

# THE JOURNAL ON **ACTIVE**AGING®

January/February 2020, Vol. 19 No. 1



## **Strengthening immune systems**

Lifestyle strategies counter chronic inflammation

## **Beacons of excellence**

Four exceptional communities in the wellness culture space

## **The flip side of innovative technologies**

Weighing the benefits vs. the drawbacks

## **Health, wealth & longevity**

Science-based tools support financial wellness





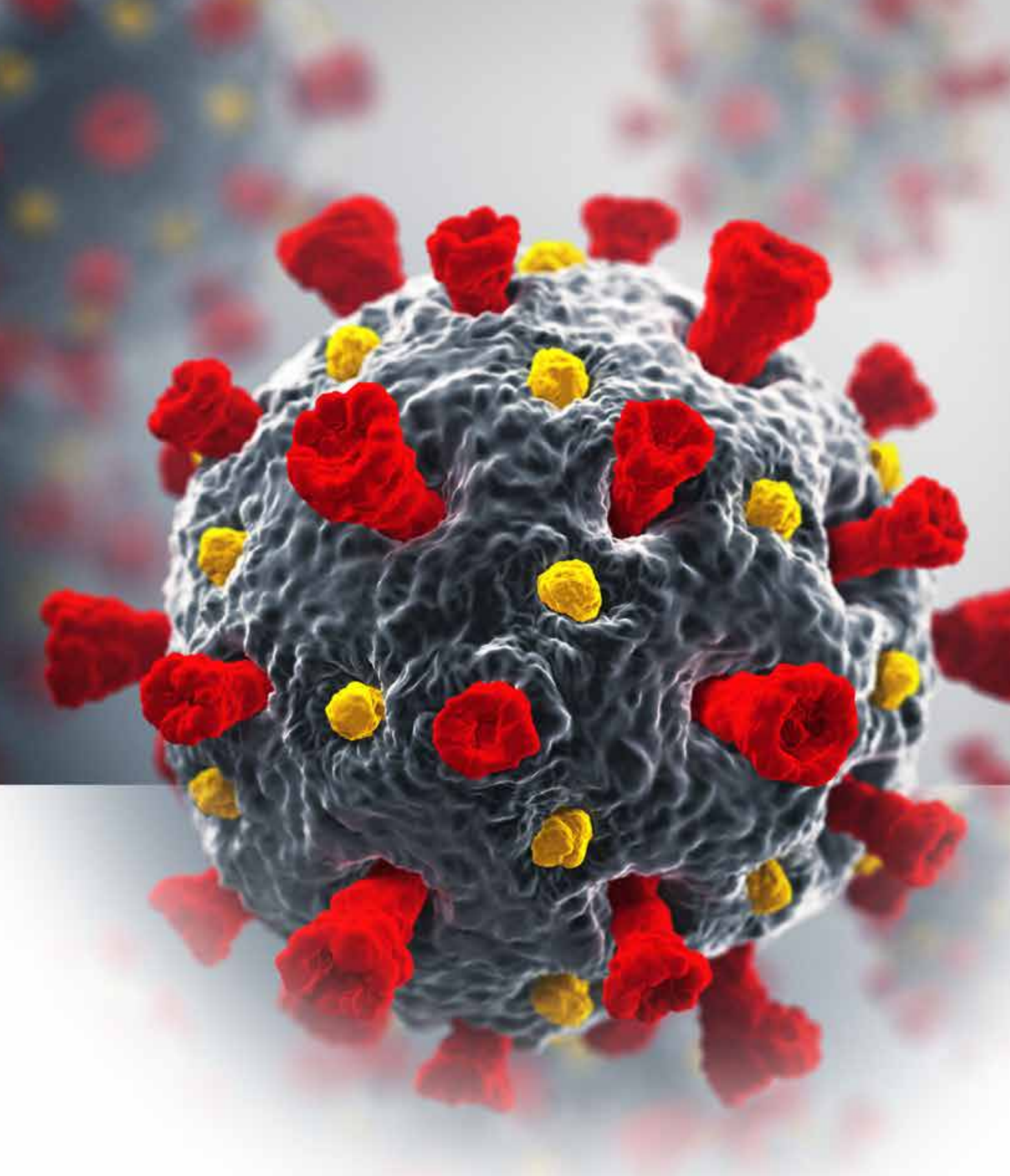
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Visit [www.icaa.cc/covid19response.php](http://www.icaa.cc/covid19response.php) to participate in the forum.

**Important:** ICAA asks all participants to be respectful in their comments, to refrain from selling products and to focus on COVID-19 only. Posts will be removed if they do not follow these guidelines.

# Be a shinin



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**Application  
process closes  
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***You could become a shining example.***

# g example

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Studies show links between certain lifestyle behaviors and levels of inflammatory markers. Encourage use of these practices to reduce inflammation, enhance quality of life and strengthen the immune system.

*By Shirley Archer, JD, MA*



### **BEST IN WELLNESS PROFILES Beacons of excellence: Profiling winners in the wellness culture space pg. 46**

A new ICAA NuStep awards program recognizes exceptional contributions to wellness as a way of life in senior living communities—for residents and staff alike. Learn about four award-winners in this article.

*By Julie Halpert*



### **TECHTALK The flip side: Weighing benefits versus drawbacks of innovative technologies pg. 56**

Organizations need to be tech savvy and equipped with the products and services their customers want and need, says ICAA CEO Colin Milner. But they also need to ensure that those technologies don't replace interpersonal interactions—and that they deliver on their claims.

*By Marilyn Larkin, MA*



### **FINANCIAL WELLNESS Health, wealth and longevity: New tools allow science-based financial planning pg. 64**

Combining technology and aging science, 21<sup>st</sup>-century risk assessment tools allow older adults to work with financial advisors who can assess health and longevity to individualize recommendations for wealth management. Find out how these tools can support financial wellness for your clients—and your organization. *By S. Jay Olshansky, PhD, Karl Ricanek, PhD, Kirk Ashburn, CCPS, and Steven Austad, PhD*

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### **Active aging**

The concept of active aging is summed up in the phrase “engaged in life.” Individuals can participate in life as fully as possible, regardless of socioeconomic status or health conditions, within the wellness dimensions.

### **Age-friendly**

ICAA's age-friendly philosophy designates programs that provide the information, access and motivation people need to become and stay active through all levels of functional ability.



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# COMMENT

## Waking up to a new world

What will the world look like when I wake up tomorrow? A lot of us ask ourselves that question daily. What we see in China and other areas of Asia, Europe—most notably Italy—in North America and spreading elsewhere is a prevailing concern for many of us. The novel coronavirus disease, COVID-19, is grabbing hold of the global community.

Young, old, healthy, unhealthy: This virus is a threat to us all. It appears particularly dangerous for individuals with underlying health conditions, especially those of advanced age, and for people who are vulnerable, especially those with compromised immune systems. What will tomorrow bring?

Public health leaders are calling on us to “socially distance” ourselves from those we love and know, to avoid groups and to work from home where possible. Lockdowns or other measures are being implemented in towns and cities around the world. Urged to stay apart physically, people are reconnecting with family and friends through video chats and phone calls, emails and social media. They are checking on neighbors and volunteering to help those who are socially isolated or in need. We are seeing the human spirit at work.

It might seem odd to think about preparing for the future in the face of such uncertainty. Not planning, however, will delay our response after this pandemic subsides. With that in mind, here are a few areas to consider.

**Reemergence of family.** In general, family members are the people we will rely on over these next months. And we will likely emerge from this time with stronger family bonds and a heightened desire to stay

connected. Already we see more intergenerational developments in senior living. This shift will pick up speed. The desire will grow for family-oriented activities in seniors centers and fitness clubs, along with a focus on interdependence. In senior living, for example, be prepared to expand access to services—spas, wellness, dining and so on—to the outside community.

**Mainstream cohousing.** Cohousing could accelerate if the wealth of older adults is diminished. Rather than senior living residents having to move out, how might we adjust our models to build cohousing into business? Could organizations offer a cohousing section within an existing community, for example? Be ready to get creative.


**Mental health support.** Loss of control. Fear of the unknown. Increases in mental health issues such as anxiety and depression will require robust wellness solutions now and for the foreseeable future. How will you assist your team, residents or members, and family build greater resilience and/or manage mental health issues? (Remember to attend to your own mental health needs as well.) A greater focus on the emotional, spiritual, physical and social wellness dimensions will be key.

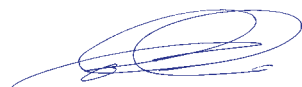
**Online solutions in disaster plans.** The COVID-19 outbreak demonstrates why disaster planning needs to include online solutions for those who are socially isolated. What tools should we have in our toolboxes to help residents and members remain well when they are unable to go out? Virtual reality (VR) is one thing that springs to mind. VR can offer us meditations, prayer sessions, exercise instruction, and the like. If the real world is challenging, VR might transport us

to a virtual world that calms the senses and soothes the soul, helping build resilience and strengthen the immune system.

**Wellness front and center.** While on the rise for years, wellness will catapult forward as residents and members seek to rebuild their capabilities and squeeze every ounce out of life. This is a wakeup call: Life is fleeting and needs to be lived. Expect the desire for well-buildings and a wellness culture to reach an all-time high. Ways to reduce vulnerability will be top of mind for all, as will programs and services that build the immune system.

**Safe experiences.** With a newfound appreciation for life and a desire to live it, people will crave safe experiences. Now is the time for us to consider how we will provide these experiences in real life, the virtual world and online.

Let's take comfort in knowing that the human spirit has prevailed over all kinds of tests throughout history. In uncertain times, we must plan for the future even as we manage the present, ensuring that our organizations will also prevail. 



**Colin Milner, CEO**  
*International Council on Active Aging®*



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*Living Care Lifestyles' Quail Park at Shannon Ranch is opening the doors of The Silver Saloon pub at this new community near Fresno, California. Image courtesy of Living Care Lifestyles*

## Quail Park celebrates first anniversary

Living Care Lifestyles and Quail Park Memory Care Residences of West Seattle, Washington, recently celebrated the memory care community's one-year anniversary and its receipt of the Silver LEED [Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design] certificate for New Construction & Major Renovations from the United States Green Building Council. Dedicated to residents with dementia and Alzheimer's disease, the eco-friendly community provides programs that contribute to quality of life for those living with an early diagnosis through end of life. Ed Taylor, who has expertise in real estate and technology, was recently appointed community relations director. "Helping residents, families and friends find comfort in their care decisions is incredibly rewarding," he comments of his move into the senior living industry.

With three self-sustaining floors on almost a half-acre site, Quail Park has centrally-located common areas on each floor with signature programs such as weekly virtual reality sessions, where residents can explore

places where they grew up, as well as those they'd like to visit. Implementation of It's Never 2 Late person-centered engagement technology helps to reinforce the company goal of customizing purpose-driven activities for each resident.

In other news, Living Care Lifestyles also announced the official opening of another community, Quail Park at Shannon Ranch, for March 2020. Accommodating 140 residents, the new community in Visalia, California, offers independent living and a memory-care wing. The Shannon Ranch location features a bistro, pub, dining room with private dining options, pool-fitness-wellness area, sports den and activity center, virtual game room and 24-seat movie theater, library and meditation areas. The community also includes outdoor patios on three levels and a walking trail.

Seattle-based Living Care Lifestyles also recently welcomed Tracey Harvey as director of community solutions. The active-aging veteran brings more than three decades of experience in senior living, wellness and fitness to the organization.

## Nutrition task force aims to standardize malnutrition care in hospitals

The Canadian Malnutrition Task Force (CMTF) and the Health Standards Organization (HSO) recently announced a partnership to develop a national Malnutrition Safety Intervention Standard for detection, treatment and prevention of malnutrition in Canadian hospitals.

CMTF, a standing committee of the Canadian Nutrition Society, strives to reduce malnutrition by promoting nutrition care knowledge and optimal practice. HSO leads the development of standards, assessment programs, and other methodologies to enable health and social service providers to provide high-quality care.

The Intervention Standard's development process is currently underway, and a technical committee and a working group consisting of physicians, researchers, dietitians, nurses and a patient advisor are in place. The standard is being developed based on rigorous evidence and best practices and involves consultation with healthcare professions, decision-makers, patients and families. The final standard is expected to be approved and published later in 2020.



*Cypress Living President and CEO Troy Churchill presents new branding logos for the Cypress family of brands, including Cypress Cove life-plan community. Image courtesy of Cypress Cove*

## Cypress Cove rebrands, also introduces new business

Cypress Cove at HealthPark Florida, located in South Fort Myers, is refreshing its brand image in a move that company management believe will further increase



consumer recognition and community identity. The changes include shortening the community's name to Cypress Cove and creating a new logo to depict the energy and vitality afforded to older adults, according to Cypress Living President and CEO Troy Churchill.

"The spirit of Cypress Cove residents has for years challenged administrators to continue and improve on The Cypress Cove model," says Churchill. "The rebranding effort has allowed the company to capture the credibility and success of Cypress Cove and place the word *Cypress* at the core of the organization's overall family brand." Since the opening of Cypress Cove in April 1999 and until the most-recent change, operational support for the 48-acre life-plan community has been provided by Lee FP—now known as Cypress Living.

Cypress Cove's new logo is quickly identifiable, says Churchill, and fits well within the Cypress Living family of senior living and care services. The logo is a round turquoise symbol with a yellow line and two white v-shaped drawings within the circle. Its color is meant to reflect the local waters and sky of Southwest Florida. "The yellow represents the color of our Cypress Cove campus buildings," he reveals, "and the v-shaped drawings depict the natural elements of the campus—the birds of the area, the numerous palm trees, and the beautiful water fountains surrounding the community."

Also unveiled under the new Cypress Living umbrella is the organization's new in-home care business—Cypress at Home—a partnership with Lee Health. "Together, we have accepted the task of changing the way we care for older adults by offering services and innovative solutions that support aging-in-place," explains Churchill. With these changes, he adds that Cypress Living is seeking to create a client-centric approach to care that wraps together solutions for those living within their home.

### NCOA seeks CEO and announces partnership

On February 6, 2020, the Washington, DC-based National Council on Aging (NCOA) announced that Spencer Stuart, a global executive search and leadership ad-

*Continued on page 16*

## Moves and more



*Tana Gall. Courtesy of Merrill Gardens*

**Chuck Flynn** was recently named administrator for Friendship Health and Rehab Center North in Roanoke, Virginia ... **Margaret Fitch** recently retired from her position as program coordinator at The Center in Charlottesville, Virginia; The Center—which celebrated its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary on February 14, 2020—also recently appointed **Alex Waltrip** as fitness coordinator ... **David Patterson** was promoted from wellness associate to wellness director at Summit Hills, a life-plan community in Spartanburg, South Carolina, owned and operated by Senior Living Communities ... Seniorlink, headquartered in Boston, Massachusetts, recently appointed **Diane Fronckiewicz, JD**, as its vice president, chief compliance and privacy officer ... Merrill Gardens recently named **Tana Gall** to succeed company president **David Eskenazy**, who announced his retirement in late 2019; the organization also acquired Blue Harbor, a senior living management company in Portland, Oregon, where Gall had been CEO for the past three years ... **Mary Franklin** was promoted to associate executive director at Cypress Cove in South Fort Myers, Florida; the life-plan community also appointed certified care manager **Chris Austin** as supervisor of Southwest Florida operations for its Choices by Cypress at Home division ... Inspir Carnegie Hill, a senior residence in New York's Manhattan borough, welcomed **Wendy Suzuki, PhD**, professor of Neural Science and Psychology at New York University's Center for Neural Science and CEO of BrainBody, to its Advisory Board ...

Biodex Medical Systems, Inc., in Shirley, New York, has named **Lila J. Corwin** to head of Global Physical Medicine Sales ... former BaptistCare NSW chief operating officer **Annette Hili** has joined technology provider AlayaCare as the new general manager for its Australia and New Zealand operations ... Ipnos, a mobile wellness and health & fitness company in Montreal, Canada, announced recently that its sleep-aid app, Relax Melodies, has been downloaded over 50 million times across all platforms; Relax Melodies also logged over 2.5 billion individual sessions in which individuals used the app to try to fall asleep ... Masterpiece Living experts have launched a new podcast, "Dr. Roger & Friends: The Bright Side of Longevity," which features **Roger Landry, MD, MPH**, along with certified professional coach, Teresa Beshwate and mindfulness coach and spiritual advisor, **Danielle Palli** ... LifePod® Solutions Inc., a voice-enabled caregiving service, won the second annual Health Tech Venture Challenge and pitch competition hosted by not-for-profit integrated health system Advocate Aurora Health and healthcare incubator MATTER ... Life Care Services is now managing Atlantic Shores Retirement Community in Virginia Beach, Virginia, which is owned and operated by Atlantic Shores Cooperative Association ... Fundamental Advisors LP in New York recently announced the sale of The Clare at Rush and Pearson, located in Chicago, Illinois, to Iowa-based senior living operator LCS ... **Don Ardell** recently trademarked his REAL Wellness® [Reason, Exuberance, Athleticism, Liberty] model; the Florida-based wellness pioneer has produced nearly 800 issues of his newsletter, now renamed the *Ardell REAL Wellness® Report*, since its launch in January 1984 ... and, finally, Swedish robotics company Camanio Care AB (which is changing its name and business focus to financial services) transferred its wellness technology business, including the BikeAround, to subsidiary Camanio AB, which it then sold to Brighter AB.



*New equipment is part of the offerings at The Cardinal at North Hills' expanded wellness center. Image courtesy of The Cardinal at North Hills/Kisco Senior Living*

visory firm, will lead a national search for the organization's next president and CEO. The search comes after current President and CEO James Firman announced in late 2019 that he planned to retire after 25 years of service. Firman will continue to lead NCOA until a successor has been appointed.

The NCOA Board of Directors formed a search committee that is partnering with Spencer Stuart to conduct a comprehensive review of candidates. The Spencer Stuart team will include senior consultants from both the healthcare services and not-for-profit practices areas.

