

NEW JERSEY BLUEPRINT FOR HEALTHY AGING INFORMS KEY DECISION MAKERS

Planned actions can lessen the impact of chronic disease and improve quality of life for older adults

Public Health Problem

- Much of the physical decline associated with aging is due to lifestyle; for example, lack of physical activity and unhealthy diet.
- A third of older people get no leisure-time physical activity and about two thirds are either overweight or obese.
- Health care spending is expected to increase twenty-five percent by 2030, due in large part to the anticipated increased health care needs of older adults.
- Even into advanced old age, people who make healthy lifestyle choices can reap wellness benefits, improve quality of life and prevent disease.

Program

- With a one-year Senior Planning Grant from the National Association of Chronic Disease Directors, the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services developed the *Blueprint for Healthy Aging in New Jersey*, a guide to effective, low-cost senior wellness programs.
- The *Blueprint* document (www.nj.gov/health/senior/blueprint/) includes:
 - Cost-effective programs that can be implemented locally to support older adult healthy behaviors
 - County-specific data on older adults and their health status
 - Strategies for containing health care costs and public policy recommendations
 - Personal success stories from older adults in every New Jersey county
- A feedback form tracks community agencies use of the document to plan, implement or expand older adult health promotion programs and policies.

Impact

- For the first time, county-specific data on older adults is available to direct local action on preventive lifestyle changes for older adults to lessen the impact of chronic disease.
- The *Blueprint* is reaching local, county, state and federal government leaders, local health departments, health and aging service organizations and local foundations. For example:
 - The Grotta Foundation for Senior Care used the *Blueprint* to set priorities for its current grant funding cycle
 - Local agencies report they'll use the *Blueprint* to increase support for older adult programs.
 - Workshops for health and aging service professionals are providing technical assistance on using the *Blueprint* to expand health promotion to older adults
- Benjamin Mount, Atlantic County Division of Public Health says of the *Blueprint*, "Great job.....I see the *Blueprint* playing a supporting role in the implementation of the Community Health Improvement Plan action cycle as we address this issue."

Contact

Sue Lachenmayr

New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services

609-292-9152

susan.lachenmayr@doh.state.nj.us

