

## HEALTHWORD

Putting Health Promotion Back in Motion

May 2006

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HEALTHWORD is a monthly e-mail newsletter produced by the American Society on Aging's Live Well, Live Long project, funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Live Well, Live Long provides education and resources to professionals in the field of aging to help them improve health promotion and disease prevention efforts aimed at older adults. Current and past issues of this newsletter are available on the Live Well, Live Long website at <http://www.asaging.org/cdc/HealthWord.cfm>.

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Back up your health promotion initiatives with an assessment of the health of elders in your community, based on local, state, and national health statistics.

#### TOOLS YOU CAN USE

Announcing the winners of the 2006 Healthcare and Aging Awards, which recognize innovative programs to improve elders' health and quality of life.

#### CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Health promotion education and training events around North America

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#### FEATURE:

#### HOW TO USE STATISTICS TO ASSESS THE HEALTH OF OLDER ADULTS IN YOUR COMMUNITY

By Sandra Maldague

A community assessment of the health issues or particular diseases affecting older adults in your area can help you develop health promotion initiatives, goals, and programs. One of the primary ways to conduct such an assessment is to consult the wealth of health-related data that are readily available from published local, state, and national health statistics.

#### The Behavior Risk Factor Surveillance System

One excellent source for current health information on older adults in your state is the Behavior Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), developed by the National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. The BRFSS is a continuous telephone survey that examines patterns in eating habits, physical activity, and other

individual behaviors that affect health. All 50 state health departments are responsible for using the BRFSS to collect information. The nationwide BRFSS website (<http://www.cdc.gov/brfss/>), which is quite user friendly, compiles the survey findings for each state as well as a number of large metropolitan areas. You can sort the results according to age group to find information specifically on elders.

If the national website is not able to provide the information you are looking for, contact your state health department to find the latest BRFSS data for chronic diseases, nutrition and physical activity, and other topics. To find out who to contact, visit the National Association of Chronic Disease Directors website (<http://www.chronicdisease.org>) and click on "Membership Directory." Select your state from the drop-down menu; each state has a BRFSS coordinator, and the site also lists contact people for specific diseases. Alternatively, contact your local health department and ask them who they work with at the state level to report their local data on chronic disease. In most cases, you will not need to speak with the director of the program to get the data.

#### Other Sources of Health Statistics

For additional ideas on how to gather health data on specific topics or diseases -- such as diabetes, depression, or physical activity -- browse through the modules on the Live Long, Live Well website (<http://www.asaging.org/cdc>). Just added to the site is a series of online courses teaching users how to access the National Center for Health Statistics' "Tables on Trends in Aging and Health." These online tables help make health data and statistics usable and accessible. Live Well, Live Long's eight teaching modules can help you understand the tables or demonstrate how different surveys can highlight important health information related to older adults.

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#### TOOLS YOU CAN USE 2006 HEALTHCARE AND AGING AWARDS

Each year, ASA's Healthcare and Aging Network presents the Healthcare and Aging Awards, sponsored by Pfizer Medical Humanities Initiative, to recognize organizations that have demonstrated high-quality, innovative programs that enhance the health-related quality of life in older adults. For more information -- including full contact information for program organizers -- visit the 2006 HAN Awards webpage at <http://www.asaging.org/awards/HAN.cfm>.

#### WORK OUT LOW FAT (Milwaukee, Wisc.)

Organizers: Milwaukee County Department on Aging, Indian Council of the Elderly, and Gerald L. Ignace Indian Health Center

The WOLF program provides activities aimed at preventing and controlling type 2 diabetes as well as maintaining heart health among a population of urban Native American Indian elders.

A MATTER OF BALANCE: MANAGING CONCERNS ABOUT FALLS (Portland, Maine)

Organizers: MaineHealth's Partnership for Healthy Aging; Southern Maine Agency on Aging; Maine Medical Center, Division of Geriatrics; University of Southern Maine  
A Matter of Balance recruits and trains lay leaders to present an evidence-based program designed to reduce elders' fear of falling and improve their activity levels.