The committee is seeking leaders who can inspire NCOA's strategic vision and cultivate strong public-private partnerships to drive systemic change in how the United States serves the changing needs of older adults. The NCOA CEO will have responsibility for a USD\$63-million budget and an 85-person staff at the District of Columbia metro area national office. The individual will also serve

as an informed advocate for addressing unmet needs and opportunities to improve the lives of older adults through innovative programs, services, and public policies.

In other NCOA news, the agency is joining with the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) in a new partnership to offer a wide range of benefits to Latino elders and adults with disabilities throughout the US. Through the partnership, LULAC and NCOA will offer information and assistance in connecting Latinos who qualify for one or more benefits programs, including Medicare Part D Extra Help/Low-Income Subsidy, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Medicaid, and the State Pharmaceutical Assistance Programs, among others.

"A partner such as NCOA enables LULAC to help ensure that millions more older adults, *adultos mayores*, in our community living with disabilities and those with limited economic means are made aware of vital benefits, which will help them remain healthy and enjoy a better quality of life," comments LULAC National Chief Executive Officer Sindy Benavides.

### **North Carolina community expands wellness center**

The Cardinal at North Hills, a Kisco Senior Living community in Raleigh, North Carolina, has finished the expansion of its wellness center, which doubles the center's studio and gym size. New age-friendly equipment by leading brands was also included as part of the expansion.

"We're really proud of this expansion," comments Tom Ford, executive director of The Cardinal at North Hills, who noted that residents now had access to the new equipment. "Our residents really helped guide us through what was most important during this expansion. They really enjoy using our studios, taking our classes and using equipment accessible for seniors, so that quickly became the focus," Ford says. "This space also allows members of our Cardinal Advantage Club and Priority Wait List to experience The Cardinal firsthand. We think it's really great that so many

people are able to be a part of our community and commitment to wellness."

### **Growing Bolder introduces membership organization, interactive portal**

Orlando, Florida-based Growing Bolder, a multimedia lifestyle brand dedicated to the rebranding of aging, has launched an online portal and membership program to unlock tools, tips and worksheets for aging well, health, travel, finance, tech, fitness and arts and entertainment.

The company has hosted five seasons of the *Growing Bolder* television show on PBS and recently won the grand prize at American Public Television's *PitchFest Live*, which contributed to the production of a new television pledge program, *Launchpad to What's Next*. The show has already aired more than 700 times and is carried on 73% of all public broadcasting stations.

In addition to the television shows, *Growing Bolder* produces a quarterly magazine, a radio show and a podcast, and has a robust online presence across social media outlets. These assets coincide with the creation of a membership organization intended to inspire people to pursue active lifestyles as they age, as well as the interactive portal to inspire, educate and empower healthy aging, enabling people of all ages to live lives of passion and purpose.

### **Do you have news to share?**

The *Journal on Active Aging*® welcomes your news submissions. Please send your press releases to [publications@icaa.cc](mailto:publications@icaa.cc)—the *Journal's* email for submissions—and staff will consider your news for possible publication. Newsworthy topics include such things as center/community openings; initiative or campaign launches; announcements of awards, promotions or grants; and other topics of interest to active-aging professionals.



“Our global vision is to build the Growing Bolder Membership Organization into an intergenerational worldwide community,” says Marc Middleton, founder and CEO. “What’s happening in the US is happening in every industrialized country in the world in terms of an age wave of people living a more active, engaged life. We want to provide the blueprint for our members on how to achieve the best version of themselves as they age.”

### More active-aging organizations rebrand to expand reach

In addition to Cypress Cove above (see page 14), three other organizations serving older adults recently rebranded. The nearly 80-year-old not-for-profit Mather LifeWays rebranded to Mather, “provid(ing) an opportunity to evolve the identity with a new look and new narrative while retaining brand equity,” according to the Evanston, Illinois-based company. While the new identity includes a contemporary logo that portrays a human touch, the brand will retain its current bold orange color, which has been in use since 2004. Mather also introduced a new tagline “Be Nextaordinary.” This phrase embodies the organization’s commitment to surpassing the ordinary, turning everyday moments into



*California’s Napa Valley Vintners trade association has granted funds to four active-aging and elder care organizations, including Rianda House senior activity center (see the sidebar on page 18 for details). Image courtesy of Napa Valley Vintners*

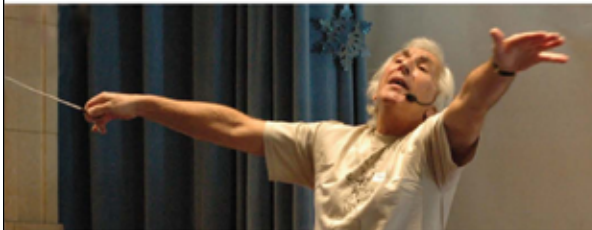
extraordinary ones. Graphically, Mather will depict and define Nextaordinary through images that spotlight indescribable moments, bracketing them simply with quotation marks.

Springpoint Senior Living, headquartered in Wall Township, New Jersey, also evolved its brand to Springpoint and created a new logo, enabling all of its housing and services to be united under one entity, according to the company. The organization conducted focus groups and elicited feedback from hundreds of individuals from throughout the organization,

including representatives from governance, senior leadership, staff and residents. The result was an updated mission, vision and values statement, as well as the new brand platform.

Further, the Northwest Missouri Area Agency on Aging in Albany, Missouri, recently changed its name to Young at Heart Resources, with a tagline, “Resources for Healthy Aging.”

*Continued on page 18*



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# Industry news: studies, campaigns and programs

## **Mission roadmap for aging and dementia released in Australia**

Australia's AUD\$185-million Dementia, Ageing and Aged Care Mission took another step forward in January 2020 with the release of a draft roadmap for public consultations, enabling Australians to assess the draft and offer feedback on the current strategy. With feedback closed as of press time, the documents will remain on the site. Ultimately, they will assist the government as it seeks to prioritize funding for critical dementia and aged care research. More than 447,000 people currently live with dementia in Australia. Funding for the Mission was made available through the Medical Research Future Fund, an AUD\$20-billion long-term investment supporting Australian health and medical research. The draft roadmap can be accessed online at <https://consultations.health.gov.au>.

## **Mt. Ascutney Hospital and Health Center to build prevention network**

A Prevention Network Grant of USD\$450,000 has been awarded to Mt. Ascutney Hospital and Health Center (MAHHC) by the Vermont Department of Health, Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Programs. MAHHC is the sole recipient of the grant, the goals of which include reducing the prevalence of substance misuse by all ages through building regional prevention infrastructure and capacity. State Opioid Response funding is backing the grant, which includes subawards for local communities. The grant will also serve as a "data hub" for organizations that may need information related to substance misuse for grant writing or other needs.

## **Grant enables hospitals to deliver care in Toronto's communities**

Through a CAD\$3-million investment from The Slaughter Family Foundation, Toronto's University Health Network (UHN) is designing programs and supportive services to enable older Canadians to live and thrive

in their communities. As part of a larger \$30-million gift through The Slaughter Family Foundation Seniors Initiative, UHN will leverage community partnerships, technology, and its influence as one of the country's leading academic hospitals to deliver enhanced care for older adults outside of the hospital, promoting quality of life and reducing emergency room visits. Programs will include:

- launching a Geriatric Community Integration Hub (GERI Hub) to be designed and run by Toronto Rehab in partnership with Sinai Health System and Circle of Care
- transforming Toronto's high-rise apartment buildings with high concentrations of older adults into Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORCs) through UHN's OpenLab initiative
- expanding programming at the Dotsa Bitove Wellness Academy to serve more individuals with dementia through the power of art, education and movement
- filling gaps in care for older adults with cancer through efforts by the Geriatric Oncology Program at the Princess Margaret Cancer Centre

## **Napa Valley Vintners makes grant to active-aging and compassionate care organizations**


On February 2, 2020, the Napa Valley Vintners (NVV) trade association announced USD\$1.8 million in grant funding for active aging and compassionate elder care in Napa County, California. The four nonprofit organizations funded in this second of three phases under the NVV's community health grant include Collabria Care, Mentis (which, with Collabria, provides the Healthy Minds, Healthy Aging program), OLE Health, and Rianda House senior activity center. These organizations anticipate serving nearly 14,000 Napa County residents in 2020, enabling older adults and family members to access programs and healthcare that help them stay healthy, and navigate often daunting healthcare channels.

## **University of Rochester researcher funded for art and movement project**

Nikhil Satchidanand, PhD, a research assistant professor at the Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences at New York's University at Buffalo, has been awarded a grant from the Health Foundation for Western and Central New York to continue his work with vulnerable older adults. Satchidanand, an exercise physiologist with expertise in motor development and aging, will use the nearly USD\$72,000 grant for a project called "The Movers and Makers Club: A Community-based Recreation Program to Improve Cognition and Motor Function in Older Adults."

The project involves developing and testing the impact of a community-based art-making and thinking-while-moving (dual-task) exercise intervention on cognition and motor function in adults age 65 and older. Project participants will engage in weekly sessions led by trained professionals from Fine Art Miracles and the YMCA. "We hypothesize that weekly art-making and dual-task exercise training will improve executive functions, visual-spatial abilities and motor function," says Satchidanand.

## **AARP launches Vision 2020 campaign and eye center to educate consumers**

A new AARP survey finds most Americans ages 50-plus are worried that vision loss could affect their quality of life. Nearly all respondents (92%) are concerned about experiencing eye health conditions as they age, but fewer than 20% report being up-to-date on or proactively researching eye health information. To help, AARP will spotlight information on eye health throughout the year with a new Vision 2020 campaign in *AARP The Magazine* and a dedicated online Eye Center. Content will include signs of common vision issues, new developments in diagnosis and treatment, advice from top doctors in the field, and stories from people who are living with eye conditions. 

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*Residents at a Holiday Retirement community enjoyed December Game Night, which featured Total Brain Health's TBH TOOLBOX365. Image courtesy of Total Brain Health*

## **Total Brain Health and Holiday Retirement team up for game night**

New Jersey-based Total Brain Health recently partnered with Holiday Retirement, headquartered in Winter Park, Florida, for the senior living provider's December Game Night. For the event Holiday communities selected TBH® TOOLBOX365, a game-based brain-training system for individuals and small groups, giving residents and their families the chance to jump-start their way to a brain-healthy year. "Game night at our Holiday Retirement community was a blast!" writes Mary Eileen Finch, regional connector of resident experience at Holiday Retirement. "We hired a magician and had him incorporate Total Brain Health's toolbox into his act. Our residents were rolling with laughter!" Total Brain Health introduced TBH TOOLBOX365 in October 2019 to target everyday cog-

nitive skills. For details about the TBH TOOLBOX365, email [info@tbhtoolbox365.com](mailto:info@tbhtoolbox365.com). Information about Total Brain Health and other TBH products is available at [www.totalbrainhealth.com](http://www.totalbrainhealth.com).

## **Precor celebrates milestones**

Woodinville, Washington-based Precor marks its 40<sup>th</sup> year of operation in 2020. The company expects to surpass more than one billion recorded workouts in its cloud-based Preva® suite and debut a 21-piece collection of selectorized strength equipment called Resolute®. In addition, Precor will introduce the world to the Preva and SonyAdvagym™ partnership, which allows the ability to connect all moving environments. The company had intended to showcase new products and services at the FIBO 2020 health and fitness shown in Cologne, Germany. Concerns about the novel coronavirus disease COVID-19 led

Precor to withdraw as an exhibitor, according to a February announcement by Precor President Rob Barker. "We are disappointed," Barker acknowledged, "but we've made this decision on behalf of our customers, employees, partners, and their families." He added that the company is "planning a series of webinars, online product launches, and digital executions" to keep customers "informed, up-to-date, and excited about all that we have coming to market this year." For information about Precor products, go to [www.precor.com](http://www.precor.com).

## **New Matrix slat-belt treadmill debuts**

Matrix Fitness has introduced its Performance Plus Treadmill. A reimagined treadmill, Performance Plus offers running enthusiasts the Pure Stride Cushioning System for shock-absorption and a high-efficiency drive for responsiveness. From the 61 x 157 cm / 24" x 62" running surface and a top speed of 25 kilometers/16 miles per hour, to the quick adjustable incline up to 20%, the Performance Plus withstands demanding users of all ages. This slat-belt treadmill features a low step-on height of 25 cm / 10.5". It also includes continuous multigrip handlebars that are ergonomically sculpted to fit the hand for a secure, comfortable exercise experience.

Matrix's new treadmill was engineered to be durable and efficient, according to the company. The Performance Plus can log up to 100,000 miles with minimum maintenance plus operates with lower power requirements. The Synchronous Response Drive System™ is located at the front of the running surface, rather than under it, to simplify maintenance and service.

The Performance Plus Treadmill is compatible with Matrix's new collection of consoles. The Touch XL, Touch, Premium LED, Group Training LED and standard LED consoles offer a variety of choices when it comes to entertainment, exercise programs, connectivity, workout feedback and intuitive use.



"Offering choices when it came to technology was extremely important to us," states Andrew Kolman, senior global director, Technology and Business Development, for Matrix. "We know not every fitness facility is the same, and not every fitness facility caters to the same kind of user." As Matrix offers "everything from simple to sophisticated consoles, owners and operators can tailor the equipment experience to the desires of their guests." Kolman adds that all the Matrix consoles are compatible with the company's Connected Solutions portfolio. To learn more about the Matrix Performance Plus Treadmill, visit [www.matrixfitness.com](http://www.matrixfitness.com).



*The Matrix Performance Plus Treadmill offers a smooth, comfortable exercise experience. Image courtesy of Matrix Fitness*



*Husband-and-wife team Matt and Susan Richardson lead WhisperGLIDE Swing Company. Image courtesy of WhisperGLIDE Swing Company, LLC*

### **WhisperGLIDE marks a pair of developments**

New ICAA Corporate Partner WhisperGLIDE Swing Company is celebrating two significant events. The WhisperGLIDE

wheelchair-accessible swing is celebrating 20 years of providing clinically proven, therapeutic benefits to wheelchair users. More than 3,000 swings across the United States and Canada offer thousands of people a shared outdoor activity that stimulates social, neuromuscular and cognitive components.

In other company news, after 25 years of putting his heart and soul into WhisperGLIDE, founder George Knuteson sold the company to Matt and Susan Richardson of Mosinee, Wisconsin. The Richardsons have been expanding their product portfolio, so a larger percentage of the active-aging population can enjoy the outdoors in comfort. The couple looks forward to growing the customer base and continuing to bring joy to life—one swing at a time. To find out more about WhisperGLIDE Swings, go to <https://whisperglide.com>.

*The International Council on Active Aging® connects ICAA members with companies interested in doing business with them and in supporting the active-aging industry. Listings appear in the "ICAA Corporate Partners" department that starts on page 72 of this Journal on Active Aging® issue.*

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## **Fragmented sleep may affect brain's immune cells, impair cognition**

A Canadian study by University of Toronto researchers recently showed that for older adults with and without Alzheimer's disease, fragmented sleep—where people wake up repeatedly instead of sleeping soundly—may have an effect on the brain's immune cells and impact people's cognitive abilities.

Specifically, there was an effect on microglia, which are nerve cells found in the brain and spine. These cells showed signs of accelerated aging and other abnormalities. The researchers were able to identify that the changes in the microglia, described by neurology professor Andrew Lim, MD, as the “brain's innate immune cells,” could be associated with worse cognition.

The research was based on 685 adults who were more than 65 years old, including more than 260 who had Alzheimer's disease. The researchers measured the participants' sleep patterns using wearable

devices. They also measured cognitive function. They quantified the number and state of the brain's innate immune cells for each participant by examining the gene expression patterns of the cells and by looking at the cells' shape under the microscope.

“Greater expression of genes characteristic of aged microglia was associated with worse cognition and partially accounted for the association between sleep fragmentation and worse cognition,” write Lim and colleagues. Further, they state, “Our findings are compatible with three scenarios:

- microglial aging and activation may lead to sleep fragmentation
- sleep fragmentation may lead to microglial aging and activation; or
- both may be caused by other brain changes, such as dementia-related brain pathologies.”

The “two important takeaways,” according to Lim, are “poor sleep is associated with brain immune dysregulation or dysfunction” and “dysfunction appears to be fur-

ther associated with impaired cognition.” Overall, he adds, the findings emphasize the importance of getting a good night's rest. **Source:** University of Toronto, December 11, 2019. **Citation:** *Science Advances*, 5(12), eaax7331. <https://doi.org/10.1126/sciadv.aax7331>

## **Report highlights links between heart and brain health**

A recently released report from the Global Council on Brain Health (GCBH) states that heart and brain health are connected, and that taking action to improve cardiovascular health reduces risk of cognitive decline and dementia. GCBH's “The Brain-Heart Connection” report summarizes strong research on this topic and offers practical lifestyle tips people can take to protect their heart and brain health.

Cardiovascular risk factors, such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, smoking and diabetes, are known to be harmful to the brain. The more risk factors a person has, the more likely they are to experience cognitive decline. However, there is strong evidence that reducing or treating these conditions lowers risk of cognitive decline and dementia, even if people make changes in their 70s or 80s.

The GCBH recommends the following steps for adults to improve their heart health:

- Lead a physically active life.
- Check blood pressure regularly. Work with a health professional to lower blood pressure if it is too high.
- If you smoke, quit. If you don't smoke, don't start. Smoking in any form is bad for the heart and the brain.
- Take the time and steps to manage stress effectively.
- If you have diabetes or prediabetes, consult with a health provider and nutritionist in order to help manage these conditions. Additional lifestyle tips and recommendations for health providers are included in the report, along with a

discussion of the scientific evidence supporting these conclusions and gaps in current medical knowledge.

