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New Directions in Healthy Aging

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NEW DIRECTIONS IN HEALTHY AGING

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Whistlestop Programs, March 22, 2016
The Gift of 30 Years

- Public health strategies
- Advances in medical treatment

Unprecedented 30-year increase in average US life expectancy

- We are now living vital, meaningful, happy lives into our 80’s and beyond!
- By 2030, one in five Americans will be “older adults”
Who are older adults?

- Ethnically diverse
- More women than men
- Majority live independently
- Actively involved in health care
- Many living with multiple chronic illnesses
- Many have some level of cognitive challenge
Living with Chronic Illness

Figure 3. Multiple chronic conditions among Medicare fee-for-service beneficiaries, 2010

- Depression
- Cancer
- Arthritis
- Hypertension
- Alzheimer's disease
- Hyperlipidemia
- Diabetes
- Osteoporosis
- Asthma
- Ischemic heart disease
- COPD*
- Atrial fibrillation
- Chronic kidney disease
- Stroke
- Heart failure

*chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.

What is aging – this?
Or this!
Aging Paradox

- Despite losses and health challenges associated with aging, most older adults are happier than their younger counterparts
  - More stable and optimistic outlook
  - Lowest rates of depression
  - Active, live successfully on own

- Positivity Bias
  - Older adults report more positive affective experiences than younger adults.
  - Attend to and remember emotional events in a more positive light.
A Shift in Perspective

Time is limited, so focus shifts to*

- Deeper experiences
- Simple pleasures
- Closeness and connection
- Smaller set of goals
- Select group of loved ones

- More attuned to the sweetness of life than to its bitterness

*Laurel Carstensen, Stanford Center on Longevity
Pillars of Positive Aging

- Care for physical and mental health
- Be productive, maintain autonomy
- Positive social relationships
- Financial planning, retirement savings
- Meaningful occupation: work, play
- Lifelong learning
- Throughout life, not just in stages
## Factors Associated with Positive QoL in Older Adults

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lifestyle Factor</th>
<th>Recommendations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Good health habits</td>
<td>• Good nutrition, regular exercise, sleep, etc.</td>
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<td>Chronic illness management skills</td>
<td>• Communication with physicians</td>
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<td>• Management of self-help skills</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social skills</td>
<td>• Active listening, empathy</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Prioritizing family, long term relationships</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Importance of multiple generation friendships</td>
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<td>Cognitive skills</td>
<td>• Stay intellectually active</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Life-long learning</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Stay current with technology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Work and leisure activities</td>
<td>• “Encore career” or volunteer work</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Learn new things</td>
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<tr>
<td>Good economic skills</td>
<td>• Competent management of finances, budget</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Economic security</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Practice Healthy Aging in Daily Life

- Envision
  - Spend time fantasizing about a good life

- Design
  - Daily routine reinforces goals

- Diversify
  - Education, work, family, leisure should be enjoyed throughout life

- Invest
  - Invest in the future
Model of Healthy Aging

The Six Dimensions of Wellness

©1976 Bill H. Hackett, MD, Co-Founder, National Wellness Institute
New Trends in Healthy Aging

*Think Globally, Act Locally!*

1. Blue Zones
2. Longevity Project
3. Age-Friendly Communities
4. Village Movement
5. Dominican Healthy Aging Initiatives
Blue Zones

- Global “blue zones” where people live longest
- **Sardinia, Okinawa, Costa Rica, Greece, USA**
- What can we learn about healthy aging there?
Shared Traits of “Blue Zoners”

➢ Move naturally
➢ Know your purpose
➢ Down shift
➢ 80% rule
➢ Plant slant
➢ Wine @5
➢ Belong
➢ “Family” first
➢ Right tribe
Longevity Project

- Eight-decade longitudinal study
- Stanford researcher: Dr. Lewis Terman
- Personality traits of the longest-lived:
  - Prudent and persistent
  - Friendly and convivial
  - Resilience in adversity
  - Strong social networks
  - Altruistic, other-focused
  - Health-conscious
Age-Friendly Communities/Cities

- WHO Initiative, AARP-affiliated
- 33 cities: 22 countries
- Self study and application process
- Making cities and communities better for older adults
- Factors include:
  - Outdoor spaces and buildings, Public transportation, Housing, Social participation, Civic participation, Communication and information, Community and Health services
Village Movement

- Established in Boston, 2001
- Grounding in principles of “aging in place”
- Membership-driven, grass-roots
- Volunteers and paid staff
- Coordinate access to: affordable services, transportation, health and wellness programs, home repairs, social and educational activities and trips
- Marin Villages– anyone a member?
San Rafael as “NORC”

- Naturally Occurring Retirement Community
- Similar traits as age-friendly cities
- Higher than normal % of older adults
- Health benefits to living within NORC’s
- Focus on “social determinants of health”
- Low-cost, community level approach to healthy aging
Healthy Aging at Dominican

- Osher Lifelong Learning Institute
- Healthy Seniors Program
- Senior Exercise Program
- Dining hall, campus grounds
- Leadership lectures, concerts

**Resources for Healthy Aging website**
(http://www.dominican.edu/academics/hns/ot/healthyaging).
Resources for Healthy Aging

- Marin Aging and Adult Services
- American Association of Retired People
- American Occupational Therapy Association
- National Institute on Aging (NIA)
- American Society on Aging
Thank you! – Questions?

- “Grow old along with me! The best is yet to be!”