

Preventing Disability

The Health-Promoting Effects of Senior Centers on Delaware's Aging Population

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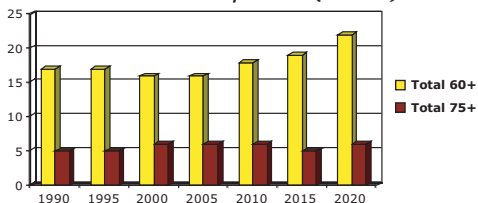
The Significance of Health-Promoting Effects on Delaware's Aging Population

With more than 70 million baby boomers in the United States poised to join the ranks of those 65 or older, the prevention of disease and injury is one of the few tools available to reduce the expected growth of healthcare and long-term-care costs, according to CDC Director, Julie Louise Gerberding, M.D., M.P.H.¹

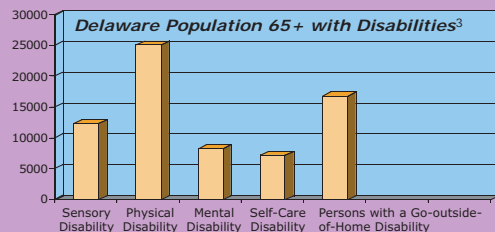
Delaware's Elderly Population Projections²

- By 2020 Delaware's 60+ population will comprise one-fifth of its total population.
- Between 1990 and 2020 Delaware's 60+ population is projected to more than double, and its 75+ population will increase even more rapidly, by approximately 146%.

Share of State's Total Population (Percent)



About 40% of Delaware Seniors Have at Least One Disability



Senior Centers' Role in Health Promotion Among the Elderly

Statistical data clearly demonstrate that senior centers in the 21st century provide a social-support milieu, which promotes



successful aging among its participants. It appears that senior centers are also doing a good job in helping older adults maintain their overall physical health.⁴

Senior Centers are designated as community focal points through the Older Americans Act. The National Institute for Senior Centers defines a senior center as a place where older adults come together for services and activities that reflect their experience and skills, respond to their diverse needs and interests, enhance their dignity, support their independence, and encourage their involvement in and with the center and the community.⁵

Activities that Promote Physical Health⁶

FITNESS

aerobics, strength conditioning, yoga, tai chi, aquatics, walking

NUTRITION

congregate meals, homebound meals, counseling and monitoring

- Wards off heart disease, cancer, diabetes, and Alzheimer's disease.
- Improves cardiovascular health, gains better balance, and increases joint mobility, making seniors less prone to falls and long-term disabilities.

Citations

- 1 American Society on Aging, CDC Background: "Crucial Issues in Elder Health: What the CDC is Doing to Prevent and Protect," Spring 2003, www.asaging.org
- 2 Institute for Public Administration, University of Delaware, www.ipa.udel.edu/healthcare/srcenters
- 3 U.S. Census 2000 Summary
- 4 Identifying Important Linkages between Successful Aging and Senior Center Participation, Ronald H. Aday, Ph.D., www.aoa.gov/prof/agingnet/Seniorcenters/NISC.pdf
- 5 National Council on Aging (NCOA)
- 6 Institute for Public Administration, University of Delaware, www.ipa.udel.edu/healthcare/srcenters
- 7 Aging in the Know, www.healthinaging.org/agingintheknow6

Activities that Promote Mental Health⁷

SOCIAL

card games, arts and crafts, singles clubs, celebrations, recreational trips

- Provides mental and emotional stimulation through cognitively demanding leisure activities.
- Reportedly reduces the risk of developing depression or chronic illness such as Alzheimer's disease.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

support groups, health-education lectures, blood-pressure screenings

- Provides education and support on the effects of healthy living, prevention, and maintenance of chronic disease and illness.



- Provides health assessments and screening services to help identify functional status (ability to perform "activities of daily living" or ADL), determine potential health risks, and maintain existing health conditions.

What Role Does the University of Delaware's IPA Play in Health Promotion for Seniors?



Created by the University of Delaware's Institute for Public Administration (IPA), Delaware's Senior Center Grant-in-Aid Funding Formula allocates \$7 million in state-generated funds to 46 senior centers throughout Delaware. This formula has encouraged the development and expansion of high-level services offered by Delaware senior centers. Grant-in-Aid funds are appropriated by the Delaware General Assembly (www.legis.state.de.us for more info) to support the activity of nonprofit agencies.