



Vital Aging Network
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VAN Forum: January 9, 2006

10 a.m. – 12 Noon

Roseville Library

2180 North Hamline Ave., Roseville MN

Click [here](#) for a map.

Planning for Vital Aging in Minnesota

Last year, the baby boom generation began to turn 60, and for the next 25 years, Minnesota and the rest of the world will experience a permanent shift in the age of our population. This change presents both opportunities and challenges, and has major implications for individuals, families, communities, employers and state and local government.

Transform 2010 is a project of the State of Minnesota that is identifying the impact of these demographic changes and preparing a vision and strategies for action to prepare the state. The state has just concluded the first phase of this project. LaRhae Knatterud, director of this project at the Department of Human Services, will share the Transform 2010 results and recommendations. For more information, visit <http://mnseniors.org/content/view/434/71/>.

Dawn Simonson and Dick Graham will discuss the initiative called **Living the Questions**, a program undertaken by the Minnesota Leadership Council on Aging, a collaborative of thirteen leading nonprofit organizations with statewide service and advocacy presence. Formed in 2004 to advocate for home and community-based services, the Council has met with community leaders to raise awareness of and discuss the demographic, social and economic issues related to the aging of the baby boom generation. Through a series of dialogue sessions, the Council is gathering information about community aging issues as viewed by foundations, housing and community developers, civic groups, education officials, transportation representatives, faith communities, business and industry, and others. For more information, visit www.tcaging.org/whatwedo/questions.html.

Directions: The Roseville Library is located north of Country Road B on Hamline. From Snelling Avenue, traveling north, turn right onto County Road B, then left onto Hamline. The library's phone number is 651-628-6803.

2007 FORUM PREVIEW

In addition to the January VAN forum described above, other topics planned for the coming year include:

February	Creativity Force
March	Finance / Funding Your Dreams
April	Transforming Volunteerism for Boomers
May	Transitioning to Retirement
June	Minnesota's Senior Driver Improvement Program
July	Social Entrepreneurism
August	Recreation and Fitness
September	Environmental Force
October	Legacy Planning
November	Workshop on Preserving Family Heirlooms

VAN Forums, free and open to the public, are held on the second Tuesday of each month. Locations and times for the forums will be announced monthly in the VAN Bulletin and at www.van.umn.edu. The Program Committee of VAN's Leadership Group welcomes suggestions for future forum topics. Send an e-mail to van@umn.edu or call 612-626-5555.

WEB SITE FOR TAKING CHARGE OF YOUR HEALTH

The University of Minnesota's Center for Spirituality & Healing has created a free-of-charge, interactive Web site that provides tools and resources to help consumers make informed health care choices. The site, Taking Charge of Your Health, educates consumers on integrating conventional care with therapies that address their emotional, physical, and spiritual needs. Found at <http://www.csh.umn.edu>, Taking Charge of Your Health is written in easy-to-understand language by top University of Minnesota and community experts. The site covers three main topics: exploring complementary therapies, navigating the health care system, and creating healthy lifestyles.

Not long ago, people relied mostly on their doctors to direct their health care. With today's office visits lasting 15 minutes on average, health care providers have limited time to address their patients' questions and needs. "The reality is that all of us must take personal responsibility for our own health and wellness, and the best way to make wise health care choices is to have easy access to credible information," said center Director Mary Jo Kreitzer, R.N., Ph.D. "Our goal in creating Taking Charge of Your Health is to provide practical information that helps people make healthy lifestyle changes, learn to better navigate the health care system, and explore integrating complementary therapies and healing practices with conventional care."

National Institutes of Health (NIH) studies indicate that a majority of Americans have used some form of complementary and/or alternative therapy such as massage,

meditation, acupuncture, and aromatherapy. The **Exploring Complementary Therapies** section of the Web site offers insights into a variety of “non-conventional” therapies: what they are, whether they’re safe and effective, and how and when to use them.

While making healthy lifestyle choices sounds simple, the trick is sticking to them. The **Creating Healthy Lifestyles** section helps users make it doable. People face choices every day — what to eat, how much to exercise, and how to manage stress. These choices profoundly impact how healthy people are and what chronic diseases they might face. This section provides valuable tips and allows users to track their goals making it easier to maintain a recommended body weight, commit to an exercise program or take steps to master stress.

The **Navigating the Health Care System** section shows consumers how to get the most out of the health care system. The section shows them how to find credible health information on the web, find a good health care provider, evaluate treatment options, help ensure healthy hospitalizations, and better understand health insurance.

Taking Charge of Your Health is a collaboration between the University of Minnesota’s Center for Spirituality & Healing and Life Science Foundation.