**Source:** Global Council on Brain Health, February 10, 2020. **Citation:** “The Brain-Heart Connection: GCBH Recommendations to Manage Cardiovascular Risks to Brain Health.” <https://www.aarp.org/health/brain-health/global-council-on-brain-health/sleep-and-brain-health/>

## Overcoming loneliness with acceptance and wisdom in senior housing

With older adults increasingly moving into senior living or retirement communities, researchers at the University of California–San Diego School of Medicine sought to identify the common characteristics of residents who feel lonely in these environments.

“Loneliness rivals smoking and obesity in its impact on shortening longevity,” says senior author Dilip V. Jeste, MD, senior associate dean for the Center of Healthy Aging and Distinguished Professor of Psychiatry and Neurosciences at UC–San Diego School of Medicine. “It is a growing public health concern, and it’s important that we identify the underlying causes of loneliness from the seniors’ own perspectives so we can help resolve it and improve the overall health, well-being and longevity of our aging population.”

Jeste notes that there are few published qualitative studies about loneliness among older adults in the independent-living sector of senior housing communities, where shared common areas, planned social outings and communal activities are intended to promote socialization and reduce isolation. “So why are many older adults living in this type of housing still experiencing strong feelings of loneliness?” he asks.

The study found that people’s experience of living with loneliness is shaped by a number of personal and environmental factors. Researchers conducted 1.5-hour individual interviews with 30 adults, ages 67–92 years, part of an overall study evaluating the physical, mental and cognitive functions of 100 older residents in independent-living at a senior housing community in San Diego.

In this communal setting, 85% of the residents reported moderate to severe levels of loneliness. “Loneliness is subjective,” says Jeste. “Different people feel lonely for different reasons despite having opportunities and resources for socialization. This is not a one-size-fits-all topic.”

Three main themes emerged from the study:

- Age-associated losses and inadequate social skills were considered to be primary risk factors for loneliness. “Some residents talked about the loss of spouses, siblings and friends as the cause of their loneliness. Others mentioned how making new friends in a senior community cannot replace deceased friends they grew up with,” observes first author Alejandra Paredes, PhD, a research fellow at UC San Diego School of Medicine’s Department of Psychiatry.
- The feeling of loneliness was frequently associated with a lack of purpose in life. “We heard powerful comments like, ‘It’s kind of gray and incarcerating,’” comments Jeste. “Others expressed a sense of ‘not being attached, not having very much meaning and not feeling very hopeful’ or ‘being lost and not having control.’”
- Wisdom, including compassion, seemed to be a factor that prevented loneliness. “One participant spoke of a technique she had used for years, saying ‘If you’re feeling lonely, then go out and do something for somebody else.’ That’s proactive,” states Jeste. Other protective factors were acceptance of aging and comfort with being alone.

Concludes Jeste, “Our study is relevant to better understand loneliness within senior housing and other settings, so we can develop effective interventions.” **Source:** University of California–San Diego, January 10, 2020. **Citation:** *Aging & Mental Health*, 2020. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13607863.2019.1699022>


## Nearly 1,000 ride-share services available for older Americans

An analysis by NORC at the University of Chicago, Illinois, and ITNAmerica, Westbrook, Maine, shows that adults ages 65+ have access to nearly 1,000 for-profit and

non-profit ride-share services across the US to help meet their transportation needs. The study also found that healthcare was the most common reason to use a non-profit ride share (43%). The majority of rides, however, were for other personal needs, such as shopping, trips to the hairdresser, getting to work or volunteer activities, or just having fun.

This overview is the first part of a 3-year study of all ride-share services for older adults in the US, conducted on behalf of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The report defines “ride share” as transportation arranged through a third party, where a person is a passenger in a private automobile. A second phase of the study will explore older adults’ attitudes and beliefs toward using ride-share services.

“This study found that many adults age 75 and over require high-touch personal service to travel safely, remain in their homes, and actively engage in their communities,” comments Alycia Bayne, principal research scientist at NORC and an author of the white paper.

The report was based on an analysis of ITNAmerica’s ride-scheduling software and research database data from 27 locations across the US, representing 793,313 trips and 10,010 riders from 1996 to October 2019, as well as other sources. **Sources:** NORC at the University of Chicago and ITNAmerica, December 5, 2019. “Environmental Scan of Ride Share Services Available for Older Adults,” 2019. [https://reports.norc.org/white\\_paper/environmental-scan-of-ride-share-services-available-for-older-adults/](https://reports.norc.org/white_paper/environmental-scan-of-ride-share-services-available-for-older-adults/) 

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# Strengthen the immune system naturally:

More lifestyle strategies to counter chronic inflammation



**Studies show links between certain lifestyle behaviors and levels of inflammatory markers. Encourage use of these practices to reduce inflammation and enhance quality of life**

*by Shirley Archer, JD, MA*

If someone suggested that making very simple adjustments to one's daily routine would result in more energy, better sleep and potentially fewer aches and pains, with no adverse side effects and yet a host of beneficial side effects, would that persuade you or the people you work with to adopt them?

In part one of my *Journal on Active Aging*® (*JAA*) article on countering chronic in-

flammation for healthier aging, I described how lifestyle choices, environmental factors and genetics affect conditions related to inflammation (see "Resources" on page 31 for article details). Since our genetics and many environmental factors—such as exposure to pollutants or environmental contaminants—are beyond our control, what we can influence are our lifestyle choices.<sup>1</sup>

The first article provided an overview of inflammation and focused on nutritional strategies to lower inflammation. Growing evidence is shining light on additional lifestyle factors and their relationship with the immune system. This second article offers a sampling of areas in which older adults can make simple lifestyle changes to

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# Strengthen the immune system naturally: More lifestyle strategies to counter chronic inflammation *Continued from page 24*

support a healthy immune system, improve quality of life and enhance healthy aging.

## Inflammation and the aging immune system

Before digging into the research, let's review some important concepts in this dynamic field. Numerous studies have identified inflammation and inflamm-aging as a feature of many chronic conditions like heart disease or type 2 diabetes that challenge people today, particularly older adults. In fact, our understanding of heart disease is changing dramatically as more knowledge of inflammatory processes is gained.

Chronic inflammation and inflamm-aging are *not* the same: Mechanisms related to inflammatory conditions and inflamm-aging are complex and require more multidisciplinary research to be better understood.<sup>2</sup> We now know:

*Acute inflammation* is a natural, immediate response by the immune system to a harmful agent that initiates the healing process. It is characterized by swelling, heat, redness, pain and loss of function, which subside as healing is completed.

*Chronic inflammation* is a prolonged inflammatory response that occurs when the immune response is continuously triggered or when the immune system reacts to an agent as if it were harmful when in fact it is not, as in rheumatoid arthritis. In contrast to acute inflammation, chronic inflammation can be damaging, not healing.

*Inflamm-aging* is chronic, low-grade inflammation that occurs with aging. This kind of inflammation is associated with many diseases that affect older adults, including Alzheimer's disease, cancer and heart disease. Scientific consensus does not exist on the exact definition of inflamm-aging. However, investigators agree that with aging comes a progressive increase in inflammation partially due to a less efficient and adaptive immune system, or

"immunosenescence."<sup>2</sup> This immune system aging co-occurs with cellular aging, also referred to as "cellular senescence," when cells lose their ability to reproduce, as with telomere shortening and DNA damage. (Telomeres are DNA segments that "cap" the end of chromosomes and function like aglets, the protective plastic tips that prevent shoelaces from unraveling. Longer telomeres are associated with greater longevity.<sup>3</sup>) Senescent cells secrete pro-inflammatory chemicals that contribute to inflammation and oxidative stress<sup>4</sup> (which arises due to an imbalance between oxygen-containing "free radical" molecules and antioxidants).

Causes of chronic inflammation and inflamm-aging are numerous. Causes of inflamm-aging include aging and genetic predisposition, as some people are more likely to experience it than others. Different causal factors are likely to be interconnected as well as cumulative. From a medical standpoint, reducing inflammation requires an individualized understanding and approach, plus a clear diagnosis of underlying causes. Therefore this article is intended to be neither diagnostic nor prescriptive.

## From research to real life

A simplified overview follows of the relationship between specific lifestyle practices and an immune system response, with suggestions for how to translate research findings into real-life applications. Research has yet to confirm the specific underlying mechanisms for why these lifestyle behaviors impact inflammation. In other words, much of the data shows associational relationships, but researchers continue to unravel the picture for a clearer understanding of cause and effect. The good news is these lifestyle factors, unlike some medical interventions, promote health not only by contributing to potentially lower inflammation levels, but also by supporting *positive* side effects like better mood, greater strength, more energy, less fatigue and overall higher life quality.

## I. Dental hygiene and regular checkups

*Relationship with inflammation.* Something as basic as regular checkups and good oral hygiene practices is important in addressing inflammation. Chronic infections, like oral infections, are associated with a persistent inflammatory state. Treating these infections can reduce this inflammation and offers many long-term benefits beyond simply eliminating the infection.<sup>5</sup> Regular checkups are also essential to evaluate issues related to heart disease, type 2 diabetes and other chronic conditions that older adults often face to make sure that treatment plans are effective.

In particular, research suggests that gum disease—which occurs with the buildup of plaque around teeth—can turn into periodontal disease. Characterized by more severe inflammation, periodontal disease carries an increased risk of heart disease and other conditions like type 2 diabetes, osteoporosis and rheumatoid arthritis. The theory is that bacteria and inflammation from gum disease stimulates inflammation, which may then provoke oxidative stress and worsening of systemic inflammation.<sup>6</sup> More research is needed.

*Particular impact on older adults.* Older adults often need to manage multiple chronic health issues and associated treatment regimes. Approximately two in three age 65+ adults (68%) in the United States have gum disease, according to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.<sup>7</sup> Many medications, prescriptive and over-the-counter, can cause dry mouth, which increases risk of cavities.<sup>7</sup> Yet many older Americans do not have dental health insurance.

*What to do:* Encourage regular checkups for evaluation of ongoing care. This includes regular dental health visits as well as promoting good oral hygiene practices. Consider offering education on good oral hygiene practices through workshops,

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# Strengthen the immune system naturally: More lifestyle strategies to counter chronic inflammation *Continued from page 26*



health fairs and communications such as newsletters, for example. Perhaps invite a local dentist to participate as well.

In addition to regular dental care, routine checkups for health biomarkers such as blood pressure, heart rate, blood sugar, body composition, bone density and more, should be tracked regularly, so any deviations from the norm can be spotted quickly. Heart disease, diabetes, osteoporosis and cancer are often referred to as silent killers. Proactive health screening on a regular basis can catch these conditions earlier for a more effective response.

## **2. Hydration**

*Relationship with inflammation.* Since water is a main component of the body and an essential nutrient for life, maintaining adequate hydration is essential to good health. Studies show that dehydration

increases inflammation. Inflammatory agents stimulated by dehydration may contribute to development of arthritis, inflammatory bowel disease and other chronic inflammatory conditions. And, dehydration increases oxidative stress.

Researchers suggest that dehydration may also be linked to an increased risk of type 2 diabetes, because inadequate muscle hydration affects metabolism of glucose (blood sugar) and may be related to muscle development and function. More research is needed, in particular to establish evidence-based personalized water-intake recommendations for older adults.<sup>8</sup>

*Particular impact on older adults.* Older adults face a challenge to maintain hydration levels as sensitivity to thirst declines and aging cells retain less water, which may be related to low muscle mass

and quality. In addition, many medications are diuretic, such as corticosteroids and metformin. Other drugs such as certain blood pressure medications and antidepressants impact thirst sensation.

*What to do.* Strategies to avoid dehydration include encouraging consistent water intake throughout the day, recommends Angel Planells, MS, RDN, a Seattle, Washington-based registered dietitian and spokesperson for the Academy of Nutrition & Dietetics. Planells also encourages people to eat fruits and vegetables daily. For those who consider water boring, he recommends flavoring it with herbs like fresh mint or slices of cucumber, apple or orange. Another option can be to drink teas.

Studies suggest that teas, especially green and white teas, are rich in antioxidants, which may reduce oxidative stress and

inflammation, but more high-quality research is needed.<sup>9</sup> Daily tea consumption of 2–3 cups is associated with less risk of premature death, though causal evidence is difficult to obtain.<sup>10</sup>

### 3. Sleep

*Relationship with inflammation.* Sleep and the immune system are closely related, note researchers from the Universities of Tübingen and Lübeck in Germany as well as Harvard University, who conducted a review of sleep and inflammation studies.<sup>11</sup> For example, when the immune system is stimulated by a cold or flu, it triggers an inflammatory response that can induce longer sleep duration and depth. Certain immune system chemicals promote non-REM [rapid eye movement] sleep. This deep sleep is believed to improve infection outcome, thereby supporting a healing immune system response.

“Our findings show that sleep has the potential to enhance the efficiency of T cell responses, which is especially relevant in light of the high prevalence of sleep disorders and conditions characterized by impaired sleep...,” says study author Luciana Besedovsky, PhD. She cites “depression, chronic stress, aging and shift work” as examples.

In contrast, prolonged systemic low-grade inflammation disrupts rest, leading to sleep fragmentation, nonrestorative sleep and daytime fatigue. Frequent sleep loss stimulates production of pro-inflammatory chemical messengers (e.g., neurotransmitters).

In a review of human studies, Hyogo College of Medicine researchers in Japan noted that short sleep duration and low sleep quality induce a pro-inflammatory state. It also contributes to blood vessel dysfunction that increases atherosclerosis risk. Obstructive sleep apnea contributes to oxidative stress as well.<sup>12</sup> As much sleep and immune system research has been conducted on animals, more human studies are needed.

*Particular impact on older adults.* Since many older adults face challenges with good quality sleep and inflammation, ensuring adequate sleep is an important lifestyle strategy to reduce inflammation. Diagnosing and treating sleep apnea is important to improve sleep quality and duration. Many medications may disrupt sleep, such as beta-blockers, corticosteroids or antidepressants. Where people require those medications, it’s important to educate them on why good sleep hygiene habits are even more important [Ed. See “Resources” on page 31 for details about a 2019 *JAA* article on environments that support sleep].

In a review of 72 studies, University of California–Los Angeles researchers found that sleep disturbance and long sleep duration are associated with increases in systemic inflammation markers, while adequate sleep nightly is not.<sup>13</sup>

*What to do.* Based on what is known to date, researchers recommend that people sleep around 7–8 hours per night consistently to keep inflammation levels low. Napping is a good strategy when nighttime sleep is too short, while extra recovery sleep is recommended immediately following episodes of sleep deprivation. Consistent sleep of long duration, however, is associated with higher inflammation and may indicate an underlying health issue.<sup>11</sup>

The National Sleep Foundation recommends establishing consistent sleep and wake times; relaxing sleep routines or rituals; avoiding stimulants before bedtime; creating a quiet, dark and comfortable sleep setting; keeping the bedroom cool; and ensuring adequate exposure to natural light to balance body rhythms.<sup>14</sup>

### 4. Physical activity

*Relationship with inflammation.* Studies suggest that sedentary behavior is associated with higher inflammation levels and that prolonged inactivity increases risk of death from all causes. In the first study



*Shirley Archer. Image courtesy of Shirley S. Archer Associates*

### Mark your calendar

Want to hear more from Shirley Archer? Plan now to attend the International Council on Active Aging Conference, Leadership Summit & Trade Show 2020, to be held October 27–29 at the Hyatt Regency and Long Beach Convention & Entertainment Center in Long Beach, California. Archer will present on the following topics:

- Indoors or out: Nurturing nature connections to boost health and well-being
- Why increasing happiness should be part of every program

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to examine the relationship between objectively measured physical activity and inflammatory biomarkers, researchers from University College London in the United Kingdom and Harvard Medical School evaluated data from 1,139 men, mean age 78 years, in the British Regional Heart Study. The researchers found that higher levels of sedentary behavior were associ-

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ated with higher levels of inflammatory biomarkers.

Higher total physical activity, daily steps and moderate-to-vigorous physical activity were all associated with lower inflammatory biomarker levels. Investigators noted that all activity matters, regardless of length, and that moderate-to-vigorous physical activity was associated with more favorable profiles of biomarkers that identify risk of heart disease and other chronic age-related conditions.<sup>15</sup>

Other recent evidence shows that people who are inactive for 9.5 hours in a row on a daily basis have an increased risk of death from all causes. This is based on an international research group review of 10 studies with a combined total of more than 36,000 participants from the US, UK and Scandinavia.<sup>16</sup> The risks associated with

prolonged inactivity are independent of exercise activity, which appears to be anti-inflammatory. This means it's important to keep moving intermittently at any intensity—whether it involves lifestyle activity such as walking the dog and cycling to the store or exercise activity such as swimming laps.

A significant body of evidence supports the relationship between consistent exercise of moderate-to-vigorous intensity, performed for less than 60 minutes on most days of the week, and a healthy, balanced immune system. Each exercise bout increases immune-system chemical messengers that search for harmful agents in fat tissue, thereby reducing inflammation. Regular exercise stimulates release of other anti-inflammatory agents that boost the immune defense system and metabolic health over time in a way that can reduce

tumor development, atherosclerosis and other disease processes.<sup>17</sup>

Emerging evidence suggests that habitual exercise can delay the onset of immunosenescence. In other words, consistent exercise can slow immune system aging and maintain a healthily functioning immune system longer over a lifetime. However, too much exercise—for example, doing high-intensity interval training for 2 hours every day—can depress the immune system, so moderation is important. Most studies related to exercise and the immune system have examined aerobic exercise. Immune system benefits remain unclear for strength training and other modes of exercise.

