HOUSTON HEALTH DEPARTMENT

2008–2016

Moving toward an elder-friendly future

2008–2016 AGING AGENDA

PROGRESS REPORT FOR HOUSTON AND HARRIS COUNTY

Area Agency on Aging
HARRIS COUNTY
Houston Health Department

Funded by Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services

- **Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA)**
  https://texasagriculture.gov/GrantsServices/TradeandBusinessDevelopment/HomeDeliveredMealsGrantProgram.aspx
- **Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC)**
  http://www.hhsc.state.tx.us/
- **Texas Silver–Haired Legislature**
  http://www.txshl.org/
- **Texas Utility Bill Assistance and Help Programs**
  http://www.utilitybillassistance.com/html/texas_utility_bill_assistance_.html
- **Transforming Life after 50 – Lifelong Learning**
  http://www.transforminglifeafter50.org/midlife-trends/lifelong-learning
- **United Way Thrive**
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- **United Workers Congress – Domestic Workers**
  http://www.unitedworkerscongress.org/domestic-workers.html
- **US Department of Agriculture (USDA)**
  - **Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program**
    http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/wic/SFMNPFactSheet.pdf
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    http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap
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  http://www.hhs.gov/aging/index.html
  - **Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)**
    http://www.hrsa.gov/index.html
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    http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/priorities/prevention/strategy/index.html
  - **Direct Care Workers**
    https://aspe.hhs.gov/basic-report/understanding-direct-care-workers-snapshot-two-americas-most-important-jobs-certified-nursing-assistants-and-home-health-aides
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  http://www.dol.gov/
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  http://www.fta.dot.gov/
- **U.S. Energy Information Administration, Texas**
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  https://www.uth.edu/aging/
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  https://nursing.uth.edu/centers-progs/coajump.htm
- **Veterans Affairs Office – City of Houston**
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- **Veteran Caregiver Support Services – The Michael E. DeBakey Veterans Affairs Medical Center**
  www.caregiver.va.gov
- **Veteran Housing Assistance – Travis Street Plaza**
  http://www.houstonchronicle.com/news/houston-texas/houston/article/Local-efforts-to-target-homeless-veterans-paying-4758813.php
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  http://www.westutx.gov/285/Parks-Recreation
- **World Health Organization's Age – Friendly Cities**
  http://www.who.int/ageing/age-friendly-world/en/
- **YMCA**
  http://www.ymca.net/
  - **50 Moving Forward**
    http://www.gethealthystayhealthy.com/videos/50-moving-forward
  - **Livestrong at the YMCA**
    https://www.ymcahouston.org/livestrong-at-the-ymca/
  - **SilverSneakers®**
    https://www.silversneakers.com/

Eight years have passed since the Houston Health Department brought together an elite corps of specialists in aging services to create the 2008 Aging Agenda for Houston and Harris County. The Aging Agenda was a comprehensive view of the issues faced by older adults in the community and suggested opportunities for improvement in the form of recommendations. Aspects of aging were categorized into eight central domains of living.

This 2016 Progress Report revisits those eight domains and highlights progress made in response to the 2008 recommendations.

CITY OF HOUSTON

Sylvester Turner
Mayor

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May 2016

To Houstonians, especially our elders and those who serve them,

I applaud the work of the aging community leaders who responded to the Houston Health Department's call for collaboration, resulting in the creation of the 2008 Aging Agenda for Houston and Harris County. The recommendations set forth in the Aging Agenda now serve as the basis for this 2016 Aging Agenda Progress Report.

As Mayor of the 4th largest city in the nation, I recognize the contributions of those that came before – our seniors. I realize that many of us are standing on the shoulders of the seniors in our city and I respectfully acknowledge our responsibility to positively impact the lives of older adults in this community.

With the City's 60 and older population continuing to grow, it is imperative that we stay alert to the needs and concerns of this age group. Not only are we obligated to stay alert, but also to stay engaged in planning well, reviewing current strategies and creating new ones that effectively and efficiently use our resources to address the challenges to healthy aging.

This update represents our continued commitment to remain at our posts as active participants in this process. As we revisit the recommendations from eight years ago and identify the progress made, the highlight on successes is very encouraging. We see how collaborations and partnerships have forged new pathways in service responses. Working together, we can continue to achieve.

The focus on achievements also highlights what yet remains as 'work to be done.' As we consider our present successes and challenges, let us stay focused in this shared responsibility. Be encouraged to build on the successes and inspired to create new ones. Both are necessary, if we are to continue "Moving Toward an Elder Friendly Future."

Sincerely,

Sylvester Turner
Mayor

Council Members: Brenda Stardig Jerry Davis Ellen R. Cohen Dwight A. Boykins Dave Martin Steve Le Greg Travis Karla Cisneros
Robert Gallegos Mike Laster Larry V. Green Mike Knox David W. Robinson Michael Kubosh Amanda K. Edwards Jack Christie

Controller: Chris B. Brown

- **Houston Housing Authority**
  http://www.housingforhouston.com/about-hha.aspx
- **Houston Health Department**
  http://www.houstontx.gov/health/
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- **Huffington Post – Post 50**
  http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/04/16/baby-boomer-industries_n_3061772.html
- **Insured Retirement Institute (IRI)**
  http://www.irionline.org/
- **Interfaith Care Partners**
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- **Long Star College Academy for Lifelong Learning**
  http://www.lonestar.edu/all.htm
- **LeadingAge Texas Legislative Priorities (formerly the Texas Association of Homes and Services for the Aging – TAHSA)**
  https://www.leadingagetexas.org/?page=Advocacy_Priorities
- **LITE-UP Texas Program**
  https://www.puc.texas.gov/consumer/lowincome/assistance.aspx
- **Long Term Care Commission**
  http://ltccommission.org/
- **Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act (MIPPA)**
  https://www.ncoa.org/centerforbenefits/mippa/
- **National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a)**
  http://www.n4a.org/
- **National Council on Aging (NCOA)**
  https://www.ncoa.org/
- **METRO (Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County, Texas)**
  http://www.ridemetro.org/Pages/index.aspx
- **MIT AgeLab**
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  http://www.montrosecenter.org/hub/
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- **National Center for Senior Transportation (NCST)**
  http://seniortransportation.net/
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  https://www.arts.gov/accessibility/accessibility-resources/leadership-initiatives/arts-aging
- **National Foundation to End Senior Hunger**
  http://www.nfesh.org/research/
- **Neighborhood Centers Inc. (NCI) Houston Aging in Place Innovations**
  http://www.ciaip.org/resource_docs/hapi_appreciative_inquiry_process.pdf
- **Northwest Assistance Ministries (NAM)**
  http://namonline.org/get-help/assistance/
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- **Rebuilding Together Houston**
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- **Senior Citizen's Guide – Lifelong Learning**
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  http://www.shelteringarms.org/services/basicNeeds/gatekeeper_program.php
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  http://www.caregiver.va.gov/
- **Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services (DADS)**
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    http://www.dads.state.tx.us/providers/pi/bip/
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    http://www.dads.state.tx.us/handbooks/appendix/02.htm
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  http://www.h-gac.com/taq/transit_planning/ridethegulfcoast/
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  http://www.uth.tmc.edu/hgec/
- **Houston Gerontological Society**
  http://www.hgsociety.org/?AspxAutoDetectCookieSupport=1

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PREFACE ▼

In 2008, the City of Houston Health Department (HHD)/Harris County Area Agency on Aging (HCAAA) spearheaded a series of meetings involving local leaders of national organizations, regional representatives of state agencies, chief executives, other non-profit senior services organizational staff, Texas Medical Center representatives, universities, and most importantly, our subject matter experts—older adults to document the issues that our City's aging population faces in navigating their central domains of life. This collaborative effort produced the 2008 Aging Agenda as an accurate view of the issues that concerned older adults and the recommendations necessary for successful and healthy aging. The Agenda also identified the need for overall policy changes to improve outcomes for Houston and Harris County's aging population.

> The Vision of the 2008 Aging Agenda was to provide a road map for Houston and Harris County to become an elder friendly and elder prepared community.

In 2015, we began looking at how far we've traveled, using that road map. We began examining our achievements made toward accomplishing the 2008 recommendations and realizing the vision. What actions had we taken? What policy changes had we enacted? What outcomes had we generated? Again, we appealed to the community's aging experts to tell us, and again they have responded. This 2016 Progress Report has been constructed from the responses and feedback of those service network providers, educators, researchers, sponsors, advocates, representatives of state agencies and local leaders, etc.

The data collected eight years later confirms that the vision remains intact and the Aging Agenda continues to serve as a dynamic source document to inform and guide service delivery and coordination of resources among partnering organizations tasked with meeting the needs of older adults in the Greater Houston area. With 'Baby Boomers' aging into their senior years at the rate of 10,000 a day, available resources will continue to fall far short of demand. Systematic collaboration and coordination are essential to avoid duplication, facilitate leveraging, and ensure equitable appropriation of available funds and resources, as well as serve as a model for future age-friendly initiatives such as the AARP network of Age-Friendly cities and communities.

Stephen L. Williams, M.Ed., M.P.A.
Director
Houston Health Department

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- **American Community Survey (ACS) Census**
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- **Care Connection Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC)**
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    https://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Medicare-Fee-for-Service-Payment/ACO/
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    https://innovation.cms.gov/initiatives/CCTP/
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  http://www.homelesshouston.org/community-needs-survey-city-of-houston-housing-and-community-development-department/
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  - **HPARD Senior Programs**
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  http://prtl.uhcl.edu/portal/page/portal/UAV/Community/CLASP
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  http://www.homelesshouston.org/
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  http://www.utilitybillassistance.com/html/texas_utility_bill_assistance_.html
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    http://liheap.org/states/tx/
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  http://www.easterseals.com/explore-resources/for-caregivers/are-you-a-caregiver.html
- **Elder Justice**
  http://www.justice.gov/elderjustice//
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  http://www.elderoptionsoftexas.com/senior-assistance-programs.htm
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  http://www.aarp.org/
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  http://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/?cmp=RDRCT-LIVABL_SEPT09_012
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- **A Calmer Life – Baylor College of Medicine**
  https://www.bcm.edu/news/grants/grant-funds-anxiety-intervention-older-adults
- **Administration on Community Living (ACL)**
  http://www.acl.gov/
  - **ACL – Elder Justice Coordinating Council**
    http://www.aoa.acl.gov/AoA_Programs/Elder_Rights/EJCC/index.aspx
- **Adult Protective Services (APS) – Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS)**
  http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/everyonesbusiness/Facts.asp#Facts
  - **DFPS Purchased Client Services Background Check Policy (also see Texas DADS below)**
    https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/PCS/Contract_Handbook/Chapter_5/5-08-back_ground_check.asp
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  http://www.todaysgeriatricmedicine.com/archive/050310p27.shtml

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ▼

The Aging Agenda has been used to strengthen and guide the community's aging service directions in Houston and Harris County. Its methodology and contents have been presented at local and national conferences as an encouraging model for other communities desiring an elder friendly future. This update will ensure its continued usage as a tool that supports healthy and successful aging.

It is the product of a combined effort, commitment and feedback from multiple sources across a broad spectrum of the local aging network. Documented responses are acknowledged from the following partners:

- Adult Protective Services (APS) – Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS)
- Baylor College of Medicine
- Baytown Meals on Wheels
- Care Connection Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC)
- City of Houston Fire Department (HFD)
- City of Houston Health Department (HHD)
- City of South Houston Meals Program
- Elder Service Provider Network (ESPN) –United Way of Greater Houston
- Evelyn Rubenstein Jewish Community Center of Houston
- Harris County Area Agency on Aging (HCAAA)
- Harris County RIDES
- Montrose Center
- Neighborhood Centers Inc. (NCI)
- NCI-Sheltering Arms Senior Services
- Texas Southern University (TSU) – COTF Aging and Intergenerational Resources
- United Way of Greater Houston – Care for Elders
- UTHealth Consortium on Aging
- YWCA of Greater Houston

We would like to extend sincere appreciation for all contributions made in production of this document, including the research assistance of Texas Southern University Health Care Administration Masters intern students Hafusat T. Adediran, Mel'Lisa LeBen and Cherrelle M. Posey.

A very special thank you is extended to the original Domain Leaders and their teams for their hard work, dedication and commitment to produce the 2008 Aging Agenda. Without their effort, the Houston and Harris County aging community would not have had access to such comprehensive data to inform, educate, and focus decisions and actions during the past eight years.

Lastly, this progress report would not have been possible without the tireless energy, resourcefulness and unwavering commitment of Ms. Thelma Samuel.

The demographic data across the nation continually highlights an 'Aging America,' including the aging of the Baby Boomers (the generation born between 1946 and 1964) which is creating a dramatic shift in the age composition of the U.S. population. The oldest Baby Boomers are celebrating their 70th birthdays in 2016. Projections of the entire older population (which includes the pre-Baby Boomers born before 1946) suggest that 71.4 million people will be age 65 or older in 2029. This means that the elderly, ages 65 and older, will make up about 20 percent of the U.S. population by 2029, which is almost a 14 percent increase from 2012.

From 2009-2013, the American Community Survey (ACS), a part of the U.S. Census Bureau, reported an increase of 58,585 households with one or more persons 60 years old and older in Harris County. For this same period, there was a 36,854 increase in households with persons 65 years old and older.

▶ By 2016, the number of Harris County adults, 60 and older is projected to be 654,618.

The 2015 White House Conference on Aging Long Term Services Policy Brief quoted a 2012 report, stating approximately 20 percent (7.7 million) of older Americans receive assistance with their care needs (2012 Disability Status Report: United States, Cornell University). With projections in population growth come increased health-care consumption and increased spending for federal entitlement programs, such as Medicare and Social Security. While the nation celebrated the 50th anniversary of Medicare, Medicaid, and the Older Americans Act, as well as the 80th anniversary of Social Security in 2015, its capacity to support the unmet needs of this generation of older adults remains uncertain.

This 2016 Progress Report revisits the eight domains to document advancements made on the '2008 Recommendations for Action.' In addition, state and national initiatives/activities designed to enhance the lives of older adults and provide resources to their families, friends and other caregivers are included.

The progress reported is neither all inclusive nor absolute. While some '2008 Recommendations for Actions' remain to be done, additional challenges have surfaced. Responses to these challenges are fundamental to continue the journey toward achieving an elder friendly and elder prepared community in Houston and Harris County.

The 2008 Aging Agenda established a framework and served as a road map to identify and advance actions to improve the quality of life for older adults, so credibly that it aligns perfectly with the broad categories addressed at the 2015 Whitehouse Conference on Aging and the World Health Organization/AARP 8 Domains of Livability. During the past eight years, it has served as a source document to inform the aging community and the public, to influence new ideas and actions beyond its initial recommendations, to direct advocacy, to inspire and validate collaborations, and to guide the leverage of funding and pooling of limited resources. This progress report presents achievements, as identified and documented by responses and feedback from the Houston and Harris County aging community.

DATA SOURCES

PART ONE ▼

PASSION

DOMAIN #1:
Health and Well-Being

LEAD: Janice Sparks, PhD
Manager, Care Connection Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC)

▼ VISION ▼

Ensure accessible and integrated medical and mental health services that improve the quality of life for seniors.

The 2008 Aging Agenda (Agenda) suggested the meaning of 'Health and Well Being' and how it is to be achieved are best answered individually. However, the community also has a responsibility to its seniors in defining, supporting, and addressing barriers to achieving 'Health and Well Being.' Local senior-centered organizations recognized seven characteristics of a community consciously seeking the physical and mental well-being of its seniors as follows:

- opportunities for seniors to participate in physical activities;
- vaccination programs to protect against influenza and pneumonia;
- cancer screening programs;
- programs that educate seniors about achieving good health, maintaining it, and dealing with disease;
- accessible health care;
- screening and care for mental health problems; and
- programs that support caregivers and their education.

The 2008 *Agenda* identified key indicators of the status and challenges for 'Health and Well Being' across four areas:

- older adults' participation in organized health promotion activities;
- the mental health state of older adults in Houston and Harris County;
- the increased mortality rates for cancer in older adults linked to aging; and
- low vaccination rates for flu and pneumococcal disease among older adults (ages 65+).

