



## *E-Newsletter Update*

*April 2004*



### From the *Active for Life* National Program Office

#### ***AARP Active for Life social marketing update***

Wave 3 survey results of the *Active for Life Social Marketing* Projects in Richmond, VA and Madison, WI have shown that after a year of communications and program activities in the two cities *Active for Life* has achieved notable changes in the physical activity behaviors of the target audiences, in the knowledge and attitudes that lead to behavior change, and in the system and infrastructure issues that can support enduring change.

Next steps in the project include:

- Maintenance of community partner involvement; facilitating partner engagement in physical activity for people 50+ for the long term; and securing partner sustainability of environmental change strategies and activities.
- Preparation for evaluation of the pilot campaign process and impact.
- Planning for dissemination of the lessons learned through the development of tool kits, conference presentations and papers.

#### ***Survey seeks insight into Internet-based physical activity programs***

Beginning on April 5<sup>th</sup>, The Oregon Center for Applied Science will conduct an Internet survey of 400 adults age 60 and older to learn more about what mature adults would like to have in an online program designed to help them be more active. The survey, which is funded by the National Institute on Aging, is for research purposes only. Participant names and information will not go on a mailing list or be passed on to other organizations. All information will be kept confidential. The survey will take about 15-20 minutes to complete and eligible participants who agree to do the survey will be compensated \$15. For information contact: [seniorsonthemove@orcasinc.com](mailto:seniorsonthemove@orcasinc.com) or call Molly Billow at 1-800-934-0626.

## ***Upcoming meetings of interest***

*Physical Activity Policy in Action: Scanning the Landscape, a National Coalition for Promoting Physical Activity ([www.ncppa.org](http://www.ncppa.org)) Conference is set for June 9.*



The conference will:

- Provide a five year inventory of physical activity related policies at the federal and state levels;
- Review enacted policies, provide background information and explanations of the policies as well as analyze their intended and unintended outcomes;
- Act as a catalyst for future policy and legislative action regarding physical activity; and
- Convene diverse perspectives and resources around physical activity.

## ***DCAC International Fitness Conference***

Fitness instructors from all over the globe will converge on Washington DC for the annual DCAC International Fitness Conference and Trade Show, July 28 - August 1 at the Hyatt Regency in Reston, VA. The training conference is aimed at helping fitness instructors sharpen their skills and catch the next popular fitness wave. Visit [www.dcacinc.com](http://www.dcacinc.com) for information.



*Photo of the 2003 DCAC Conference, Used with permission from DCAC, Inc.*

## ***Increasing Physical Activity in Populations: Understanding Diffusion & Dissemination***

Researchers from a wide range of disciplines are invited to submit abstracts for poster presentations on research investigating processes of diffusion and dissemination, broadly-defined, as they relate to recommendations, programs, policies, and environmental changes for physical activity. Public health practitioners are invited to submit abstracts describing the dissemination of physical activity with their client populations. The deadline for abstract submission is August 1, 2004. Abstracts will be presented and discussed during the Cooper Institute Conference October 21-24, 2004 in Dallas. More information is available at <http://www.cooperinst.org/conf2004intro.asp>.



## **Marketing Facts, Figures and Ideas**

### ***PEW report on older Americans and the Internet***

The *Pew Internet & American Life Project* released a new report on older Americans and the Internet. The percent of seniors who go online has jumped by 47 percent between 2000 and 2004. In a February 2004 survey, 22 percent of Americans age 65 or older reported having access to the Internet. That translates to about 8 million Americans age 65 or older who use the Internet.

- 66% of wired seniors looked for health or medical information online in 2003.
- 66% of wired seniors did product research online by the end of 2003.
- 47% of online seniors bought something on the Internet by the end of 2003.
- 41% made travel reservations online by the end of 2003.
- 26% of wired seniors looked for religious and spiritual information by the end of 2003.
- 20% of online seniors did banking on the Internet by the end of 2003.