*Particular impact on older adults.* Any amount of physical activity is beneficial for older adults, and both lifestyle and exercise



activity count. Researchers note that individuals who meet recommendations for aerobic physical activity—150 minutes of moderate-intensity or 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity activity per week—exhibit less immunological aging than age-matched controls who are not active.<sup>18</sup> People with active lifestyles have stronger immune response to vaccines. In fact, studies show that a poor vaccine response can be improved by a single bout of exercise.<sup>18</sup>

*What to do.* Until more research focuses specifically on physical activity and the immune system, the best recommendation is to follow current physical activity guidelines (see the sidebar on page 32). Keep in mind that studies show that any level of activity is better than none. In addition to quantity of exercise, frequency of activity matters. In other words, it is ideal to get up periodically and move to avoid long sitting bouts, even if you also squeeze in regular exercise.

## 5. Emotional and mental well-being

*Relationship with inflammation.* Substantial evidence supports that psychological stress can trigger increases in inflammatory activity, absent physical injury, via a neuro-inflammatory link.<sup>19</sup> When the body’s “fight or flight” response is stimulated, the immune system is activated *before* an injury occurs to potentially protect from possible skin wounding or infections from bacteria and viruses that may come from aggressive encounters. This is intended to be an episodic response. Some suggest this activation is evolutionarily adaptive, as the historical “fight or flight” response protected humans from physical dangers.

In contrast, chronic stress may weaken and prematurely age the immune system because it repeatedly activates the immune system when there is no acute injury that requires healing, as in situations of social conflict, rejection or isolation. Investigators currently theorize that under chronic con-

ditions, the immune system continues to respond by protecting against bacteria and other pathogens but reducing the antiviral response. Over time, this process can increase an individual’s risk for viral infection and inflammation-related diseases.<sup>19</sup>

This is particularly significant to note: Chronic stress can reduce the immune system’s ability to fight off viral attacks. Since modern medicine has not yet identified effective therapeutic medications or vaccines against many viruses, it is even more important to integrate ways to cope with modern-day life stresses.

Multiple studies support this theory of heightened inflammation from chronic stress. In one examination of caregivers, researchers found that people who cared for a spouse with dementia had four times the level of a certain inflammation biomarker when compared with people of an equiva-

*Continued on page 32*

## Resources

### Internet

**American Dental Hygienists Association: “Inflammation: The Relationship Between Oral Health and Systemic Disease”**

[https://www.adha.org/sites/default/files/7823\\_Inflammation.pdf](https://www.adha.org/sites/default/files/7823_Inflammation.pdf)

### Print

The *Journal on Active Aging*® articles below are available to ICAA members free online in the “Articles” archives at [www.icaa.cc](http://www.icaa.cc). Recommended keywords follow each to enable readers to find articles easily.

Archer, S. (2019). Countering chronic inflammation for healthier aging, part one:

The food connection. *Journal on Active Aging*, 18(5), 52–62; July/August/September issue [keyword “inflammation”]

Archer, S. (2018). Happiness and health, part one: How positive emotions affect physical well-being. *Journal on Active Aging*, 17(3), 102–108; May/June issue [keyword “happiness”]

Archer, S. (2018). Happiness and health, part two: What you can do to boost happiness. *Journal on Active Aging*, 17(7), 40–47; November/December issue [keyword “happiness”]

Archer, S. (2018). Nature walking and health: An update on benefits to mind, body and spirit of time in nature. *Journal on Active Aging*,

17(5), 56–61; July/August issue [keyword “nature walking”]

Garbe, K. C., & Sanders, M. E. (2019). Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans: Understand and apply the 2018 recommendations. *Journal on Active Aging*, 18(1), 78–86; January/February issue [keyword “physical activity guidelines”]

Vaicekonyte, R., Swope, C., Timm, S., & Gray, W. A. (2019). Simple environmental design solutions to support sleep for healthy aging. *Journal on Active Aging*, 18(5), 32–42; July/August/September issue [keyword “sleep”]

# Strengthen the immune system naturally: More lifestyle strategies to counter chronic inflammation *Continued from page 31*

lent age that did not have family caregiving responsibilities.<sup>20</sup>

Negative emotions such as depression and anxiety can also stimulate an inflammatory response via this neuroinflammatory link. Study authors note that “neural systems involved in processing physical pain also play a role in processing social pain.” Depression is characterized by high levels of pro-inflammatory messengers. And, inflammatory diseases and high levels of pro-inflammatory markers increase depression risks, indicating a bidirectional relationship. In fact, Alzheimer’s disease is characterized by neuroinflammatory changes.<sup>5</sup>

Research also shows that inflammation may induce “sickness behavioral” changes such as fatigue and social-behavioral withdrawal from interaction that supports recuperation and recovery. Individual susceptibility to disordered mood changes may be related to individual cognitive vulnerability, since not all people with challenges related to systemic inflammation experience major depressive disorder.<sup>19</sup>

*Particular impact on older adults.* In addition to normal life stressors, older adults must cope more with issues related to both physical and emotional loss—from functional abilities and mobility to loss of friends and loved ones. Individuals in this population are more likely to experience social isolation and may be survivors of elder abuse. And as many as 7% of older adults may have unipolar depression that is often underdiagnosed and undertreated, according to the World Health Organization.<sup>21</sup>

*What to do:* Supporting a strong sense of social connection with other people is one of the most important behavioral strategies to promote well-being for older adults. Studies show that people who are socially isolated have as much as two to four times higher levels of inflammation biomarkers when compared with socially integrated individuals.<sup>19</sup>

Increasing social support and promoting practices that boost happiness and a positive mindset can be great strategies to reduce emotional distress and promote feelings of well-being in older adults. [Ed. For more specific activities, see part two of Shirley Archer’s article on happiness and health, published in *JAA* in 2018; refer to “Resources” on page 31 for details.]

Forest bathing or “shinrin-yoku” as it originated in Japan, a practice that involves fostering a present-moment awareness of sensory experience in nature, is also proven to boost immune system functioning. One study showed that three days of forest bathing result in a 56% increase in natural killer immune system cells and this boost lasted for one month. [Ed. To learn more about the powerful health benefits of time in nature, see “Resources” on page 31 for an article on nature walking and health published in the *JAA*.]

In addition, studies suggest activities like mindfulness meditation practices, tai chi or other cognitive-based training can also be helpful for reducing stress-related inflammation.<sup>19</sup> Perhaps providing education on relaxation practices or offering group classes such as tai chi or nature-based mindfulness programs like forest bathing can give both social support and tools to reduce feelings of emotional distress. Watch this space for more about mindfulness meditation in an upcoming *JAA* issue.

## 6. Additional lifestyle changes

Additional activities relevant to an anti-inflammatory lifestyle include quitting smoking, managing weight and promoting a healthy gut microbiome. Numerous studies show the relationship between systemic inflammation and smoking or obesity.<sup>22,23</sup> New evidence also points to the relationship between an altered gut microbiome and age-related inflammation.<sup>24</sup>

## Small efforts, big rewards

The science around understanding inflammatory processes is dynamic and

exciting. We are offered a firsthand look at how various body systems interact and the links between thoughts, emotions and our environment on physiological processes that can either promote or undermine health.

What’s even more empowering is that simple lifestyle strategies *can* make a difference. Habits around what we eat and drink, how we move and rest, how and with whom we spend our time, plus our outlook and commitment to self-care—everything matters. And it matters not only for the

*Continued on page 34*

## Physical activity by older adults: current recommendations

The 2018 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans includes these key points for older adults:

- As part of their weekly physical activity, older adults should do multicomponent exercise, including balance training as well as aerobic and muscle-strengthening activities.
- Older adults should determine their level of effort for physical activity relative to their level of fitness.
- Older adults with chronic health conditions should understand whether and how their conditions affect their ability to do regular physical activity safely.
- When older adults cannot do 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity a week because of chronic conditions, they should be as physically active as their abilities and conditions allow.<sup>25</sup>

For further information about the 2018 Physical Activity Guidelines, refer to an article by Drs. Kathie Garbe and Mary E. Sanders published in 2019 in the *Journal on Active Aging* (see “Resources” on page 31).

# Ten tips for living an anti-inflammation lifestyle

by Shirley Archer, JD, MA

The best defense to protect against colds, flus, viruses and other harmful agents and to slow the pace of chronic conditions is a strong offense. Build your offensive line of optimal health by regularly doing activities that support systemic mental, physical and spiritual health.

1. Take care of your teeth. Get regular dental check-ups and follow good oral hygiene practices to prevent inflammation of the gums and tooth decay.
2. Know your numbers. Go for annual physical exams to check health biomarkers like blood pressure, heart rate, blood sugar, bone density, body composition. Get recommended cancer screenings to establish a baseline. Initiate treatment early for any detected issues.
3. Eat mostly plants. Eat a minimally processed whole foods diet that consists mostly of plant-based foods like fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts and seeds and healthy fats. This eating pattern provides a rich array of vitamins, minerals, antioxidants and fiber that boosts health, reduces oxidative damage, enhances your gut microbiome and strengthens your immune system.
4. Drink lots. Adequate hydration supports the healthy functioning of every cell of your body. You think more clearly, you have more energy, you sleep better—all your body functions work more efficiently when you are hydrated. Thirst is not a good indicator. Drink fluids throughout the day at regular intervals. Try teas if water is not appealing.
5. Sleep more soundly. Follow good sleep hygiene practices for consistent quantity and quality of sleep. If frequent waking at night is an issue, try taking a daily nap. Resolve any sleep apnea or snoring issues.
6. Move more, sit less. Any amount of physical activity boosts your health. Do muscle strengthening exercises at least once per week to maintain strength to enjoy daily activities. Do a rhythmic activity like walking daily to maintain endurance. Stand up and move around on an hourly basis to boost your mobility.

7. Enjoy nature breaks. Fill your home with plants or nature images. Sit by picture windows or on the porch. Open windows for fresh air and nature sounds. Go outside and savor nature's beauty, when possible.
8. Join a club or social group. Make time for activities with friends to connect and share common interests. Support organizations that interest you and align with your values. Contribute to causes that add meaning to your life.
9. Learn how to meditate. Experience mindfulness or loving-kindness meditation practices to bring more positivity, calm and happiness into your life.
10. Practice gratitude. Consciously acknowledge what parts of your life that you appreciate and for which you feel thankful. Bring more of the people, activities and things into your life that make you feel happy to be alive.

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# Strengthen the immune system naturally: More lifestyle strategies to counter chronic inflammation *Continued from page 32*

older adults with whom we work, but for all of us who support healthy, active aging.

The final ingredients are education and motivation. As the late comedian George Burns once said, “You can’t help getting older, but you don’t have to grow old.” Even though we may not yet have all the answers, we can begin applying what we know to optimize health over the lifespan. 

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# FOUNDATION FOR WELLNESS CERTIFICATE COURSE



**Take this course and you will** develop a fundamental understanding of wellness curricula with scientific-based evidence and strategies that help you build successful programs and a robust wellness culture in your organization.





# Why ICAA Education

At ICAA Education we believe that wellness should be the number one consideration for any organization that wants to instill a robust culture and thriving community within its walls, and beyond.

**The challenge:** Wellness means different things to different people. Why is this an issue? According to a 2019 survey conducted by ICAA, 92% of organizations in the active aging industry believe it is very or extremely important that all staff in every department support wellness. However, only 34% of organizations are very or extremely effective in getting staff in all departments to support wellness. This gap, between importance and effectiveness, is why ICAA Education certificate courses are laser-focused on helping you to build a foundation for wellness within your organization.

**The opportunity:** 73% of organizations believe the ability to stay relevant in a changing industry is a direct result of incorporating wellness into their daily service programs.

**The solution:** ICAA certificate courses are laser-focused on increasing the knowledge and skills needed to strengthen individual wellbeing and build a wellness culture within an organization. These courses are instrumental in developing proficient leaders in wellness management who can foster successful cross-collaboration among all departments and deliver effective initiatives in the pursuit of high-level wellness.

By enrolling in an ICAA course you are making a bold statement that you believe in wellness, and that your organization supports the future of your staff and the people they work with.

# Course overview

This innovative course covers the foundational concepts and cutting-edge research necessary to improve life within each of the seven dimensions of wellness. More and more businesses are taking the opportunity to offer wellness products, programming, environments, and services dedicated to meeting the needs and desires of the escalating aging population. Therefore, creating lifestyle opportunities focused on these seven dimensions of wellness is one of the most important cultural changes affecting our entire economy. Across the U.S. and throughout the world, businesses and communities are rebuilding and creating facilities and developing programs designed to support the growing wellness industry. As a result, facilitators of this movement are needed more than ever.

This unique course is designed for anyone interested in improving the health and wellbeing of older adults—as well as individuals working rigorously to create an inclusive wellness culture at their organization. Professionals who are new to their roles in health care, wellness, fitness, recreation, and aging, and those individuals looking for ways to understand and support their organization's wellness initiatives, will benefit from acquiring the knowledge and tools provided in this course. In addition, Health Care Professionals such as Physical Therapists, Occupational Therapists, Speech Therapists, Nurses, as well as those directly involved in helping people attain and maintain a healthy lifestyle, will learn what is needed

to successfully implement a vibrant and results-oriented wellness program. Also, administrators and management professionals will gain valuable insights that will help them understand and advocate for wellness in their organization and beyond.

**Important:** ICAA Education is committed to supporting the educational needs of professionals working in active-aging and wellness. Elevating the knowledge, skills, and abilities of these professionals will help to improve the lives of all living and working in wellness and aging. ICAA's Foundation for Wellness is an ideal way to meet the needs of professionals working in a fast-paced and growing wellness industry.

# What you should know

While the topic of “living well” and implementing a healthy lifestyle has long been an aspiration for most of the population, there isn’t much training on the market about how to practically achieve these goals. The ICAA’s Foundation for Wellness course enables participants to obtain and utilize groundbreaking curricula to achieve these goals within a forward-thinking organization. If you have a desire to design and run a successful wellness program at your facility or organization, then you must understand the major principles and content of wellness.

help you develop new ideas and strategies and how to implement them successfully; while creating and building effective wellness programs that help your residents/ members live their very best lives.

The purpose of the ICAA’s Foundation for Wellness course is to help you understand the seven dimensions of wellness, discover best practices for wellness activities, and learn essential wellness concepts based on scientific evidence.

Enrolling in ICAA’s Foundation for Wellness allows participants to learn about the seven dimensions of wellness, which is the heart of the holistic, total approach to achieving wellness. This course will





# Who should take this course

This course has been intricately developed for Wellness Professionals and anyone who is interested in supporting the advanced wellness culture and programming within their organization. More specifically, this course is for those individuals who are interested in refreshing or expanding their wellness knowledge with ICAA content and evidence-based activities—as well as those who are new to the field and want to learn the fundamental concepts instrumental to wellness success. This course also benefits those administrators who support wellness programming and want to learn more ways to enhance a thriving wellness culture.

**ICAA's Foundation for Wellness** is an ideal way to meet the needs of professionals working in a fast-paced and growing wellness industry. The people who sign up to take this course are like-minded individuals who believe wholeheartedly in the mandate that helping others improve their well-being and daily wellness practices will encourage a more beneficial lifestyle for adults as a whole. The following is a list of professionals who align

perfectly with the mission of this course. If you are on this list, you should take ICAA's Foundation for Wellness certification course because the content was designed with you in mind.

## Do you want to make a big impact? Is this you?

- Wellness Directors
- Fitness Staff
- Activity Directors
- Program Managers in older adult programming
- Physical Therapists, Occupational Therapists, Recreational Therapists, Nurses
- Human Resources Personnel
- Upper-Level Administration and Management
- Students seeking careers in aging and older adult programming
- Anyone interested in the field of Wellness as a career

## Why this course is for you

This course is a must-have in your professional arsenal if you are a Wellness Professional who wants to ensure you are making a difference in the lives around you.

By enrolling in the Foundation for Wellness course you will:

- Gain an in-depth understanding of what wellness is, and why it is vital to your organization's success
- Stay competitive and up-to-date in the wellness field
- Advance your career in wellness
- Become a leader in your company and in the wellness industry
- Learn valuable new knowledge, skills, and expertise in wellness
- Build a professional network and share ideas and resources
- Gain new methods to improve your programming, and ways to support the mission of your organization
- Become a fierce advocate of wellness
- Support people to live their very best lives!

# Course expectations

The ICAA's Foundation for Wellness certification course provides you the vital wellness knowledge and skills upon which to establish or enhance your wellness culture.

Each module includes:

- Module objectives
- Definitions and general concepts on the subject
- Science and facts about the topic
- Case studies
- Actions for wellness
- Conclusion
- 10 question quiz
- A valuable reference list that can be used as resources in the future

Note: All participants will receive articles, examples, and videos which serve to reinforce the information in the module.

## Module topics

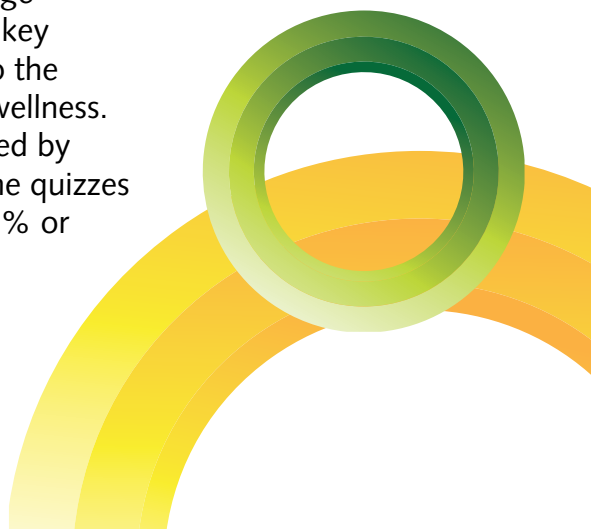
- Course introduction
- What is wellness?
- The physical dimension of wellness
- The social dimension of wellness
- The spiritual dimension of wellness
- The vocational dimension of wellness
- The environmental dimension of wellness
- The emotional dimension of wellness
- The intellectual dimension of wellness
- A clear and comprehensive vision of wellness

ICAA's Foundation for Wellness certificate is earned by demonstrating fundamental knowledge of wellness, including key information specific to the seven dimensions of wellness. This certificate is earned by successfully passing the quizzes with an average of 80% or higher.