STUDY PROBES THOUGHTS ON BRAIN HEALTH

In a recent national public opinion study, “Attitudes and Awareness of Brain Health,” few people rated brain health as highly as physical health.

While more than half of respondents rated heart health as very important, only seven percent said the same of brain health. Yet nearly nine out of 10 respondents thought it was possible to improve brain fitness, and an overwhelming majority said that thinking abilities should be checked as routinely as physical abilities are.

At least 60 percent said that, to improve mental fitness, people should avoid tobacco, eat fresh fruits and vegetables, do puzzles, reduce stress, limit alcoholic drinks, spend time with family and friends, and see the doctor regularly. And 84 percent report that they spend time, usually daily, in activities that are good for brain health.

The American Society on Aging commissioned the survey of more than 1,000 Americans ages 42 and older, with support from MetLife. (Source: National Council on Aging)

NEW YEARS RESOLUTIONS: FITNESS IN BODY AND MIND

Make your fitness resolution work your mind as well as your body by listening to stimulating content while you exercise. A great place to check for content is online at <http://www.cce.umn.edu/enrichment/headliners/listen.html> where you can listen to or

download audio recordings from previous presentations given at the University of Minnesota's **Headliners** program. Headliners, hosted by the College of Continuing Education, is a monthly forum in which University and community experts share first knowledge of the day's most intriguing stories—the medical breakthroughs, culture clashes, social trends, and foreign affairs that are at the forefront of current events. An open discussion follows each presentation. If you are interested in attending a Headliners forum live, visit <http://www.cce.umn.edu/enrichment/headliners/home.html> for information.

ACTING HAPPY

-Dale Anderson, M.D.

Ask most doctors and they will likely tell you: happy people are healthier people. Happiness is an infectious state that can definitely have an impact on your health. That's because your brain comes equipped with an inner pharmacy that can help you be joyful and embrace life, lending a hand to make you feel years younger.

Enjoying good health isn't just about scoring good numbers on a cholesterol test or passing a mammogram with flying colors. While those are both good things, it's also important to have a healthy state of mind, to be “welderly.” Start working on being a “welderly” person early in life so that you are in good practice when it really counts. That means never acting your age, and taking a childlike approach to life.

People get stuck in ruts, whether they are good or bad ones. Those who are feeling down train their muscles and attitudes to stay that way. Their sour moods can be reflected in their posture, clothing, hairstyle, and attitude. In other words, they get stuck in their performances.

The reverse is also true, that happy people look upbeat and peppy, and their good moods are infectious to those around them. They also benefit from neuropeptides like endorphins and other chemicals that bolster the immune system and promote well being.

Humor and laughter are two of the most important weapons in the arsenal for leading a happy life. Find someone who shares your sense of humor and use it to make each other laugh. Give yourself a prescription for laughter — just putting a smile on your face will make you feel better. Two times a day, stand before a mirror and laugh for 15 seconds. What might feel unnatural at first eventually will become routine. As actors say, “Fake it 'til you make it.”

Another way to open your inner pharmacy of happiness is to socialize, to connect, whether it's with people, pets, or places. Studies have shown that people who are 65 and older, live alone, and have a dog see the doctor 16 percent less than similar people who don't have a dog. Having someone or some living thing to care for besides yourself often will open you up to the world around you.

Getting connected to spirituality also helps. People who go to church, synagogue, a mosque, or find a way to connect with their spiritual being are happier. If that's not your thing, try following a sports team or a musical group. Music is a wonderful connector — it bridges links between different areas of the brain, tapping into that inner chemistry. Other key contributors to being "welllderly" are exercising and getting enough sleep.

Finally, be a role model for the young people around you. Teach your children and grandchildren through the example of your own happy life. Show them that it's not so bad to be old — it's fun and stimulating. You can still be creative, have causes, start new things, and get educated. You'll be happy and you'll make them happy, knowing that you are content. After all, happiness is infectious.

Dale Anderson, M.D., has been a family physician and board-certified surgeon and emergency physician for more than 45 years. An author of *Never Act Your Age: Play the Happy Childlike Role Well at Every Age*, he also is a frequent lecturer on how humor and positive attitudes affect health and well being.

VOLUNTEER GROWTH IN AMERICA REPORT RELEASED

The Corporation for National and Community Service has recently released "Volunteer Growth in America: A Review of Trends Since 1974." According to the report, volunteering is at a 30-year high. The report provides a breakdown by age group, and gives detailed information on the volunteerism trends of teenagers, baby boomers, and older adults. To learn more, visit <http://www.nationalservice.gov>.

