Healthy Aging in the Commonwealth: Pathways to Life Long Wellness

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The Talk

• The Issue Brief
• Reflections on Healthy Aging from a LTC researcher
The Issue Brief

Questions:
• What is "Healthy Aging"?
• What programs and policies support HA?
• What's happening in MA with HA?

Methods:
• Research review
• Interviews
What is Healthy Aging?

• *Healthy Aging* is the development and maintenance of optimal physical, mental and social well-being and function in older adults.*

* Definition from the Healthy Aging Research Network, CDC & Prevention Research Centers
How is Healthy Aging Achieved?

• Keys to achieving healthy aging:
  – Effective community programs and health services are available and accessible.
  – Communities are safe and support healthy behaviors.
  – Individuals adopt and maintain behaviors known to promote health and well-being.
Ingredients of Healthy Aging

Healthy Aging
Seniors will ....

Lead meaningful lives

Be pro-active about health

Be socially engaged

Be physically active

Feel safe and secure

Have good diets

And….Communities will support older adults to achieve these goals
The Social - Ecological Model of Healthy Aging
What’s Happening in MA?

- Rolling out Evidence-based HA programs
- EOEA and DPH leadership with community partners
- Healthy Communities
- Aging Network & others on the frontline
Reflections on HA from a traditional LTC researcher

• They're creating a myth
• They'll be blaming the victims
• They'll be taking our money
A re-framing HA from a converted LTC researcher

1. HA is not just about the Viagra ad people: it's about people with disabilities and chronic illnesses.
A re-framing HA from a converted LTC researcher

2. HA is consistent with the new participant-direction paradigm in LTC (and therefore it’s critical to creating a home-based and community-based LTC system).
A re-framing HA from a converted LTC researcher

3. HA is about organizational change
4. HA is about community organizing
Challenges to the Aging Network

• HA asks the Network to use resources to save resources in health care.
Can the Network maintain this infrastructure?
Challenges to HA

- Will the partners in this system collaborate?
- Will the health care system (or someone) pay up?
Final thought: How about a Mantra?

- Healthy Aging - I’m a Believer
- Healthy Aging - Mass in the lead again
- Healthy Aging - May we be healthy