

Health Bulletin



Keys To Aging In Good Health

(NAPSA)—For older adults, keeping healthy may sometimes be an issue of matter over mind.

A recent poll by the American Public Health Association (APHA) found Americans over 55 are aware of proven steps to better health—such as proper diet, regular exercise, reducing stress and having a positive attitude—but they face a number of barriers that prevent them from improving their health.

Key findings from the survey, conducted in conjunction with National Public Health Week 2005, include:

- A lack of motivation (51%), money (46%) and time (34%) were cited as primary barriers to taking action to be healthier.

- Members of the oldest segment of Americans, those 75 and older, are more likely than their younger counterparts to say they are living a healthy lifestyle (67% for those age 75+ compared to 38% for those 55 to 64 years old).

- Nearly eight in 10 (78%) believe diet and exercise have more of an influence than genes do (18%) on how healthy they will be as they age.

According to the APHA, the survey illustrates the need to invest in public education, community-based programs, and environmental and policy interventions. The group argues that doing so will help the U.S. health care system better serve the needs of the aging population—a need that respondents indicated is pressing.

- More than one in four (28%) older adults rank health care as their top concern for the country.



Participants in the Lifetime Fitness Program get a workout at Seattle's Central Area Senior Center.

Photo by Chris Arredondo, courtesy Senior Wellness Project.

- Nearly two-thirds (61%) of older adults say the cost of health care is of particular concern, followed by quality (22%) and access (14%).

“One of the driving forces behind the rising cost of health care is the lack of preventative care being taken by consumers,” says Georges C. Benjamin, MD, FACP, executive director of the APHA. “We need to move from a health care system that focuses on treating illness to one that stresses prevention.”

The APHA encourages all Americans to adopt the “three Ps” to living stronger, longer: prevent problems from happening, protect your health through early detection, and plan to stay healthy for many years to come.

Information to assist individuals in developing a plan for staying healthy as well as an online personal health assessment calculator are available at www.apha.org/nphw.