I. Summary

In 2009, the Tufts Health Plan Foundation launched a new grant initiative focused on healthy aging for older adults 60 plus. Along with its new strategic grantmaking initiative, the Foundation began a partnership with the Massachusetts Health Policy Forum to leverage the Foundation’s grantmaking efforts with policy and public education approaches aimed at building a healthy aging movement in Massachusetts.

In December 2009, a conference was held in Boston with more than 300 attendees including policy experts, government officials, academic leaders, advocates and representatives of community based organizations that work with older adults. The conference, Healthy Aging in the Commonwealth: Pathways to Lifelong Wellness, included speakers from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs, Department of Public Health, Commonwealth Care Alliance, Hebrew SeniorLife and a keynote address by Nancy Whitelaw from the National Council on Aging. An issue brief on healthy aging authored by Walter Leutz at Brandeis University was released, outlining the essential components of healthy aging as well as policy and program approaches statewide and nationally.

Since the conference, the Tufts Health Plan Foundation and Massachusetts Health Policy Forum have furthered their work by bringing together key experts and leaders from government, academia, the provider community and grassroots organizations that work with older adults to form a Healthy Aging Steering Committee. This committee has met three times in March, May and June 2010, all focused on laying out the key elements of an action plan for a broad state initiative on healthy aging. There are now three subcommittees being formed in the areas of Healthy Aging Programs, Public Awareness and Healthy Aging Communities. Each of the subcommittee project plans must be politically feasible, financially feasible and sustainable.

In addition, the committee is encouraged to take into consideration the following crosscutting elements in formulating the plan:

- **Older Adult Engagement:** In what ways is the plan engaging older adults in the process as well as project implementation?
- **Evaluation:** In what ways does the plan measure the effectiveness and ultimate impact of these programs?
- **Leadership:** Who is going to lead the effort going forward/who is responsible for various aspects of the plan?
- **Systems Linkages:** In what ways does the plan involve various government and organizational entities serving older adults? In what ways does the plan incorporate ideas/plans from the other two focus areas? What about the provider community and other systems i.e. transportation?
The subcommittees will meet beginning in fall 2010 and formulate action plans, which the Steering Committee will then incorporate into an overall plan to be launched in 2011.

II. Subcommittee Descriptions

Healthy Aging Programs

The Healthy Aging Programs Subcommittee is charged with developing a plan for building and sustaining a statewide infrastructure of healthy aging programs in Massachusetts. To this aim, the charge of this committee is to develop a plan to:

- Disseminate evidence-based and other healthy aging programs statewide
- Increase outreach for programs to particularly vulnerable populations, including low-income, ethnic and racial minorities, non-English-speaking, and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender older adults
- Sustain funding for evidence-based and other healthy aging programs
- Ensure fidelity in terms of programs and evaluation/data collection, as programs grow in number and geographic reach

Public Awareness

The Public Awareness Subcommittee is charged with developing a plan for improving public images of older adults in society and raising awareness of the benefits of active, healthy living among older adults, thereby leading to (1) older adults being more physically, socially and civically active and (2) greater societal support for healthy aging programs and a more positive perception of older adults in general. To this aim, the charge of this committee is to develop a plan to:

- Create a social marketing plan that may include traditional forms of marketing such as billboards, print or television ads, as well as alternate forms of media such as online networking groups or outreach to local organizations that work with older adults
- Coordinate closely with state and local government, private and non-profit sector organizations to combine any public awareness campaign with programs, services and activities being offered

Healthy Aging Communities Sub-Committee

The Healthy Aging Communities Subcommittee is charged with developing a plan for creating pilot demonstration projects in select cities or towns that build healthy aging into the fabric of communities by addressing a multitude of environmental factors (e.g. sidewalks, transportation, affordable healthy foods, etc.) and coordinating with government as well as other community resources and organizations to develop a blueprint for what it means to age healthily in a community setting. To this aim, the charge of this committee is to develop a plan to:

- Build a blueprint for a community that supports healthy aging
- Create a plan by which cities and or towns would be selected to be chosen to pilot this concept
- Include a list of partner government entities, businesses and nonprofit organizations to be involved in carrying out the project