



## Age-Friendly Public Health Systems

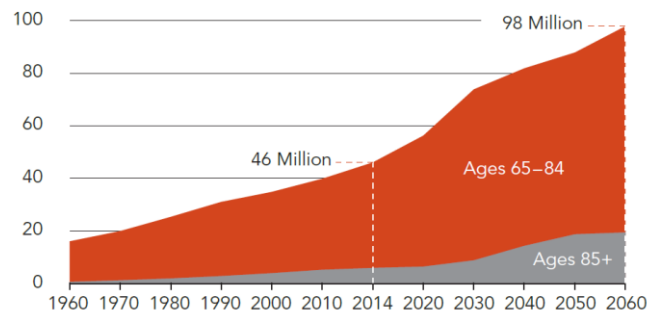
### National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) FY 2023 Labor HHS Appropriations Bill

	FY2023 President's Budget	FY2023 TFAH Recommendation
Age-Friendly Public Health Systems	\$0	\$50,000,000

**Background:** The COVID-19 pandemic has illustrated the need for public health to increase its focus on both the health and social needs of older adults to help this population remain healthy and independent. U.S. public health efforts have importantly contributed to the significant increase in longevity and health over the twentieth century, including the remarkable achievement that an individual reaching age 65 today can expect to live nearly 20 more years, which promotes greater opportunity and productivity of our society as a whole. Every day, 10,000 more Americans turn 65. Yet, historically, there have been limited collaborations across the public health and aging services sectors and little funding to ensure public health has the capacity and capability to address the unique public health needs of older adults. TFAH recommends funding for a CDC Healthy Aging unit to promote the health and well-being of older adults, advance health equity and reduce healthcare costs by developing Age-Friendly Public Health Systems (AFPHS) at state, local, territorial, and tribal health departments.

### The Number of Americans Ages 65 and Older Will More Than Double by 2060.

U.S. Population Ages 65 and Older, 1960 to 2060 (Millions)



Source: PRB analysis of data from the U.S. Census Bureau.

**Impact:** Isolation and loneliness, financial hardship, and limited access to transportation, healthy food, and affordable housing are challenges many older adults face. Social isolation alone increases the risk of heart disease, infections, depression, cognitive decline and death among older adults and accounts for

\$6.7 billion in additional Medicare spending annually.<sup>1</sup> A public health approach to healthy aging would complement individual-level services provided by the aging services sector with population- or community-wide solutions that promote healthier aging and improve the quality of life. Inequities amongst older adults persist -- Black Americans and American Indian/Alaska Native populations have shorter life expectancies with steeper declines in life expectancy than the non-Hispanic white population during the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>2</sup>

AFPHS interventions can optimize the health and well-being of adults 65 and over, prolong their independence, help reduce disparities and advance equity, and help reduce the nation's healthcare spending. Yet there is no program at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) that supports local, state, territorial and tribal public health departments to improve older adult health and well-being. Elevating healthy aging as a core function of public health departments is necessary to foster multi-sector collaboration and develop effective solutions to improve the lives of older Americans.

TFAH has helped build the evidence base for these interventions. In partnership with the Florida Departments of Health and Elder Affairs, TFAH launched an Age-Friendly Public Health Systems pilot program, which included 37 of Florida's 67 county health departments as they explored and expanded their roles in older adult health. This effort has included creating and supporting collaborations between the public health and aging sectors, collecting, and disseminating data on the state's older adult population, and ensuring all planning and programming is done with an aging lens. Since this initiative's launch, TFAH has expanded AFPHS efforts into Michigan, Mississippi, and Washington State. While this initiative has proven value to the communities it serves, sustained federal funding for public health to address the needs of older adults is necessary in order to be impactful nationwide.

Examples from Florida's Age-Friendly Public Health System pilot:

- St. Johns County Health Department targeted the 2020 Census for accuracy to ensure the county has the appropriate level of support and resources for the fast-growing older adult population.
- Escambia County Health Department works with the local Council on Aging to ensure they are addressing older adult health in the community health improvement plan.
- Indian River County Health Department engages with housing non-profit organizations and builders to educate on the benefits of universal design to increase access for older adults.
- Putnam County Health Department connects with the Transportation for the Disadvantaged program, eliciting support from a local hospital to pay for non-emergency medical trips for older adults.
- Okaloosa County Health Department implemented the Lean on Me program, enlisting community volunteers to ensure broad registration of vulnerable older adults for emergency special needs shelters.

**Recommendation:** TFAH recommends \$50 million in FY 2023 to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to expand its healthy aging work to include coordinating healthy aging efforts across CDC, funding applied research and translation for public health practice, and awarding cooperative agreements to build capacity in state, local, tribal, and territorial public health departments to promote the health of older adults within an Age-Friendly Public Health System.

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<sup>1</sup> Flowers, Lynda, et al. Medicare Spends More on Socially Isolated Older Adults. AARP, 2017, Medicare Spends More on Socially Isolated Older Adults, [www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/ppi/2017/10/medicare-spends-more-on-socially-isolated-older-adults.pdf](http://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/ppi/2017/10/medicare-spends-more-on-socially-isolated-older-adults.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> Arias, Elizabeth, et al. Provisional Life Expectancy Estimates for January through June, 2020. Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, US Dept of Health and Human Services. 2021. <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/vsrr/VSRR10-508.pdf>