## Continuing education units

ICAA offers Continuing Education Units (CEUs) for this course from a select number of accreditation providers. If your CEU provider is not listed on the ICAA website, please petition them directly. To earn CEUs, participants must pass the entire course and complete the course evaluation.

Note: The cost of CEUs will vary depending upon the specific organization. CEUs range from \$50-\$150. This fee covers costs charged by certifying agencies and is non-refundable. CEU fees must be submitted when you register for the course.



People who embrace wellness as a part of intentional, everyday living demonstrate considerable benefits in all aspects of their lives. They live with purpose and are engaged in life. For instance, they are more optimistic and involved in their communities. For older adults, improved quality of life has been one of the most significant outcomes of practicing healthy living and wellness behaviors. Forward-thinking organizations

understand the current need to transition their organization to a wellness-based model—and they recognize the importance of establishing a holistic approach to improve life within the seven dimensions of wellness. Companies that want to pave the way for revolutionary change and transformation understand that improving wellness for older adults *will* lead to better living options—and a thriving population. Strengthening wellness knowledge will lead to a more profound commitment by staff to enhance lives but will also create a flourishing and prosperous organization.

#### **How much does ICAA's Foundation for Wellness cost?**

ICAA members: \$449\*

Non-members: \$649

Note: ICAA Education offers a discount for multiple team members from the same company. Please contact us for more information: 866.335.9777





### **What will I learn by taking this course?**

You will learn the importance of understanding wellness and developing a wellness vision, essential research-based content on the seven dimensions of wellness, essential wellness terminology, and wellness information based on science and best practices. Students will also learn how to develop a holistic wellness program and apply strategies to improve customers' quality of life.

### **How long do I have to complete the course?**

Although each module takes an average of 3-5 hours to complete, students have up to 20 weeks to complete the course. However, ICAA is flexible and willing to meet the timing needs of the individual student.

### **Since this course is entirely online, what kind of support is there if I have a question?**

Although the course is entirely online, students will be designated an official "Instructor of Record." This instructor has advanced education and experience in

the active-aging and wellness industry. She/he will be available via email and phone to help you during regular business hours.

### **What if I fall behind or cannot complete the course due to a major life event and wish to withdraw?**

If you fall behind, have difficulty with the material, or feel you cannot complete the course due to a major life event, please notify your instructor and the ICAA staff immediately by email or phone. We are here to help you in any way possible.

The course withdrawal and refund policy is:

- **100% refund**, minus a \$50 processing fee, if requested 30 days or more before course start date;
- **50% refund**, minus a \$50 processing fee, if requested 14–29 days before the course start date;
- **25% refund**, minus a \$50 processing fee, 1–7 days after the course has begun.

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### **I am not an ICAA member—how do I register?**

You may register without ICAA membership, however, there are excellent benefits by obtaining a membership. To learn more about ICAA memberships and to join, visit [www.icaa.cc](http://www.icaa.cc).

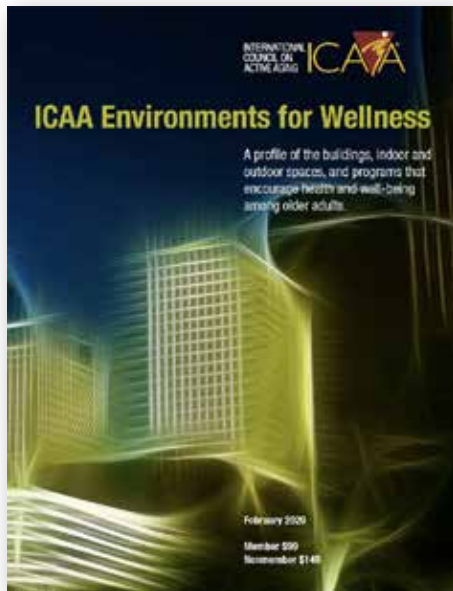


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# What does the future of wellness look organization?



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**ICAA State of Wellness:** Organizations' views of wellness; importance of indicators of a wellness culture with organizations' success in achieving them; indicators that need improvement; action plans.

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# Beacons of excellence:

Profiling winners in the wellness culture space



**A new ICAA NuStep awards program recognizes exceptional contributions to wellness as a way of life in senior living communities—for residents and staff alike. Read on to learn about four award-winners**

*by Julie Halpert*

After 15 years living in a rural community on the Chesapeake Bay, Joel Grow, 69, and his wife, Rebecca, 73, decided to move to a senior living community. The Grows don't

have children. They feared that getting care as they aged would be challenging in their remote setting on America's Mid-Atlantic coast. An acquaintance suggested they visit Sunnyside Retirement Community, a life-plan community located in Harrisonburg, Virginia.

Looking to maintain their active lifestyle, the Grows were attracted to Sunnyside's numerous fitness classes. "The instructors were capable and well trained and just nice, caring people who knew how to be helpful

*Continued on page 48*

*Presbyterian Village North in Dallas,  
Texas, promotes 'a lifestyle filled with  
activity and fitness.' Image courtesy of  
Presbyterian Village North*





# Beacons of excellence: Profiling winners in the wellness culture space

*Continued from page 46*



*Maravilla Santa Barbara adventurers enjoy an active day out from the Senior Resource Group community in California. Image courtesy of SRG Maravilla Santa Barbara*

to those who aren't 25 anymore," Joel says. The couple moved to Sunnyside in March 2018. Since then, they have discovered a rich lifestyle, participating in movie and travel clubs, playing pool regularly and attending numerous local concerts. "I haven't lived in any other retirement community, but I know this is a wonderful place," Joel states.

In fact, Sunnyside is more than a nice place to live. Along with state and international awards (including four ICAA Innovators Awards for excellence in wellness programming), the Virginia community is one of the top five winners of the inaugural ICAA NuStep Beacon Award, announced October 2019. The other top winners are:

- Moorings Park in Naples, Florida,<sup>1</sup>
- Senior Resource Group: Maravilla in Santa Barbara, California
- Presbyterian Village North in Dallas, Texas
- John Knox Village of Florida in Pompano Beach, Florida

All five communities have also received the ICAA NuStep Pinnacle Award, signifying

the highest wellness achievement in senior living.

These senior living communities foster a culture of wellness that goes beyond just physical fitness and healthcare. They share certain features: a continuum of care, a large variety of classes and programs, breathtaking physical surroundings that are incorporated into the programming, partnerships with their local cultural and academic institutions, employee involvement in wellness activities, and a system that ensures continual response to resident feedback.

The International Council on Aging<sup>®</sup> joined with NuStep, LLC, a leading manufacturer of recumbent cross-trainers, in 2018 to develop a new opportunity for senior living communities to win recognition for creating and fostering a wellness culture. Launched in January 2019, the prestigious Beacon Award also allows recipients to position themselves competitively in a changing industry. To win the annual award, communities must demonstrate the ways in which they

meet the seven dimensions of wellness: emotional, physical, intellectual, social, spiritual, vocational and environmental. Every year the Beacon Award will recognize the 25 most deserving applicants.

One of the judges, Kate Mearns, director of Spa and Wellness for LIVunLtd in New York, mentions she was tapped to judge the Beacon Awards because senior living leaders seek to incorporate some spa features that appeal to future residents. A universal theme among the top winners was "that wellness really is part of their DNA" and integrated into all of their programs, says Mearns. She also saw the concept of involving residents in the operations of many of the best communities she reviewed. Another judge, Carolyn Swope, director of Health Sciences at Delos Labs, adds that the top winners "actively strove to engage their residents, listen to their needs and promote participation in wellness activities and culture."

Previously, the *Journal on Active Aging*<sup>®</sup> featured an article on Moorings Park, the number one "Best in Wellness" community recognized by the 2019 ICAA NuStep awards program<sup>1</sup> (a full list of the 2019 award-winners appears on page 51). The four communities that round out the top five are profiled below for this issue.

## **Senior Resource Group: Maravilla Santa Barbara**

At Maravilla, the wellness culture starts from the top. Senior Resource Group (SRG) hired Dr. Sarah Matyko, OTD, OTR/L, as their corporate director of Life Enrichment three years ago to launch an evidence-based wellness program in the company's 32 communities throughout the United States. With a doctorate in behavioral science and a background in population health, Matyko believes that for a wellness program to succeed, it needs to be both science-based and rolled out in a way that's engaging. "Find out what residents are most interested in," is her motto.



To do this, SRG developed a program called ZEST™ that has become the lynchpin of wellness in all SRG communities, including Maravilla Santa Barbara. Based in research and best practices from multiple fields of discipline as well as a year's worth of resident input, ZEST stands out for the way it is designed to work for all residents, says Swope. One of the areas of research SRG drew from is "blue zones," five areas throughout the world with the highest concentrations of centenarians. One of the secrets to longevity in these areas is infusing movement into daily life, a principle SRG has taken to heart.

ZEST uses color psychology to make it easier for residents to identify types of activities, with each category designated a different color on the activity calendar. Mind-related pursuits, like lifelong-learning seminars, are blue; activities for the body, like fitness classes, are green; and soul-related activities, which include art classes and social hours, are pink.

Kelsey Roberts, Maravilla Santa Barbara's fitness director, comments that there's a strong sense of camaraderie as she encourages residents to try new types of activities. She's taken 87-year-old residents kayaking for the first time, and she's had them test out their right hooks at a Rock Steady Boxing class, which helps residents living with Parkinson's disease. "We're creating these remarkable experiences and giving them the confidence to say, 'Wow, I did it!'" Roberts says. Mearns notes that these types of new pursuits help residents step out of their comfort level and could help them grow both psychologically and physically.

Staff participation is also part of the SRG wellness culture. Matyko comments that having staff involved not only keeps them healthier; it also gets them more engaged, which helps decrease turnover—a huge issue in senior living communities. So Roberts starts the first 15 minutes of employees' days with an exercise routine.

The SRG wellness culture also extends to the availability of healthy food choices. The community's "Fresh ZEST" provides a plant-based item on every menu. Roberts says these items have been extremely



*Opportunities for active living abound on John Knox Village's 70-acre campus in Pompano Beach, Florida. Image courtesy of John Knox Village of Florida*

popular, thanks to the talents of a five-star chef. Mearns comments that introducing vegan options to a primarily meat and potatoes crowd represents "forward, progressive thinking." Since family members are likely to be more exposed to these diets, it's conducive to a positive intergenerational bonding experience, she adds.

In order to launch a successful wellness program, managers must frame it in a way that's not intimidating, Matyko advises, "because everything about wellness is so new to [residents]." However, she continues, wellness will be an expectation for the younger generation, many of whom are already lured to Maravilla because of this component. "ZEST is a competitive differentiator," says Matyko.

Maravilla's focus on wellness was a big draw for Jim McClure, 79, and his wife, Kathie, 77. McClure was impressed that the community had a fitness director, two pools and numerous fitness-related activities. Three years ago, they purchased a two-bedroom, two-bathroom cottage in the community's independent living space. Today, their days are filled with activities that include beach walks, bird watching and current events discussions. Every Thursday, the McClures mingle with neighbors at a social gathering. "The staff is wonderful, and the community is very welcoming," Jim says.

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## Let your light shine

Does your community foster a wellness culture and an environment that embraces wellness as a way of life for everyone who lives and works there? Do you create meaningful, relevant opportunities that empower participants to improve their quality of life? If you believe your community puts the "well" in wellness, here's your chance to be recognized. Apply for a 2020 ICAA NuStep Beacon Award, and you may be honored as a "Best in Wellness" community for your achievements. It offers you a powerful tool for recruiting staff, attracting new investors or adding extra prestige to marketing materials.

Launched last year by the International Council on Active Aging® (ICAA) and NuStep, LLC, the Beacon Award will recognize 25 senior living communities this year, with recipients' best practices to be catalogued and publicized on the award website. In addition, the top five Beacon Award winners will receive an ICAA NuStep Pinnacle Award for their exceptional contributions.

To learn more, determine if your community qualifies and apply for an ICAA NuStep Beacon Award, go to <https://beaconaward.icaa.cc>. The deadline to apply is April 20, 2020.

# Beacons of excellence: Profiling winners in the wellness culture space

*Continued from page 49*



*A personal trainer oversees an exerciser in the Fitness Studio at John Knox Village, located at Pompano Beach, Florida. Image courtesy of John Knox Village of Florida*

## **Presbyterian Village North**

At Presbyterian Village North, wellness begins with an inclusive spirit. When Jude Hammett, 64, and her wife, Sue Sherrod, 78, were eyeing future residential prospects, they made certain to ask whether the community had any problems with their being lesbian. Hammett recalls that staff replied, “Absolutely not.” The couple moved to the community in October 2016. An avid swimmer, Hammett particularly enjoys the saltwater pool and exercise bikes that can be used in the pool. “It feels like you’re living on a cruise ship where you have all these things you can do, but you still have a neighborhood feeling and staff that are really concerned. They’re always

around trying to think of something new,” she says.

Hammett particularly appreciates the community’s Wellness University, a two-month program that provides new opportunities in addition to the community’s regular offerings. Shannon Radford, Presbyterian Village’s director of wellness, says it’s a chance to try things that are “a bit outside” the residents’ comfort zone. Previous destinations have included an escape room, a haunted ghost tour of an old city and a Battle of the Burgers, where residents judged the best burgers in Dallas. Wellness University has also provided lifelong-learning programs such as Do Well

Be Well Diabetes, Religions of the World, Musically Speaking-Contemporary Era, Master of Memory, and genealogy, cooking and tablet/computer classes.

Residents can choose from 80 fitness classes weekly. There’s also a Get Fit program for personal training. A per-session charge generates revenue for the program, providing salaries for seven full-time staff members with degrees in exercise physiology.<sup>2</sup>

Radford says she’s beginning to see younger people moving to the community who enjoy being active, so there’s an effort to stay on the forefront of the latest fitness trends.



An example is the use of a well-known “smart” training system for older adults,<sup>3</sup> which allows wellness staff to customize workouts and track progress. “It’s so user-friendly that tons of 90-year-olds use it,” she notes. There’s also an on-site clinic with specialists in geriatric care management. Residents have access to podiatry, dental, optometry and physician services.<sup>4</sup>

To those wanting to roll out a wellness program, Radford advises it is important to find ways to ensure the program is never dull. She continues to research and learn from others, and she isn’t afraid to try new things. This spring, by example, more than 100 residents will participate in a music-based mindfulness intervention pilot study with Texas Tech and Southern Methodist University.

Mearns comments that the Presbyterian Village mantra, “Don’t let fear of failure hold us back,” stood out to her when

judging the Beacon Awards. She says the best applicants were those who didn’t merely react to their residents’ needs: They introduced new modalities to stretch them.

### John Knox Village

John Knox, like the other top winners, prides itself on fostering a culture of “we and us” instead of “I and me.” That’s something that resident Ellen Isaacs, 72, sees every day. In addition to praising the friendly staff, Isaacs mentions neighbors have knocked on her door offering her a freshly picked mango or avocado from fruit trees nestled throughout resident properties. The atmosphere is invigorating. “At our age, you’re not usually making new friends,” she says.

All new employees receive “sensitivity training” so they can better understand hearing loss and visual impairment, states Monica McAfee, the community’s chief marketing and innovation officer. There

are also systems in place, including daily check-ins, to monitor when residents are having health-related issues and ensure sufficient support is provided. On Wellness Wednesdays, residents can work with professionals schooled in diet, nutrition and health.

John Knox’s tagline, “Where possibility plays,” is intended to convey the idea that residents can walk into their future in a new way, says McAfee. She highlights ArtSage, a month of events focused on the arts and humanities. They’ve brought in speakers from around the country, including the renowned Edward Villella, former artistic director of Miami City Ballet, and opera singer and Kennedy Center honoree Grace Bumbry.

Isaacs serves on the Resident Senate, where residents get updated on happenings in

*Continued on page 52*

## Beacons for the industry: 25 ‘Best in Wellness’ communities

The 2019 ICAA/NuStep award recipients bring wellness to many nuances of daily living in their communities. They are:

### *Winners of the 2019 ICAA NuStep Beacon Award/ICAA NuStep Pinnacle Award*

1. Moorings Park (Naples, Florida)
2. **Senior Resource Group: Maravilla (Santa Barbara, California)**
3. **Presbyterian Village North (Dallas, Texas)**
4. **John Knox Village of Florida (Pompano Beach, Florida)**
5. **Sunnyside Retirement Community (Harrisonburg, Virginia)**

### *Winners of the 2019 ICAA NuStep Beacon Award*

6. Vi Communities (Chicago, Illinois)
7. Touchmark on South Hill (Spokane, Washington)

8. Touchmark at the Ranch (Prescott, Arizona)
9. Galloway Ridge at Fearington (Pittsboro, North Carolina)
10. Sun Health Life Care (Sun City West, Arizona)
11. Touchmark at Harwood Groves (Fargo, North Dakota)
12. Vesta Properties: King Point (Sun City, Florida)
13. Senior Resource Group: Maravilla (Scottsdale, Arizona)
14. Still Hopes Episcopal Retirement Community (West Columbia, South Carolina)
15. Kavod Senior Life (Denver, Colorado)
16. The Hacienda at the River (Tucson, Arizona)
17. Juniper Village at Brookline (State College, Pennsylvania)
18. Touchmark Vancouver (Vancouver, Washington)

19. Friendship Village of Bloomington (Bloomington, Minnesota)
20. Touchmark in the West Hills (Portland, Oregon)
21. Westminster Woods on Julington Creek (St. Johns, Florida)
22. The Meth-Wick Community (Cedar Rapids, Iowa)
23. Willow Valley Communities (Lancaster, Pennsylvania)
24. Berwick Comox Valley (Comox Valley, British Columbia, Canada)
25. Tapestry at Wesbrook Village (Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada)

Profiles of the award-winners will appear in the *Journal on Active Aging*® throughout the year.