Despite the significant gains noted, most Americans age 65 and older live lives far removed from the Internet, know few people who use email or surf the Web, and cannot imagine why they would spend money and time learning how to use a computer. Seniors are also more likely than any other age group to be living with some kind of disability, which could hinder their capacity to get to a computer training center or read the small type on many Web sites. The report, titled "Older Americans and the Internet," is based primarily on survey data collected between February 3 and March 1, 2004. The full report is available at: <http://www.pewinternet.org/reports/toc.asp?Report=117>

### ***Getting around***

According to the 1995 National Personal Transportation Survey, 71.7 percent of suburban, 68.1 percent of rural, and 54.9 percent of urban elders drive as their main mode of transportation. Notes the *San Francisco Bay Area Older Adults Transportation Study*, prepared by Nelson\Nygaard Consulting Associates, "The majority of seniors see driving as crucial to being able to lead an independent and fulfilling life. Older drivers facing the prospect of reducing or terminating their driving expect substantially reduced mobility with undesirable consequences. These include loss of personal independence, social isolation, and a reduction or lack of access to essential services."



Currently walking/bicycling are not widespread transportation means for a majority of older adults. The survey showed that only 13.3 percent of urban and 4.6 percent of suburban and rural elders walk or bicycle as their means of transportation. Encouraging older adults to become more physically active can help them feel comfortable and confident about walking or bicycling as a method of getting around, and thus help them remain more independent.



### **Tips, Tactics & Tools**

#### ***“Cultural Competence in Health Care”***

An issue brief from the *Center on an Aging Society* points out that the increasing diversity of the population brings opportunities and challenges for the health care system in the U.S. Racial and ethnic minorities, who are disproportionately burdened by chronic illness, are also likely to benefit from care that is delivered in a culturally competent manner. The brief notes that the commitment to

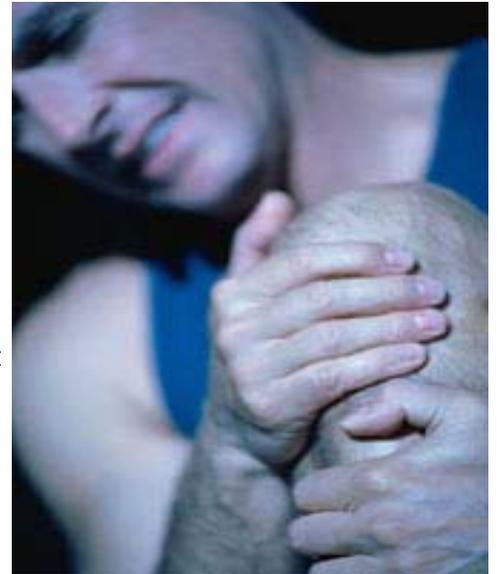
cultural competence is growing among health care providers and systems, and that more attention to this issue could help improve access to health care services, quality of care, and health outcomes for vulnerable populations. <http://ihcrp.georgetown.edu/agingsociety/pubhtml/cultural/cultural.html>

### ***10 reasons why people with arthritis should stay active***

Unfortunately, many people mistakenly believe that exercise will worsen their arthritis. Not true, according to the *American Council on Exercise* (ACE). “As is the case with many diseases, a well-rounded program of flexibility, strength and cardiovascular activity can not only reduce the adverse affects of arthritis, but improve overall fitness as well.”

ACE offers 10 reasons why people with arthritis should stay active:

1. Flexibility training helps improve range of motion and reduces stiffness.
2. Low-impact activities not only improve overall fitness, but can reduce the psychological and emotional pain that often accompanies arthritis.
3. Exercise strengthens muscles and improves mobility.
4. Weight-bearing exercise, such as walking, positively affects bone mass helping to reduce the risk of developing osteoporosis.
5. Arthritis can negatively affect posture, balance and coordination, all of which may be improved by regular exercise.
6. Excess weight places additional strain on the joints, so maintaining a healthy weight is important for those with arthritis.
7. Exercise has been proven to help manage stress, which can take its toll on the whole body, including the joints.
8. Because it’s a chronic degenerative disease, people with arthritis can become depressed and develop a poor self-image. People who exercise tend to be less depressed and possess a more positive outlook.
9. Painful joints can make getting a good night’s sleep difficult, if not impossible. Regular exercise has been shown to improve sleep patterns and may help alleviate this problem.
10. Because arthritis often leads to a more sedentary lifestyle, individuals with this disease often increase their risk of developing other deadly diseases, such as heart disease or diabetes. Staying active and exercising regularly is an effective means of offsetting the affects of arthritis, as well as the risk of developing other lifestyle-related diseases.