#4 Housing	Amy Young Barrier Removal Program (HCIL), Catholic Charities Community Living, HCAAA, HCIL, LITE-UP Texas program, Rebuilding Together Houston, Sheltering Arms, Habitat for Humanity, etc., churches, New Hope Housing, age 55+ apt. complexes, increased subsidized senior housing, HUD List, supportive housing vouchers, Harris County Resource Center	Houston Housing Authority, HCAAA, Harris Center for Mental Health and IDD, 55+ senior housing complexes, senior living facilities, Rebuilding Together Houston, Section 8-subsidized housing, Sheltering Arms Weatherization Program	FEMA, government legislation, reverse mortgages, senior apartments, senior housing
#5 Transportation & Mobility	METRO, METROLift, RIDES, VIC-SW, Hero, other volunteer programs, American Red Cross, Senior Wheels, City of West U Senior Services, TRIPP, HCAAA, Care for Elders, ESPN, Basic Mustard Seed Ministry, Medicaid	RIDES, METRO Discounts, METROLift, METRO Rail, Meals on Wheels, Harris Center for Mental Health and IDD, licensed caregivers with vehicles	County services, family and friends, lifts, scooters, wheel-chairs, METRO & METRO Lift
#6 Safety and Security	Better Business Bureau, visibility of HPD, Lifeline, speakers from Police Dept., alarm systems, education on 'Fall Prevention,' more police & Neighborhood Watch, retirement plan, financial education (payday loans & debt), home assessment and family members assisting seniors in making home environment safer.	Education on safety & security, emergency response systems/ Lifeline services, in-home companions, communication checks (other seniors & volunteers), bathroom/shower chairs & rails, one-story homes, home repairs, First Responders/ 9-1-1, more patrol officers, alarm systems, security gates, Harris Center for Mental Health & IDD	Automatic burglar bars, 'buddy system', fire alarms, more senior housing with security, security cameras with remote viewing, apartments for families
#7. Civic Engagement/ Volunteerism and Employment	Churches, Montrose Center, Multi-Service Centers, RSVP, Sheltering Arms, Senior Corps programs (RSVP, Foster Grandparents, Senior Companions), SPRY Outreach @ Montrose Center, senior centers, seniors helping seniors, community centers are offering more opportunity, AARP Senior Employment, Family Houston, CSEP program	AARP, SER/SCEAP Programs, Goodwill, Walmart, Senior Companions, senior community service employee programs, City of Houston Volunteer Program, R.S.V.P. Program, churches, Harris Center for Mental Health and IDD, community centers, Involvement in community, Internet, local newspaper, retirement funds	Church ministries, The Pinnacle Senior Center, Senior Corp– AmeriCorps, Area Agency on Aging, Small Business Administration, education
#8 Spirituality, Culture, Recreation, and Lifelong Learning	Senior church groups, bible study, prayer, All Saints Catholic Church, N.W. Methodist Church, Office of Aging Ministry-Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston, St. John's Downtown, Montrose Center-SPRY Program, TALC - Third Age Learning Center, RSVP - Retired Senior Volunteer Program, church groups/therapy counseling, church volunteers, mega churches providing basic resources, senior classes for learning, calmer life, community/senior centers	Churches, religious TV shows, Catholic Charities, volunteer service agencies, programs for veterans, community centers, senior centers with diverse populations, AARP, YWCA, HCC, Leisure Learning, Brazilian Arts Institute, technology, pamphlets in various languages, county senior citizen outlets, accessible transportation	Churches, ministries for seniors, religious institutions, sense of well-being, media & TV. Culture: outings, outreach organization and jobs, plays, senior clubs, church programs & activities, city & county programs, community/senior citizen centers, exercise programs & social events, increased recreation in county, The Pinnacle, training for children caretakers, Y memberships

APPENDIX A

2015 SURVEY RESPONSE LIST OF RESOURCES, SERVICES, & INITIATIVES USED OVER THE PAST FIVE YEARS.

Aging service providers, caregivers and seniors were surveyed in 2015. These are their written responses to the question asked across the 8 domains, *"Over the past five years, what resource/service/initiative(s) are you aware of that has/have made a significant impact in the lives of older adults?"*

DOMAIN	AUDIENCES		
	SERVICE PROVIDERS (33%)	**CAREGIVERS (39%)**	**SENIORS (28%)**
#1 Health and Well-Being	Care for Elders, CBA, ESPN,Harris Health Hospitals, assistance with Medicare applications, HCAAA, Houston Hospice, Montrose Center-SPRY Program, Sheltering Arms, visiting doctors & nurses, counseling for depression, education, use of care managers by CMOs, CEAP, case managers, counseling, METROLift, vouchers/ transportation, Food Pantry (Our Lady of Guadalupe), Life Alert button, provider services home visits/ SNAP/ Medicare/Medicaid	The D.A.W.N. Program, having a good primary care doctor, HHS HCAAA, AARP, APS, Harris Center for Mental Health and IDD Conferences, Meals on Wheels, Houston Food Bank, NCI, Obama Health Care, adult day centers	Assistance with caregiving, utility assistance, community centers activities, FEMA Grants for housing repair, Affordable Care Act, Sheltering Arms, Food Bank, SNAP, Meals on Wheels, Medicare, Medicaid
#2 Access to Quality Care	APS, Catholic Charities, DADS, DARS, family members, HCAAA, Montrose Center, Public Housing, Sheltering Arms, 2-1-1, Flexible Funding Pool (FFP) funds, HCAAA, community health fairs, San Jose Clinic	HCAAA, HHD, Harris Center for Mental Health and IDD, vision and dental, 2-1-1 and elderly network training, Affordable Care Act, Amerigroup & WellCare & TexanPlus, good caregiver, bill assistance, nursing care, METROLift, rail expansion	Increase in facilities for health care & well-being, i.e., gyms & exercise facilities, Gulf Coast Community Services, African American Support Conference, Harris Health Systems, help with utilities & food, Medicare, METRO & METROLift, Obama Care, senior housing, YMCA
#3 Basic Needs: Food, Clothing, and Utilities	Braes Interfaith Ministries, Catholic Charities, Comprehensive Energy Assistance Program (CEAP), food pantries, Houston Food Bank, informal support groups, local churches, Meals on Wheels, NCI, Sheltering Arms, St. Vincent de Paul Society, United Way 2-1-1, Goodwill/clothing donation stores, re-sale shops & clothes closets, Lite-Up Texas, RIDES, METROLift/ transportation vouchers for taxis and other, Your Texas Benefits online system, SNAP	Harris Center for Mental Health and IDD, SNAP, Meals on Wheels, food pantries, Houston Food Bank, Sheltering Arms, TXU Energy, adult day care services, churches, community organizations, Comprehensive Energy Assistance Program (CEAP), Volunteer Health Care Nurses, utility (light) bill discounts	Food pantries & Food Bank, Meals on Wheels, Salvation Army, SNAP, Lite-Up Texas, FEMA Grants

The following section outlines the recommendations made in 2008 and the progress made through 2016, including State and National Initiatives/Activities toward achieving the Health and Well-Being vision of ensuring accessible and integrated medical and mental health services that improve the quality of life for seniors.

(Note: Lists of services, initiatives, activities, etc., are not all inclusive.)

2008 RECOMMENDATION ▼

Preventive Health

- Drive preventive health programs and existing evidenced based health, exercise, nutrition, and disease management programs and encourage seniors of all abilities to get involved.

2016 PROGRESS ▼

EVIDENCE-BASED

- **2010-PRESENT –** HCAAA, Care Connection ADRC and other organizations such as the Chinese Community Center were funded through the Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act (MIPPA) to educate, identify and enroll consumers into the Medicare Savings Programs (MSP) and the Low Income Subsidy Program (LIS), helping to ensure that thousands of Medicare beneficiaries are able to afford necessary medical care through assistance paying for prescriptions and Medicare premiums.
- **2011-PRESENT –** HCAAA has funded 12 evidence-based intervention programs (EBIs) delivered by 10 providers: A Matter of Balance (AMOB), Active Living Every Day (ALED), Arthritis Self-Management Program, HomeMeds, Program to Encourage Active, Rewarding Lives (PEARLS), Tai Chi, Stress- Busting for Family Caregivers, Chronic Disease Self-Management Program (CDSMP), Diabetes Self-Management Program (DSMP), Substance Abuse screening and intervention-Brief Intervention and Referral to Treatment (BIRT), and Healthy Ideas. In 2014, 865 older adults participated in EBI programs; 1,491 participated in 2015.
- **IN 2011 –** HCAAA implemented the evidence-based Community Care Transitions Program (CCTP) with two hospitals in Katy, TX. Through a 2014 partnership with the City of Houston Health Department via federal 1115 Waiver funds, CCTP became the Hospital Care Transitions Program. The program now partners with five hospital sites throughout Harris County and has successfully enrolled over 506 patients during FY2015 and achieved a hospital recidivism rate of 13 percent (below the current 15 percent goal) for patients returning to the hospital within a 30-day period.

THE CITY OF HOUSTON HEALTH DEPARTMENT—

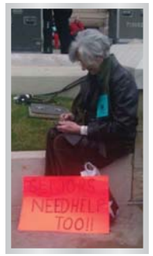
- **2010-PRESENT –** Established the Diabetes Awareness and Wellness Network (D.A.W.N.) in the Third Ward Houston Multi-Service Center, offering free wellness programming to those diagnosed with, or at risk for, diabetes, promoting lifestyle enhancements to improve their disease management and quality of life.
- **2013-PRESENT –** Established the Colorectal Cancer Awareness and Screening (COCAS) program that provides the FIT screening test free of charge to participants 50-75 years of age, in an effort to prevent and/or treat colorectal cancer early, improving health outcomes in colorectal cancer.
- **2013-2016 STRATEGIC PLAN –** Includes an action to maximize Chronic Disease Prevention and Wellness opportunities using national prevention funding under its goal to align services with national mandates and standards.

- **2010-PRESENT –** Neighborhood Centers Inc. (NCI) offered 86 evidence-based workshops, including AMOB, CDSMP, DSMP to 1,376 seniors. Electronic tracking has recorded 473 seniors participating in 10,818 units of physical activity (ALED & Tai Chi: Moving for Better Balance). (Note: Additional participation occurred prior to electronic tracking.)
- **2010-PRESENT –** Michael E. DeBakey Veterans Affairs Medical Center Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Program and NCI-Sheltering Arms Senior Services partner in the Strength to Serve: Peer Service for Veteran Family Health program of the Corporation for National and Community Service, coordinated by Partners in Care Foundation, to expand veteran access to evidence-based programs in their home communities. The program provides veterans,

APPENDIX A

2015 Survey Response List of Resources, Services, & Initiatives Used Over the Past Five Years

Reflections of Houston and Harris County Seniors in an elder friendly community.



their caregivers and family members with skills to better self-manage their health, improved access to needed resources, and health coaching. The partnership ensures veterans with chronic medical or mental health problems can acquire skills in self-management and physical activity to avoid falls and maintain functioning.

- **2013-2016 –** Texas Southern University (TSU) introduced Aging in Motion (AIM), an evidence-based wellness program that included the Arthritis Foundation Exercise and Aquatic programs.
- **2013-2016 –** TSU also presented the following evidence-based workshops/programs: AMOB, CDSMP, and DSMP.
- **2016 –** Funded by the Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services (DADS), the School of Public Health at Texas A&M University is conducting a pilot project with the cooperation of the HCAAA to expand and improve the Texercise program, a health and wellness initiative. The project, referred to as Texercise Select Research Study, will operate at selected congregate meal sites and is designed to develop data in support of establishing Texercise as an evidence-based program.

PREVENTIVE

- **2008-PRESENT –** UTHealth Consortium on Aging's geriatric patients seen at UT Physicians Center for Healthy Aging, Bayland Geriatric Health Center, Settegast Clinic and Bayland Clinic receive comprehensive geriatric assessments with preventive health recommendations.
- **2008-PRESENT –** UT Physicians and Harris Health System sponsor a home visit program through which homebound older adults can receive preventive and primary care.
- **2008-2015 –** The Houston Geriatric Education Center provides education (face-to-face, online) to inter-professionals, older adults and their caregivers, covering multiple preventative health programs, including healthy aging, nutrition, disease self-management and exercise.
- **2009-PRESENT –** A Calmer Life, developed by Baylor College of Medicine, is designed to help older adults learn skills to help cope with anxiety. The program has the option of including religion and spirituality into skill building and coping strategies.
- **2010-2012 –** TSU Center on the Family Aging and Intergenerational Resources conducted Medication Management workshops on health topics regarding vitamins and herbs, drinking water, immunizations, 'Safe Use of Prescription Drugs,' 'Alzheimer's Disease and Treatment.'
- **2010-PRESENT –** NCI has provided 3,315 health and nutrition workshops at nutrition Congregate Centers. Workshops include health screenings, immunizations, medication management, and nutrition education sessions.
- **2012-2015 –** The Annual Falls and Flu Prevention Education Workshop, a community collaborative event, promotes awareness of the leading causes of fatal injury among the elderly, (with the intent to decrease preventable injuries and fatalities) and educates older adults about their increased risk of complications from the flu and the importance of annual vaccinations.
- **2014-2015 –** TSU provided Caregiver Information Services group presentations on stress management, behavioral health and aging, 'Safe Environment for the Family Caregiver', and 'Caregiver Tools to Live By' (2016).
- **2014-PRESENT –** The Montrose Center hosts monthly 'Essential Education' speakers. Topics include nutrition education, health education (Alzheimer's information, colorectal cancer prevention), mental health ('Healthy Ideas Program', grief/loss, depression, coping w/ holidays). Also included are evidence-based programs, i.e., AMOB.

"I am too crippled to do a lot of exercise. I just joined Nutrisystem and I look forward to doing a commercial in the nude with Marie Osmond when I get to my goal weight."

2008 RECOMMENDATION ▼

Annual Exams and Fragmentation

- Promote yearly, comprehensive senior health workups from dentists and physicians that include the following: dental examinations, immunizations, screenings for physical impairments, cancer, depression, syndromes as dementia, over prescription of drugs, or functional impairment that can lead to disability.
- Reduce fragmentation among health specialties and care providers that encourage cooperative geriatric programs and effective medical homes.

2016 PROGRESS ▼

- **ONGOING –** Medicare Prevention and Wellness Programs: Annually, Medicare pays for many preventive services to maintain health, detect health problems early, determine the best treatment and to prevent certain diseases. Preventive services include exams, shots, lab tests, and screenings. They also include programs for health monitoring, counseling and education, and a yearly wellness visit.
- **2012-2015 –** The Annual Falls and Flu Prevention Education Workshop/Conference community collaborative event promoting awareness and education about increased risk of falls and complications from the flu and the importance of receiving annual vaccinations (see above).
- **ONGOING –** Montrose Center promotes yearly comprehensive health workups, including screenings for depression and alcohol abuse.
- **2014 –** STAR+PLUS is a Texas Medicaid managed care program for people who have disabilities or are 65 or older. One of its features is service coordination. A STAR+PLUS staff member works with the member, the member's family and the member's doctors and other providers to help the member get the medical and long-term services and support they need.
- **2012 –** Medicare Accountable Care Organizations (ACOs) are local health care providers and hospitals who volunteer to work together to provide coordinated care by communicating with each other, and partner with original Medicare beneficiaries in making health care decisions.
- **2010-PRESENT –** UTHealth Consortium on Aging's Nurse Case Managers coordinate communication between geriatric patients/families and the healthcare teams at UT Physicians Center for Healthy Aging, Bayland Geriatric Health Center, Settegast Clinic and Bayland Clinic.
- **2014-2015–** UTHealth Consortium on Aging assembled outstanding expertise across the spectrum of geriatric care and, most recently, organized that expertise to undertake a comprehensive strategic planning effort that identified shortcomings of the mainstream health care delivery system as fragmented, uncoordinated, inefficient, and with a focus on specialty procedures rather than on comprehensive care. Findings also stated UTHealth is uniquely positioned to facilitate the integration of current approaches into a comprehensive care delivery model to care for elderly patients.

EPILOGUE – CALL TO ACTION▼

The U.S. Census data reflect the rapid population growth of older adults throughout the nation. Increased requests for services will accompany this growth. Even with aging Baby Boomers' increased aspirations and efforts toward healthier aging, some decline and reduced capacity may occur, requiring additional assistance with activities of daily living. The projected growth in the aging population of Houston and Harris County was recognized as a challenge in 2008, including increasing service demands, and a greater competition for funds and resources. Eight years later, the challenge is confirmed.

In 2015, the Harris County Area Agency on Aging surveyed older adult service providers and found a general consensus that the number of requests for services received by their agencies during the past five years had increased across all Domains with the greatest increases seen in Domain #1: Access to Quality Care; Domain #3: Basic Needs: Food, Clothing, and Utilities; Domain #4: Housing; and Domain #5: Transportation & Mobility.

In 2008, there was also recognition of a tremendous opportunity for agencies to collaborate and leverage each other's unique advantages and resources. That opportunity continues. It's time for strong partnerships and full engagement of all stakeholders, including service providers, demographers, advocates, policy makers, elected officials, public authorities, higher education leaders, healthcare systems, insurance companies, businesses, advocates, potential funders, faith-based institutions, older adults and caregivers.

In a 2015 survey of Houston and Harris County older adults, too frequently their responses indicated a lack of access, affordability and awareness of existing resources. Community partnerships and collaborations can generate new resources, services and opportunities, as acknowledged by the achievements documented in this progress report. However, if the population is unaware, unable to access or afford, then service delivery does not happen.

It is important to recognize that while many of the Baby Boomers are tech savvy and have the ability to actively advocate for services to meet their needs, there are others who lack this capacity. There are older adults, including pre-Boomers and some Boomers, who do not have the physical or mental capacity to engage in their care needs beyond the point of simply being a recipient of care. Outreach and awareness campaigns, safe and non-intimidating systems/processes, and assistance with service navigation through what is often a complex web of providers and benefits are critical components of a responsible and effective elder friendly community.

In our efforts to survey and document the community's response to the Aging Agenda's 2008 recommendations we recognize that there are advancements, strategies and initiatives that went unreported and therefore are not reflected here. Although not reported and not documented, it is acknowledged that the community received the benefit of those activities. The report documents progress made on specific recommendations. It is recognized that there is much more that needs to be done. Recommendations with no reportable outcomes are categorized as "More work to be done." Agencies and organizations are urged to examine and re-examine all recommendations which fit within the sphere of their operation and consider, either individually or in collaboration with network partners, championing the cause. Without this level of commitment these recommendations will remain incomplete or totally unaddressed.

Lastly, community stakeholders are encouraged to consider that increased numbers of older adults also potentially represent a valuable asset and support. As Baby Boomers age and are re-inventing retirement, many possess resources, skills, experiences and wisdom. These are assets to bring to the planning table, to broaden the stakeholder base and to increase volunteer and workforce pools with opportunities for win/win results.

Deborah A. Moore, MBA
Bureau Chief
Harris County Area Agency on Aging

2008 RECOMMENDATION

Geriatric Academics and Training

- Bolster academic and training programs to prepare more physicians, nurse practitioners, and social workers in geriatrics.

2016 PROGRESS ▼

- **2008-2015 –** Houston Geriatric Education Center (H-GEC) enhanced geriatric training programs by offering community hospital and outpatient clinic based programs on topics such as Alzheimer's Disease and related dementia, delirium, depression, complications of hospitalization, and comprehensive geriatric assessment. In addition, a 40 hour geriatric certification course for inter-professionals is offered at the Texas Medical Center.
- **UTHEALTH CONSORTIUM ON AGING –** The McGovern Medical School at UTHealth Department of Internal Medicine, Division of Geriatric and Palliative Medicine has trained 21 geriatric medicine fellows over the last 8 years. The UTHealth School of Nursing offers two adult gerontology tracks to train geriatric nurse practitioners: adult gerontology primary care and adult gerontology acute care.
- **ONGOING –** The University of Houston Agencies for Gerontology Intercultural Field Training (AGIFT) Consortium continues to offer specialized gerontological training experiences to social workers from the University of Houston Graduate College of Social Work.
- **ONGOING –** The Houston Alliance to Address Dementia works with Houston-area community-based organizations to train them on dementia recognition and making appropriate referrals to local resources.
- **2014 –** NCI-Sheltering Arms Adult Day Center trains nursing, occupational therapy and medical students in basic dementia communication skills. In addition, students from Prairie View A&M School of Nursing, University of Texas School of Nursing, Baylor College of Medicine, and University of Texas Rio Grande Valley participate in on-site learning at the Day Center. Since 2010, seven social work interns have been placed in neighborhood based senior services.
- **2014-PRESENT –** Through the CMS Delirium Grant, Houston Methodist Hospital System partnered with United Way 2-1-1 Senior Specialists to improve care for Medicare & Medicaid beneficiaries at risk for delirium and associated complications through education, recognition, and prevention efforts, offering targeted interventions, including home health visits, nurse navigator follow up phone calls, volunteer visits for inpatients, and medication monitoring.
- **2015, 2016 –** HCAAA/Care Connection ADRC hosted their first annual professional, academic training conference with 330 attendees. The conference theme of 'Building Bridges to Support Older Adults and People with Disabilities' brought local aging networks together with state and national policy makers to discuss and learn about new developments in the aging and disability community from the local, state and national perspectives.
- **ONGOING –** United Way Elder Service Provider Network (ESPN) offers monthly community resources networking forums for health and human service professionals who work with older adults. Meetings include informative presentations on a variety of aging issues as well as networking opportunities. Presentation topics include Health and Aging, Substance Abuse and the Elderly, Nutrition and Aging, Resources for Veterans, Housing for Older Adults, etc.