# Beacons of excellence: Profiling winners in the wellness culture space

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the community and provide their input to management. “We are invited to speak our minds,” she notes. The result? Residents have succeeded in bringing a bird sanctuary and a pool lift to the community, and they are in the process of having charging stations installed for electric vehicles.

Echoing other Beacon Award winners, McAfee observes that senior living managers must constantly explore how to be innovative and nimble, responding to resident needs and changes in beneficial but unobtrusive ways. Plans at John Knox include hiring a coach to work with residents individually on their health and career goals. A new aquatic complex with a resort-style pool, a four-lane lap pool, an open air sports bar and grille, a 60-seat

indoor restaurant, and pickleball and bocce ball courts will open in September 2020.<sup>5</sup> A multipurpose performing arts center is also in the works.

## Sunnyside

Sunnyside Retirement Community pioneered a wellness program 25 years ago, well before it became mainstream. Annie Shaffer, Sunnyside’s wellness director, mentions that the program has evolved from being focused primarily on the fitness center to one where there’s no divide between activities and wellness. The focus is on creating a wellness culture on the campus and educating residents and staff alike as to what that means. Everyone from dining to maintenance and transportation staff is on board.

Physical fitness is still a Sunnyside cornerstone, however. Shaffer says that 72% of the independent living residents exercise at least twice a week, a number that has remained fairly consistent for the past 15 years.

A major development in Sunnyside’s wellness culture was a decision for the entire campus, including staff and residents, to go tobacco free beginning March 1, 2018. “We knew for tobacco users, it wasn’t going to be a happy day,” Shaffer comments. So that date was turned into an opportunity to celebrate wellness: Each department created its own station featuring activities like a yogurt bar, group meditations, yoga and smoking cessation information.

In another innovative program, residents were inspired to start their own virtual reality lab after being part of a research program at a local college. The community now has virtual reality headsets that allow residents the opportunity to experience virtual visits to nature trails or vacation destinations. As well, a new 13,000-sq.-ft. wellness center is due to be completed by the end of 2020, adding a second wellness facility to the existing one built 23 years ago.<sup>6</sup> The investment in a state-of-the-art center demonstrates the commitment to continually improve the wellness focus, Shaffer states.

Sunnyside prides itself on its “Spirit of Sunnyside,” which is intended to foster a family-like atmosphere. In reviewing the community’s Beacon Award application, Delos’s Swope sensed that spirit was genuine. And Joel and Rebecca Grow, whose choice of Sunnyside was mentioned previously, can attest to it: After Joel recently slipped on the ice and broke his pelvis, he called a Sunnyside staff person to request a grab bar. Within 10 minutes, two men had arrived to install it in his bathroom. “People have been so kind and reached out and brought food and walked the dog,” he says.

## Resources

### Internet

#### Delos

<https://delos.com>

#### ICAA NuStep Beacon Awards

<https://beaconaward.icaa.cc>

#### International Council on Active Aging (ICAA)

[www.icaa.cc](http://www.icaa.cc)

#### John Knox Village

[www.johnknoxvillage.com/](http://www.johnknoxvillage.com/)

#### LIVunLtd.

<https://livunltd.com>

#### Moorings Park

[www.mooringspark.org](http://www.mooringspark.org)

#### NuStep, LLC

[www.nustep.com](http://www.nustep.com)

#### Presbyterian Village North

[www.presvillagenorth.org/](http://www.presvillagenorth.org/)

#### Senior Resource Group: Maravilla Santa Barbara

[www.srgseniorliving.com/communities/santa-barbara-ca-maravilla](http://www.srgseniorliving.com/communities/santa-barbara-ca-maravilla)

#### Sunnyside Retirement Community

[www.sunnyside.cc/sunnyside-harrisonburg/](http://www.sunnyside.cc/sunnyside-harrisonburg/)

### Print

Abrahms, S. (2019). Meet Moorings Park: The #1 wellness-based community in North America. *Journal on Active Aging*, 18(7), 24–31; November/December issue. Available free online to ICAA members in the “Articles” archives [search using keywords “Moorings Park”] at [www.icaa.cc](http://www.icaa.cc)

The editors. (2019). Shining examples: ICAA and NuStep name 25 “Best in Wellness” communities. *Journal on Active Aging*, 18(7), 32–33. Available free online to ICAA members in the “Articles” archives [search using keywords “Shining examples”] at [www.icaa.cc](http://www.icaa.cc)



*Sunnyside Retirement Community will add a second wellness facility to augment amenities on its 100-acre campus in Harrisonburg, Virginia. Image courtesy of Sunnyside Communities*

## The shift is happening

Those at the forefront of an innovative, inclusive wellness culture shift in senior living believe the investment in wellness will pay big dividends. They predict the next generation of senior living residents will value these types of programs even more. LIVunLtd's Mearns agrees. In providing such an expansive wellness culture, these award-winning communities will have a competitive advantage. "The resident of the future is the spa guest of today," she says.

In fact, 64% of active-aging industry leaders already viewed wellness as a "must have" in ICAA's 2018 trends survey.<sup>7</sup> In a follow-up 2019 survey,<sup>8</sup> 305 senior living communities reaffirmed that leaders see the value of having a wellness culture that supports staff as well as residents, creating programs, environments and services that

promote wellness in the seven wellness dimensions. When nurtured as a whole, these dimensions can improve quality of life measurably for residents and staff alike. Benefits extend to families and communities as well.

The 2019 ICAA NuStep Beacon Award winners "prioritize wellness—and its pursuit—as an essential way of life," emphasize ICAA and NuStep, both longtime champions of older-adult wellness.<sup>9</sup> These communities demonstrate "remarkable strength in creating resident-staff partnerships to create meaningful opportunities that empower participants to improve their quality of life," the two companies say. By weaving wellness into the fabric of communities, SRG Maravilla Santa Barbara, John Knox Village, Presbyterian Village North and Sunnyside "provide innovation, inspiration and motivation for

engaging residents and staff in a wellness culture and journey." 🌀

*Julie Halpert is a freelance journalist, author, journalism instructor and speaker. Halpert writes regularly for such publications as the New York Times and The Wall Street Journal. She has also contributed to The Atlantic, AARP, CNBC, Scientific American, The Washington Post, Family Circle, Real Simple, and many others. She is the coauthor of Making Up With Mom: Why Mothers and Daughters Disagree About Kids, Careers and Casseroles (and What to Do About It). A founder of The Society of Environmental Journalists, Halpert teaches environmental journalism at the University of Michigan. More information is available <https://juliehalpert.com>.*

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# Beacons of excellence: Profiling winners in the wellness culture space

*Continued from page 53*



*With a clubhouse and lounge, spa and heated pool, fitness center, movie theaters and restaurants, residents benefit from the wellness amenities at Senior Resource Group's Maravilla Santa Barbara community. Image courtesy of SRG Maravilla Santa Barbara*

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Photo: Dorothy Shi



Marilynn Larkin, MA

# The flip side:

Weighing benefits versus drawbacks of innovative technologies



**Organizations need to be tech savvy and equipped with the products and services their customers want and need, says ICAA CEO Colin Milner. But they also need to ensure that those technologies don't replace interpersonal interactions—and that they deliver on their claims**

*by Marilyn Larkin, MA*

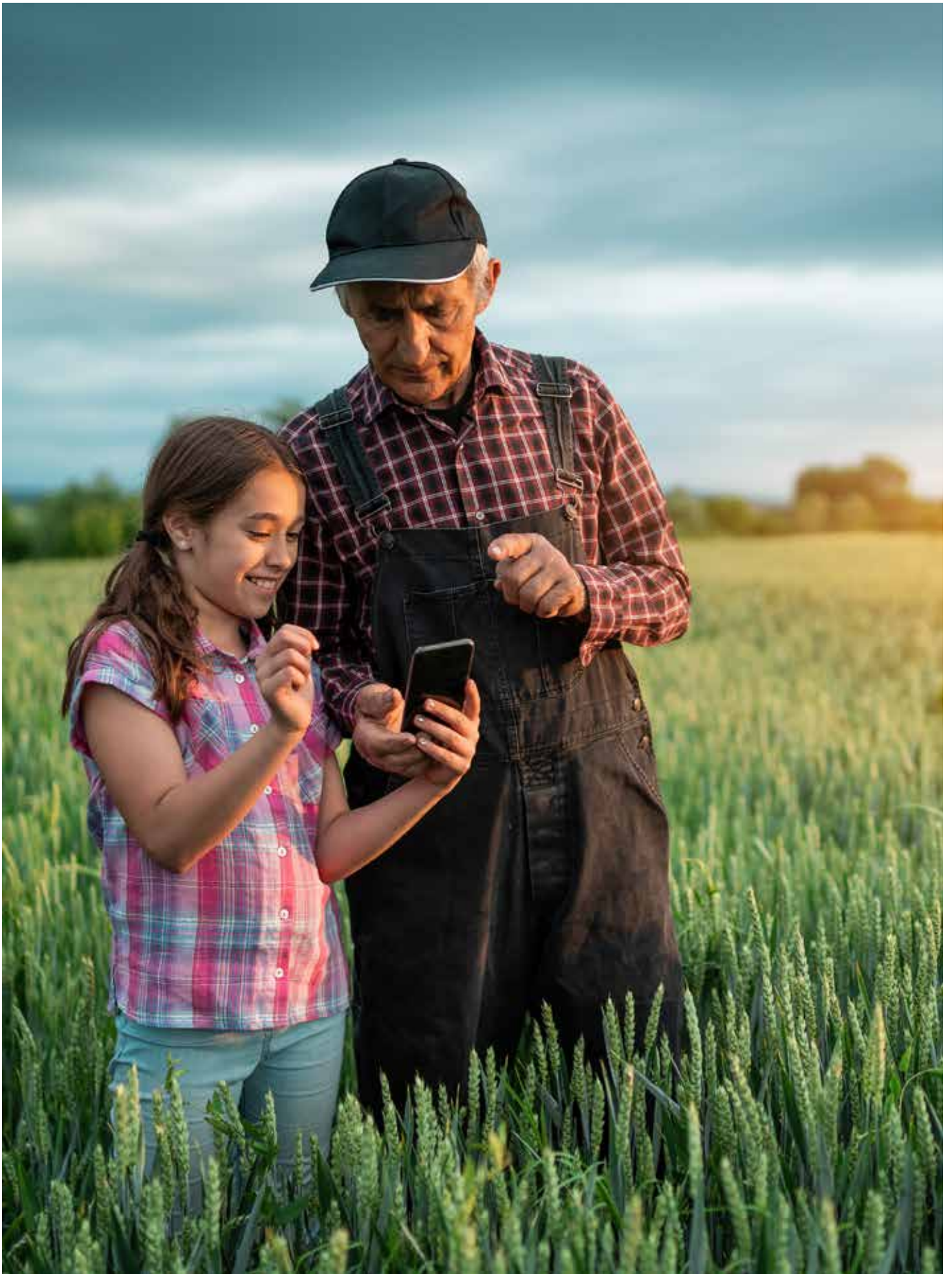
Technology: The word can evoke both excitement and uncertainty among active-aging industry providers in all settings,

from senior living and seniors centers to health clubs and rehabilitation centers. Excitement, because new technologies often provide opportunities to accomplish tasks faster and more easily and may enable staff and constituents to take charge of their health and connect socially; uncertainty, because implementing those same applications often requires a change in the status quo, a learning curve and, of course, a cost.

How do you know if you're choosing the right product for your wellness services—

*Continued on page 58*





# The flip side: Weighing benefits versus drawbacks of innovative technologies *Continued from page 56*

or if you even need it? How do you best apply and monitor it? How do you ensure the most beneficial aspects of technologies are successfully implemented, and with a minimum of disruption or mistakes? And how do you retain the personal, social connections so critical to well-being, while also staying current and competitive?

“Technology has become both a solution and a challenge,” states International Council on Active Aging® CEO Colin

Milner. “For instance, the wonderful part about many available wellness apps is they enable us to have a greater focus on self-care, self-wellness and person-centered solutions—so that we are not only encouraged, but in some ways forced into being more responsible for our own health.

“However, there’s a flip side to those apps: In order for them to help, you actually have to use them, and use them appropriately,” Milner adds. “Too often, people download

an app, set it up and forget about it. Or, they spend an inordinate amount of time tweaking it instead of being active. That’s part of the pitfalls of technology: You have to use it if you want it to make a difference in your life, and at the same time, you need to know when to let go, live your life and let the app do what it’s supposed to do.”

Milner expands on that theme below. In this interview for my column, he shares examples of how technology can help—but

Technology in the built environment			
<i>Organizations may remodel or build new structures to provide wiring and infrastructure. Does the place where you work have these today, or plan to add them?</i>	All respondents N = 310-394	Sr. Living & care N = 226-294	Centers & agencies N = 49-58
<b>Have this now</b>			
High-speed broadband Internet connections (DSL, fiber-optic, cable, wireless, satellite)	87%	87%	82%
Wireless connections that are strong in all areas of the building	77%	77%	76%
Cellular connections that are strong in all areas of the building	78%	75%	89%
Voice-activated assistants, e.g., Amazon Echo or Alexa or Google Home	26%	32%	6%
Monitors in floors and rooms to track movement patterns	16%	18%	8%
Smart technology to control light, heat, appliances	24%	25%	14%
<b>Plan to add</b>			
High-speed broadband Internet connections (DSL, fiber-optic, cable, wireless, satellite)	9%	9%	9%
Wireless connections that are strong in all areas of the building	17%	18%	10%
Cellular connections that are strong in all areas of the building	14%	17%	4%
Voice-activated assistants, e.g., Amazon Echo or Alexa or Google Home	13%	17%	6%
Monitors in floors and rooms to track movement patterns	6%	7%	6%
Smart technology to control light, heat, appliances	12%	15%	4%

**Table 1.** Technology in the built environment. Source: Ryan, P. (2020). ICAA Environments for Wellness. Vancouver, BC: International Council on Active Aging. Available at [www.icaa.cc/listing.php?type=industry\\_research](http://www.icaa.cc/listing.php?type=industry_research).



at times work against—dimensions of wellness and society at large.

Since 2016, when ICAA convened its think-tank to explore the future of technology for active aging,<sup>1</sup> Milner has worked to define technology's value for the industry and help organizations find their way. "Carefully considering the total potential impact of any given technology—that is, the upsides and possible downsides—can help organizations make the best possible decisions for their staff and members," he says.

**ML:** *Colin, you've emphasized the importance of knowing your organization's capabilities before you start looking at new products and services. Can you elaborate, and also touch on the challenges?*

**CM:** Your capabilities are critically important because everything else feeds into that. The number one capability right now is Wi-Fi, with solid broadband throughout the organization, particularly if you're running a senior living community. If you have old buildings that challenge your broadband, meaning that connections are spotty because the building isn't capable of handling it, then your community members and staff will have difficulty using apps that track steps or monitor vital signs, as well as operational apps that depend on all community members being able to do things like making appointments for transportation. Without full capabilities, your technology can only do so much, and not always enough.

If I'm thinking of moving into a senior living community or participating in a fitness studio or a hospital wellness center, and you don't have a capability that is part of my lifestyle—maybe I want to watch a TV show while I'm riding a bike—then you become less appealing to me. So, the more that Wi-Fi and all the different applications around it permeate society, the bigger the challenges for those who don't have it. If your organization isn't set up with adequate Wi-Fi and broadband, it could be a deal breaker (view Table 1 on page 58 to

see which technologies organizations currently plan to add or have).

**ML:** *Once you are set up, how do you decide what to buy? Is there an issue with purchasing the latest gadgets and programs?*

**CM:** We're at a stage with technology that there is so much out there, we almost have too many choices. It's the difference between a classy restaurant with a two-page menu and a fast-food restaurant with a 30-page book of items. It takes you a long time to examine the book, and by the time you're finished, you're more confused than you are thrilled. You may even have lost your appetite. It's hard to figure out what you actually want because there are so many options to choose from. Some people buy randomly, and others just give up altogether.

What people can do instead is to step back and ask, What am I actually trying to achieve with a new technology? And how can I install it in such a way that it works seamlessly with the technologies I already have?

Look first at your members' needs, because if you can't meet them, what you personally might want doesn't really matter. Also look at your organization's operational and staffing needs, perhaps even what the larger community might need to work with you on programs and events. Bringing everyone in to talk about their capabilities, needs and desires can help clarify issues associated with having so many choices.

**ML:** *Sometimes it's difficult to know where to start when it comes to addressing everyone's needs and prioritizing them. How might you handle that?*

**CM:** I'd start with the lifestyle of the individual and how the community supports it. Whether you're working in parks and recreation or senior living or seniors centers, if you are addressing multiple dimensions of wellness, the question is, what technologies might help?

Consider the environmental dimension of wellness. Virtual reality (VR) is widely discussed here because some products are positioned as helpful for people with dementia; a recent small study suggests it may have some benefits.<sup>2</sup> But when you look at virtual reality as a multidimensional wellness tool, you see additional possibilities.

As an industry, we spend a lot of money to create internal and external environments that foster wellness. VR is a third environment—an intangible one created by technology—that you can set up to foster wellness in several ways. One example is to encourage exercise. In fact, at least one company uses virtual reality instead of actual instructors to create motivating exercise environments [Ed. See "Resources" on page 61].

Also, your community might have a meditation room with four white walls. Instead of an environment that is essentially sterile, you could transform that room with a technology that projects soothing, changeable images onto those walls. Or, it could be as simple as a technology that changes a room's lighting. These are simple ways to create an environment that invites people to connect with themselves.

Of course, these technologically created environments should never be encouraged as a substitute for the real outdoors or social contact where applicable.

