many do not receive treatment. Community-based strategies to effectively screen and treat older adults should be more widely disseminated.
- Promote caregiving interventions.** In 2004, about 34 million people were providing unpaid care for adult family members, friends, or neighbors aged 50 years or older. This number will increase dramatically as baby boomers reach older age. A key public health goal is to translate policies and strategies known to improve caregiver health and well-being into widespread practice.

- Address end-of-life issues.** What most people want at the end of their lives is well-documented—to die, as pain-free as possible, at home with family present and to have their wishes honored. However, many people are not allowed “to die with dignity.” In response, public health aims to raise awareness about the value of end-of-life planning and ensure that individuals and their families have appropriate guidance and information.

Causes of Death Among U.S. Adults Aged 65 Years or Older, 2005



Source: CDC, National Center for Health Statistics, National Vital Statistics System, 2005.



CDC's Role in Promoting Healthy Aging

CDC's Healthy Aging Program conducts activities designed to provide a comprehensive approach to helping older adults live longer, high-quality, productive, and independent lives. The Healthy Aging Program collaborates with other CDC programs, such as those focused on injury prevention, disability prevention, and adult immunizations, as well as with key external groups.

Examples of these activities include the following:

- **Enhance the ability of states and communities to identify and implement effective strategies, policies, and programs to promote and protect the health of older adults.**

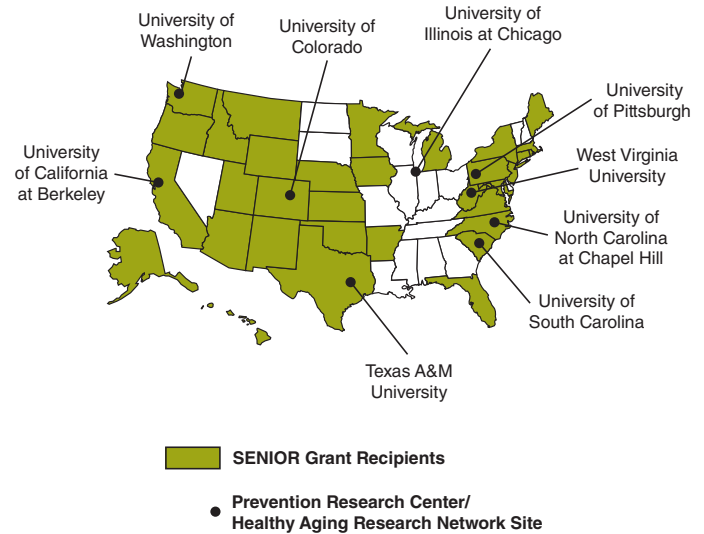
CDC supports the Healthy Aging Research Network (HAN), a consortium of nine Prevention Research Centers at academic institutions around the country working to better understand the determinants of healthy aging, identify interventions that promote healthy aging, and assist in translating research into sustainable community-based programs.

In 2008, the Healthy Aging Program sponsored “Effective Programs to Treat Depression in Older Adults: Implementation Strategies for Community Agencies,” a symposium to assist community-based professionals in public health, aging services, and mental health networks in providing science-based depression screening and management for older adults.

In 2009, a second symposium, “Promoting Environmental and Policy Change to Support Healthy Aging,” will address the opportunities posed by environmental and policy strategies.

The Healthy Aging Program recently released *Assuring Healthy Caregivers, A Public Health Approach to Translating Research into Practice: The RE-AIM Framework*, to respond to challenges in translating science-based caregiver interventions into “real world” settings. This document helps practitioners and researchers plan, conduct, and evaluate intervention programs and policies that promote the health and well-being of caregivers. It also illustrates the benefits of applying the RE-AIM framework (Reach, Effectiveness, Adoption, Implementation, and Maintenance) to caregiver intervention programs, using Alabama's REACH (Resources for Enhancing Caregiver Health) II Caregiver Demonstration Project as an example.

Selected CDC-Supported Healthy Aging Programs, 2003–2008



- **Expand efforts to integrate public health and aging services and enhance outreach for health promotion and disease prevention for older adults.** The Healthy Aging Program aims to integrate public health's expertise in research, health tracking, and prevention programs with the experience and reach of the nation's aging services network. For example, through the National Association of Chronic Disease Directors (NACDD), CDC funds SENIOR (State-Based Examples of Network Innovation, Opportunity, and Replication) grants in several states (see map) to assist selected health departments in working with aging network colleagues to promote integrated strategies for healthy aging.

The Healthy Aging Program partnered with NACDD in 2008 to release *The State of Mental Health and Aging in America Issue Brief 1: What Do the Data Tell Us?* (http://www.chronicdisease.org/files/public/IssueBrief_TheStateofMentalHealthandAginginAmerica.pdf). This brief presents national and state data on six indicators of mental health for older adults. A second brief in 2009 will present interventions addressing depression.



CDC's Role in Promoting Healthy Aging (continued)

The Healthy Aging Program sponsors *The State of Aging and Health in America* report series and interactive Web site (<http://www.cdc.gov/aging/saha.htm>). These tools enable public health and aging services professionals, journalists, and researchers to evaluate key indicators of older adult health at state and national levels. In 2009, the Web site will be updated with the most current data.

- **Promote health and preserve health-related quality of life for older adults within health care and other systems.**

Promoting the broader use of preventive services by older adults is a key public health strategy. A recent analysis showed that in 2004, no more than 25% of adults aged 50–64 years were up-to-date on immunizations and cancer screenings recommended by the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force.

In 2008, CDC collaborated with the American Medical Association and AARP to develop *Building Clinical and Community Bridges to Promote Preventive Services for Adults Aged 50–64 in the United States*. This tool includes easily referenced national and state data on preventive services, effective community-based strategies, and “calls to action” designed to ensure that adults aged 50–64 years receive potentially lifesaving preventive services.

The Healthy Aging Program, partnered with key collaborators to fund a scientific examination of the effectiveness of community-based interventions for treating depression in older adults. Based on these findings, The Guide to Community Preventive Services Task Force made three new recommendations concerning mental health and older adults (<http://www.thecommunityguide.org>).

Healthy Brain Initiative

In 2007, CDC and the Alzheimer's Association released *The Healthy Brain Initiative: A National Public Health Road Map to Maintaining Cognitive Health* (<http://www.cdc.gov/aging/roadmap>). This publication outlines specific actions for addressing cognitive health, a major public health issue that is increasingly affecting individuals, communities, and states. CDC supports several projects including supporting the HAN to increase understanding of the public's beliefs about cognitive health (including those of caregivers and health care providers) and developing and implementing measures to assess and monitor the impact of cognitive impairment to guide national and state strategies.

Future Directions

State and local health departments, the aging services network, and other groups that serve older adults look to CDC to provide scientific and programmatic expertise and strategies that reduce long-term care needs and preserve health and quality of life for older adults. In response, CDC and its partners are working in several areas including the following:

- The Healthy Aging Program conducted research to identify health disparities. They examined the health and characteristics of American Indian and Alaska Native caregivers and included a “call to action” in *The State of Aging and Health in America 2007* report to address health disparities among older adults.
- Working with the NACDD, the Healthy Aging Program examined state health departments' needs, priorities, and activities related to older adult health to better support state-based efforts.

For more information, please contact the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
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