

Trust for America's Health Creates Momentum Towards an Age-Friendly Public Health System

Why Should Public Health Address the Health of Older Americans?

Due to a combination of factors, including improvements in health and longevity, the aging of the baby boomer generation, and declining fertility rates, older adults are the fastest growing demographic of the U.S. population. All sectors should be engaged in promoting healthy aging (health care, justice, business, etc.), but given public health's contributions to helping Americans live longer, it should also contribute to the ongoing health and productivity of these citizens. Yet historically, the public health sector has not had a significant focus on the health of older adults. Trust for America's Health has launched an Age-Friendly Public Health Initiative with the goal of making the health and well-being of older adults a public health priority.

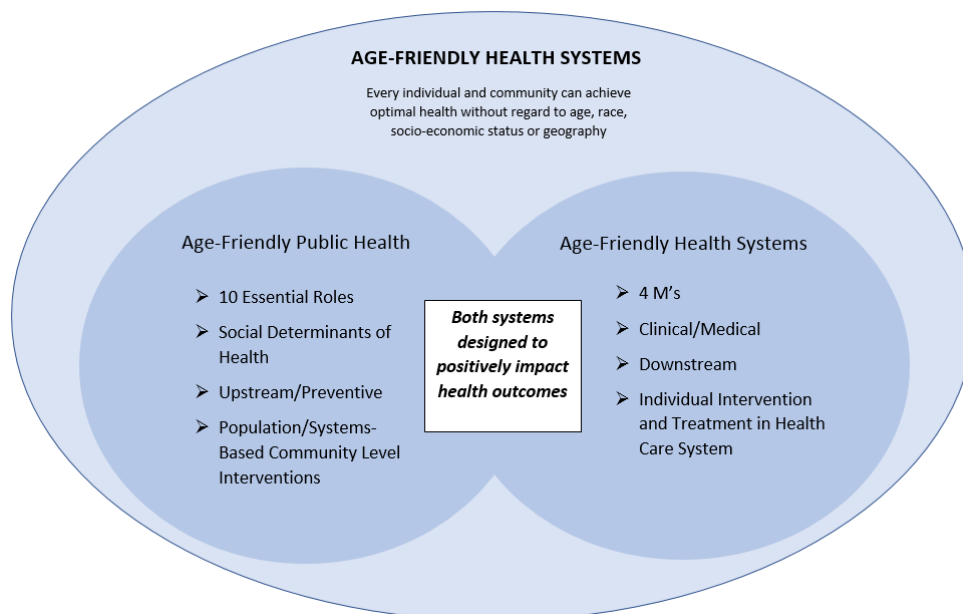
About Trust for America's Health

Trust for America's Health (TFAH) is a non-profit, non-partisan, policy, research and advocacy organization that promotes optimal health for every person and community and makes the prevention of illness and injury a national priority. Given the growing demographics of the older adult population in the U.S. and the health challenges they face, TFAH's strategic plan includes a focus on improving the health and well-being of older adults.

About The John A. Hartford Foundation

The John A. Hartford Foundation, which is partnering with and funding TFAH for the Florida project, is a private, nonpartisan, national philanthropy dedicated to improving the care of older adults. The leader in the field of aging and health, the Foundation has three priority areas: creating age-friendly health systems, supporting family caregivers, and improving serious illness and end-of-life care.

Diagram of the intersection between Age-Friendly Public Health and Age-Friendly Health Systems



Age-Friendly Public Health Accomplishments to Date

TFAH and The John A. Hartford Foundation have: led the development of a framework that supports the expansion of public health's role in improving the health, well-being and health care of older adults; begun building national partnerships to spread this framework through policy and practice change; begun connecting public health with both the Age-Friendly Communities movement and Age-Friendly Health Systems initiative; and launched a pilot in Florida to prototype state and local Age-Friendly Public Health systems.

Creating an Age-Friendly Public Health Framework

TFAH convened a select group of national, state, and local public health officials; aging experts, advocates, and service providers; and health care officials to discuss how public health could play a greater role in improving the health and well-being of older Americans and how it could learn from and complement the work of other sectors. The convening resulted in a [*Framework for an Age-Friendly Public Health System*](#) that outlines the roles that public health could fulfill, in collaboration with aging services, to address the challenges and opportunities of an aging society. The convening confirmed the need for an age-friendly public health system – one that recognizes aging as a core public health issue and leverages its skills and capacities to improve the health and wellbeing of older adults.