STATE & NATIONAL INITIATIVES/ACTIVITIES ▼

In December 2010, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services launched the Healthy People 2020 initiative with objectives and targets covering 42 topic areas, including "Health-Related Quality of Life and Well-Being." Assigned to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as the lead agency, this topic area presents healthy aging as a long, productive, and meaningful life, while acknowledging that many older adults do not maintain these behaviors at the levels necessary to avoid serious health conditions and chronic diseases, including high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, heart disease and stroke, and osteoarthritis, as well as poor mental/emotional health, such as depression.

The Healthy People 2020 initiative continues to monitor the topic area of health-related quality of life and well-being from a multidisciplinary perspective, looking at self-rated physical and mental health, overall well-being, and participation in society.

At the July 2015 White House Conference on Aging, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) made several prevention-related announcements:

- The National Institutes of Health is partnering with a diverse group of public and private partners to promote healthy aging through its Go4Life exercise and physical activity campaign for older adults, including a call by the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials for all state and territorial health departments to support physical activity events for older adults beginning with Go4Life Month in September 2015.
- The National Prevention Council, chaired by the Surgeon General and made up of 20 federal departments, developed the National Prevention Strategy in 2011 to guide the nation in implementing the most effective strategies for improving health and well-being. In the spring of 2016, the Council will release a Healthy Aging Action Plan to advance the National Prevention Strategy, which will identify federal action steps to promote prevention and well-being among older Americans.
- The Surgeon General is joining with the YMCA to announce a partnership for YMCA associations across the country to host intergenerational physical activity events during the first week of August to promote opportunities for young and older Americans to be active together.
- The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) is partnering with AARP, the American Medical Association, the American Association of Family Physicians, the National Black Nurses Association, the National Hispanic Medical Association, the National Medical Association, the Partnership to Prevent Chronic Disease, the National Council on Aging, the National Hispanic Council on Aging and Services and Advocacy for GLBT Elders (SAGE) to disseminate information to patients and members on Medicare's preventive benefits. Efforts to increase use of recommended preventive services will include, for example, co-branding CMS publications on preventive services and distributing a user-friendly check list to help Medicare beneficiaries understand and use their Medicare preventive benefits.
- To reduce the occurrence of preventable injuries such as falls, which affect one in three older adults every year, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is launching a free on-line course offering continuing education credits to physicians, nurses and other health professionals on making falls prevention a routine part of clinical care. The CDC's evidence-based falls prevention tool, known as Stopping Elderly Accidents, Deaths & Injuries (STEADI) will be implemented across the country.
- In an effort to help older Americans stay healthy, the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) is announcing $35 million in awards to health professions training programs to expand geriatrics education to prepare the health care workforce to respond to the needs associated with advancing age.
- HRSA will create an Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias training curriculum to build a health care workforce with the necessary skills to provide high quality dementia care and ensure timely and accurate detection and diagnosis of dementia.

STATE & NATIONAL INITIATIVES/ACTIVITIES ▼

Seniors do love their art. The National Endowment for the Arts reports on-going, community-based arts programs improve the quality of life for older Americans. The Directory of Creative Aging Programs in America produces the National Center for Creative Aging (NCCA) directory, featuring arts programs serving older people and includes intergenerational activities. NCAA goals are enabling older adults to find programs, encouraging arts and aging organizations to find partners, and helping teaching artists to find employment with organizations committed to creative aging in their communities. It is the first of its kind, funded by the National Endowment for the Arts, MetLife Foundation, and The Michelson Foundation.

The July 2015 White House Conference on Aging 'Private Sector' actions supporting Lifelong Learning and Engagement were announced as follows:

- Encore.org, a national nonprofit, focused on leveraging the experience of adults in midlife and beyond to meet community needs, will develop a new national campaign to mobilize older Americans' talent to improve the prospects of vulnerable children and youth.
- Michigan Technological University's Breaking Digital Barriers group pairs university students with older learners to provide instruction in digital literacy in rural Michigan. By 2017, the program will expand to reach additional older learners with 100 student tutors, with the aim of producing a nationally replicable model.

SUMMATION ▼

One good thing can lead to another. For example, the National Endowment for the Arts (2007) noted those who are part of a community's performing arts audience are twice as likely as those who are not to participate in outdoor activities and 1.7 times more likely to exercise.

With Baby Boomers' quest for personal enrichment and the research that supports the "neuroplasticity" of the brain—the ability to reorganize itself, forming new neural connections throughout life in response to experiences—lifelong learning has become a purposeful learning discipline that positively impacts healthy aging.

In an Aging Well, Spring 2010 article, Nancy Merz Nordstrom, lifelong learning author, states a healthy mind/body/spirit connection is critical to getting the most out of life at any age, and even more important as we get older. She describes how lifelong learning has formal and informal, structured and unstructured sources that keep the mind, body, and spirit stimulated, challenged, and fully engaged in the after-50 years. Examples of activities are spirituality, meditation, stress reduction, yoga, exercise, the creative arts, walking clubs, and enjoying nature outdoors.

Spirituality, Culture, Recreation and Lifelong Learning are critical to an individual's ability to age well and remain socially engaged and connected to those around them. The opposite of which is social isolation and loneliness which can negatively impact both physical and emotional health, increasing the strain on limited resources. ▲

SUMMATION ▼

The State of Aging and Health in America 2013 report from the CDC shows that the key to improving the health and quality of life for all older adults living in the United States will be collaboration between multiple and diverse groups on national, state, and local levels. These groups will include the public, health care providers, government agencies, and community organizations.

Several of the 2015 White House Conference on Aging initiatives involve partnerships and focus on prevention, i.e.,

- September 2015 – The National Institutes of Health is partnering with a diverse group of public and private partners to promote healthy aging through its Go4Life exercise and physical activity campaign for older adults.
- The National Prevention Council, chaired by the Surgeon General and made up of 20 federal departments, announced at the 2015 Conference on Aging that in the spring of 2016, it will release a Healthy Aging Action Plan to advance the National Prevention Strategy with action steps to promote prevention and well-being among older Americans.

As the Healthy People 2020 initiative continues to monitor the topic area of health-related quality of life and well-being, measuring self-rated physical and mental health, overall well-being, and participation in society, it is noted that people with higher levels of well-being judge their lives as going well. They feel very healthy and full of energy to take on their daily activities. They are satisfied, interested, and engaged with their lives. They experience a sense of accomplishment from their activities and judge their lives to be meaningful. Those with a sense of well-being report they are more often content or cheerful than depressed or anxious, and they get along with others and experience good social relationships. Personal factors, social circumstances, and community environments influence well-being.

In addition to the education of older adult consumers about healthy aging, the State of Aging and Health in America 2013 recommends educating young adults, adolescents, and children to pursue health promoting behaviors and get recommended preventive services to positively impact future 'healthy aging.' ▲

2008 RECOMMENDATION ▼

Senior Public Awareness Campaign

- Create a public awareness campaign that defines what makes a venue friendly to seniors
  - Make the community aware of the appeal of afternoon performances.
  - Encourage restaurants to enhance lighting so menus can be read.
  - Enlarge aisles to accommodate walking appliances, wheelchairs, or persons assisting elders with walking.

2016 PROGRESS ▼

- The 2008 creation of the Aging Agenda for Houston and Harris County.
- **2013 –** Houston Complete Streets and Transportation Plan included utilizing City mobility planning efforts to provide safe, accessible and convenient use of public roadways by motorists, public transit riders, pedestrians, and people of all ages and abilities, including older adults walking or using wheelchairs.
- **2014-PRESENT –**Cigna Sunday Streets Houston is a Go Healthy Houston initiative to promote and improve the health of Houstonians. Cigna Sunday Streets Houston opens a stretch of streets normally reserved for cars and other vehicles to allow cycling, walking, dancing, socializing and provides a family-friendly opportunity to be physically active. The initiative sponsors include the City of Houston, Cigna Health Insurance, the Houston Health Department, the Houston Police Department, and Green Houston.
- **2015-PRESENT –** The City of Houston joined the AARP Age-Friendly Communities Network, committing to making the city more livable for seniors. Age friendly communities include all forms of mobility (driving, walking, public transit, assisted transportation and other options) to support older adults living safely, independently, and comfortably in their own homes/communities, regardless of age, income, or ability level.

▼

"I am 90 years old. I still drive a 1994 Ford truck and I have lunch at the Senior Center and play dominoes every day."

— MORE WORK TO BE DONE —

- Create a public awareness campaign that defines what makes a venue friendly to seniors
  - Make the community aware of the appeal of afternoon performances.
  - Encourage restaurants to enhance lighting so menus can be read.
  - Enlarge aisles to accommodate walking appliances, wheelchairs, or persons assisting elders with walking.

sports outings; recreational; crafts; physical fitness (dances) activities with annual Senior Olympics, etc. Activities include: Aerobics, Ballroom Dancing, Beading Class, Bingo, Ceramics/Crafts, Computer Class /Room, Dance, Drama, Exercise Room, Gardening Class, Learn to Swim, Line Dancing, Monthly Trips, Sign Language Class, Table Games, Tai-Chi, Water Aerobics, Weight Training / Room, Wii, Games, Writing Class, Yoga, and Zumba.

- **2012-PRESENT –** HCAAA/Care Connection ADRC operates the Age Well-Live Well Harris County initiative developed by the Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services (DADS). The initiative serves to promote older adults engagement in healthy habits, awareness of aging issues and available resources, and social engagement with others. Using evidence based health and wellness models such as Texercise Fitness Program, A Matter of Balance Fall Prevention, Medication Management Education, Talk with your Doctor - Healthy Living Series, Tai Chi, Line Dancing and more. Local Harris County PARTNERS include the HCAAA Nutrition Providers, City of Houston Health Department – Community Health Services, Care For Elders (United Way of Greater Houston), Rebuilding Together Houston, Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS), Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services (DADS), Cigna Healthspring, Memorial Hermann at the Texas Medical Center, and the Harris Center for Mental Health and IDD (Individual Developmental Disabilities).
- **2012-PRESENT –** LIVESTRONG at the YMCA of Greater Houston supports the increasing number of cancer survivors (anyone from diagnosis through remission) during the transitional period between completing their cancer treatment and the shift to feeling physically and emotionally strong enough to attempt to return to their normal life or their "new normal."
- **2013-PRESENT –** SilverSneakers® is a fitness program and benefit provided to Medicare-eligible members by over 65 Medicare Advantage and Supplemental plans, such as AARP's MedicareComplete through United Healthcare, and the AARP Medicare Supplement Insurance Plan. It is one of the largest senior-focused exercise programs in the United States. A SilverSneakers participating fitness location can be found by searching the website.
- **2013-PRESENT –** The NCI - JW Peavy Senior Center operates an internet café, fitness center, and craft studio in partnership with funders Advanced Health Education Center and Ernst and Young.
- **2015-PRESENT –** NCI has added four long-term intergenerational programs at their senior centers which include a walking club with kindergardners & seniors, an arts class with 3rd graders and seniors, and two different cyber senior groups with middle school students.
- **2015 –** Through collaboration with CuraConnector, NCI-Sheltering Arms Adult Day Center offers theatre classes for clients.
- **2016 –** Funded by the Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services (DADS), the School of Public Health at Texas A&M University is conducting a pilot project with the cooperation of the HCAAA to expand and improve the Texercise program, a statewide health and wellness initiative. The project, referred to as Texercise Select Research Study, will operate at selected congregate meal sites and is designed to develop data in support of establishing Texercise as an evidence-based program.

— MORE WORK TO BE DONE —

- Initiate pilot programs with nonprofit and for-profit entities such as bookstores, libraries, and coffee houses to implement or expand activities, classes, and programs geared toward seniors.

PART TWO ▼

INDEPENDENCE

DOMAIN #2:
Access to Quality Health and Well-Being

LEAD: Josh Reynolds, MSW, MBA
Director, Care for Elders, United Way of Greater Houston

▼ VISION ▼

Improve the competency, availability and scope of senior social services provided by compensated, uncompensated and family caregivers.

The 2008 Aging Agenda Work Group Members identified three particularly critical and complex issues involved in ensuring quality care for older adults and family caregivers:

- Access to Needed Services
- Quality and the Direct Care Work Force, and
- Services and Supports for Family Caregivers

Key Indicators of the 2008 Aging Agenda Status and Challenges for Access to Quality Care included the large number of older adults waiting on the Region 6 Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services (DADS) interest list for the In-home Family Support Program services and on the waiting list for Home Delivered Meals service; the low hourly wage of personal attendants; caregivers' knowledge of resources and access to benefits; and caregiver assessments and training.

Recommendations for Actions were grouped according to the three issues cited above. The following chart shows the 2008 Recommendations and the 2016 Progress Made, including State and National Initiatives/Activities, toward achieving the 'Access to Quality Care' vision of improving the competency, availability and scope of senior social services provided by compensated, uncompensated and family caregivers. (Note: Lists of services, initiatives, activities, etc., are not all inclusive.)

2008 RECOMMENDATION ▼

Partnerships/Pilot Projects: Nonprofits, Universities, For-profits

- Forge partnership between nonprofit organizations and area universities to create centers for lifelong learning geared toward people 60 years of age and over.
- Initiate pilot programs with nonprofit and for-profit entities such as bookstores, libraries, coffee houses, and fitness centers to implement or expand activities, classes, and programs geared toward seniors.

2016 PROGRESS ▼

- **ONGOING –** Lone Star Community College – The Academy for Lifelong Learning (ALL) is located on five Harris County campuses, most recently added at the Atascocita Center in 2012. The Academy is a membership community that offers free and low-cost stimulating classes and seminars, social activities, skills development, and opportunities for personal growth that enriches the lives of senior adults age 50 and older.
- **ONGOING –** The Clear Lake Association of Senior Programs (CLASP), an outreach initiative of the University of Houston-Clear Lake, provides lifelong learning opportunities through free programs open to the public. Evening speaker series are offered about new and varied subjects for the education and intellectual challenge of the community.
- **ONGOING –** Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) at UTMB is a collaborative learning program with college level courses for 55 year olds and older. The curriculum is designed by learners to meet specialized interests, capitalize on unique regional resources and environment, and utilize local experts for faculty. Special events and presentations include lectures and seminars that welcome internationally acclaimed speakers, and field trips.
- **ONGOING –** The Evelyn Rubenstein Jewish Community Center (ERJCC) publishes a Lifelong Learning newsletter for adults, 60 years old and older, available online. The newsletter announces courses, activities and events hosted by the ERJCC on a range of topics, including art, music, theater, etc.
- **ONGOING –** The Houston Parks and Recreation Department (HPARD) Senior Programs (ages 55 and older) provide a wide variety of recreation and leisure activities at the many Houston area community centers and the Metropolitan Multi-Service Center. Activities include specialty and creative craft classes, fitness and walking clubs, cultural events, field trips, and senior forums, craft exhibitions, computer classes at local libraries, fashion shows, special holiday events, Senior Olympics competition, and sports programs. Most programming is free.
- **ONGOING –** Volunteer Houston-Connecting People offers opportunities for people to follow their passion and volunteer with Greater Houston nonprofit organizations. Areas of service include Animals, Business, Children & Youth, Education & Literacy, Environment, Homeless & Housing, Mission, Veterans, and more.
- **ONGOING –** 50 Moving Forward at the YMCA of Greater Houston for adults ages 50 years and older focuses on helping individuals enjoy life and meet responsibilities while improving their health and well-being, and learning how even small differences in lifestyle choices can have positive health benefits.
- **ONGOING –** Harris County Precinct Senior Programs offer a variety of cultural, recreational, and learning opportunities, including performing arts, educational, and

The following section outlines the recommendations made in 2008 and the progress made through 2016, including State and National Initiatives/Activities toward achieving the Spirituality, Culture, Recreation and Lifelong Learning vision of promoting/ providing culturally appropriate neighborhood oriented social, recreational, education and religious opportunities to enhance the quality of life for seniors.

(Note: Lists of services, initiatives, activities, etc., are not all inclusive.)

The following section outlines the recommendations made in 2008 and the progress made through 2016, including State and National Initiatives/Activities toward achieving the Access to Health and Well-Being vision of ensuring accessible and integrated medical and mental health services that improve the quality of life for seniors.

(Note: Lists of services, initiatives, activities, etc., are not all inclusive.)

2008 RECOMMENDATION ▼

Access to Needed Services

- Increase funding for needed services.
  - Close service gaps and reduce waiting lists for home and community based services such as home care, home delivered meals, home repair and supportive housing.
  - Expand flexible funding resources to address individual consumer needs when existing community resources are not available.
- Expand education and training
- Train consumers and providers about self-management of chronic disease to promote optimum health and prevent excess disability.
- Enhance and expand programs and services.
- Expand efforts that directly assist older adults in accessing needed services and ensure continuity of care.
- Create a Web-based, multi-audience community resource database of local programs and services.
- Establish a shared intake/eligibility form for use by multiple providers and across settings.

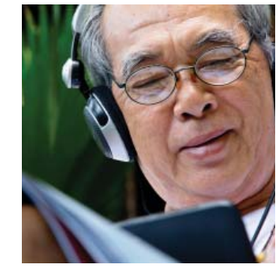
2016 PROGRESS ▼

PROGRESS IS PRESENTED PER THE SEQUENCE OF RECOMMENDATIONS ABOVE.

