



Inside Aging-USA

Chronic Conditions-most frequently occurring condition of elderly

	(percentage)	%
Hypertension		49.2
Arthritic Symptoms		36.1
Heart Disease (all types)		31.1
Any Cancer		20.0
Sinusitis		15.1
Diabetes		15.0

Aging Facts: Chronic Conditions

- Five of the six leading causes of death among older Americans are chronic diseases
- The prevalence of certain chronic conditions differs by sex, race and ethnicity
- Diabetes is one of the fastest growing chronic conditions. Diet and exercise can have a positive impact on results.

Source: Older Americans 2004: Key Indicators of Well-Being

EngAGEMENT News: Michigan

This month the focus is on The Council of Michigan Foundations (CMF). Julie Ford has been leading the EngAGEMENT team in Michigan. CMF is working specifically with the community foundations across the state. CMF is the largest regional association of grantmakers in the country with over 400 member foundations and corporate grantmakers.

Michigan is also the birthplace of GIA. In 1982 Trudy Cross, a consultant on aging at the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, organized the first meeting at the Council on Foundations meeting in Detroit. From that meeting and Trudy's persistence GIA has grown into the organization it is today.

Fast Facts for Funders

The first of a series of issue briefs that are being called "fast facts" is close to completion. GIA has partnered with Barbara Greenberg and Jan Schwarz to produce the first four Fast Facts. Barbara and Jan have a long history with GIA as they were the pair responsible for the original GIA Toolkit. Their knowledge of both the field of aging and GIA make it a great fit for this project.

For the EngAGEMENT Initiative, CMF has contracted with Williams Group, an organization that plans, designs and manages strategic communication programs and has experience working with the Michigan community foundations to develop the marketing materials. Other organizations that will be integral to the success of their project include the Michigan Office of Services to the Aging, The Michigan Area Agencies on Aging and the Office of the Foundation Liaison.

CMF and the Williams Group are working together to develop materials for twelve community foundations who have asked to be involved with the initiative. Michigan has approximately 65 community foundations across the state. The twelve participating in the project cover the majority of the state's population.

Barbara and Jan have worked with each of the EngAGEMENT participants to ensure that the final product is beneficial to each regional associations of grantmakers' members, the target audience of the EngAGEMENT Initiative.

The topic area of the first Fast Facts will be aging demographics. This issue will highlight the changing face of America as the population

CMF has two main goals for their EngAGEMENT Initiative. First, to raise awareness and educate people throughout the state of Michigan that the demography is changing and arming them with the facts and information that they need to make a difference for the older population in their communities. Second goal is to stimulate funding around aging and elder care issues in Michigan, which will address the challenges facing their older population for years to come.

The pace in picking up as materials are being developed and foundations are starting to embrace the idea of focusing on older adults to improve their communities.

grows older. There are many positive indicators, but just as many challenges.

Future issues will focus on how foundations can build aging into their grantmaking strategy, housing/elder friendly communities, and children, youth and families. Each issue will offer stats and charts, program examples, and local contacts. Keep an eye open for our inaugural issue later this month.

Don't Ignore the Signs

I had only driven one mile to the nearest Starbucks, but over that short distance, I counted 27 signs. Stop signs, speed limit signs, school crossings, stop lights, street signs, not to mention the billboards, store signs, garage sales signs, lost pet notices all bombarding the senses. Today advertisers take up more minutes on prime time programs, and you can't log onto the internet without being assaulted by pop-ups and spam. Obviously, most of those street signs help society function safely, but there are other signs that need to be recognized as well.



The signs are everywhere.

Our population is growing older! There are new needs that will have to be met. There are new challenges that need to be faced. And there are new opportunities for communities to flourish. Luckily, there are some wonderful foundations that are reading the signs and are building programs around them. National funders as well as local funders have started to look for ways to help.

One example of a foundation that is reading the signs is The Beverly Foundation in Pasadena, California. The Beverly Foundation is a non-profit operating foundation that uses its resources to support research, demonstration and technical activities in senior mobility and transportation. Senior mobility is not just providing transportation for seniors to the doctors. It is really a broad subject, which covers areas such as building designs, sidewalks, the length of time a crosswalk allows pedestrians to cross, and more. The Foundation's target audience is professionals, policy makers and planners, the media and consumers. Foundations like The Beverly Foundation, provide valuable research and data that other local foundations can utilize to the benefit of their community.

Other foundations, such as the John A. Hartford Foundation in New York, are totally dedicated to aging. Aging is their one and only focus area. Through the EngAGEMENT Initiative we would welcome other grantmakers completely dedicated to aging, but we realize change doesn't come quickly and much good can be done with small grants, or a collaboration with several other funders. The need will continue to grow, so each and every grant focused on older adults is vitally important.

Foundations are not the only organizations that are recognizing the demographic shift. Home-builders are building customized homes for the retirees who don't want to be associated with the typical retirement of the past. These new communities are offering physical fitness facilities, bike trails, hiking, and other amenities that baby boomers desire. Automakers are customizing their vehicles with bigger dials, larger buttons and knobs and seats that are wider and easier to get in and out of. Other companies have shifted their marketing focus to lure the growing number of older adults. Luckily the media is taking notice of the growing number of older adults too. Some of the publicity may not be positive, but many important issues are being raised.

The signs are everywhere. EngAGEMENT hopes to help grantmakers recognize the signs. Once the signs are read, navigating the road becomes possible. The road may appear bumpy and too steep to climb, but with continued effort we'll reach the summit.

The road is open, but the warning signs are there. Now is the time for foundations to act.

EngAGEMENT's National Outreach Director
Cort Eiken
ceiken@GIAging.org

***"Old age is
no place for
sissies."
-Bette Davis***



Grantmakers In Aging

Your personal connection to key people, high quality resources and state-of-the-art ideas about aging and all issues related to aging

GRANTMAKERS IN AGING

7333 Paragon Road
Suite 220
Dayton, OH 45459

Phone: 937.435.3156
Fax: 937.435.3733
Website: www.GIAging.org