**ML:** *Let's look at another aspect of technology getting a lot of attention these days, namely robots. You've noted that they are becoming more common in senior living communities.*

**CM:** Mention robots in senior living and people tend to point to the seal, the dog, the cat—essentially, social robots that are supposed to help with the emotional dimension of wellness by soothing anxiety, relieving depression and so forth. Incidentally, while those might indeed be

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# The flip side: Weighing benefits versus drawbacks of innovative technologies

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helpful for that purpose, researchers say there aren't enough quality studies yet to confirm it.<sup>3</sup>

Increasingly, robots also fill a practical role whereby they might become a resident's assistant. For example, it used to be your dog that responded when you said, "Fetch me this." Robots on the near horizon will do just that: You say what you want, like pills or juice, and the robot will bring it to you.

While that technology is great for people who are physically challenged, I would argue that there's a fine line between a truly assistive product for those who are mobility challenged, and one that potentially and unintentionally promotes inactivity even among those who are more able-bodied. This is a common result even with technology such as escalators and powered doors. Organizational providers and members need to be mindful of both potential outcomes.

Some individuals resist tech assistance. In the feature on autonomous vehicles in the 2019 *Journal on Active Aging*<sup>®</sup> (JAA) Special Technology Issue,<sup>4</sup> many residents preferred to walk on campus rather than make use of the vehicle. They felt instinctively that using the driverless vehicle when they didn't really need to might compromise physical wellness.

We see a similar conundrum with exoskeletons. These outfits, fitted with special technology, can do things like give you a boost when you have to get up out of your chair. But if you can do that on your own, is the technology really assisting you or is it deconditioning you? Is it a boon to people who need to recover from an injury or a stroke, or might it actually delay recovery because instead of trying to regain their strength, they're relying on a product that could allow them to stay weaker? These are issues that industry leaders need to keep in mind so that monitoring and adjustments are factored into any

purchase and installation, with a plan in place, and staff training, in how to use new technologies appropriately.

On the plus side, you have a few technologies such as one covered in the JAA last year, called MusicGlove.<sup>5</sup> These rehabilitation technologies depend on your using them consistently and appropriately, and when you do, you can become stronger.

**ML:** *Wearables are incredibly popular in active-aging settings and in the community at large. What should organizations be paying attention to?*

**CM:** One major consideration here is quality. We read studies showing the benefits of monitoring steps and heart rate and so forth, but the technologies used in clinical studies, broadly referred to as "research grade," are not always the same as what you buy over the counter.

For example, a study published last year in the *British Journal of Sports Medicine* showed wide variation in energy-expenditure measures from wrist- or arm-worn activity monitors depending on the manufacturer and the type of activity being measured.<sup>6</sup> The researchers noted that inaccurate fitness trackers may make errors like overestimating how much someone is exercising, increasing the person's risk of obesity; whereas trackers that underestimate activity may lead some people to overdo it and stress their cardiovascular system.

So, you have to know exactly what it is you're buying and understand its limitations versus a research-grade device. And that has an impact on the physical dimension of wellness.

The other consideration is the amount of monitoring itself. Whether it's for physical, emotional or other dimensions, at what stage do you hit the wall and tire of entering data? You have to be clear what results you want from all this monitoring: Is it helping you achieve important wellness goals or are you losing yourself in a numbers game?

Even with all these considerations, wearables already have huge potential for the industry. These tools not only motivate people to adopt and sustain healthier behaviors, but also help users become better attuned to overall health. My feeling is that wearables—which are still relatively new—will improve over time.

**ML:** *What about cognitive fitness tech, like brain games?*

**CM:** Unfounded claims is an issue. The United States Federal Trade Commission sued one company for allegedly deceiving customers by saying its games could help people do better at work and delay cognitive impairment.<sup>7</sup>

Unfortunately, there is a rapidly growing market offering products that are unproven, with no science behind their claims.<sup>8</sup> People spend a lot of money on these products, whether they're brain games, chronic disease management tools or mental health apps, with the anticipation that they can change lives. Do you buy them or not? Those decisions need to be made by people and by organizations on an individual basis and with awareness of limitations.

A certain technology that promotes reminiscence, for example, might not improve memory loss but could help someone feel happier. That's a different, yet valid, goal.

**ML:** *What about social media? Some people feel it's a great way to engage with others.*

**CM:** Yes, some may feel more connected when they're using these tools, but a concern is the amount of time spent on social media. As always, there is no substitute for real-time social connections. Social isolation is a real issue among older adults, however, and technology can help them get and stay connected, and make fulfilling virtual friendships, too.<sup>9</sup>

Support is warranted for social media literacy. If people know the upsides *and* downsides of social media ahead of time, they will be better prepared to navigate this space. For example, oftentimes individuals post what *seems* like a perfect life to Instagram and other platforms, even though they may struggle as much as the next person. According to anecdotal reports, constantly seeing these kinds of posts can affect people's mental health, as an article in *The Guardian*<sup>10</sup> suggested last year.

My concern is also for the spiritual dimension of wellness. Are we going to not only lose the human touch, but also the human connection? Let's remember, everything in moderation.

**ML:** *You've also expressed broader concerns with technology that you think the industry should prioritize. Can you elaborate?*

**CM:** Online security is a primary concern. AARP did a survey in 2018 showing that most people don't protect their digital identities.<sup>11</sup> They don't do basic things like changing passwords, monitoring their online banking accounts for suspicious activity, looking at all the information a phone app is privy to before installing it, or changing default privacy settings on their devices and social media platforms.

Consider that devices like Alexa and other smart speakers and smartphones have listened in on private conversations.<sup>12</sup> So, people are giving away their identity and their privacy, plus their time, for convenience's sake. On the flip side, smart homes with digital personal assistants also provide safety and assistance for those aging in place in their homes and living in seniors housing. We need to look at both the advantages and disadvantages.

In fact, we had a session at the ICAA Forum in October 2019 about the legalities

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## Resources

### Internet

**International Council on Active Aging (ICAA)**  
[www.icaa.cc](http://www.icaa.cc)

**Wellness Solutions**  
[www.wellnesssolutions.com.au](http://www.wellnesssolutions.com.au)

### Multimedia

**Flint Rehabilitation YouTube video: *Everything you need to know about MusicGlove***  
<https://youtu.be/Pfa9utDRabA>

### Print

Galvan, T. (2019). Taming the tech tidal wave. *Journal on Active Aging*, 18(4), 34–41; July/Special Technology Issue. Available free to ICAA members in the “Articles” archives [search using keywords “tech tidal wave”] at [www.icaa.cc](http://www.icaa.cc)

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Sklar, T., Carmona, R., Insel, K., & Robertson, C. (2019). Digital health privacy in active-aging settings: Will the law let you age well? *Journal on Active Aging*, 18(7), 34–42; November/December issue. Available free to ICAA members in the “Articles” archives [search using keywords “digital health privacy”] at [www.icaa.cc](http://www.icaa.cc)



# The flip side: Weighing benefits versus drawbacks of innovative technologies

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around technology, what data providers can or can't access and how that might affect people's ability to age well. A multidisciplinary team from the University of Arizona—including Dr. Richard Carmona, former US Surgeon General and now chief of health innovations at Canyon Ranch—gave Forum participants an overview of what it means to adopt these technologies. And the team followed up with a recent article in the *JAA* on digital health privacy in active-aging settings. This article shares issues discussed at the Forum, describing the benefits of digital health technology as well as privacy challenges and solutions [Ed. For article details, see “Resources” on page 61]. I encourage everyone to give this article a read. Individuals, organizations and industries must know how to secure access and data and protect privacy with utmost care. Members and residents also need to know what to do.

In addition, it's important to remember that technology creates “haves” and “have-nots.” Some individuals simply don't have access to technology, period, whether it's because of income, or the area they live in or other circumstances. Things many of us take for granted—staying updated, for example, which is relevant for current or future employers, or even communicating with government offices—can become a challenge.


**ML:** *What does technology's double-edged sword mean for the industry as a whole, Colin? I know ICAA supports the implementation of useful technologies.*

**CM:** With technology, as with anything else, it's “buyer beware.” We all need to do our homework to uncover both benefits and pitfalls. Just because something is on the shelf or advertised on TV doesn't mean it works or is needed.

At the end of the day, technology is part of 21<sup>st</sup>-century life. Industry leaders can embrace devices to address their clients' needs while also ensuring technologies don't replace interpersonal interactions—and that they deliver on their claims.

Ultimately, it's the human cost that we should care about, to be sure that social connections don't get replaced or forgotten in the rush to keep up to date with innovative and helpful technologies. To me, that's key for an industry focused on quality of life.

We can circumvent a lot of these issues by taking control: What information we release is in our control; how much time we spend is in our control; what we do with any device is in our control. This is what it means to use technologies appropriately. Whatever the “dark side” is, there is always a Jedi-like Luke Skywalker to “illuminate” the positives.

And that can be each and every one of us. 

*Marilynn Larkin, MA, is an award-winning medical writer and editor, an ACE-certified personal trainer and group fitness instructor, the editor of ICAA's Research Review, and a contributing editor and technology columnist for the Journal on Active Aging.*

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# Health, wealth and longevity:

New tools allow science-based financial planning



**Combining technology and aging science, 21<sup>st</sup>-century risk assessment tools allow older adults to work with financial advisors who can assess health and longevity to individualize recommendations for wealth management. Find out how these tools can support financial wellness for your clients—and your organization**

*by S. Jay Olshansky, PhD, Karl Ricanek, PhD, Kirk Ashburn, CCPS, and Steven Austad, PhD*

*Active-aging organizations seek ways to help older adults ensure their financial futures. This article describes new tools that draw on aging science to inform customized health and wealth planning, while presenting organizations with a new topic to engage residents or members*

The wealthiest individuals tend to lead longer lives than their poorest counterparts—up to an additional 15 years for men and 10 years for women in one 2016 study. The researchers noted at the time that these disparities could relate to differences in educational levels, lifestyles and health behaviors rather than simply financial status.<sup>1</sup> Now, a newly published study in the *Journal of Gerontology* shows that when compared to the poorest individuals, the wealthiest men and women also enjoy nearly a decade longer in “favorable states of health” and free from disability, based on estimates arrived at by measuring healthy life expectancy (referred to here as healthspan).<sup>2,3</sup>

“We know that improving both the quality and the quantity of years that individuals are expected to live has implications for public expenditure on health, income, long-term care of older people and work

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participation,” says lead author Paola Zaninotto, PhD, an associate professor of epidemiology and health care at University College London. She adds that these results “suggest that policy makers in both England and the [United States]”—the countries where the research took place—“must make greater efforts into reducing health inequalities.”<sup>3</sup>

Even as calls go out to address disparities and improve healthy life expectancy for all, more people are already living to advanced ages. Many will outlive their money and large segments of the population have little or no money set aside for retirement at all, creating personal as well as public challenges across a wide range of areas, including housing and healthcare. What if it did not have to be that way? What if individuals could use modern technology to help them plan earlier and better? Think of the grief they would avoid for themselves and their families.

Financial advisors know that health and happiness are by far the most precious commodities that clients seek—longevity is just a bonus. Wealth amplifies the chances that both will occur. Longevity

accompanied by good health then becomes a gift. Today, new tools merge aging science with wealth planning to help individuals achieve these goals.

## **Assessing health and longevity with machine learning**

The 21<sup>st</sup> century, and the last decade in particular, has brought forth a series of new developments in health and longevity assessment that are beginning to make their way into risk assessment in a broad range of life industries, including wealth management. Some of these technologies are already in the market, with others forthcoming (refer to “Resources” on page 69 for information about one provider).

### ***Biodemographic assessments***

The modern field of biodemography arose in the early 1990s under the premise that biological factors, and not just acquired behavioral risk factors, determine how long individuals and populations can live.<sup>4,5</sup>

The use of biodemographic principles known to drive duration of life are fundamental to the way in which newly developed online assessment platforms operate

(see the sidebar, “The evolution of longevity and health risk assessment” on page 71). These variables are currently unknown to financial planners and not yet used to assess risk today in any life industry—including wealth management.

By way of example, one powerful predictor of exceptional longevity in women is age at natural menopause. For each year menopause is delayed past age 50, the risk of cardiovascular diseases (CVD) is lowered 2%.<sup>6</sup> Given that CVD is a primary cause of death among older women, this has a powerful influence on expected duration of life. Furthermore, women are known to live longer than men by about 2.5 years after having reached the age of 65. Accounting for natural biological differences in longevity between men and women, and the unique biodemographic factors that influence duration of life, allows for a far more nuanced understanding of both healthspan (length of healthy life) and lifespan. Other biodemographic factors known to influence duration of life include biomarkers for the rate of aging drawn from facial images and genetic tests (described below).

### ***Facial analytics***

If two people aged 40 and 80 were standing in front of you and you were asked to determine who was older, you would answer correctly every time. The reason is simple: The human brain is hard-wired to determine a broad range of attributes of individuals, including gender, age and health status. The functioning of the human brain teaches us ways to both identify people and assess health status by looking at a person’s face.

It is now possible to train computers to detect gender, age and body mass index (BMI) by mimicking the locations on the face that the human brain and eye will scan to make these determinations. This process of training computers to “think” like humans is called machine learning—the wave of the future in life-event evaluation.

In fact, many of us already use a related technology called facial recognition to open many applications on the Apple iPhone, for example.

A single photograph can yield valuable information for wealth management advisors. In one example, the face age of an individual (e.g., how old someone looks relative to other people the same age) informs us whether this person might be aging biologically at a faster or slower pace relative to others the same age. This represents a scientifically validated biomarker for rate of aging.<sup>7</sup> It's already been documented that those who look old for their age have a higher risk of death,<sup>8</sup> while those who look young for their age live longer.<sup>9</sup>

Behavioral risk factors also appear as unmistakable signatures written on the face. Some examples include current or previous smoking history,<sup>10</sup> diet,<sup>11</sup> body mass index,<sup>12</sup> and the presence or absence of genes associated with exceptional longevity.<sup>13</sup>

Photographs of the face can also be “age progressed”—a technology from facial analytics now under development at Lapetus Solutions (see “Resources” on page 69). Age progression can be deployed as a tool for showing what people could look like in the future depending on the health choices they make (e.g., smoker versus non-smoker, physically active versus sedentary, obese versus healthy weight, etc.). Such technology may facilitate better wealth planning as those who see an image of their future self are more likely to plan for that future.

### **Genetic analysis**

Scientists are constantly in search of genes that influence how long people live. The scientific study of aging has led biologists to recently discover that certain gene variants influence both our risk of experiencing lethal diseases, the rate at which we age or grow old, and how long we live.<sup>14,15</sup> Some of these genes so powerfully influence

duration of life that they have the same life-lengthening or life-shortening effects in different species.<sup>16,17</sup> While some companies have developed genetic markers to determine ancestry and propensity for certain diseases, efforts are underway to make available a genetic analysis designed to assess genetic prospects for longevity [Ed. Refer to “Resources” on page 69].

Why is genetic analysis useful for financial services? Some of the variability in how long people live is baked into our biology, and lifestyle factors can add to these differences. Right now, however, the financial services industry ignores the biological and behavioral risk factors that often lead to dramatic differences in survival between partners. If it is determined, for example, that among a married couple, a wife will likely outlive her husband by 10–30 years—and this is common—planning for such an eventuality represents a critically important measure of protection and comfort. This kind of genetic analysis is available now to wealth management advisors.

### **The need for science-based tools**

While the process of achieving the goals of health, happiness, longevity and wealth can begin with aging science tools, it is the analysis and implementation of information learned from their use that is the important next step.

When people meet with financial advisors today, the advisor commonly asks how long individuals think they will live. Most are unable to answer this question with any level of authority, yet this becomes the basis for personal wealth planning. A more sophisticated wealth advisor might ask people about their age and then look up the estimated lifespan for individuals of that age and gender from a generic life table. Some advisors will even use a “Monte Carlo simulation”<sup>18</sup> (a computer program) to estimate a retirement age or to orchestrate the probability of having financial assets left at end of life.

These decisions (and computer models) are all made based on one critical assumption—that *an individual is just like the average man or woman*. There is no accounting for what is unique about the individual that could lead to a much longer or shorter life than average, such as the effects of educational level, health and disease history, behavioral risk factors such as smoking or physical activity, and family history or genetic makeup.

The problem with using “averaging” assumptions is that a person has only a 5% chance of surviving to a projected average age—approximately 22% will die within three years on either side of that average and the remaining 73% will die more than three years on either side of average.<sup>19</sup> Imagine how incorrect lifespan estimates might influence the outcome of a decision on when to receive social security retirement income, and how long that income will last. If the scientific tools used to assess lifespan determine that someone is highly likely to have a longer or shorter lifespan than estimated using generic tables, it would make sense to draw on social security either later or earlier than planned.

Products used to create an income stream for retirement may also vary depending on the person's scientifically estimated lifespan and level of assets accumulated. Someone with a small nest egg and a short lifespan would likely benefit from using an annuity to create the largest amount of lifetime income possible. On the other hand, someone with a large nest egg and a longer lifespan would likely choose market investments and life insurance combined with specially designed annuities to fund their income needs. The options available vary depending on the situation for each person.

Consider, too, how spouses should plan for the future, especially if they have dramatically different lifespan trajectories. Planning appropriately for differences in expected longevity between couples can go

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a long way to ensuring peace of mind when one spouse is likely to outlive the other by years or even decades.

## Using the information

Individuals need more reliable information during the planning process to make the best use of tools available in the marketplace. That's where aging science enters the picture. Here's a hypothetical example of how the genetic test for longevity might benefit those planning for retirement.

Tom, a 60-year-old university professor, is contemplating retirement. He wants to maintain his current income stream throughout retirement, so he seeks the advice of a financial planner. The financial planner spends hours with Tom discussing his savings, assets and plans for the future, and three weeks later Tom is asked to come back to the office. Tom's estimated lifespan is 82 years based on a generic life table commonly used by most advisors in the industry; and his advisor makes the conservative assumption to plan for an additional 10 years of life—to age 92. Based on his current income and savings,

Tom is advised to begin collecting social security at age 68 so he can bump up his annual income by 8% per year above what he would receive if he retired at age 66. His income stream in retirement is expected to be roughly equivalent to his current income stream under conservative assumptions about growth. No further recommendations are made.