- In 2009, HCAAA expended $26,563 for housing repairs. In 2015, $93,395 was expended for housing repairs, a 350% increase..
- The Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) has continued to fund agencies in Harris County annually through the Texans Feeding Texans Home-Delivered Meal Grant funds. Since 2008, annual awards have ranged from $1.5 to $1.87 million each year. The 2015 award for Harris County was $1.79 million.
- **ONGOING –** The Care for Elders Access Network Flexible Funding Pool (FFP) resources are utilized as the funding source of last resort to address critical unmet needs of clients served through a collaboration of 12 organizations working to improve older adults' access to needed services. FFP resources are intended to meet urgent unmet needs, especially those that pose a threat to the health and/or well-being of the client, and for which no current community resources are available within the time frame necessary for that client's particular situation. Similarly, FFP funds are intended to address needs that add a significant benefit to the client's health and/or well-being.
- **2011-PRESENT –** Neighborhood Centers, Inc. (NCI)-Sheltering Arms Senior Services uses current funding to provide Home Care Services on a sliding fee scale (based on total household income) to seniors who exceed the income guidelines for state funded services, or are waiting to receive those state funded services and cannot afford the cost of other private pay agencies.
- **2011 –** Care for Elders, The National Council on Aging (NCOA) and the Bank of America Charitable Foundation announced a partnership with a $25,000 grant from the Foundation to provide one-on-one screening/assessment of older adults to determine eligibility for access to

DOMAIN #8:
Spirituality, Culture, Recreation and Lifelong Learning

LEAD: Allison Booker Brooks, MSW,
Executive Director, YWCA of Houston



▼ VISION ▼

Promote and provide culturally appropriate neighborhood oriented social, recreational, education and religious opportunities to enhance the quality of life for seniors.

The 2008 Aging Agenda overview of 'Spirituality, Culture, Recreation and Lifelong Learning' presented these aspects of living as combined contributors to a meaningful life for older adults. Spirituality can describe activities that contribute to being spiritual (concentrating on things sacred or those unrelated to the material world), reading, studying, singing, exchanging ideas with others of varied faiths, or simply communing with nature. In Houston and Harris County, recreational activities geared toward seniors typically include health and wellness training and exercise programs. Lifelong learning ensures that seniors have the opportunity to be engaged in learning regardless of age. It includes everything from art and music classes to college courses and opportunities to get acquainted, or stay current with technological trends. Cultural diversity has an underlying impact on the involvement of older adults in all the above. Understanding and awareness of cultural influence can enhance the success of programs and activities for older adults.

Key Indicators of 2008 Status and Challenges of Spirituality, Culture, Recreation and Lifelong Learning were viewed in terms of the participation levels of older adults in various spiritual, cultural, recreational, and learning activities/events.

SUMMATION ▼

ACL reported about 10 million older adults use Older Americans Act services, in which half a million volunteers assist, including older volunteers. Aging network providers often recruit older volunteers for several reasons—many come with time, knowledge and skills from past life/work experiences, a good work ethic, and have made a voluntary choice to be there with a desire to help. They are likely to have similar life experiences to those of the ones being served which brings with it a higher comfort level for both. Depending on prior work and life experiences, they may be able to lead, mentor, train, and/or inspire those being served, as well as other volunteers.

The return on their investment in civic engagement and volunteerism for older adults could be worthwhile. In a June 2013, article "Volunteering may be Good for Body and Mind," Stephanie Watson, Executive Editor, Harvard's Women Health Watch noted how past studies have supported the positive mental health benefits of volunteering as it wards off loneliness and depression. In addition, she also cited some evidence suggests volunteering may positively impact blood pressure and stress levels which are both linked to positive health outcomes. Another study suggests positive return when done for the "right" reason of helping others, and not for self.

AARP defined community engagement in its discussion of 'Livable Communities' as involvement in social activities and relationships, volunteering, civic participation in community planning and the political process. It was also believed to be a primary contributor to successful aging by significantly influencing the health and well-being of adults as they age.

The 2015 White House Conference on Aging – Healthy Aging Policy Brief noted how major medical and public health advances and greater access to health care has caused an increase in the life expectancy of Americans to reach a record high of 78.8 years. With this increased longevity, there is an expectation that older Americans will have more time to engage in the workforce, in civic and volunteer activities, and in enriching their communities.

Many older adults work well beyond retirement age. The need for additional income prompts many Baby Boomers and older adults to work longer or to seek further employment after retirement. An article on 'Part-time Jobs for Seniors Continuing Work after Retirement,' noted other prompters for older adults continuing work included personal satisfaction, pursuing that dream career that was missed, basic enjoyment, and opportunity to meet others and create friendships. Often, many are looking for part-time jobs to cover medical insurance.

Although the Houston job market has increased, the increase in income is not felt by seniors because of the increase in costs for housing/rent, food and services. In addition, SS/SSI/Disability income has not kept up with the cost of living.

In 2015, the Insured Retirement Institute (IRI) released a new research report that found Baby Boomers' confidence in having sufficient savings to last throughout retirement has dropped to a five-year low. Only 27 percent of Boomers felt their savings will last. Despite the drop in confidence, 44 percent expect their financial situation to improve during the next five years, up from 32 percent in 2012. ▲

information and assistance from a wide range of federal, state and community solutions.

- **2013-PRESENT –** Care Connection ADRC has continued to receive "rebalancing" funding used to increase access to home and community based services, totaling $858,000. Funds are the result of Medicaid spending being shifted from institutional long-term services and supports to home- and community-based services, as a result of research documenting the improvement of quality care and reduced health care costs when formal services and supports are delivered in home and community-based programs. The Affordable Care Act is helping to support this effort through the Balancing Incentives Program.
- **2014 –** Through the Houston Alliance to Address Dementia, a Direct Assistance Fund was created to provide individuals with dementia and their caregivers access to needed services, including respite for caregivers.
- **2012-PRESENT –** NCI-Sheltering Arms Senior Services has an estimated $30,000 available in flexible funding from Universal American donations.
- **ONGOING –** Montrose Center offers a sliding fee scale for services to all clients, including older adults.
- **2015 –** Baylor College of Medicine obtained Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI) funding to train community agency providers to assist consumers 50+ years old with managing worry and stress through the Calmer Life Program in collaboration with NCI-Sheltering Arms Senior Services and Catholic Charities. This assistance is accessible in mental health underserved areas of Harris County through partnerships with faith-based communities, community centers , non-profit and public agencies.
- **ONGOING –** UTHealth Consortium on Aging members give lectures to community members at the Glazier Senior Education Center about chronic disease self-management and other aging-related topics.
- **2010-PRESENT –** NCI has hosted Chronic Disease Self-Management Program workshops for 825 older adult participants.
- **2015, 2016 –** Montrose Center sponsors an annual Senior Resource Fair.
- **ONGOING –** Baytown Meals on Wheels provides general service information to Home Delivered Meals recipients during assessments for the meals programs.
- **2016 –** NCI-Sheltering Arms Senior Services Caregiver Support program is currently developing and piloting a Houston-Area Caregiver Meetup platform where caregivers of older adults can access resources from multiple programs and services.
- **2014 –** NCI, through the Houston Alliance to Address Dementia, created a Dementia-specific case manager position to help individuals with or at risk of dementia navigate service access including health-related services.
- **2009-PRESENT –** Take Time Texas website hosted and maintained by the Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services (DADS) to provide information that refreshes and recharges the caregiver, raise awareness of services available to caregivers, collect profile data on informal caregivers, implement a standardized caregiver assessment tool to evaluate the needs of caregivers, and to refer informal caregivers to support services, while improving existing services and developing new ones to sustain informal caregivers.
  The website provides:
  - Statewide database of respite providers that caregivers can search to find nonprofit, commercial, faith-based, and governmental respite providers.
  - Educational materials and online information and resources to help caregivers and providers resolve issues and find information about caregiving.
  - Resources to help respite providers, including outreach materials, information on best practices and training tools.
- **ONGOING –** 2-1-1 Helpline/United Way of Greater Houston maintains a comprehensive resource database for utility bill assistance, food, shelter, rent assistance, counseling, clothing, etc., that is continually updated to ensure accuracy.

RECORD OF INFORMATION AND REFERRAL ACCESS

- 2-1-1 Helpline/United Way of Greater Houston Information & Referral Access Network
  - **2015 –** Total Calls: 957,631
    - Senior Related Calls: 118,284
    - Clients assessed via Senior Specialists: 2,593
    - Clients receiving case management: 131
- Care Connections – Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC)
  - **2015 –** Total Calls: 7,563
- Harris County Area Agency on Aging Information, Referral and Assistance Program
  - **2015 –** Total Calls: 26,600

— MORE WORK TO BE DONE —

- Establish a shared intake/eligibility form for use by multiple providers and across settings.

2008 RECOMMENDATION ▼

Quality and the Direct-Care Workforce

- Mandate pre-employment training for unlicensed direct care workers.
- Develop and conduct supervisory staff training to enhance management and communication skills.
- Advocate for higher reimbursement rates for service providers that are restricted to increasing worker wages.
- Centralize the recruitment, screening, training and supportive services provided to direct care workers from multiple organizations and enhance management and communication skills among these workers.
- Improve training, wages, benefits, and career advancement opportunities for frontline, direct care workers.

2016 PROGRESS ▼

- **HIRING: 2007 –** Texas passed legislation mandating background checks and minimum training standards.

ONGOING – Education /Training

- HCAAA funds Caregiver Information Services via contracts with six agencies to disseminate information for informal caregivers and the public through publications, large group presentations, seminars, health fairs and mass media. In 2014, contractors hosted 272 activities/events with 9,448 participants. In 2015, there were 363 activities/events with 9,928 participants.
- Care for Elders Direct Care Workers Annual Conferences provide free training to direct care workers. Attendees participate in interactive workshops to build professional and personal skills, demonstrations to develop techniques, and networking opportunities to share experiences with fellow caregivers. Additionally, they learn about best practices and community resources. Direct care staff trained: 290 in 2014; 260 in 2015.
- **2013 –** Care for Elders co-hosted the Houston Voices Institute Leadership Program with Direct Care Alliance for a two-day

STATE & NATIONAL INITIATIVES/ACTIVITIES ▼

'You'll be Amazed' is a Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services (DADS) volunteer campaign that educates Texans about the value volunteers provide for the aging and disability population and how to access volunteer opportunities. The program operates under the Age Well ~ Live Well Volunteer and Community Partnerships. The website provides links to resources to help recruit, retain, recognize and relate to volunteers, and ideas for making the most out of a volunteer program.

The Aging Network's Volunteer Cooperative – In 2010, the Administration for Community Living (ACL), formerly Administration on Aging, funded the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a) for a three year project to create the recently renamed the "Aging Network's Volunteer Cooperative" at www.ncoa.org/. The purpose of the Cooperative was to help the Aging Network expand and use volunteers, especially Boomers, more effectively and develop ACL's and the Aging Network's leadership in civic engagement. The Cooperative is a partnership of n4a, AARP, the AARP Foundation, the National Association of State Units on Aging and Disabilities, the Council for Certification in Volunteer Administration and the Corporation of National and Community Service. ACL will work with these organizations to expand the capacity of the Aging Network to engage volunteers nationwide.

Facilitating the Availability of Lifetime Income Options was among the many announcements made at the 2015 White House Conference on Aging. The Treasury and Labor Departments previously issued a series of guidance documents encouraging workplace retirement plan sponsors to offer responsible annuity options to help protect retirees from outliving their savings. The guidance should encourage more employers to offer lifetime income annuities as a benefit distribution option in their 401(k)-type plans.

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"If you are an older adult living in Houston and willing to get out of your comfort zone, you will find many opportunities in the area."

access to services, improve the quality of care, and enhance the quality of life for older adults and their families.

- Evelyn Rubenstein Jewish Community Center, Houston Senior Community Service Department uses a variety of outreach activities. Concentrating on the needs of all seniors, the Department brings programs and activities, some of which are federally funded, to the community for the betterment of all older adults.
- Gateway to Care has nearly 190 member or affiliate partners striving together to bring accessible and affordable health care resources and services to under-served and vulnerable communities.
- Interfaith CarePartners serves people through a congregation based (coalition of churches/synagogues) volunteer caregiving program. The program equips congregations to reach out and serve weakened and vulnerable people in ways that enhance their own lives, as prepared partners in care, members of home-based ministries of personal presence and practical assistance.

▶ **ONGOING –** Evelyn Rubenstein Jewish Community Center-Senior Corps is a leading senior volunteer service partnership for senior volunteer opportunities. Participants (age 55 and older) utilize their experience, skills, and talents to assist local nonprofits, public agencies, and faith-based organizations in carrying out the missions of Senior Corps RSVP, Foster Grandparents, and Senior Companions.

▶ **ONGOING –** AARP Foundation hosts volunteer opportunities using online search options to match interests, experience and location.

▼

"As a senior, I don't mind working in the Houston area, but want to be paid a reasonable amount for my work efforts."

▶ **ONGOING –** SER-Jobs for Progress of the Texas Gulf Coast, Inc., AARP Foundation, and the National Asian Pacific Center on Aging (Chinese Community Center) operate the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) focusing on the training and employment needs (full and part-time) of the unemployed older workers, age 55 and older, who meet certain income guidelines. These agencies partner with local non-profit organizations (host agencies) to provide participants with training opportunities to update their skills.

▶ **2015 –** NCI-Sheltering Arms Senior Services conducted Appreciative Inquiry Focus Group with Home Based Seniors to determine future guidance for volunteer programming. The inquiry asked what tasks were needed in their homes for which they did not have resources to cover, and how they could use their passions to volunteer/give back to their community. Plans are to use the results in 2016 to both create volunteer opportunities for seniors and to guide the development of a menu of services for external volunteer projects.

▶ **ONGOING –** Baytown Meals on Wheels provides gasoline reimbursement to senior volunteers.

— MORE WORK TO BE DONE —

▶ Organizations that promote ... employment of seniors.

Direct Care Workers training to enhance their personal and professional development through the interactive teaching of Direct Care Alliance. Funding was provided by HCCA and United Way of Greater Houston.

▶ Interfaith CarePartners offers caregiver support programming in 49 ZIP codes in the greater Houston area. Communities of faith congregations work with Interfaith CarePartners to host Caregiver Conferences throughout the year in the greater Houston area.

▶ Care for Elders Access Network of senior service agencies and organizations provides practice enhancements through interventions and staff trainings to better serve clients.

▶ **2008-2009 –** Texas Southern University (TSU) Center on the Family Aging and Intergenerational Resources provided the following Caregiver Information Services: support group meetings, sessions on 'Parental, the Second Time Around,' legal issues, health and wellness, financial matters, and caring for yourself.

▶ Montrose Center provides ongoing weekly supervisory staff training and clinical staff participate in monthly in-service trainings.

▶ The UTHealth Consortium on Aging and the Houston Geriatric Education Center have online educational resources available on 50+ (and growing) aging-related topics.

▶ **2009-PRESENT –** Take Time Texas website provides educational materials, online information and resources, best practices and training tools to help caregivers and respite providers. (See above for more details.)

WAGES

▶ **2013 –** U.S. Department of Labor extended minimum wage and overtime protections to home care workers who, unlike workers who provide services in nursing homes and other residential facilities, lacked such protection. The Department has been committed to assisting employers in implementing the regulation in a manner that affords crucial wage protections to these workers who provide long-term services and supports. These wage protections and other measures that enhance the labor standards for direct care workers are critical to efforts to recruit and retain a sufficient number into the profession to keep pace with the growing need. Direct care workers, like other low wage workers are likely to benefit from greater access to health insurance through the Affordable Care Act.

▶ **2015 –** U.S. Department of Labor added standards for minimum wage and overtime protections for home care service employees.

▶ **2015 –** NCI-The Sheltering Arms Senior Services changed the organizational Home Care structure to allow direct care workers to have full-time employment status with more stability in their income levels. In addition, all personal care assistant positions have full benefits packages, including paid vacation time. (Note: This area is being reviewed at the state level.)

— MORE WORK TO BE DONE —

▶ Centralize the recruitment, screening, training and supportive services provided to direct care workers from multiple organizations and enhance management and communication skills among these workers.

2008 RECOMMENDATION ▼

Services and Supports for Family Caregivers

- Undertake a systematic, detailed review and evaluation of existing caregiver resources in Houston-Harris County and develop an interagency, coordinated response to identify gaps and unmet needs, keeping in mind the needs of a culturally diverse population
- Implement caregiver assessment protocols across all care settings and ensure quality caregiver education and care consultation
- Advocate with the corporate sector for expanded working caregiver initiatives and support

2016 PROGRESS ▼

- **2016 –** NCI-Sheltering Arms Senior Services Division began facilitating conversations with area caregiver service providers to better understand the current resources and gaps in our system. To better inform this group, NCI has also conducted focus groups with family caregivers to better understand their needs and wishes for services.

ONGOING SUPPORT SERVICES INCLUDE

- HCAAA Family Caregiver Support Network works to identify resources, assist and promote awareness to caregivers who are taking care of an elderly person, assist with access to available services (counseling, support groups, a library of bilingual resources and training to help caregivers make decisions and solve problems relating to their care giving needs), respite for temporary relief of care giving responsibilities, and supplemental services on a limited basis to compliment care provided by caregivers. Grandparents and other caregivers (age 60 and older) raising grandchildren, or children with developmental disabilities are also eligible to receive these services.
- The Michael E. DeBakey Veterans Affairs Medical Center implemented Caregiver Support Services which include the services of a social worker or nurse to offer information and assistance for caregivers. Support options include referring caregivers to the Building Better Caregivers six-week, highly-interactive, online small-group workshop where 20-25 family caregivers complete the online workshop together. Referrals to other community services are also available. Respite and other concrete services are available to post-911 veterans.
- Alzheimer's Association: The Southeast Texas chapter offers more than 25 support groups in Harris County, including specialized groups based on language, disease modality, gender, and disease stage.
- HCAAA hosts bi-monthly "Conversations with Caregivers," a family caregiver support initiative to provide training, support, and information about Caregiver resources.
- **2009-PRESENT –** Take Time Texas Website provides 'Elder Care' resources and referral information for employers and HR professionals of working caregivers, providing links and information to help employees balance work responsibilities and caregiving. (See above for more details.)
- **2010-PRESENT –** Care Connection ADRC Lifespan Respite Voucher program has received over $600,000 to provide vouchers to pay for in-home care and care outside the home, such as adult day care services that allow family caregivers temporary respite from their care giving responsibilities.
- **2014-PRESENT –** Through a partnership with Houston Methodist Hospital System and United Way 2-1-1 Senior Specialists,

2008 RECOMMENDATION ▼

Organizations that promote civic engagement, volunteerism, and/or employment of seniors

- Subsidize METRO fares and gasoline costs for senior volunteers and employees.