*Photo courtesy of ACE,  
used with permission.*

For more information, go to [www.acefitness.org](http://www.acefitness.org)

## *Preventing falls*

Each year, one out of every three older people falls - accounting for 40 percent of new nursing home admissions. Many falls result in hip fractures, a severe injury in older people that can lead to long-term hospitalization, debilitating psychological effects, and even death. Women have two to three times as many hip fractures as men, and some women have a one in seven chance of hip fracture during their lifetime. The American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons offers helpful tips on physical activity as well as ways to adjust the home environment to reduce the risk of falls.

<http://orthoinfo.aaos.org>

## *Tips on creating a winning team*

Your team of winning health or wellness professionals will find these ideas from legendary football coach Bear Bryant valuable. Members of a football team, like any other team in sports or business, need five things:

1. Tell people what you expect from them.
2. Give them an opportunity to perform.
3. Let them know how they're doing.
4. Give guidance when needed.
5. Reward people according to their contribution.

## *Keeping meetings on track*

Much of the work we do involves meetings. Yet a frequent reaction is they go on too long, are unfocused, and little gets done. In *The Total Communicator*, the Executive Communications Group ([www.ecglink.com](http://www.ecglink.com)) offers simple guidelines to make meetings productive.

**Ask if the meeting is necessary.** Can your purpose be better served in some other way? For example, if your objective is to pass on information, another method might suffice.

**Have an agenda.** Prioritize the items to be discussed. Don't overload the meeting with too many topics. Make sure those attending the meeting know what topics you plan to discuss, preferably in advance of the meeting, and how long the meeting will last.

**Keep things moving.** Once the meeting begins, guide the discussion and keep the meeting on track. This requires a delicate balance of both control and flexibility. Encourage participation from everyone and listen. Pay attention to what isn't said as well as to what is.

**Manage conflict.** Your best bet is to anticipate as much as possible any negative responses that might flow from your agenda topics. Prepare in advance to deal with resistance you expect to meet.

**Sum up.** As the meeting ends, restate the decisions and actions agreed on. Underscore the key items: priorities set, specific steps to be taken, by whom, and in what period of time.



## ***In the News***

### ***A little music with exercise boosts brain power***

It's no secret that exercise improves mood, but new research suggests that working out to music may give exercisers a mental boost. "This is the first study to look at the combined effects of music and short-term exercise on mental performance," says Charles Emery, the study's lead author and a professor of psychology at Ohio State University. "Evidence suggests that exercise improves the cognitive performance of people with coronary artery disease," explains Emery. "And listening to music is thought to enhance brain power. We wanted to put the two results together."



"Exercise seems to cause positive changes in the nervous system, and these changes may have a direct effect on cognitive ability," Emery says. "Listening to music may influence cognitive function through different pathways in the brain. The combination of music and exercise may stimulate and increase cognitive arousal, while helping to organize cognitive output."

### ***Obesity in the elderly could account for increase in health care costs***

According to study published in the March/April issue of *Health Affairs*, researchers led by Roland Sturm, senior economist at the Rand Corporation, examined data from the *Health and Retirement Study* to estimate the association between obesity and disability and combined the data with trend estimates of obesity rates from the *Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey*. An April 9<sup>th</sup> *Wall Street Journal* report on the study noted:

- Based on current obesity trends, disability rates will increase by one percent per year more for individuals ages 50 to 69 than "if there were no further weight gain";
- Severely obese individuals ages 50 to 69 are "more than twice as likely as people of normal weight to be in fair or poor health" and have about twice as many chronic medical conditions;
- There is a 44 percent increase in health care costs among moderately and severely obese individuals ages 50 to 69 compared with those of normal weight.

An abstract is available <http://content.healthaffairs.org/cgi/content/abstract/23/2/199>

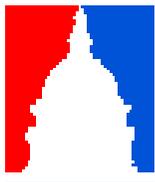
### ***Leisure activity benefits the heart***

According to an article in the *American Journal of Medicine* (July 2003), based on research involving men and women age 40 – 60, physical activity during leisure is inversely related to the

progression of atherosclerosis in the carotid artery. The study was conducted by the Department of Preventive Medicine at University of Southern California Keck School of Medicine.

