



Vital Aging Network
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September 2005 Bulletin

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September 13 VAN FORUM...

Old and Rural: Health and Medical Decision Making

Presenter:

Jan McCulloch, Ph.D., Chair, U of M Department of Family Social Science

Time and Place: Tuesday, September 13 from 10 AM to Noon, at the Fairview Community Center, Roseville.

Rural elders aging in place have been facing major losses for more than one generation – loss of their income with the changing agricultural economy, loss of their children and grandchildren to better economic opportunities in the city, loss of population from their communities – as well as losses normally associated with aging. Over the last 15 years, Jan McCulloch has focused her scholarship largely on issues affecting quality of life for rural elders. She has written articles about the mental health and well-being – depression, hopelessness, ways of coping, and hardiness – of rural men and women. At the September 13 Forum, Dr. McCulloch will share her knowledge and feelings about the past, present and future of rural elders – an important focus of her professional life. She will also provide information about her most current work – how family affects older rural women's medical decision making.

In 2003, Jan McCulloch came from the University of Kentucky to head the Department of Family Social Science at the University of Minnesota. She has reached out to the community and, among other activities, served as a member of the Board of the Metropolitan Area Agency on Aging.

Directions: The meeting will be held in the EDC Great Room at the Fairview Community Center, 1910 West County Road B, in Roseville. County Road B runs parallel to and just south of Highway 36, near Rosedale. The community center is located one block west of Fairview,

between Fairview and Cleveland on County Road B. Park free in the large parking lot that lies in front of the center. The Great Room is in the building on the right. An information desk is inside the front door. If you have trouble finding it call 651-604-3500.

Questions? Need a ride? Call VAN at 612-626-5555. Everyone is welcome. There is no charge for VAN's monthly forums.

Policies to Promote Vital Aging

What supports and encourages vital aging?

Since May, VAN has convened or participated in several forums focused on policies needed to promote and support vital aging. "Policies" are defined as rules, laws and institutional procedures. The basic elements of "vital aging" are self-determination, community involvement, and personal enrichment. Here is a summary of what we've heard so far, and an invitation to add your comments via email at van@umn.edu. This material will be brought to the December White House Conference on Aging.

"What works" for vital aging?

On the basis of personal experience, meeting participants agreed that these four conditions are important for vital aging:

- Open political process. Decision makers are open to hearing and making use of new ideas. They listen to the people who will be affected.
- Community-based planning. There is easy access to an integrated system of information and services. Intergenerational communities encourage social interaction and engagement at neighborhood sites. The workplace provides flexibility to retain older workers.
- Supportive relationships. Across generations, we help each other to maintain independence as we age. Our contributions are valued, whether as paid employees or volunteers. Respect, inclusion, and spiritual exploration are critical for vital aging.
- Available resources. Key resources include: a) technology – to support independent living and expand communication, b) transportation – to support social/community connections, c) education – to support lifelong learning, d) income – to support economic security, e) comprehensive health care – to support wellness, and f) positive media – to support the image of aging as growth.

What are the guiding principles for decision-making?

- Involve all of the stakeholders in the planning process – including older adults.
- Realign resources across all sectors and agencies to build on assets and increase capacity.
- Create and support flexible, accessible options adapted to older adult needs, strengths and interests.
- Maximize intergenerational give-and-take, supporting the

informal bartering of services in multi-generational communities – people helping each other.

- Empower pro-active planning and entrepreneurship – for both organizations and older adults themselves.

What are some specific policies that would promote and support vital aging?

Here are some examples of the policies suggested so far:

- Require universal access for all new housing
- Require cross-sector planning for vital aging in every community
- Expand transit and transit-oriented development
- Change rules for long-term care to allow residents to help themselves and each other
- Organize one-stop shopping for services at the neighborhood level to support independence
- Federal mortgage benefits should not be available for developing segregated retirement communities where residence age is the only justification for benefits
- Plan for multi-use, multi-generational, accessible communities
- Provide incentives and reward good practices
- Review entitlements based on aging without consideration of income/need
- Focus health care dollars on prevention and wellness as well as acute care
- Help us to be prudent and responsible in our self-care. Don't push pills and other kinds of excessive service
- Report on the costs of red tape (advertising, billing, reporting, explaining new laws)

Who will do the work of advocacy that needs to be done?

Meeting participants recognized the value of their own leadership skills for advocacy:

- Communication skills – listening, writing, speaking, synthesizing discussion
- Working with different groups – mediating, collaborating, moving ideas along
- Tenacity – understanding the system, seeking resources, engaging change

VAN would welcome the addition of your response to these questions. Write down what comes to mind, and send your comments to VAN via van@umn.edu.

ART OF AGING EXHIBIT

September 10 through October 7

City Passport, St. Paul's new downtown activity center for people 50 and better, will display six panels produced by 40 senior artists through the "Art of Aging" project sponsored by MN CAAN (Minnesota Creative Arts and Aging Network). City Passport is located in Suite 230 on the

skyway level of Galtier Plaza, 380 Jackson Street, in downtown St. Paul (by Mears Park). The panels will be on display from September 10 through October 7 from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM.

City Passport is a collaborative effort involving the City of St. Paul and HealthEast® Care System. It functions as the official programming site for MN CAAN and provides a range of health, recreational, cultural and social activities for older adults.

For more information contact Mike Rossberg, St. Paul Parks and Recreation Senior Programs at 651-266-6447.



DATES TO PUT ON YOUR CALENDAR

Let VAN know if you have events in your community for vital agers...email van@umn.edu

September 13 @ 10:00AM – 12:00 Noon

VAN Monthly Forum: Old and Rural: Health and Medical Decision Making

Join Dr. Jan McCulloch, Director of the Family Social Science Department at the University of Minnesota and explore the uniqueness of older adults living in rural areas.

Location: Fairview Community Center

September 13 @ 7:30 AM – 9:30 AM

Location: Joe's Garage, 1610 Harmon Place, Minneapolis

September 16th @ 11:30 AM – 1:30 PM

Location: Black Bear Crossings on the Lake, 1360 N. Lexington, St. Paul

Speaking of Ageing: Where Elders, Boomers, and Professionals/Academics Meet

Whether you are an entrepreneur turning your business over to your heirs or an executive or manager wanting a change in venue, join ElderZest. You will hear and rap with Kevin Hannigan (CEO of Roland Mann Associates) and Tom Hubler (President of Hubler Family Business Consultants / Adjunct Faculty at the University of St. Thomas).

September 30 @ 10:00 AM – 2:30 PM

Mind-Body Skills Workshop

Take advantage of this great opportunity to learn how mind-body skills can help seniors decrease their stress and increase their well-being. Anyone with a desire to learn mind-body skills proven to improve health and wellness should plan on attending this seminar. Each participant will receive a curriculum packet to help integrate powerful mind-body skills for self-care or with others. They can be easily learned, add to the quality of life, and help us to be more stress resistant. The event is sponsored by the Greater Twin Cities United Way and Volunteers of America of Minnesota.

Location: Southwest Senior Center, 3612 Bryant Ave S, Minneapolis

Registration: Due to space considerations, register by calling Mary Ann Schoenberger at 612-822-3194.

VAN connects older adults with education to promote and support their self-sufficiency, community participation, and personal enrichment. VAN is supported by the University of Minnesota's College of Continuing Education. Visit the VAN Web site at www.van.umn.edu



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