Tom seeks a second opinion from an advisor using the new tools of aging science. The advisor either comes to Tom's house and has him fill out a form on an iPad, or Tom is provided an online platform that he can fill in from his computer or cell phone. In five minutes or less, Tom has a science-based estimate of his personal lifespan, healthspan and probability of reaching every age up to 100. The best retirement age is calculated automatically, and it's not 68, it's 70. Tom's science-based estimated lifespan is not 82, it's actually 88. When Tom acknowledges a family history of people routinely living into their 90s, the statistics suggest he has a higher than average chance of living past 90. Based on this new information, Tom receives considerably different advice.

To seek additional confirmation of his prospects for a long life, Tom uses a genetic test to assess his longevity prospects. By providing the results of this already completed genetic analysis, he discovers two pieces of information about himself that he was unaware of. First, he's a carrier of one particular gene associated with a much longer and healthier life than the average man his age. It's likely this gene runs in his family, which would explain the longevity of his parents, grandparents, and aunts and uncles. In addition, this particular gene increases his chances of living to ages 90+ by more than 50% relative to the average person his age and gender. He also discovers that a second gene he carries means he has a low probability of developing late-onset Alzheimer's disease.

Based on this new information, his science-driven advisor recommends that Tom not only begin taking social security at age 70, but that he might be better served avoiding the expense of a long-term care policy. He's further advised to take a portion of his retirement fund over the next decade and invest it in a suite of products that can be specially designed to create tax-free, tax-deferred and guaranteed income that he can begin drawing on for income at age 70. The two specific products are life insurance and annuities. The life insurance provides tax-free income in the future, and the annuities will create additional income that the client cannot outlive. Tom's new science-based advisor also has access to specially designed annuity products that will utilize these new science-based rapid assessment tools.

With the use of aging science in the financial planning market, advisors using this new technology will be able to create customized wealth and health planning that is better suited to each person.


## New tools, new options

As they approach and enter into their retirement ages, most people fear running out of money and being a burden on family

members. These fears may now be reduced with science-based approaches to risk assessment.

Information provided by these new assessment tools also offer older adults and their advisors opportunities to plan strategically to address the financial impacts of increased longevity. There are clear benefits for senior living communities and others whose missions support health, well-being and quality of life for older adults. Readers may want to consider the following:

- Will this information impact *your* longevity plan, and if so, how?
- How could this information impact the choices your residents and/or members make, and when they make them? How might you educate individuals about these new capabilities?
- What might this information mean to your business (think about the demographic and financial makeup of your customers)?
- How might this information impact lifestyles and health for your residents and/or members?

By combining aging science, technology and wealth planning, these new tools promise new ways to support financial wellness for older adults. When it comes to the financial planning market, some industries may be slow to change and use these new tools because of regulations that limit the use of technology—the insurance industry, for example. In wealth management, however, advisors and older adults can reap immediate benefits from the application of science. Senior living communities and other service providers also stand to benefit when customers are financially better prepared for a longer life. 

*S. Jay Olshansky, PhD, is a professor of Public Health at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Olshansky is on the Board of Directors of the American Federation for Aging Research, and is cofounder and chief scientist at Lapetus Solutions, Inc. He also serves on the scientific advisory board of*

*Wealthspan. Olshansky's expertise is on estimating and forecasting human longevity, and he has received multiple awards for his research on aging.*

*Karl Ricanek, PhD, is cofounder and chief technology officer at Lapetus Solutions, Inc.*

*Kirk Ashburn, CCPS, was CEO of Advantage Wealth Advisors in Lake Zurich, Illinois, before founding the firm Wealthspan Financial Group.*

*Steven Austad, PhD, is a Distinguished Professor of Biology at the University of Alabama at Birmingham and Senior Scientific Director of the American Federation for Aging Research. Author of more than 200 scientific articles, Austad has won both national and international prizes for his research on the biology of aging. He serves, or has served, on the editorial board of nine major scientific journals in the biology of aging. Austad also serves on the scientific advisory board of Wealthspan.*

[Ed. The authors lead and advise companies that develop and offer the kinds of tools and services described in this article.]

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## Resources

### Internet

**Lapetus Solutions, Inc.**  
[www.lapetussolutions.com](http://www.lapetussolutions.com)

**Wealthspan Financial Group**  
<https://mywealthspan.com>

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## The billion-dollar bet that transformed wealth management

In 2001, two scientists in the field of aging placed a bet that has gone down in scientific circles as one of the most famous wagers ever made—even spawning a popular website known as “longbets” [longbets.org]. The question at the heart of this bet was, would anyone alive in the year 2000 still be alive and cognitively intact in the year 2150? If yes, someone would have to live for at least 150 years—28 years longer than the world record of 122 years set by France’s Jeanne Calment in 1997—making Dr. Steven Austad’s surviving relatives USD\$1 billion. If no one lives to 150 by the year 2150, then Dr. S. Jay Olshansky’s surviving relatives would become rich<sup>21</sup> (see “Resources” on page 69).

Where did two academics working in the field of aging come up with \$1 billion to make this bet? The answer is

simple—the magic of compound interest. The scientists started out in the year 2001 with a \$300 investment (\$150 each) and doubled it some 15 years later. They first invested in gold at \$800/oz and sold it at \$1,600/oz; they then moved it all into the stock market—where it has outperformed. However, most of the \$1 billion available in 2150 will be a byproduct of patience.

The lessons learned from this wager speak to the value of retirement planning because most of the money used to pay off this bet will accrue from compound interest on the original investment.

While patience is an important lesson for investors of all ages, one financial planner saw much more to this bet than meets the eye. When Kirk Ashburn from Advantage Wealth Advisors in Illinois read about this bet in the news, he realized instantly its importance beyond the wager itself.

Recognizing the combined importance of health, wealth, longevity and happiness, Ashburn coined the term *Wealthspan* to exemplify the merging of aging science with wealth planning. And he sought the advice of the two academics involved in the billion-dollar bet to launch a new firm [Ed. See Wealthspan Financial Group in the “Resources” sidebar on page 69]. The result is a method of science-based lifespan and healthspan prediction, and how it all connects to wealthspan.

Ashburn believes advisors and their clients can reap immediate benefits from the application of science. Wealthspan is the end result of what he envisioned the moment he learned of the billion-dollar bet—that health and happiness are precious commodities, and science-based wealth management can help make it happen.



## The evolution of longevity and health risk assessment

### Stage I (18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries)

When the famous actuary Benjamin Gompertz set out in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century to discover a mathematical formula to determine premiums for life insurance, he needed to know the relationship between age and longevity. While it was already known that the longer you lived the greater your chance of dying in the coming year (the first life table was developed in 1693 by Edmund Halley), insurance companies needed better mathematical precision. Gompertz meticulously collected data on longevity of people across parts of Europe, and discovered a simple formula that accurately portrayed a pattern of death for people between the ages of 20 and 80. His observation was so consistent across populations and time periods that it became the standard in the life insurance industry.<sup>20</sup>

Overlaying the Gompertz law which applies to populations, another general pattern was that *individual* life trajectories are diverse. That is, among people born on the same day, even among those living their entire lives in similar circumstances, some will live long, some will die early, but most will live an intermediate length of time.

The Stage I approach to estimating an individual's lifespan was based on the Gompertz formula applied to the observed mortality experience of an entire country. Estimates of how long someone might live come from a generic

life table drawn from hundreds of millions of people with dramatically different survival prospects and born in eras dating back to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century—all averaged together. Unique life history attributes and acquired behavioral risk factors are almost always completely ignored.

### Stage II (20<sup>th</sup> century)

Advances in medical science and public health extended both the healthspan of individuals and the life expectancy of populations, yet the Gompertz Law still holds. Such advances made it possible to generate more personalized health and longevity assessments. This approach has historically relied on the use of paper and pencil, telephone interviews, home visits by phlebotomists or other data collection experts, multiple layers of subsequent assessments from physicians to actuaries to medical underwriters, and weeks if not months of time.

Increasingly sophisticated epidemiology combined with the accumulation of more detailed data on massively greater numbers of people have enhanced the ability to make predictions about life trajectories among groups of people with certain traits in common. For instance, certain inherited traits—or genes—can predispose individuals to greater or lesser health and longevity.

Also, with millions of people having their genomes sequenced for personal reasons, massive amounts of data are now used to identify gene variants associated with specific patterns of health and disease.

From that knowledge, and as more genomes and better analytic approaches discover more links between health patterns, earlier and more precise medical preventive measures may become possible. The same science will also reveal gene variants pointing to specific interventions that may best enhance a person's health pattern. Acquired traits are also powerful predictors. Examples include education level, financial stability, smoking status, level of physical activity and family history of longevity.

Taking advantage of the emerging knowledge from diverse scientific disciplines allows for the development of financial planning strategies with greater precision, using tools of science never before used for wealth management.

### Stage III (21<sup>st</sup> century)

Approaches in this stage transform this process into an automated exercise that can be completed in minutes using technology such as cell phones and other mobile devices. Online platforms are available, backed by decades of science, that transform answers to a handful of questions into an instantaneous risk assessment. By the time an interview is complete the individual can be fully underwritten with an ability to sign the dotted line, pay the first premium, and have an insurance, annuity or other life product in effect immediately. Operating under the admonition that “simpler is better,” the next generation of life-event evaluation technologies has arrived.

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Precor develops and manufactures premium fitness equipment and software. It also creates education and service solutions that help fitness facility operators grow their business and create a personalized fitness experience for their customers.



### SportsArt America

8217 44th Avenue West, Suite A  
Mukilteo WA 98275  
Toll-free: 800-709-1400  
Tel: 206-354-8113  
Fax: 425-488-8155  
info@gosportsart.com  
https://gosportsart.com

SportsArt has roots planted in medical product manufacturing. It has branched out to create a large offering of cardio and strength-based units that are easily accessible by all ages and training levels.



### SwimEx

### SwimEx, Inc.

390 Airport Road  
Fall River MA 02720  
Toll-free: 800-877-7946  
Tel: 508-646-1600  
Fax: 508-675-0525  
sales@swimex.com  
www.swimex.com

SwimEx pools offer an exercise environment that's gentle on joints, and takes up little space. The pools feature an adjustable paddlewheel water current that is smooth and nonturbulent for clients' exercise routines or swimming strokes.



### Total Brain Health

89 Commerce Road  
Cedar Grove NJ 07009  
Tel: 973-665-0422  
info@totalbrainhealth.com  
www.totalbrainhealth.com

TBH Toolkits are fun, social-based brain-training programs that allow professionals to teach brain fitness and memory strategies to all ages. Each toolkit includes scripted classes and engaging group activities around cognitive fitness.





## Urban Poling

106 185 Forester Street  
North Vancouver BC Canada V7H 0A6  
Toll-free: 877-499-7999  
Fax: 604-990-7715  
info@urbanpoling.com  
www.urbanpoling.com

Urban Poling was founded in 2005 by an occupational therapist/gerontologist. We are the creators of the evidence-based ACTIVATOR Poles®, which are supported by comprehensive educational programs for rehabilitation and active senior living.



## WhisperGLIDE Swing Company, LLC

PO Box 188  
Mosinee WI 54455  
Toll-free: 800-944-7737  
Fax: 715-457-0048  
matt@whisperglide.com,  
susan@whisperglide.com  
https://whisperglide.com

WhisperGLIDE offers three models of aluminum, commercial-grade glider swings designed to be used by both wheelchair users and those not in wheelchairs. The wheelchair-accessible model offers socialization, neuromuscular, motor, cognitive and sensorimotor benefits.

## Want more information?

To learn about the benefits of becoming an ICAA Corporate Partner, call ICAA toll-free at 866.335.9777.

# Are you looking for products and services?



Connect with ICAA Corporate Partners to find the right offerings. These leaders want to do business with your organization and support active aging. Their products and services not only represent an excellent value, but often are available to you at preferred discounts.

Find out more at <https://www.icaa.cc/preferredbusinesspartners/preferredbusinesspartners.htm>



603-1112 West Pender Street  
Vancouver, BC V6E 2S1  
Toll-free: 866-335-9777  
Tel: 604-734-4466  
[www.icaa.cc](http://www.icaa.cc)

Catch up with the association for professionals that support wellness



*In this Spirit Award-winning photo, an Asbury Solomons resident participates in Riverfest during Active Aging Week 2019 at the Maryland community. Image courtesy of Asbury Communities*

### Active Aging Week 2019 cash prize-winners named

In addition to the Spirit Awards for the 10 best images from Active Aging Week 2019, presenting sponsor Humana gave cash prizes of USD\$1,000 to five organizations for registering early as official host sites. The winners of those cash prizes included: Morningstar Senior Living; Country Meadows; Montgomery County Recreation; YMCA of Central Florida, and Mission Valley YMCA. Thanks to Humana for supporting this initiative. You can see all the Spirit Award-winning photos and read stories about the hosts' experiences online at [www.activeagingweek.com/awards\\_result.php](http://www.activeagingweek.com/awards_result.php).

Thanks to Humana and to all national sponsors of last year's campaign: Abbott, Aegis Therapies/EnerG Wellness by Aegis Therapies, Centre for Aging + Brain Health Innovation, and Domtar.

### Deadline extended for Beacon Award applications

Senior living organizations can gain a powerful tool to recruit staff, attract investors and add marketing prestige by winning a 2020 ICAA NuStep Beacon Award. Launched in 2019 by the International Council on Active Aging® and NuStep, LLC, the Beacon Award program will recognize 25 "Best in Wellness" senior living communities this year. Communities that place in the top five will also receive an ICAA NuStep Pinnacle Award for exceptional contributions.

Beacon Award-winning communities will each receive a crystal award trophy to display.

They also will be featured in the *Journal on Active Aging*® and have their best practices catalogued and publicized on the dedicated award website.

The deadline to apply for this year's ICAA NuStep Beacon Award has been extended to July 20, 2020. You can discover more information about the award and determine if your community qualifies at <https://beaconaward.icaa.cc>.

### Second certificate course launches

ICAA Education, ICAA's sister division, is introducing its second online certificate course. Called "Foundation for Wellness," this course is for individuals who are interested in refreshing or expanding their wellness knowledge with ICAA content and evidence-based activities. It also targets those who are new to the field and want to learn the fundamental concepts instrumental to wellness success. More information about ICAA Education's new certificate course, including the schedule, can be found in this issue of the *Journal on Active Aging*® or online at [www.icaa.cc/certificate/overview.htm](http://www.icaa.cc/certificate/overview.htm).

### Survey findings now available, thank-you gift recipients announced

A new ICAA research report is now available for download. Developed and reported by consultant Pat Ryan, "ICAA Environments for wellness" profiles buildings, indoor and outdoor spaces, and programs that encourage health and well-being among older adults. The publication shares the results of the Environments for Wellness Survey conducted in late 2019. It also provides a valuable companion to the reports "ICAA State of Wellness" (September 2019) and "Visions of the Future" (December 2018).

Individuals who answered the survey could register to receive a free copy of the survey findings. In addition, respondents were invited to enter drawings for the chance to win a thank-you gift for completing the survey. Named below are the winners and the prizes they received:

- One USD\$250 Amazon gift card (drawing limited to the first 100 respondents): Mandie Birchem


- One of three \$100 Amazon gift cards: Mark Andrew, Aaron Aslakson, Michele Stipe
- One seat in the "ICAA Leadership in Wellness Management Certificate" course (\$899 value): Anna Bowen
- One ICAA Organizational membership (\$669 value): Michele Reid
- One ICAA Individual membership (\$225 value): Micaela Robinson

ICAA 100 and ICAA Organizational members may access "Environments for Wellness" free at [www.icaa.cc/listing.php?type=industry\\_research](http://www.icaa.cc/listing.php?type=industry_research). ICAA Individual members and nonmembers may purchase the report for USD\$99 and \$149, respectively. For further information, call toll-free 866-335-9777.

### ICAA names winners of conference prizes

After the ICAA Conference, Executive Leadership Summit and Trade Show 2019 in Orlando, Florida, in October, ICAA identified the winners of a number of prizes. Congratulations to those below:

- **Jill Beam**—for completing the most session evaluations on the Whova app: a free ICAA Conference registration
- **Cheryl Welsh**—for reading the countdown to the conference event info: a free ICAA Conference registration
- **Shondrella Little**—for participating in the IDEA Exchange in the Expo Hall: a free ICAA Conference registration
- **Chelsea Clinkscales**—for completing the postconference evaluation: a free ICAA Conference registration, continuing education units and accommodation for three nights
- **HUR USA**—for completing the postconference evaluation: a free ICAA Conference registration for a client

ICAA's 2020 Conference is scheduled to take place October 27–29 at the Hyatt Regency and Long Beach Convention Center in Long Beach, California. Information is available online at [www.icaa.cc/conferenceandevents.index.htm](http://www.icaa.cc/conferenceandevents.index.htm). 

# Active aging is a worldwide movement



With the collective power of 10,000 members in 37 countries—professionals, organizations and subject matter experts—the International Council on Active Aging® has improved the lives of millions of people worldwide. ICAA's actions have also opened a market of vast opportunity for individuals and businesses.

Are you interested in adding your strength to the association that is "Changing the Way We Age®" and taking advantage of these opportunities?

The timing has never been better to make a difference. And the first step has never been easier. ***Join us.***

To learn more about ICAA membership, **call toll-free 866-335-9777 or email [info@icaa.cc](mailto:info@icaa.cc)**

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Tel: 604-734-4466  
[www.icaa.cc](http://www.icaa.cc)





## BRING HEALTHY MOVEMENT TO LIFE //

At Matrix, we believe in the quality of life that comes from movement. Our portfolio of Med CE certified equipment was designed to meet the needs of medical and training specialists who understand just how important movement is to a healthy future.

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