### ***Too much of a good thing?***

Forty-nine percent of Americans say they watch too much TV notes RealVision, a project of *TV-Turnoff Network*. The average American watches more than four hours a day, and by age 65 the average person will see two million TV commercials. If people just cut TV viewing by 30 minutes a day, and spent that time engaged in physical activity, they'd reap a myriad of health and wellness benefits.



### **Public Policy Info**

### ***Passage of congressional budget resolution 1<sup>st</sup> step in appropriations process***

Leaders of the House and the Senate Budget Committees are meeting to resolve differences in two conflicting budget resolutions passed by the U.S. Senate and the House of Representatives. These non-binding resolutions serve as a blueprint for the Appropriations Committees that determine funding levels for federal programs. Neither of these budget resolutions provide for adequate funding for public health programs, comments the American Heart Association. However, the Senate-passed budget resolution is somewhat better for public health programs than the House version.

### ***Harkin wellness and disease prevention initiative***

Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA) is currently working on legislation that addresses the risk factors associated with the alarmingly high rises in chronic conditions and the healthcare costs associated with them. Because chronic conditions like obesity and mental health are so complex, the solution demands a commitment from the federal government, consumers, employers, insurers, and others in the private sector. Harkin's initiative will give Americans access to better preventive care and consumer information to promote healthier lifestyles. Senator Harkin has scheduled a field hearing in Des Moines, Iowa on April 16, 2004 to bring together individuals to discuss ways that we can promote better wellness initiatives in our schools, workplaces and communities.

### ***Great outdoors is getting the attention it needs and deserves***

The *Great Outdoors Act*, introduced by Representatives Don Young (R-AK) and George Miller (D-CA), will help improve the health and quality of life of Americans by promoting active lifestyles through recreation, sports, and fitness. Also known as the *GO Bill*, the

proposed legislation will establish a multi-billion dollar trust fund to support a broad array of recreation, conservation, wildlife, historic preservation and park maintenance programs. Annual allocations of \$450 million to the state assistance account of the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and \$125 million to the Urban Park and Recreation Recovery program will make an immediate impact on the recreation inventories nationwide.

"This legislation will move the needle toward a long term, important goal, namely a permanent funding source to provide recreation infrastructure for all Americans. The bill will address pressing funding needs for trails, parks, wild lands, ball fields, courts, and playgrounds. This bill will greatly enhance the ability of every American to engage in the recreation of their choosing." said Tom Cove, Vice President of Government Affairs of the Sporting Goods Manufacturers Association.



## **Grants and available resources**

### ***Interdisciplinary research on adult health and well-being***

Two pilot project grants will be awarded for innovative interdisciplinary research on adult health and well-being, with an emphasis on integrative approaches to understanding life course and subgroup variations in physical, socio-emotional, and cognitive functioning. All research must be based on the National Survey of Midlife Development in the United States (MIDUS) data set, or its satellite studies including the National Study of Daily Experiences (NSDE) and sibling/twin subsample studies. Grants of up to \$15,000 (total costs) will be awarded to investigators from a variety of disciplines. Applications should be sent no later than July 1, 2004 to: Dr. Deborah Carr, Institute for Health, Health Care Policy & Aging Research, Rutgers University, 30 College Ave., New Brunswick, NJ 08901. For more information, call 732-932-4068 or send e-mail to [carrds@rci.rutgers.edu](mailto:carrds@rci.rutgers.edu).

### ***Stroke Belt Elimination Initiative***

A request for applications (RFA) to support hypertension prevention, detection, and control efforts in southeastern *Stroke Belt* states is expected to be announced soon by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Minority Health. Applications will be accepted from communities in the following seven states: Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee. Successful applicants will adopt, own, and localize a program to reduce the rates of stroke and its priority risk factor, hypertension, in their community. They will collaborate with local, regional, and national entities and programs through a local *Stroke Belt Community Action Team* and a *Community Stroke Belt Coordinator*. More information will be provided through an NHLBI *Health Information Network e-Bulletin* when the RFA and initiative are formally announced.

The *Active for Life*® E-Newsletter Update is produced monthly by the *Active for Life*® National Program Office at The Texas A&M University System Health Science Center School of Rural Public Health. To include information, contact Brigid McHugh Sanner at [Brigid@sannerandcompany.com](mailto:Brigid@sannerandcompany.com) or call 214-553-0621. This program is funded by a grant from The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation®.