COVID-19 and Age-Friendly Public Health Systems

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Trust for America’s Health

Independent, non-partisan, public health & prevention focus, including:

• Non-profit, non-partisan
• Evidence-based policy & advocacy
• Dedicated to improving the health of every community and making disease prevention a national priority

The State of Obesity: Better Policies for a Healthier America
The Impact of Chronic Underfunding on America’s Public Health System: Trends, Issues, and Recommendations, 2019
Presentation Objectives

- Describe the Age-Friendly Public Health Systems framework and the five categories of public health roles in healthy aging.
- Identify the connections between public health and other sectors in the COVID-19 response efforts.
- Increase understanding of the value of Age-Friendly Public Health collaboration with other sectors to improve older adult health outcomes.

What is Public Health?

“Public health is what we, as a society, do collectively to assure the conditions in which (all) people can be healthy.”

Institute of Medicine (1988), Future of Public Health
Public Health is “Upstream”

- Gathering and analyzing data
- Building systems of care and support
- Deploying strategies of disease prevention and control
- Establishing model policies
- Demonstrating viability of new approaches
- Disseminating information and health education
- Convening allies and partners in dialogue and collaborative initiatives
- Community engagement
- Safety net and gap-filling services
Public Health’s Focus on Older Adults

- Federal: No CDC healthy aging unit
- State/local: Lack of funding and expertise
- Current PH aging work is limited: falls prevention, vaccinations, dementias

Prevalence of Preventable Chronic Diseases
Framework for Creating Age-Friendly Public Health Systems

- Connecting
- Complementing
- Coordinating
- Communicating
- Collecting

TFAH’S AFPHS Florida Pilot

- FL Depts. of Health & Elder Affairs
- 37 counties – 2/3 of state population
- Policy, systems, environmental changes (data, collaborations, emergency prep, programs)
- Links to AARP Age-Friendly network, Dementia Friendly Communities, AFHS
Framework for Creating Age-Friendly Public Health Systems

Older Adults and COVID-19

- 8 out of 10 COVID deaths are in people 65 and older
- 50% of deaths occur in long-term care facilities
- Greater vulnerability due to multiple chronic health conditions
- Congregate settings increase risk
Public Health’s Focus on Older Adults During COVID-19

- Communications
- Data tracking, analysis
- Contact tracing
- Nursing home safety
- Social isolation
- Support for aging services

Engaging with and supporting other sectors during COVID-19

Florida -- Seminole County Health Department:
- Engagement with aging sector through AFPHS Learning and Action Network
- Messaging and communication efficiency
- Capture information on older adult needs
- Assist with meal delivery, social isolation
Engaging with and supporting other sectors during COVID-19

Florida -- Nassau County Health Department:
- Engagement with faith-based community organizations through AFPHS Network
- Became trusted partner and source of information
- Able to quickly share hygiene and testing information and resources

Public Health in Seattle-King County:
- Assigned to address C19 in LTC facilities
- Data dashboard
- Increased testing (EMS, CHW, college and univ volunteers)
AFPHS Collaboration Can Improve Older Adult Health Outcomes

- **Change the “social determinants”:** Join transportation, housing, public safety, etc. efforts to adopt health/well-being policies
- **Social isolation:** Create programs to promote meaningful connections
- **Home/community focus:** Develop home-neighborhood programs
- **Strengthen Partnerships:** Engage and align with Age-Friendly Communities, Age-Friendly Health Systems
- **Promote equity:** Reach sub-populations with limited resources and improve access to needed services

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**Age-Friendly Recognition Program**

- Incentivize EVERY state & local health dept. to address older adult health
- Build capacity through guidance and training
- Develop learning network within/across states
Value of Becoming an AFPHS

- Implementation within current resources
- Build expertise and competency in aging
- Leverage public and private funding
- Opportunity to better serve all populations

THANK YOU!

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