2016 PROGRESS ▼

- **ONGOING –** HCAAA Area Planning Advisory Council (APAC) includes as a requirement membership of older adult volunteers whose civic engagement includes advising HCAAA on matters relating to the development of the Area Aging Service Plan, the administration of the Plan and the operations conducted under the Plan. As a group, APAC members collaborate with state/local officials, and other community groups to present HCAAA's mission and advocate for needs of older adults within the community. Past APAC supported events include Older Americans Month activities, annual listening sessions, town hall meetings, and the annual Houston's Meals for the Elderly (Ho.M.E.) project.
- **ONGOING –** HCAAA coordinates and promotes Harris County older adults attendance at the annual Senior Day at the Capitol event sponsored by the Texas Senior Advocacy Coalition. With a combined voice, seniors meet with public officials to advocate for public policies that protect and enhance the quality of life for older adults in their communities.
- **ONGOING –** HCAAA APAC elects six members to serve 2-year terms, representing Houston and Harris County in the Texas Silver-Haired Legislature (TSHL). TSHL promotes good government for all Texans by directly involving senior citizens as volunteers in the legislative process. TSHL provides a nonpartisan forum for discussion and debate of senior issues, advocacy training and an avenue through which older citizens may serve as a resource to both public and private sectors.
- **ONGOING –** HCAAA subcontracts with University of Texas Health Science Center, School of Nursing, Center on Aging to manage Ombudsman Volunteers who advocate for the welfare and rights of residents in nursing homes and assisted living facilities. The program recruitment includes the use of social media in identifying volunteers who serve in three critical roles: advocate, mediator, and friendly visitor to the facilities that care for some of the most vulnerable population.
- **ONGOING –** The City of Houston Community Center Operations under the Parks and Recreation Department directs the programs and facility operations for 60 Houston area community centers and the Metropolitan Multi-Service Center. Opportunities for civic engagement and volunteerism at these centers include but are not limited to: The After-School Enrichment Program, Summer Enrichment Program, After-School Achievement Program (ASAP), Instructional Sports, Nature and Environmental Education and Exploration Programs, Teen Programs, Senior Adult Programs, Adult Arts and Specialty Crafts and a host of fitness activities and programs.
- **ONGOING –** Non-Profit Organizations collaborating with other service providers to ensure access to affordable and accessible services to residents of Houston and Harris County, offer opportunities for volunteerism and/or employment, such as:
  - Care for Elders (CFE) is Houston's largest, most diverse and most experienced partnership focused solely on elder care issues. Uniting members from the public, private and nonprofit sectors, Care for Elders is dedicated to informing public policy and influencing community practice to increase

2008 RECOMMENDATION ▼

Seniors made aware of opportunities

- Develop a quarterly newsletter or flyer that informs seniors of opportunities in civic engagement/volunteering and employment.
- Ask members of city council to distribute information to their constituencies.
- Create a Speaker's Bureau to educate the community about volunteer, civic engagement and employment opportunities for individuals 55 and older.

2016 PROGRESS ▼

- **ONGOING –** Electronic newsletters and other communications containing opportunities for civic engagement/volunteering and employment are distributed on set schedules to specific client/constituent audiences by local organizations, non-profit agencies, elected officials (including City Council members), etc. Transportation support/allowance, stipends, special acknowledgements, or other incentives may accompany the various different opportunities. (See organizations that promote civic engagement, volunteerism, and/or employment of seniors on next page for a list of some of those ongoing opportunities.)
- **ONGOING –** Information about activities and events for adults is disseminated via Harris County Precinct newsletters, calendars, and other publications. The Precinct 2 Senior Chit-Chat Newsletter is an example of a senior newsletter used to provide public information and promote awareness.
- **ONGOING –** The City of Houston Volunteer Initiatives Program (VIP) in the Mayor's Office is responsible for engaging Houstonians in city government through volunteer service activities and community projects. Some of the programs overseen by the VIP include recruitment and referral of interested volunteers to various departments and community partners through the City's website, as well as HoustonSERVICE.org. The VIP website has a search option to help narrow options to individual preferences.
- **ONGOING –** Volunteer Houston-Connecting People to Their Passions offers opportunities to volunteer with Greater Houston nonprofit organizations in an array of service areas, including Animals, Business, Children & Youth, Education & Literacy, Environment, Homeless & Housing, Mission, Veterans, and more. The website has a link to select a preferred area and sign-up option. Nonprofit organizations all around Houston and its vicinity rely on Volunteer Houston to acquire over 50,000 volunteers per year.
- **ONGOING –** The Harris County Citizen Corps Council coordinates with volunteer groups such as the Red Cross, the Salvation Army, the United Way, and Citizen Corps programs to identify volunteer opportunities. The Citizen Corps programs include the Community Emergency Response Team, the Neighborhood Watch Program, Volunteers in Police Service, Fire Corps and the Medical Reserve Corps. The website includes links to specific opportunities with contact information.

— MORE WORK TO BE DONE —

- Create a Speaker's Bureau to educate the community about volunteer, civic engagement and employment opportunities for individuals 55 and older.

NCI-Sheltering Arms Senior Services Division developed a direct-referral system to connect individuals with or at risk of dementia and their caregivers immediately to resources.

- **2014 –** The Houston Alliance to Address Dementia works with Houston-area community-based organizations to train them on dementia recognition and making appropriate referrals to local resources. Organizations are trained on caregiver needs and are provided assessment tools and protocols to use with dementia clients.
- Through the Houston Alliance to Address Dementia, NCI-Sheltering Arms Senior Services collaborates with the Alzheimer's Association to provide behavior-management classes to caregivers of people with dementia.
- **2014 –** NCI-Sheltering Arms Senior Services has adopted the Benjamin Rose Institute Care Consultation program to better serve the needs of caregivers.

▼

"Not only did the resources provided...help my parents transition to a new life in Texas, but they provided me with much-needed rest and a peace of mind. I don't know how I would have made it through the past year without your help."

ONGOING - RESPITE PROGRAM SERVICES

- HCAAA provides Adult Day Services for caregiver respite to family caregivers.
- Caring.com lists 30 Adult Day Centers in Houston, ranging from nonprofit organizations to faith-based groups to centers serving clients with specialized needs (physical, disabilities, and others).

— MORE WORK TO BE DONE —

- Implement caregiver assessment protocols across all care settings and ensure quality caregiver education and care consultation
- Advocate with the corporate sector for expanded working caregiver initiatives and support

STATE & NATIONAL INITIATIVES/ACTIVITIES ▼

In the recommendations section of the 2013 Long Term Care Commission Proposed Solutions report, the Commission endorses, among other measures: implementing a standard quality assessment tool; making Long-Term Services and Support (LTSS) services more available to consumers with a focus on home and community-based care; and elevating standards for the LTSS workforce, including enabling criminal background checks. They recommended the creation of a national advisory committee and convening of the 2015 White House Conference on Aging.

July 2015 White House Conference on Aging, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) announcements related to 'Access to Quality Care' and supporting elder caregiving included:

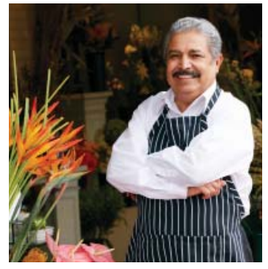
- The Office of Women's Health is developing training to help family caregivers maximize their own health and address specific care needs of persons with dementia. The curriculum will be released in 2016.
- Launching Aging.gov to provide older Americans, their families, friends, and other caregivers with a one-stop resource for government-wide information on helping older adults live independent and fulfilling lives. The web site links to a broad spectrum of federal information, including how to find local services and resources in your community for everything from healthy aging to elder justice to long-term care, as well as how to find key information on vital programs such as Social Security and Medicare.
- The employer coalition ReACT (Respect a Caregiver's Time), Care.com and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology are joining forces to generate the tools employers need to effectively support employees who are caregivers. ReACT and Care.com will launch an employer engagement effort to drive broad employer adoption of best practices and effective strategies that support their employees' caregiving responsibilities. MIT and Care.com will jointly conduct a case study based on MIT's approach to employer-supported elder care.
- The Office of Personnel Management will issue a handbook on supporting caregiving and the elder care needs of family members in the federal workforce in response to the Presidential memorandum on "Enhancing Workplace Flexibilities and Work-Life Programs" released last year. The handbook explains the workplace flexibility and work-life programs for federal employees supporting the elder care needs of their family members.
- The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services will clarify for states that the development of registries that are used to match older Americans and their families with home care workers is an eligible Medicaid administrative expense. CMS also will clarify that a state can recognize in its rates the costs associated with a provider attending Medicaid-related training once a provider is enrolled in the Medicaid program.
- HHS will release a new fact sheet on educating family caregivers about insurance coverage through the Affordable Care Act. While caring for a loved one, family caregivers of older adults may reduce work hours or retire early, and many put off their own health care needs. This resource describes some of the unique health needs family caregivers may have and their health care coverage options.
- The U.S. Department of Labor, recognizing that health care constitutes one of the largest and fastest growing sectors of the workforce due, in part, to the aging population's growth, announced a forthcoming catalogue summarizing the range of career pathways programs to support entry into health care careers and the development of a federal plan for continuing to build the evidence about promising health care career pathway programs.
- HHS will release an issue brief on long-term care entitled, "Long-term Care for Older Americans: Risks and Financing."

The following section outlines the recommendations made in 2008 and the progress made through 2016, including State and National Initiatives/Activities toward achieving the Civic Engagement/ Volunteerism and Employment vision of enabling and encouraging people over the age of 55 to seek civic engagement, employment and volunteer opportunities, as they choose.

(Note: Lists of services, initiatives, activities, etc., are not all inclusive.)

DOMAIN #7:
Civic Engagement/Volunteerism and Employment

LEAD: Marilyn Vargiu, Director, Senior Corps –
Senior Companions Program Evelyn Rubenstein Jewish Community Center Houston



▼ VISION ▼

Enable and encourage people over the age of 55 years to seek civic engagement, employment and volunteer opportunities as they choose.

The 2008 Aging Agenda stated that volunteer opportunities for persons 55 years and older, working or retired, were prevalent in the Houston and Harris County community. Nonprofit agencies captured the broad nature of volunteer assignments and noted an appreciation for older volunteers whose skills and years of experience improve the quality of their service. Volunteers served at local nonprofit agencies, national organizations, public and government groups, neighborhood civic clubs, and in the medical and educational communities.

The 2008 Agenda reported statistical results which indicated the rate of volunteering among older adults was higher than it had been in the past. Overall, the employment market was reported as healthy in Houston. In a March 2008 U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics report Houston was cited as having the largest annual increase in employment out of 310 metropolitan areas. However, the number of adults 55 years of age and older reported as seeking job placement assistance, were significantly greater than the opportunities available.

- July 2015 White House Conference on Aging, U.S. Department of HHS Private Sector Actions announcements included:
  - Transamerica Institute will support and disseminate caregiver-related research to understand how the need for caregiving is impacting American workers, especially women, and their employers. Philips, joined by the MIT AgeLab and Georgetown University's Global Social Enterprise Initiative, announced it will create the AgingWell Hub – an incubator for open innovation that examines and shares solutions to aging well through the use of new technologies, products, services and thought leadership in collaboration with academia, healthcare systems, caregivers, payers, entrepreneurs and older adults.
  - The 2015 White House Conference on Aging – Long Term Services and Supports Policy Brief noted the President's 2016 Budget emphasizes the importance of caregiver supports, with nearly $50 million in new funding for aging programs that provide critical help and supports to older adults and their caregivers, such as respite and transportation assistance. The budget also provides $15 million to a new Family Support Initiative focused on assisting family members supporting older adults and/or individuals with disabilities.

SUMMATION ▼

The State of Aging and Health in America 2013 from the Centers for Disease Control Prevention (CDC) states the need for caregiving for older adults by formal, professional caregivers or by family members— and the need for long-term care services and supports—will increase sharply during the next several decades, given the effects of chronic diseases on an aging population.

A growing demand for direct-care workers is also expected. Improving recruitment, orientation, and training to build a professional, skilled and certified workforce can translate to improved care, better wages, job retention and stability of care for the care recipient. ▲

DOMAIN #3:
Basic Needs: Food, Clothing and Utilities

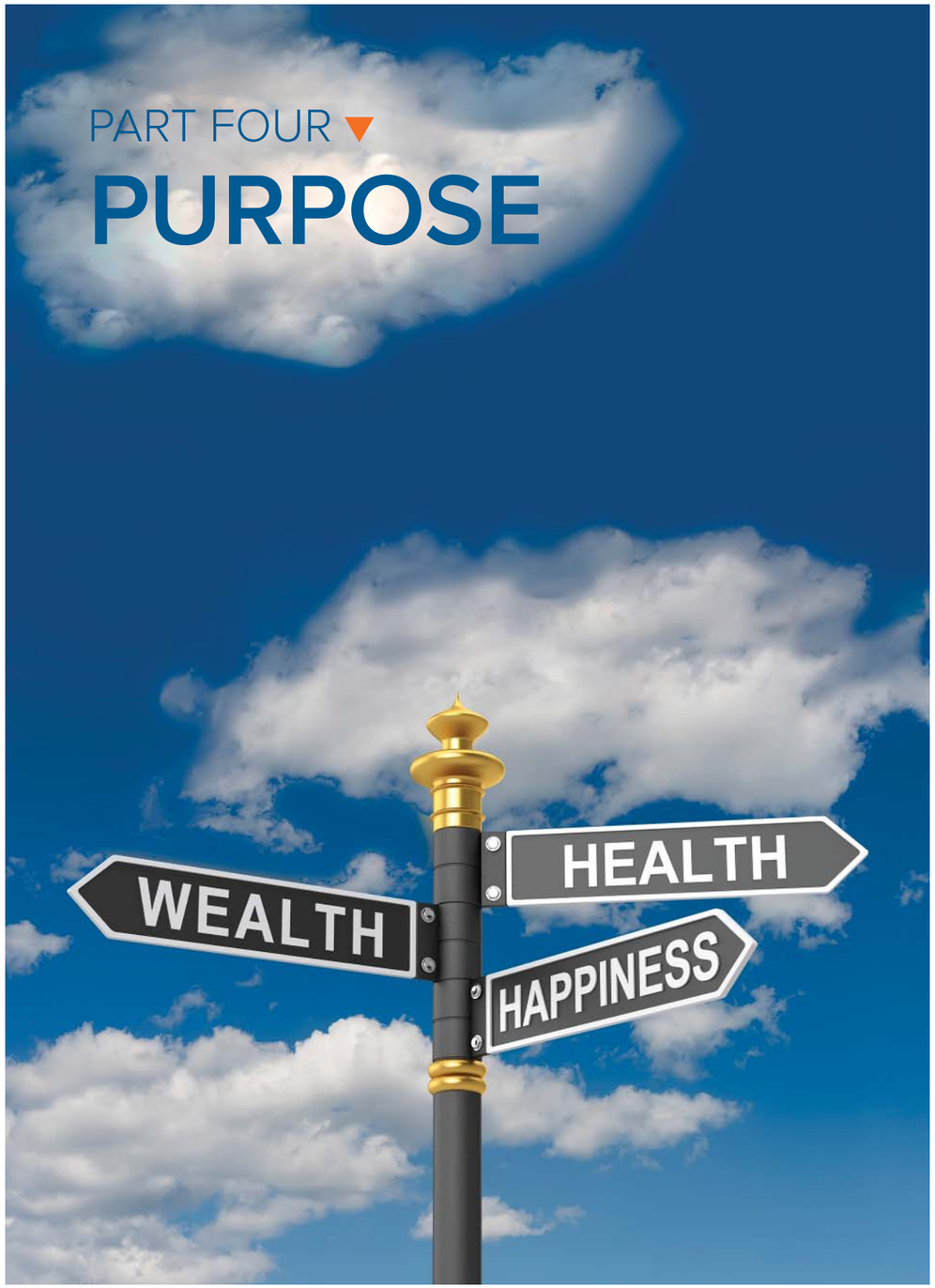
LEAD: Harris County Area Agency on Aging/Care Connection Aging and Disability Resource Center (HCAAA/ADRC)

▼ VISION ▼

Ensure that seniors are adequately equipped with food, clothing and utilities.

The 2008 Aging Agenda acknowledged the growing financial concerns of older adults with limited incomes taxed by medication expenditures. These concerns are elevated by the costs of food, utilities, and housing which are all basic needs of competing priority.

Key Indicators of the 2008 Aging Agenda Status and Challenges for Basic Needs: Food, Clothing and Utilities were elderly poverty, food insecurity and hunger, food stamp eligible Harris County households with elderly persons, and Harris County older adults living in poverty. Using 2004 poverty stats, it was noted that Texas was ranked 39th among the states, territories, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. Texas ranked 46th in food insecurity. In Feeding America's Map the Meal Gap Report on County and Congressional District Level Food Insecurity in 2013, Harris County was ranked in the top 10 metro area counties in the U.S. with the highest food insecurity rate of 18 percent (753,640 persons).



PART FOUR ▼

PURPOSE

SUMMATION ▼

Older adults, age 85 and older, is one of the fastest growing population groups in Harris County.

The Texas APS website presents the following as part of a list of factors that contribute to the abuse, neglect, and exploitation which can be attributed to strained resources to accommodate this growing population group:

- Lack of affordable housing and high costs of utility bills
- Inadequate access to health care and costly medications
- Denial of benefits, such as SSI and Medicaid, to some elderly and disabled immigrants
- Waiting lists and other limitations in the availability of in-home care and home health care
- Shortage of resources to serve persons denied long-term care and other benefits under welfare reform
- Lack of access to affordable health care and prescription drugs
- Inadequate community services for persons discharged from state hospitals and schools
- Lack of statewide access to preventative or early intervention services such as case management for elderly persons and adults with disabilities who are at risk but not yet experiencing abuse, neglect, or exploitation

Isolation is also a key factor that places vulnerable adults at risk for abuse, neglect, or exploitation. Since many people who are elderly or have disabilities live alone or are dependent on others for their care, their risk for harm is high. The source of that risk may be at any level of contact, including social acquaintances, employees, and family members.

