

# Healthy Aging



**F**or most older adults, good health ensures independence, security, and productivity as they age. Yet millions struggle every day with health and safety challenges such as chronic disease, falls, and behavioral health issues—all of which can severely impact quality of life.

## Chronic Disease

- Approximately 92% of older adults have at least one chronic disease, and 77% have at least two. Four chronic diseases—heart disease, cancer, stroke, and diabetes—cause almost two-thirds of all deaths each year.
- Chronic diseases account for 75% of the money our nation spends on health care, yet only 1% of health dollars are spent on public efforts to improve overall health. In 2009 direct health care expenditures for chronic conditions in the United States totaled more than \$262 billion.
- Diabetes affects 12.2 million Americans aged 60+, or 23% of the older population. An additional 57 million Americans aged 20+ have pre-diabetes, which increases a person's risk of developing type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and stroke. In a 2007 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention program for people at high risk for developing diabetes, lifestyle intervention reduced risk by 71% among those aged 60+.

- 90% of Americans aged 55+ are at risk for hypertension, or high blood pressure. Women are more likely than men to develop hypertension, with half of women aged 60+ and 77% of women aged 75+ having this condition. Hypertension affects 64% of men aged 75+.

## Falls

- Every 15 seconds, an older adult is treated in the emergency room for a fall; every 29 minutes, an older adult dies following a fall.
- Among older adults, falls are the leading cause of fractures, hospital admissions for trauma, and injury deaths. Falls are also the most common cause of older adult traumatic brain injuries, accounting for over 46% of fatal falls.
- The nation spends \$30 billion a year treating older adults for the effects of falls. If we cannot stem the rate of falls, it's projected that direct treatment costs will reach \$69.5 billion by 2020. A quarter of hip fracture patients will be in a nursing home for at least half a year, adding to Medicaid costs.

## Mental Health and Substance Abuse

- One in four older adults experiences some mental disorder such as depression, anxiety disorders, and dementia. This number is expected to double to 15 million by 2030.