The broad public health roles outlined in the *Framework* are:

1. Connecting and convening multiple sectors and professions that provide the supports, services, and infrastructure to promote healthy aging.
2. Coordinating existing supports and services to avoid duplication of efforts, identify gaps, and increase access to services and supports.
3. Collecting data to assess community health status (including inequities) and aging population needs to inform the development of interventions.
4. Conducting, communicating, and disseminating research findings and best practices to support healthy aging.
5. Complementing and supplementing existing supports and services, particularly in terms of integrating clinical and population health approaches.

Age-Friendly Public Health Advisory Committee

To help guide this work and provide strategic advice, TFAH formed an Advisory Committee of Florida-based aging sector experts, public health and health care professionals and researchers. Many of these individuals were among those who contributed to the creation of the *Framework* and they all continue to provide their counsel and share key connections to advance the Florida pilot.

Age-Friendly Public Health Learning and Action Network in Florida

An Age-Friendly Public Health Learning and Action Network (AFPH Network) was formed to support the teams of public health officials from 37 of Florida's 67 counties, representing two-thirds of the state's population. The participating counties reflect the diversity of Florida's geography and demographics.

TFAH is facilitating in-person and virtual meetings of the AFPH Network teams, as well as providing tools and technical assistance, to help them explore and adopt new age-friendly roles for public health, including collecting and analyzing data to identify and prioritize the health needs of older adults, and creating partnerships to collaborate with aging stakeholders. Many of these counties are already engaged in the AARP-led Age-Friendly Communities movement that focuses on modifying physical and social community infrastructure to support older adults' health, well-being, and ability to age in place. AFPH Network teams are exploring how these two efforts are aligned, for example in how they assess the needs of a community and set priorities for change, and how public health can contribute to local Age-Friendly Communities efforts.

The Florida Department of Elder Affairs—which oversees and administers all the programs within the jurisdiction of the Older Americans Act, including Area Agencies on Aging, evidence-based interventions, and Florida's Dementia Care and Cures Initiative—has been an instrumental partner in the AFPH project.

National Activities to Advance Age-Friendly Public Health

TFAH has participated in numerous national conferences to share information about this initiative, including the National Association of County and City Health Officials, the Alzheimer's Association, and facilitation of a panel at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' 2018 Healthy Aging Workshop. To build on the lessons learned during the Workshop, TFAH hosted a [webinar](#) that provided an opportunity to elaborate on two of the crucial roles of public health in aging—aligning and enhancing data collection and analysis around older adult health and creating multi-sector collaborations to enhance the conditions for healthy aging.

Logic model for the Age-Friendly Public Health initiative

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes	Impacts
<p>37 FL County Health Departments (CHDs)</p> <p>TFAH staff</p> <p>FL DOH and DOEA staff</p> <p>Advisory Committee</p> <p>Healthy aging experts</p> <p>National partners</p> <p>Website with resource bank, including toolkits, case studies, best practices</p> <p>John A. Hartford Foundation support and funding</p>	<p>In-person convenings</p> <p>CHD expert learning calls</p> <p>Internal assessment of capacity to expand CHD role in aging</p> <p>Vision and Action Plan creation by each participating CHD</p> <p>Identification of new partners and sectors for collaboration</p> <p>Webinars</p> <p>Monthly newsletter</p> <p>County specific TA with experts</p> <p>Case studies</p> <p>Peer-to-peer learning</p> <p>Meetings with national partner organizations</p> <p>Conference presentations</p>	<p>Each Learning Network county implements an action plan to expand its role in aging</p> <p>Each Learning Network county identifies key staff person(s) as agency lead in aging</p> <p>Strong intra-state, inter/intra agency relationships</p> <p>Increased CHD collaboration between county health and aging sector partners (agencies, CBOs)</p> <p>Sharing of evidence, resources, best practices, and challenges within the Learning Network & all FL CHDs</p>	<p>Change public health practice by increasing CHD roles in addressing the health and well-being of older adults</p> <p>County-level implementation of evidence-based practices, programs and policies that address older adult health</p> <p>Increase in number of communities that join the AARP Age-Friendly Communities Network</p> <p>Creation and promotion of a FL and national policy agenda to improve older adult health</p> <p>Inclusion of objectives related to older adult health in CHIP/SHIP</p> <p>Inclusion of older adult questions and/or indicators in CHA and CHNA</p>	<p>Improved health outcomes for older adults at the individual and population levels</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Reduced chronic disease and better management of chronic disease -Reduced infectious disease -Improved mental health -Reduced substance misuse -Reduced falls and deaths from falls -Increased rates of immunizations <p>Implementation of policies and practice that address SDOH, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Social isolation -Emergency preparedness -Transportation and housing options <p>Improved conditions for older adults to age-in-place and live active, productive lives, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Caregiver support -Dementia-friendly communities and networks -Elder abuse training and interventions

Purpose:
Create a model to guide public health departments in expanding their role in addressing the health needs of older adults