As the public education and awareness of vulnerable adults and their needs increase, APS expects an increase in reporting. Education and awareness of everyone, including older adults and family members; local, state, and national policy makers, service providers and other professionals, caregivers, and the public, are critical to prevention and response. ▲

The following section outlines the recommendations made in 2008 and the progress made through 2016, including State and National Initiatives/Activities toward achieving the Basic Needs: Food, Clothing and Utilities vision of ensuring that seniors are adequately equipped with these essential resources.

(Note: Lists of services, initiatives, activities, etc., are not all inclusive.)

2008 RECOMMENDATION ▼

Basic Needs: Food, Clothing, and Utilities

- Increase/enhance utility and telephone assistance programs, thereby reducing the burden on the elderly.

2016 PROGRESS ▼

- **ONGOING –** Gulf Coast Community Services Association (GCCSA) provides emergency energy bill assistance to clients who have received a disconnect notice from their utility or gas company.

  In addition, GCCSA coordinates the following programs to provide short term assistance with bills and expenses:

  - **DIRECT ENERGY UTILITIES PROGRAM (NEIGHBOR II NEIGHBOR PROGRAM) –** Provides utility assistance to help those struggling with paying and who are behind on their utility bills.
  - **RELIANT ENERGY UTILITIES PROGRAM (CARE PROGRAM) –** Provides assistance to those who are behind on paying their electric and utility bills.

- **ONGOING –** The Comprehensive Energy Assistance Program (CEAP) is administered by Neighborhood Centers Inc. and provides financial assistance to those low income elderly and/or disabled households most vulnerable to the high cost of energy for home heating, paying up to four of the highest bills during the year. CEAP also provides assistance in an energy-related crisis or during severe weather or supply shortages. Texas funding has continued to decrease over the past several years with a slight increase in 2014 over the previous year. The years 2013 and 2014 showed slight increases in the number of households served over 2012.

- **ONGOING –** The LITE-UP TEXAS program provides assistance with costs of electricity to qualified low-income individuals living in an area where they can choose their service provider. The program provides discounts to eligible customers from September 2015 - August 2016. Qualifications include meeting income guidelines or participating in other assistance programs.

- **ONGOING –** The Lifeline program provides assistance with basic telephone service to qualified low-income individuals. Qualifications include meeting income guidelines or participating in other assistance programs.

- **ONGOING –** Northwest Assistance Ministries (NAM) has a Shelter and Energy Assistance program funded by government grants through which seniors, disabled adults, and families are provided emergency help to prevent homelessness and to help the homeless become self-sufficient.

- **ONGOING –** Harris County Community Services Department of Housing and Community Resource Center (HCRC) maintains updated information on community resources for utility and telephone assistance. Information may be accessed via telephone recording in English, and Spanish, available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, or via website which may be printed in many languages.

- To help older adults prevent and address elder abuse, the Federal Trade Commission launched 'Pass It On' in July 2014. This fraud education campaign is aimed at active older Americans and covers financial scams, including imposter scams, identity theft, fundraising fraud, health care scams, paying too much, and 'you've won' scams. 'Pass It On' materials are available at ftc.gov/PassItOn and in Spanish at ftc.gov/Pasalo.
- To provide a critical resource for elder abuse prosecutors, researchers, practitioners, and most importantly, victims of elder abuse and their families, the U.S. Department of Justice launched a website dedicated exclusively to elder justice in September 2014. The website allows victims and/or their families to search for the nearest available resources, law enforcement agencies, and support networks by ZIP code. It provides a powerful search tool to assist academics and researchers quickly access existing data or research on elder abuse related topics. The site also provides information and training materials for elder abuse prosecutors and practitioners.
- To enhance services for long-term care facility residents, including services for residents who experience abuse and individuals with cognitive limitations, the Administration for Community Living (ACL) within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services issued regulations in February 2015 aimed at strengthening states' Long-Term Care Ombudsman Programs.

In July 2015, the White House Conference on Aging, Health and Human Services (HHS) announced:

- The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) is proposing a rule to update, for the first time in nearly 25 years, the quality and safety requirements for more than 15,000 nursing homes and skilled nursing facilities to improve quality of life, enhance person-centered care and services for residents in nursing homes, improve resident safety, and bring these regulatory requirements into closer alignment with current professional standards.
- In order to improve the science on understanding and preventing elder abuse, the National Institutes of Health will convene a state of the science workshop on elder abuse with researchers, clinicians, and others to review the science on understanding and preventing abuse; screening tools to identify abuse victims; effective interventions and research in related areas like child abuse and domestic violence that might inform research on elder abuse; and gaps and opportunities in this field of research. The aim of this workshop is to bring together a diverse set of stakeholders and determine promising avenues of research that could benefit from immediate investment.

The National Crime Prevention Council's recommended list of opportunities to educate the community and reduce risk to older adults regarding crime prevention and safety includes telemarketing fraud and scams; online telemarketing prevention resources and tips and the opportunity to request additional tips via a periodic e-bulletin and fact sheets; prevention-focused partnerships with law enforcement organizations; training and related tools for law enforcement working with older adults; prevention practices, resources, and successes from within the network of the Crime Prevention Coalition of America and other partner organizations; federal agencies, and nonprofit groups serving seniors, building a network of linked prevention resources; and media campaigns to include public service advertising featuring McGruff the Crime Dog.

STATE & NATIONAL INITIATIVES/ACTIVITIES ▼

Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services (DADS) In-Home and Family Support program provides services that help people to remain in their own homes. Services include, but are not limited to: attendant care; home health services, home health aide services; homemaker services; chore services to provide instruction/training and assistance with routine body functions, dressing, preparing and consuming food, and ambulating; and medical, surgical, therapeutic, diagnostic and other health services related to a person's disability, which may include medications not covered by Medicare or Medicaid.

The Medicaid Fraud Control Unit is a division of the Office of the Texas Attorney General with three primary responsibilities:

- Investigating criminal fraud by Medicaid providers;
- Investigating physical abuse and criminal neglect of patients in health care facilities licensed by the Medicaid program, including nursing homes and Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services (DADS) homes; and
- Assisting local Medicaid in a federal/state cost-sharing program that provides health care to people who are unable to pay for such care.

In 2014, the Elder Justice Coordinating Council adopted recommendations with a report to the U.S. Congress to improve awareness of, prevention of, intervention in, and response to elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation for increased federal involvement in addressing elder abuse, neglect and exploitation. The report provides a summary of activities and accomplishments of the Council and member agencies and written statements and white papers from experts, stakeholders, and the public on those areas they perceive as needing federal involvement to address gaps and barriers.

The federal government has taken a number of important steps to implement the Elder Justice Coordinating Council's recommendations:

- The President's 2016 Budget proposes $25 million in new funding to support enhancement of state APS systems; nationwide implementation of the National Adult Maltreatment Reporting System to collect APS data, and investment in research and evaluation activities to improve our understanding of elder and adult abuse and the best ways to prevent and address it.
- The Elder Maltreatment Initiative seeks to increase health care provider screening for elder maltreatment within the Physician Quality Reporting System. Due to the lack of consistent national data on adult maltreatment, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has started the design of a national APS reporting system. Ultimately, states will have the option to report APS data through the National Adult Maltreatment Reporting System, providing consistent and accurate nationwide information. These data will begin to fill current information gaps about the number and characteristics of adults who are victims of maltreatment; of those who abuse, neglect, and exploit adults; and the nature of services that are provided by APS agencies to address the abuse.
- The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau has produced several resource manuals geared towards a variety of audiences who play an important role in combatting financial abuse, including:
  - "Protecting Residents from Financial Exploitation: A Manual for Assisted Living and Nursing Facilities" to help operators of nursing facilities and assisted living residences to protect the people in their care from financial exploitation through prevention and early intervention.
  - "Managing Someone Else's Money" to assist individuals managing money or property for a family member or friend who is unable to pay bills or make financial decisions.
  - "Money Smart for Older Adults" to help older Americans, their caregivers, and others in the community identify and avoid frauds and scams.

2008 RECOMMENDATION ▼

Basic Needs: Food, Clothing, and Utilities

- Expand and ensure the continuation of funding of the Texas Department of Agriculture Texans Feeding Texans two-year grant, and secure enhanced funding for nutrition programs.

2016 PROGRESS ▼

- **2008-PRESENT –** Per the Harris County Community Services Department, the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) has continued to fund agencies in Harris County annually through the Texans Feeding Texans Home-Delivered Meal Grant. Since 2008, awards have ranged from $1.5 to $1.87 million ($1.79 million in 2015) and a total of eight Harris County agencies receive funds, five of which are HCAAA Nutritional Providers.
- **ONGOING –** Currently there are 36 Congregate Meal sites being served by eight HCAAA contract providers, two of which were added since 2008.
- **ONGOING –** HCAAA continues to receive Older Americans Act – Title III, Nutrition Services Incentive Program (NSIP), and local Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to provide meals to older adults.

2008 RECOMMENDATION ▼

Basic Needs: Food, Clothing, and Utilities

- Develop volunteer programs that provide funding and staffing for the city's emergency home repairs program to reduce long waiting lists and work to secure funding for emergency remodeling programs.

2016 PROGRESS ▼

- **2013-2017 –** The Harris County Consolidated Plan-Housing and Community Development Strategy includes a commitment to develop volunteer programs, provide funding and staff for emergency home repair programs to reduce waiting lists, and secure funding for emergency remodeling.
- **2013-2015 –** HCAAA funded approximately $200,000 in home repairs for seniors (6 homes in 2013, 18 in 2014, and 25 in 2015). HCAAA will continue working with partners to develop and enhance navigation and support services designed to assist adults 60 years and older to remain in their homes and communities.
- **2014-PRESENT –** Care Connection ADRC Housing Navigation Service maintains a database and provides search assistance for affordable and accessible housing options, opportunities and resources for older adults, people with disabilities, and veterans. Also included is information about home repair programs, accessibility/home modifications, emergency and homeless services, utility assistance, lead removal/ weatherization, and other housing-related resources.
- **ONGOING –** Rebuilding Together Houston uses 60-100 volunteer crews, and more than 15 Sustaining Sponsors to repair homes for low-income, elderly homeowners. The 2014 goal is to help 700 elderly homeowners by 2020.

— MORE WORK TO BE DONE —

- Develop volunteer programs that provide funding and staffing for the city's emergency home repairs program to reduce long waiting lists and work to secure funding for emergency remodeling programs.

2008 RECOMMENDATION ▼

Basic Needs: Food, Clothing, and Utilities

- Create basic need distribution "stores" in senior centers where food, medical equipment and supplies can be selected with vouchers.

2016 PROGRESS ▼

- **ONGOING –** The Emergency Food Pantry—operated by the Emergency Aid Coalition, a Houston Food Bank partner agency—serves working families who can't access their neighborhood pantry. The pantry is designed like a grocery store so working families can select the items they need. Non-working clients receive references for food pantries in their neighborhoods.
- **ONGOING –** Houston Parks and Recreation operates the Urban Gardening Program providing opportunities for community groups to transform select park areas into community gardens, with the assistance of a Houston Parks and Recreation Department horticulturist.
- **2011-PRESENT –** Houston Food Bank Senior Box Program delivers food boxes to community and senior centers where they are picked up by low income older adults, ages 60+. Recipients apply to receive a box of food each month with a retail value of $50, which helps supplement their fixed incomes by defraying the cost of food.
- **2012-PRESENT –** HCAAA distributes diabetic supplies, Ensure/Boost food supplements (prescription required), adult diapers, bed liner/padding, gloves, and wipes to older adults by request. For convenience to the consumer, these items are now drop-shipped directly to the requestor.
- **2013-PRESENT –** Houston Health Department's implementation of its Strategic Plan to "Increase Opportunities for Healthy Living" includes:
  - Organizing farmers markets in underserved, inner-city neighborhoods. The initiative provides easier access to affordable fruits and vegetables in Houston communities that are considered food deserts because they are underserved by grocery stores and other fresh food outlets. Community partners include the Get Moving Houston Farmer's Market (GMHFM). Planned expansion will include a healthy eating component at 12 multi-service center sites with either a Produce Wagon or Full Scale Farmers' Market based on site location, interest and capacity.
  - Operating community gardens at 11 locations across Houston to show residents how to grow nutritious foods and give the community a chance to participate in the process. The community gardens produce an abundance of fresh fruit, vegetables, herbs and spices. In addition, classes are taught on when and how to plant certain crops, how much sun is needed and which tools and supplies are needed. Other classes teach windowsill gardening and the importance of organic foods.
- Healthy Corner Stores is a Can Do Houston initiative to promote healthy options at affordable prices in low income communities that do not have access to larger grocery stores. A normal convenience store that contains mostly packaged, high calorie nutrient-poor foods and sugary or alcoholic beverages is partially converted to include healthier options for community members. These healthier options include fresh fruit and vegetable displays, nutrient-rich foods to compliment the fruits and vegetables, healthy cooking demonstrations and sampling, recipe handouts, and healthy product marketing. Store owners are trained and given the knowledge and skills to be able to promote and market healthier options.

continuing legal education and advocacy to promote and protect the needs of seniors and people with disabilities in Texas. NAELA hosts conferences on the integration of the legal system with social and medical concerns for the benefit of the client and their family. The conferences encompass many aspects of planning, counseling, educating and advocating for clients

- **2014 –** The Harris County District Attorney's office conducted a four week, bilingual Elder Abuse Prevention Campaign. The campaign was a proactive approach to prevent and prosecute crimes against older adults, designed to educate the community about the signs of abuse and encourage reporting of suspected abuse against the elderly. It included six billboards throughout Harris County and a public service announcement video on the Office's website, showing the signs of physical, financial and emotional abuse, and providing information on how to report elder abuse.
- **ONGOING –** The Gatekeeper Program is a collaborative effort between the NCI-Sheltering Arms Senior Services, United Way, and several other companies and agencies (including public service and utility workers, senior service provider employees, etc.) whose employees encounter the elderly on a regular basis in the course of their day-to-day work in residential neighborhoods (reading gas, electric and water meters, collecting trash or delivering mail). United Way/2-1-1 trains participants in the program to recognize potential problems. The gatekeeper checks on residents living alone, and are homebound or have limited mobility due to age or disability, and requests an investigation by the appropriate authorities if a resident's normal routines have suddenly changed, e.g., when a person's mail is not picked up on a regular basis. Individuals needing case management are served by NCI-Sheltering Arms Senior Services.
- **ONGOING –** Harris County Precinct 7 developed the Senior Citizen Hot Line "Keeping Our Seniors Safe" that utilizes volunteers to staff the Hotline and place daily calls to all senior citizens 65 and older in Precinct 7, to make sure they feel safe and to let them know they are not forgotten. This program provides an opportunity for concerned citizens to call in and identify seniors who may have serious problems or concerns. The program's commitment is "No senior will be forgotten in Precinct 7."
  - The Senior Inspection Program also operates under "Keeping Our Seniors Safe" in Harris County Precinct 7. It provides a basic home security check for senior citizens, examining window and door locks, smoke and carbon monoxide detectors.
- **ONGOING –** The Harris County Sheriff's Office has a Senior Safety Program that provides training to older adults on Personal Safety, Frauds & Scams, ID Theft, and Holiday/Travel Safety.
- **ONGOING –** Triad/S.A.L.T. (Senior and Law Together) is a Harris County Sheriff's office senior safety program. TRIAD is a partnership of the Harris County Sheriff, local law enforcement and senior adults who work together to reduce the criminal victimization of older persons and enhance the delivery of law enforcement services to older citizens.
- The Houston Police Department is the primary law enforcement agency serving Houston and some surrounding areas. Its jurisdiction overlaps with several other agencies, including the Harris County Sheriff's Office (HCSO) and the Harris County Constable Precincts. These agencies work cooperatively with Harris County aging network members to enforce the laws, preserve the peace, reduce fear and provide for a safe environment for older adults.
- The HCSO partners with the aging network to fight crime against older adults, working to create and maintain a secure community. The HCSO Community Services Division provides crime prevention education, taking a proactive stance to develop an informed citizenry.
- The Harris County District Attorney's Office handles elder abuse cases involving physical abuse against seniors and the Office's Elder Exploitation section prosecutes financial crimes against seniors.

Office, Houston Police Department (HPD), Harris County Sheriff's Office, Houston Area Women's Center, and HCAAA.

- **2010 –** TEAM Institute began conducting research, investigating medication adherence issues in community-dwelling older adults with APS substantiated self-neglect.
- **2015 –** TEAM Institute established a forensic assessment center network and telehealth program so that APS clients (i.e. elder abuse and self-neglect), statewide, can have access to and receive medical and capacity assessments by trained geriatricians. This also provides APS caseworkers with access to multidisciplinary care planning through multidisciplinary team meetings. TEAM is also analyzing statewide data from APS to develop risk factors for financial exploitation in older adults using victim and perpetrator characteristics as well as community level data such as poverty, education levels, and crime statistics.
- Harris County Elder Abuse Fatality Review Team (EFFORT) is a volunteer multidisciplinary group (i.e. DA's office, sheriff, Medical Examiner, APS, geriatricians, HPD etc.) meeting monthly to review death cases in older adults that may indicate elder maltreatment. These cases are reviewed to learn from and improve system-wide assessments of elder deaths, as well as to provide evidence for potentially pursuable cases. EFFORT produces a bi-annual report of cases reviewed, with findings and recommendations to the Harris County Commissioner's Office.
- **2015 –** Community stakeholders are developing a Harris County Senior Justice Assessment Center (SJAC), to serve as a central site for the assessment of victimized senior adults, the appropriate collection of evidence, and interventions that are appropriate for the victim's age and circumstances. The Center will be staffed by a multidisciplinary team of professionals that provides expert and comprehensive case examination, documentation, consultation, and prosecution of elder and dependent adult cases involving victims of abuse. The team includes representatives from Houston Police Department, Harris County Sheriff's Office, Harris County Health, Medical Examiner's Office, Adult Protective Services, HCAAA, Department of Aging and Disabilities Services, The Harris Center for Mental Health and IDD, UT Medical Branch, and the Harris County District Attorney's Office.
- **ONGOING –** Houston Financial Abuse Specialist Team (H-FAST) is a volunteer multidisciplinary group, led by the Houston Better Business Bureau Education Foundation. Members represent over 30 community agencies, organizations, and professions, including TEAM Institute members, UTHealth, Care for Elders, Sheltering Arms, AARP, geriatric care managers, elder law attorneys, bank officers, and others. The group meets monthly to discuss financial crimes against the elderly including the most prevalent and successful scams and fraudulent programs.