MICHIGAN'S COORDINATED ACCESS TO FOOD FOR THE ELDERLY (Lansing, Mich.)

Organizer: Elder Law of Michigan  
MiCAFE enables older adults to apply for food stamps and access nutritional information at participating senior or community centers where older adults already go for assistance.

GERIATRIC ADDITIONS PROGRAM (Rochester, N.Y.)

Organizer: Lifespan of Greater Rochester  
GAP assesses older adults for substance abuse and then counsels them in their own homes and provides links to supportive services as needed.

DROP-IN RESPITE & RESPITE COOPERATIVE (Sacramento, Calif.)

Organizer: Asian Community Center  
This cooperative provides up to five hours of recreation, socialization, physical exercise, and mental stimulation to elders with dementia and physical limitations. The program allows caregivers to "buy" time in the cooperative through a once-a-month volunteer commitment.

PALLIATIVE CARE & BEREAVEMENT SERVICE (Van Nuys, Calif.)

Organizer: Valley Presbyterian Hospital  
This program has pioneered an innovative system to deliver palliative care to its patients in a manner that eliminated the need for a specific unit, large remodeling costs, and extensive staffing.

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Event: Issues in Medicine: U.S. Medical Congress  
Dates: June 12-15, 2006  
Location: Las Vegas

Participants at this annual continuing medical education conference will have an opportunity to discuss current issues in a variety of professional specialty areas and improve their clinical skills. Sessions in the aging track include "Practical Strategies for the Prevention of Coronary Heart Disease," "Bridging Pain and Depression: The Road to Evidence-Based Care," and "Stroke Prevention and Treatment." For more information, visit <http://www.usmedicalcongress.com/>.

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Event: New Jersey Foundation for Aging's 8th Annual Professional Conference

Dates: June 8, 2006

Location: Jamesburg, N.J.

As its theme, "It Takes a Village and Then Some: Aging in Place" announces, this year's conference focuses on livable communities. Sandy Markwood, chief executive officer of the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging, will deliver the keynote address. Concurrent workshops will address such topics as emergency preparedness for agencies serving older adults and assessing readiness for an aging community. For more information, visit [http://www.njfoundationforaging.org/events.html#sm\\_anchor](http://www.njfoundationforaging.org/events.html#sm_anchor).

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Event: Health Literacy: The Foundation for Patient Safety, Empowerment, and Quality Health Care

Dates: June 26-27, 2006

Location: Rosemont, Ill.

Key issues to be addressed at this national gathering of healthcare leaders include the following:

- \* How low health literacy is linked to unsafe care and poor patient outcomes, increased costs, and inefficient care

- \* Strategies for addressing low health literacy in the care of people with chronic illnesses

- \* New methods for enhancing patients' ability to navigate the healthcare system

For more information, visit

<http://www.jcrinc.com/education.asp?durki=11276&site=5&return=11122>.

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Event: Festival of International Conferences on Caregiving, Disability, Aging, and Technology

Dates: June 16-19, 2007 (not 2006, as previously reported)

Location: Toronto

This conference brings together five different conferences focused on enhancing the lives of elders, people with disabilities, and family caregivers. The conferences: Growing Older With a Disability, The Second International Conference on Technology and Aging (ICTA), Advances in Neurorehabilitation, Caregivers: Essential Partners in Care, and Improving Medical Device Usability. For more information, visit <http://www.ficcdat.ca/>.

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For more educational offerings in the field of aging, visit the searchable "Events in Aging" calendar on the ASA website: <http://www.asaging.org/calendar>.

Have an event related to health promotion and aging that you would like to tell your colleagues about? Please submit your event, call for papers, or grant announcements to Betsy Dorsett at [betsyd@asaging.org](mailto:betsyd@asaging.org). Include the title, organization, date and time, location, contact information, and a short description of the event.

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## HEALTHWORD

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**SUGGESTIONS AND QUESTIONS.** For more information or comments about the newsletter, please contact Chaya Gordon, research manager at ASA, at [chayag@asaging.org](mailto:chayag@asaging.org).

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