ONGOING EDUCATION AND AWARENESS CONFERENCES & TRAININGS

- **ONGOING –** Region 6 Department of Family and Protective Services, APS Division, hosts annual educational/training conferences to support its mission of protecting older adults and people with disabilities from abuse, neglect, and exploitation. The APS Division investigates and provides or arranges for services, as necessary, to alleviate or prevent further maltreatment. Past conferences have had more than 300 attendees from various service disciplines, including social work, medical, financial, and the law enforcement community. The May 2015 – 10th Annual Conference theme was "The Ethical and Legal Aspects of Service Planning in a Technological Age: Financial, Legal, Mental, Social, and Healthcare Perspectives." The educational objective was to share the newest technological innovations and the ethical implications of using technology to conduct investigations and provide care for this vulnerable population.
- **ONGOING –** Texas National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys (NAELA) provides

— MORE WORK TO BE DONE —

- Create basic need distribution "stores" in senior centers where food, medical equipment and supplies can be selected with vouchers.

> "My mother passed away and didn't have sufficient insurance to bury her. Really impacted me because I had to let my bills go unpaid and bury my mother. I got a disconnect notice for my electric bill and need help."

STATE & NATIONAL INITIATIVES/ACTIVITIES ▾

The Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services (DADS) contracts with Interfaith Ministries of Greater Houston to purchase Title XX Home Delivered Meals for older adults and persons with disabilities; 56,235 meals were purchased in 2014-2015.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) provides low-income (qualifying) older adults with fresh, nutritious, unprepared, locally grown fruits, vegetables, and culinary herbs from farmers' markets, using SFMNP vouchers/coupons from participating farmers' market associations to improve their diets. Harris County sites include: Bayou City Farmers Market at 3000 Richmond Avenue, Houston Farmers Market at 3106 White Oak - Onion Creek Coffee House (Saturday); Rice University Campus - University Blvd. (Tuesday); and Midtown Farmers Market at 3701 Travis Street.

USDA Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly Food Stamps Program) offers nutrition assistance to low-income older adults, age 60 and older. Although the program has been viewed as a nutrition lifeline to some older adults, there has been low utilization due to various reasons, including lack of awareness of the program and how to access it, limited mobility, minimal access to electronic equipment used for verification and reporting requirements, etc. Recommendations are to inform, encourage and assist older adults to access SNAP benefits and reduce hunger. The Altarum Institute has an online BenefitsCheckUp® tool to connect to SNAP. It's a simple, free, and confidential checkup that helps older adults determine their SNAP eligibility and get their application.

July 2015 White House Conference on Aging announced a new proposed rule from the U.S. Department of Agriculture to increase accessibility to critical nutrition for homebound, older Americans and people with disabilities by enabling Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits to be used for services that purchase and deliver food to these households.

SUMMATION ▼

The Altarum Institute's 2012 Recommendations for Health and Well-Being of older adults includes a recommendation to promote healthy diet and nutrition among older adults to prevent nutrient deficiencies and weight loss, further associated with a long list of health effects, including dehydration, bone fractures and deterioration, oral health problems, reduced muscle mass and strength, functional and cognitive limitations, poor recovery from illness, loss of energy, and frailty.

Reporting on the state of hunger for older adults in 2013, the National Foundation to End Senior Hunger (NFESH) stated the large and growing number of food insecure older adults in the United States (4.8 million) combined with the serious health consequences facing this population, constituted a major public health challenge. The USDA was encouraged to increase participation in SNAP, in light of the fact that only about one-third of older adults eligible were receiving assistance.

Utility costs continue to challenge older adults living on fixed incomes. Too often managing costs is handled by raising the thermostat too high in the summer and lowering it too low in the winter, threatening health conditions. Many older adults desire to remain independent in their own homes. Unfortunately, many of their homes are older and in need of repairs resulting in even greater heating and cooling costs. Increased utility costs can translate to reduced funds for meeting other needs.

In addition, many older adults are experiencing financial insecurity as a result of the recent financial recession which reduced anticipated retirement funds. Although some seniors are working longer, this is not always an option due to health conditions and/or other reasons. Limited incomes potentially increase the risk of basic needs not being adequately met. ▲

2008 RECOMMENDATION ▼

Collaborations, Engaged and New Partners

- Educate all fire department and emergency medical responders to be sensitive to the issues, concerns, and needs of older residents.
- Mobilize elder service leaders to create safe, secure communities by:
  - Leveraging resources to support improvements.
  - Conducting research and developing best practices and strategic plans.
  - Advocating at all levels of government for policies that support safe, secure communities.
  - Encouraging prosecution of those committing crimes against seniors.

2016 PROGRESS ▼

- **2013-PRESENT –** Firemen/EMTs receive the following courses as part of their ongoing Basic Life Support (BLS) and Advanced Life Support (ALS) training curricula:
  - Trauma in the Elderly
  - Abuse II – Elder Maltreatment
  - Geriatrics I – Introduction to Geriatric Emergency Care
  - In addition, all new EMT's and paramedics get classroom training on how to recognize and report potential elder abuse.

  Two courses "Elder Abuse" and "An Aging Community: Geriatrics at a Glance" are planned for future education.
- **2016-2018 –** The Houston Fire Department (HFD) Strategic Plan includes the provision of safety education and prevention programs via coordination of prevention and community partnerships.
- **ONGOING –** HFD members visit senior living facilities and solicit feedback about their service needs.
- **ONGOING –** HFD members install smoke detectors (donated by private businesses) for seniors in underserved communities via the Get Alarmed Houston program. Installers respond or act to coordinate a response to other needs identified while in the home, including making referrals to have ramps installed for wheelchair bound citizens in homes with no ramps for fire self-evacuation.
- **2012-PRESENT –** The Houston Health Department (HHD) in partnership with the Houston Fire Department, operates the Care Houston Links project which uses coordinated care practices to efficiently assess and link 911 non-emergency calls to services which lead to a decreased dependency on the City's Emergency Medical Services. Since October 2014, approximately 97 percent (1,912) of the total 1,956 non-emergency calls referred from the HFD for care assessment were older adults, 60 years old and older. Non-emergency service needs included transportation, rent/mortgage assistance, and food, in that order.
- **ONGOING –** Texas Elder Abuse Mistreatment (TEAM) Institute, a unique collaboration, first of its kind in the nation between state government, a medical school, and public hospital, was named one of the two best practices in the United States by the Senate Special Committee on Aging (2004) and has been replicated in two other states. TEAM's mission is to improve the lives of mistreated elders through clinical care, education, and research. Major participants are the University of Texas, Baylor College of Medicine, Harris County Hospital District, APS, Harris County District Attorney's (DA)

2008 RECOMMENDATION ▼

New Laws

- Enact stiffer penalties for crimes against seniors, and prosecute perpetrators who commit them.
- Work with legislators, law enforcement and elder service providers to implement an employee misconduct registry for employees who commit crimes against elderly victims, ensuring criminal background checks are performed on all elder service providers.

2016 PROGRESS ▼

- **2010 –** The Elder Justice Act assures that adequate public-private infrastructure and resources exist to prevent, detect, treat, understand, intervene in and, where appropriate, prosecute elder abuse, neglect and exploitation. It was enacted as part of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA) and sets forth a series of provisions designed to address some of the weaknesses in federal and state efforts to prevent and respond to abuse, neglect, and exploitation of older people. The Act included authorization of several grant programs, established requirements for reporting of crimes in long-term care facilities, and created advisory bodies on elder abuse within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).
- **2010 –** New Employee Misconduct Law requires the names of certain state employees who have committed serious acts of abuse, neglect or exploitation to be placed in a public Employee Misconduct Registry. The purpose of the Registry is to ensure that unlicensed personnel who commit acts of abuse, neglect, exploitation, misappropriation, or misconduct against residents and consumers are barred for life from working in any state supported living center, state hospital, home and community-based services provider, licensed intermediate care facility, local mental health authority, nursing home, or other similar facility.
- **2013 –** Background checks (Texas Department of Public Safety name-based criminal history checks and DFPS abuse, neglect, or exploitation history checks) are required for all Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) purchased client services contractors and their staff. Criminal history checks on certain employees must be performed prior to an offer of permanent employment with the facility or agency except in emergency situations.

▼

"I've been living in this neighborhood for over 50 years and raised my children here. I took care of my husband until he died and I have a lot of memories here. The neighborhood is unsafe. I hear guns shooting at night, but I don't want to move. I wish my neighborhood could be safe like it was years ago."

DOMAIN #4: Housing

LEAD: Harris County Area Agency on Aging/Care Connection Aging and Disability Resource Center (HCAAA/ADRC)

▼ VISION ▼

Advocate for adequate, affordable and accessible housing that promotes quality of life for seniors.

The 2008 Aging Agenda Housing Work Group identified crucial issues to be addressed in the Houston and Harris County area to successfully meet the needs of the increasing senior population. These were issues in which work group members had been involved, including increased awareness of and funding for affordable housing and modifications, especially those undertaken with certified aging-in-place specialists (CAPS); creation of a more senior-friendly housing code, senior-friendly facilities and communities with wraparound services located near where older adults live in high concentrations; informing city and county government and expanding media coverage on housing issues; and adding the voice of a champion(s) supporting senior housing issues.

Other concerns were the housing needs of special populations, including homeless persons, the disabled, and the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender community, and the importance of recognizing/identifying and implementing new and creative housing options. There is a need for housing that provides support services in low income and/or public housing facilities that include an onsite health clinic, physical therapy, dental care, home health care and hospice services, exercise rooms, a beauty salon, a community dining room and recreational activities provided by city and county agencies working together.

The Key Indicators of 2008 status and 'Housing' challenges for older adults were:

- Affordability,
- Housing Repairs and Modifications, and
- Supportive Services such as residential community housing with services.

The following section outlines the recommendations made in 2008 and the progress made through 2016, including State and National Initiatives/Activities toward achieving the Housing vision of advocating for adequate, affordable and accessible housing that promotes quality of life for seniors.

(Note: Lists of services, initiatives, activities, etc., are not all inclusive.)

The following section outlines the recommendations made in 2008 and the progress made through 2016, including State and National Initiatives/Activities toward achieving the Safety and Security vision of improving the safety of seniors through collaborative initiatives addressing fire and crime prevention, home safety, elder abuse and mistreatment, financial security and fraud protection.

(Note: Lists of services, initiatives, activities, etc., are not all inclusive.)

DOMAIN #6:
Safety and Security

LEAD: James Booker, PhD, Regional Director, Adult Protective Services (APS) – Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS)

▼ VISION ▼

Improve the safety of seniors through collaborative initiatives addressing fire and crime prevention, home safety, elder abuse and mistreatment, financial security and fraud protection.

The 2008 Aging Agenda defined 'Safety and Security' as freedom from harm, injury, and loss in an elder-friendly community where older residents can live independently with dignity and feel safe in their homes and the community.

The Agenda identified Key Indicators of 'Safety and Security' as a list of areas when taken together reflect the risk faced by older residents.

The areas included:

- Transportation
- Crime
- Fire
- Home Safety Education
- Awareness Programs

The 2008 Agenda outlined current status and challenges with recommendations for action to ensure seniors' safety and security. (Note: Senior education, senior legal assistance, and development of a community disaster preparedness plan with input from seniors were also considered important indicators.)

2008 RECOMMENDATION ▼

Promote outreach, research, and education

- Develop a web site regarding housing resources, education, and awareness in addition to the Housing Resource Center of the Harris County Community Services Department.
- Educate consumers, elected officials and builders on ways to adapt old homes into suitable dwellings for seniors. Include how to identify remodelers with CAPS credentials and how to protect seniors against scams and adverse terms in mortgage documents.
- Promote intergenerational partnerships with schools and corporations to repair seniors' homes.
- Develop/expand usable guidelines for identifying which type of setting (for example, independent or assisted living) a senior needs.
- Complete inventory of existing housing options that would be ranked and/or organized according to a number of different values or topics and lead to a community-wide directory.

2016 PROGRESS ▼

- **2013-PRESENT –** The Care Connection ADRC hosts a Housing Navigation web page on their website, maintaining a database to provide housing search assistance on affordable, accessible and integrated housing options, opportunities and resources for older adults and people with disabilities, including veterans. The database includes services available at various 'older adult and disability friendly' multi-unit housing communities, resource information about available home repair programs, accessibility/ home modifications, emergency and homeless services, utility assistance, lead removal/ weatherization, and other housing-related resources. ADRC staff establishes relationships with various housing providers to encourage the expansion of housing opportunities for the populations served.
- **ONGOING –** The Montrose Center has two assigned senior outreach staff to participate in fairs, speaker panels, make presentations in various venues, etc. to inform and educate consumers and the general public about lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) housing resources.
- **2013-2017 –** Harris County Consolidated Plan: Housing and Community Development Strategy places a high priority on initiatives and projects serving seniors. The plan contains an aggressive fair housing program that includes educating community groups about the benefits of affordable housing, information on fair housing issues and encourages mortgage lending counseling, rental maintenance counseling, referral programs for home seekers and renters, budget/credit counseling for first time homebuyers, foreclosure/forbearance assistance, and emergency housing assistance.
- The Greater Houston Builders Association (GHBA) recognizes seniors as the fastest-growing segment of the residential remodeling industry and offers continuing education for Certified Aging-In-Place Specialists (CAPS). Courses provide the technical knowledge to meet the specific remodeling needs of the aging population. The GHBA is active in community outreach to provide quality obtainable housing. The Association also has a political component called Government Affairs Committee which communicates with elected officials and policy makers regarding the building industry regulations, federal legislative priorities, and issues that uniquely affect the greater Houston region.

- **ONGOING –** Rebuilding Together Houston
  - Students-in-Service Program for youth, ages 15-21, works through local schools and provides free repair and renovation programs for elderly low-income, disabled and service-veteran homeowners in need under adult leadership. School instructors use Rebuilding Together projects as part of a service learning program or to satisfy community service hour requirements for students. Hundreds of high school and college volunteers are able to experience learning outside the classroom in a compassionate, neighborhood-service environment that benefits the students as well as the homeowners and their families.
  - The United Methodist Action Reach-out Youth (U.M. ARMY) Camp is a student outreach mission partnered with Rebuilding Together Houston to become one of their great success stories. Each summer, hundreds of students repair dozens of homes in the Houston area.
  - Local businesses and organizations from the city's vital sectors of finance, energy, construction, real estate, insurance, management consulting, and others provide human capital (employee volunteer rebuilding crews) and/or financial capital, while developing compassionate leaders.
- **2015-2019 –** The City of Houston Housing and Community Development Department Consolidated Plan and 2015 Action Plan cited recognition of the increased need for senior housing with the growing senior population, including housing with smaller units and supportive services nearby or in the development. It was noted in the plan that although market rate housing developments are being created in response to the growth in population, many are unaffordable to low- and moderate-income residents. As a result of limited income and/or mobility, the plan reinforced the need for home repair programs for older adults who own their own homes. Goals include providing financial assistance to help the development of affordable housing units including those that serve seniors, and persons, with disabilities or other special needs populations.
- **2015 –** City of Houston joined the AARP Age-Friendly Communities Network, committing to making the city more livable for seniors. With feedback from surveys and community meetings, AARP and the City will assess the needs of Houston's elderly population and then make an action plan. The checklist of essential age-friendly housing features includes sufficient and affordable housing in areas that are safe and close to services and the rest of the community; sufficient and affordable home maintenance and support service; housing that is well-constructed and provides safe and comfortable shelter from the weather; home modification providers who understand the needs of older people; sufficient and affordable housing for frail and disabled older people; and more.
- **ONGOING –** Individual residential/direct care settings have established criteria for placement. DADS programs provide direct services and/or referrals to community partners for assistance through assessment and care-planning to ensure appropriate referrals are made. Priority consideration is given to the needs communicated by individuals at intake. Collateral contacts are made with family members. Functional/medical and in some cases, financial eligibility for appropriate housing are determined, based on communications with client and family, combined with observations. All community programs, services and resources are considered to achieve an integrated service delivery system. The Guardianship Program is a legal option to include in communications to protect the health, safety, and well-being of individuals when necessary.

PART THREE ▼

FREEDOM

SUMMATION ▼

The United States of Aging Survey is an initiative of the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a), the National Council on Aging and UnitedHealthcare, created to gain a deeper understanding of how older adults and their communities are addressing aging issues.

- In 2014, 39 percent of older Americans surveyed cited transportation as one of two areas they most anticipate needing help with in the future. Both low income and socially isolated older adults are most likely to list transportation as the area in which they most anticipate needing future assistance.
- In 2015, only 22 percent of older Americans surveyed found public transportation "acceptable," and nearly 3 in 10 rated it as "poor."

The Regional Transit Coordination Plan (RTCP) publishes a Harris County Transportation Guide that lists local transportation providers that serve specific areas within the county. The list shows specific services and indicates which providers have reduced rates for older adults and persons with disabilities. Providers include Harris County Medical Program, Katy Area Ride Service (KARS), and HK Express Transit. The American Cancer Society and American Red Cross are also listed under United Way of Greater Houston as providers of transportation to medical appointments.

In addition to the smaller transportation operations listed in the RTCP Transportation Guide, additional programs exist throughout Houston and Harris County. Some provide non-emergency transportation services restricted to recipients residing in certain neighborhoods within certain ZIP codes, or recipients of specific services offered by the provider, or to members of specific groups.

Volunteer Interfaith Caregivers-Southwest (VIC-SW) is one of those smaller operations that provide free one-on-one, door-to-door assistance to the frail and elderly in southwest Houston through a network of volunteers who provide services including transportation to visit doctors and clinics, picking up prescriptions, shopping, attending religious services, or running errands. Evelyn Rubenstein JCC - J Ride Transportation provides on-demand services for Jewish adults, 60 years and older, for similar trips. These local neighborhood/community and faith-based operations serve a vital need. They are trusted, dependable and connected to the community. Unfortunately, too often public funding does not make it to this level.

Per the National Center on Senior Transportation (NCST), older adult non-drivers make 15 percent fewer trips to the doctor; 59 percent fewer shopping or restaurant outings and 65 percent fewer trips for social, family, religious and other life-enhancing purposes. The lack of transportation services can impact the quality of living on many levels, including food and nutrition (access to fresh foods), socialization, spirituality (access to places of worship), etc. As the older adult population continues to age and increase in numbers, so does the number of older adult non-drivers. It is critical that not only the current transportation options remain operative and functional, but that additional options are made available for Houston and Harris County older adults. ▲

2008 RECOMMENDATION ▼

Cooperate and coordinate with others

- Partner with other government housing offices, including those working in code enforcement, and other organizations to improve housing options for seniors.

2016 PROGRESS ▼

- **2009 –** Harris County Community Services Department was allocated $4.4 million by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) via the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP) to help stabilize housing for Harris County residents by either preventing individuals and families from becoming homeless or helping those who are experiencing homelessness to be quickly re-housed and stabilized. Standards were included for housing opportunities that effectively met the local communities' demand for affordable multi-family/senior units.
- **2013 –** HCAAA was awarded $13,000 in Housing Bond Grant Funding (Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs) to provide residential repairs for older adults that also included accessibility modifications and weatherization.
- **2013-2015 –** HCAAA funded approximately $200,000 in home repairs for seniors over the past three years, repairing 6 homes in 2013, 18 in 2014, and 25 in 2015. HCAAA will continue working with partners to develop and enhance navigation and support services designed to assist adults 60 years and older to remain in their homes and communities.
- **2013-PRESENT –** HCAAA partners with the City of Houston Health Department 1115 Waiver Healthy Homes Fall Prevention (HHFP) program to provide education and training, home inspections, followed by remediation/modification (grab bars, ramps, rails), as needed. The program assisted 133 consumers with home remediation and modifications in FY 2015.
- **2013-PRESENT –** Houston Health Department in partnership with the Houston Housing Authority planned and implemented a smoke-free housing initiative in public housing.
- **2013-2017 –** Harris County Consolidated Plan: Housing and Community Development Strategy includes a commitment to develop volunteer programs, provide funding and staff for emergency home repair programs to reduce waiting lists, and secure funding for emergency remodeling.
- **2015-PRESENT –** The ADRC, Houston Housing Authority, Houston Center for Independent Living (HCIL), United Health Care and an individual representing persons with disabilities partnered to form a participating team in the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs' Housing Services Partnership Academy (HSP). The purpose of HSP is to expand the availability of housing options for older adults and people with disabilities in Harris County. Additionally, the group focused on developing a comprehensive resource guide to help older adults and people with disabilities identify and seek housing options throughout the service area. The group has been very successful in advocating for more accessible, affordable and integrated housing. Through this work, the Houston Housing Authority has made a commitment to allocate more housing units to individuals who receive health services through Medicare, in addition to units already set aside for those on Medicaid.

2008 RECOMMENDATION ▼

Promote new and time-tested ideas

- Investigate creative options, including multi-faceted, mixed use neighborhoods, for building senior housing, such as sweat equity and neighbor-helping-neighbor reduced rent rates.
- Develop multi-generational, multi-economic housing that encourages families to live in proximity to one another.
- Promote the concept of "granny flats", including above-garage and backyard units.

2016 PROGRESS ▼

- **ONGOING –** Habitat for Humanity Programs make low-cost housing available to very low income recipients who meet guidelines, including the contribution or donation of a specified number of volunteer hours (sweat equity) to build their home and other Habitat homes. Exterior home repairs are also offered to qualified seniors and disabled individuals who lack financial resources and physical ability to repair their own home without assistance.
- **ONGOING –** Northwest Assistance Ministries's mission is: To strive to meet basic human needs through neighbors helping neighbors. They provide rental and mortgage assistance through their Emergency Basic Needs Program supported by more than 40 congregations, 18 Service Partner organizations and more than 140 business Community Partners.
- Houston builders and realtors are becoming more aware of housing projects (new and remodeled properties) aimed at accommodating extended families where children, parents, and grandparents can all live under one roof. Next Generation (NextGen) Housing or multigenerational communities may include the following: new housing sections for first-time homebuyers adjacent to 55 housing; older adults and adult children combined purchasing power to afford a larger home that accommodates the needs of both; adult children living in the main home with an attached or detached smaller unit or a unit above the garage for the aging parents or vice versa. As needs change, the unit can also be used for returning children or grandchildren, or possibly for rental for extra income if local zoning permits.

  Note: A unit may be called a mother-in-law apartment or suite, accessory apartment, in-law suite, granny flat or suite.

  - **2015-PRESENT –** Darling and Lennar Home Builders have acknowledged the demand for multi-generational living and have begun to offer multi-generational housing in some of their newer communities. Homes include completely separate full private mother-in law suites with their own exterior entrance, bedroom, bathroom, kitchenette, laundry area and living area. Lennar has NextGen models throughout Harris County: Baytown, Crosby, Cypress, Friendswood, Houston, Humble, Katy, Kingwood, Spring, and Tomball.
  - Gateway Homes can even include a grandparent's wing for their own privacy and independence with communities in Humble and Spring.

STATE & NATIONAL INITIATIVES/ACTIVITIES ▼

The National Center for Senior Transportation (NCST) offers periodic grant opportunities, produces and offers numerous resources free of charge, and collects best practices from the field to share as examples of successful models of senior transportation. Best practice topics include developing transportation programs, using diverse funding streams, improving and expanding volunteer driver programs, etc.

The July 2015 White House Conference on Aging included the following announcements related to older adults and transportation:

- Uber is piloting programs in Florida, Texas, Ohio, Arizona and California that will partner with senior community centers and other advocates to provide free technology tutorials and free or discounted rides to older Americans to increase access to transportation options and support mobility and independence.
- The U.S. Department of Transportation through n4a and Easter Seals launched a new technical assistance center, the National Aging and Disability Transportation Center (NADTC), to promote the availability and accessibility of transportation options for seniors, people with disabilities, caregivers and communities.

2008 RECOMMENDATION ▼

Mobility audits and advocacy

- Conduct pedestrian audits and advocate with policymakers to ensure that walkways, crosswalks, and streets are more accessible to people with limited mobility.

2016 PROGRESS ▼

- **2013 –** Houston Complete Streets and Transportation Plan: By Executive Order the City of Houston continues its efforts to provide safe, accessible and convenient use of public roadways by motorists, public transit riders, pedestrians, and people of all ages and abilities, including older adults walking or using wheelchairs. Complete Streets will be achieved over time as improvements to existing roadways and redevelopment occurs.
- **2013-2017 –** The Harris County Consolidated Plan contains a section on infrastructure improvement, with an objective for construction of sidewalks/pathways and improving three miles of sidewalks/pathways benefiting low-income areas within the Houston and Harris County service area by February 2018, for the purpose of improving the living environment and improving the quality of life for 5,000 low-to-moderate income persons.
- **2015 –** The City of Houston joined the AARP Age-Friendly Communities Network, committing to making the city more livable for seniors. Age friendly communities include all forms of mobility (driving, walking, public transit, assisted transportation and other options) to support older adults living safely, independently, and comfortably in their own homes/communities, regardless of age, income, or ability level. With the help of surveys and community meetings, AARP and the city will assess the needs of Houston's elderly population and then make an action plan. The AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities is an affiliate of the World Health Organization's Age-Friendly Cities and Communities Program which includes eight essential domains/features, including outdoor spaces and buildings (includes safe streets & sidewalks), and transportation.
- **2016 –** For its fixed route bus service, Harris County RIDES has acknowledged the potential for and is considering partnerships with local government infrastructures to enhance crossings at bus stops to make mobility more accessible for seniors and people with disabilities.

▼

"It's scary to move about in Houston and the RIDES program is very appreciated."

2008 RECOMMENDATION ▼

Be aware of housing needs of special populations

- Be aware of seniors with special needs (gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender, disabled and homeless) and create diverse, inclusive neighborhoods.

2016 PROGRESS ▼

- **ONGOING –** The Montrose Center offers housing assistance for those living with HIV/AIDS and are homeless or at risk of losing housing. Assistance is provided to help access resources to achieve stability. Through the federal Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) program, the Montrose Center administers mortgage, rental, and utility assistance to qualifying HIV+ individuals. 2016 - The Center is in the capital campaign stage for developing a LGBT senior housing facility.
- **ONGOING –** Coalition for the Homeless of Houston/Harris County provides leadership in the development, advocacy, and coordination of community strategies to prevent and end homelessness. The Coalition serves the network of service providers who offer a variety of assistance programs to homeless individuals of all ages, including seniors. It maintains two resources: 1) an online digital Help Card and 2) a printable, one-page Street Guide which directs individuals in crisis, living on the streets or in shelters, to programs that can connect them with housing.
- **2013 –** The *Houston Chronicle* reported an approximate 75 percent drop (from 1,162 to 877) in the number of Houston and Harris County veterans living on the street or staying in an emergency shelter. Housing veterans was the local extension of a nationwide initiative between public agencies and nonprofits to place service members at the top of lists for housing assistance and recovery services. The presidential target to end homelessness among veterans by 2015 infused the efforts with record levels of federal funds and new rules on how to spend them. That top-level push was also matched by unprecedented collaboration and speed in the Houston area.
- **2013 –** Travis Street Plaza opened a 192-unit affordable, service- enriched housing community targeted to veterans in Houston, earning at or below 60 percent of Area Median Income (AMI), with some for those earning at or below 30 percent AMI. Twenty units are set aside for persons with special needs.
- **ONGOING –** U.S.VETS-Houston is a nonprofit provider of comprehensive services to homeless and at-risk veterans. The Supportive Housing program is designed for veterans who might not require a structured program to maintain permanent housing, but who would benefit from continuing supportive services, such as rental assistance. Specialized housing services can include rental assistance, sobriety support, individual and group counseling, peer support, and job assistance for veterans who have a financial need, who are seniors or have a medically-certified disability.
- **2015-2019 –** City of Houston Housing and Community Development Department Consolidated Plan: 2015 Action Plan includes:
  - Provide financial assistance to help the development of affordable housing units including those that serve seniors, and persons, with disabilities or other special needs populations.
  - Support housing and services for persons/families with HIV/AIDs.
  - Provide homeless prevention, rapid re-housing, and other services for the homeless or those at risk.
  - Promote fair housing education through outreach, research, and other methods.

> "It's a *!@& shame that when I do find a place I can afford to live [for the elderly and disabled] and have a child who's willing to live with me and take care of me, they won't let me stay because my son is under 55."

STATE & NATIONAL INITIATIVES/ACTIVITIES ▼

In support of aging in place, the July 2015 White House Conference on Aging announced the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's release of a guide to help older homeowners, families and caregivers make changes to their homes so that older adults can remain safe and independent. This guide promotes the safety of older adults while in support of their preference to remain in their homes and communities as they age.

The July 2015 White House Conference on Aging 'Private Sector' actions announced were:

- Home Depot released of a tip sheet and "how to" video highlighting simple home modification steps to help individuals age in place.
- Washington State University will test new models of using technology to keep older adults safe and healthy as they live independently in their own homes, including a partnership with the Good Samaritan Society to equip 1,500 homes across the country with wireless sensors to help clinicians monitor those older adult residents who voluntarily chose to participate for health concerns.

LeadingAge Texas (formerly the Texas Association of Homes and Services for the Aging - TAHSA) 2015 Legislative Priorities include:

- Continuing Care Retirement Communities (CCRCs) Without Walls – Allowing Continuing CCRCs to offer services to older people while still living in their homes will promote independence, address the growing need for home community-based services, and keep older Texans in their homes longer, therefore cutting future long-term care spending.
- Expand Affordable Housing Plus Services Options – As our population rapidly ages, there is a growing need for long-term services options for low income seniors. Bringing health and supportive services to affordable senior housing communities could be a cost-effective strategy and allow low income seniors to age in place.

- **2014-2015 –** The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) awarded Houston-Harris County $1.09 million each year in 5310 Funds (Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Grant Program) to maintain existing transit services. The Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County, Texas (METRO) is the Designated Recipient for the Houston Urbanized Area (UZA) to manage the grant funds.

  Note: 5310 funding is mostly divided into urban/rural geographic areas and population served. Some progress was made to cross geographical lines in 2012 through Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) to consolidate New Freedom and Section 5310 funding into one grant to better serve the needs of those eligible for services. The new 2015 bill – Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, is expected to continue that progress.
- **ONGOING –** Houston METRO discount fare cards help seniors (ages 65-69), and Medicare cardholders ride all METRO bus and light-rail service at a reduced rate of 50 percent off the regular fare. Older adults, ages 70+, ride free.
- **ONGOING –** Northwest Assistance Ministries (NAM) provides vouchers for free gasoline and bus tokens as part of their emergency basic needs services.
- **2013-2017 –** Harris County Consolidated Plan includes an objective to promote transportation services to 3,000 low and moderate-income persons by February 28, 2018 with the intent of increasing mobility to access essential service, facilities, jobs and employment centers thus improving the quality of life.

2008 RECOMMENDATION ▼

Educate corporate/business

- Educate major corporations on transportation issues (many have already asked for information).

2016 PROGRESS ▼

- Harris County RIDES is planning a 2016 educational campaign targeting corporations to include information about the RIDES program in their corporate newsletters to advise employees of the services that may be applicable for their parents or relatives.
- RIDES conducts outreach as part of their ongoing mission, targeting non-profits, health and human service agencies, school districts, assisted living facilities and senior housing centers, chambers of commerce meetings, United Way meetings, women's shelters, dialysis centers and community centers, etc.
- **2013-2025 –** Houston Metro Momentum Strategic Plan was shared with elected/public officials and local business community. Business leaders felt that METRO is critical to their business, in terms of providing transportation to their employees and attracting future workers and clients.
- The 2015-2016 Gulf Coast Regional Transit Coordination Plan (RTCP) includes a 'Public Information Campaign for Elected Officials and Business Leaders' as a priority. The plan includes a notation that research has shown that business leaders, employers and public officials were uninformed about the transportation services that affect them, their employees and their constituents. In addition, they were uninformed of the advantages and benefits associated with utilizing public transportation. The information campaign includes information about the potential for support and possible funding for the development of new services and the expansion of other services into new areas.

2008 RECOMMENDATION ▼

Encourage partnerships with medical communities

- Encourage partnerships that allow medical communities and physicians to directly connect their patients to transportation support.

2016 PROGRESS ▼

- **ONGOING –** Harris County RIDES actively pursues its ongoing mission to connect clients needing transportation services to the providers and agencies utilizing existing resources. RIDES conducts outreach to health insurance companies and medical providers, such as dialysis centers and hospitals to inform them about transportation options. They are willing to disseminate customer brochures, but are hesitant to partner in funding transportation services. RIDES operates a Share Ride Taxi Program for medically necessary trips.
- In 2015, HCAAA coordinated a direct link between Methodist Hospital Care Transitions Program patients and Harris County Rides to expedite the intake process and arrange transportation to follow-up doctor appointments within seven days of discharge. These doctor visits were necessary to minimize patients' risk of readmitting to the hospital within a 30-day period.
- **2015 –** HCAAA conducted outreach to the Harris Health System Oncology Treatment program to assist in linking outpatients directly to Harris County RIDES for submittal of paperwork to request transportation for clinic appointments. RIDES dedicated a mobility counselor to assist with the expedited intake process and trip planning.

2008 RECOMMENDATION ▼

Advocate for funding

Advocate for flex funding to allow for mobility and transportation support.

2016 PROGRESS ▼

- **2009 –** Neighborhood Centers, Inc. was awarded a 3-year New Freedom grant in the amount of $321,294 (including a matching contribution of $50,000 from United Way of Greater Houston) for a pilot project, Transportation Resources for Independent Persons (TRIP), which funded a volunteer driver voucher program and mobility options counselors to address gaps in transportation needs.
- **2009 –** Harris County RIDES conducted a foundation campaign to solicit flex funding support but was unable to generate new funding.
- **ONGOING –** HCAAA and Care Connection ADRC partner with the City of Houston Health Department, City of Houston Housing Department, and Harris County RIDES to leverage local city, county, and federal funds to provide non-emergency demand response transportation. In 2014, more than 950 transportation trips were provided to adults, ages 65 and older, and persons with disabilities. More than 1,300 trips were provided in 2015.

SUMMATION ▼

As stated by Rebuilding Together Houston:

"The lingering effects of an unstable global economy coupled with the aging of the Baby Boomer Generation have made for a perfect storm of critical need in maintaining adequate housing for those who desperately wish to age gracefully in the homes that they own, but cannot afford to maintain..."

The United States of Aging Survey is an initiative of the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a), the National Council on Aging, and United Healthcare. The 2015 Survey results showed older adults are looking to their communities for support as they age, so they can continue living in their homes as long as possible.

- Fifty-eight percent have not changed residences in more than 20 years.
- Seventy-five percent intend to live in their current home for the rest of their lives.
- Sixty-two percent would like to see services that would help with home modifications and repairs.

AARP research has reported as high as 87 to 90 percent of older adults desire to remain in their own homes as they age. Although older adults prefer to remain in their homes, the cost of maintaining and or remodeling to ensure it's safe and comfortable could be prohibitive, especially at a time when many have less income.

Although Rebuilding together Houston's perfect storm has already started, with the continuing population growth of Baby Boomers, consideration must be given to what it will take to accommodate ongoing housing needs. A key requirement is awareness of the need for accessible and affordable housing, including maintenance and repairs. Policy makers (local, state, national), housing/neighborhood and community developers, builders, real estate community, transportation providers, and older adults and their family members need to promote and create livable communities. AARP defined a livable community as one that has affordable and appropriate housing, supportive community features and services, and adequate mobility options which together facilitate personal independence and the engagement of residents in civic and social life. ▲

DOMAIN #5:
Transportation and Mobility

LEAD: Harris County Area Agency on Aging/Care Connection Aging and Disability Resource Center (HCAAA/ADRC)

VISION

Expand quality, cost-effective and reliable transportation options and improve neighborhood amenities to promote safe pedestrian and motorized mobility.

The 2008 Aging Agenda described transportation as having implications for and direct impact on successful aging in all the other domains, confirming that it affects all trips, both essential and discretionary. For example, 'Health and Well Being' is impacted if the lack of transportation results in missing medical appointments. Safety and Security are impacted if a lack of transportation restricts housing choices to relocate to a safer community. Hence, 'Housing' is impacted, as well.

Key Indicators of the 2008 Status and Challenges involved

- the lack of transportation preventing older adults, persons with disabilities, and low income Houston residents from taking necessary trips,
- their fear of using available public transportation, and
- the need for more signage and accessible features in public transportation services to better accommodate persons with disabilities.

The following section outlines the recommendations made in 2008 and the progress made through 2016, including State and National Initiatives/Activities toward achieving the Transportation and Mobility needs of older adults.

(Note: Lists of services, initiatives, activities, etc., are not all inclusive.)