NEW BOOK ON COMMUNITY SERVICE FROM HANDS ON NETWORK

"**Be the Change! Change the World. Change Yourself**" is the title of a new book available from Hands on Network that celebrates the power of community service. The book includes personal accounts from people who have chosen to change their communities and transform their personal lives through service to others. The book is edited by Michelle Nunn, co-founder and CEO of Hands On Network, and includes a forward by journalist Tom Brokaw. It features stories and quotes from prominent individuals, such as retired US Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, US Senator Bill Frist, author/philosopher Deepak Chopra, basketball legend Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, news commentator Cokie Roberts, in addition to others who volunteer through the 64 member organizations of Hands On Network in and outside of the United States. *Be the Change!* is available at local book stores for \$14.95. With your purchase, a portion of the proceeds go directly to support the work of Hands On Network. Visit <http://www.handsonnetwork.org> for information.

FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS (FAN) CLUB MEETINGS

The Summit Hill Living at Home Block Nurse Program hosts a Friends and Neighbors

(FAN) Club gathering each Thursday from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the Fireside Room of the United Church of Christ, 900 Summit Avenue in St. Paul. A \$5 donation for lunch is requested. Each program begins with a chair exercise program. January's lineup includes:

January 4: Guests will share stories about holiday gifts received.

January 11: Volunteers from the Humane Society.

January 18: Stew Nelson on "My Days as a Soldier."

January 25: Anne Lippin on "Care of Our Backs."

For more information, please call Julie or Sue at 651-222-7884.

"WRITING FAMILY HISTORY" COURSE AT THE U OF M

The College of Continuing Education (CCE) at the University of Minnesota is offering a non-credit course intended for anyone who has always meant to research and write a family history and for those who have already begun. "Writing Family History" addresses the problem of transforming "dead on the page" dates and facts into interesting, well-written stories. The course runs for three consecutive, two-hour Thursday evening sessions, beginning March 1.

A link to register for this course can be found at CCE's **Continuing Education for Professional and Creative Writing** Web page that provides links to, and information about, non-credit and for-credit writing classes at the University. Also included are online tools and resources for developing good writing practices and improving writing skills. Visit <http://www.cce.umn.edu/writing/> for more information.

CREATIVE ARTS AND AGING IN ZUMBROTA AREA

Too old for art? There is no such thing. In fact, there is a growing national movement to support creative expression among older adults.

The Minnesota Creative Arts and Aging Network (MnCAAN) will be forming a group in the Zumbrota-Rochester-Red Wing area to foster the engagement of older adults in the visual and performing arts. Anyone interested in helping to plan a regional event to share information, models, and resources for helping older adults express themselves artistically is invited to attend a meeting on Thursday, January 11 at 10 a.m. at Crossings in Zumbrota. To register for the meeting, call 507-732-7616 or stop in to Crossings at 320 East Ave, Zumbrota.

Questions? Contact Pat Samples: patsamples@agingandcaregiving.com.

FOR YOUR CALENDAR



January 8

SHiFT Discussion Group: Passion and Purpose

Three individuals share stories about personal journeys at midlife to careers focused on passion and purpose.

Location: Dunn Brothers Coffee in Loring Park, 7 p.m.

Contact: David Buck (612) 308-9394

January 9

BOOM! THE BOOMERS HAVE ARRIVED:

Chemical Dependency & the Twin Cities Older Adult

Thomas S. Gerenz, Director of the Senior Recovery Program will discuss:

- Age Specific Treatment in the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area;
- Changing Demographics of the Senior Recovery Program;
- How the Senior Recovery Program works with this population; and
- Funding Available for Treatment

Sponsored By: St. Paul Senior Worker's Association

Location: Neighborhood House, 179 Robie Street East, St. Paul; 651-789-2545

Contact: Diane Bjorkman (651-224-0335)

January 11

Zumbrota Area Planning Meeting

Minnesota Creative Arts and Aging Network (MnCAAN)

Location: Crossings, 320 East Ave. in Zumbrota, 10 a.m.

Contact: Pat Samples: patsamples@agingandcaregiving.com

January 15

SHiFT Discussion Group: Change the World

Will baby boomers give back to the world as much as they have changed it?

Location: Dunn Brothers Coffee in Loring Park, 7 p.m.

Contact: David Buck (612) 308-9394

January 17 - January 19

Palliative Care Leadership Center (PCLC) Training

Two days of on-site, hands-on training and a full year of follow-up mentoring. Learn how to finance, design, market and operate a successful program.

Interdisciplinary approach is intended for physicians, nurses, social workers, administrators and other healthcare professionals interested in starting palliative care programs. Sponsored by The Center to Advance Palliative Care (CAPC).

Location: Fairview Health Services, Minneapolis, MN

Contact: Julie Robbins, (612) 672-6362

January 20

Hennepin County Library Training: Genealogy Resources

Working hands-on at a computer, beginners will learn how to access online family history resources including census and immigration records. Prerequisite: Basic keyboarding (ability to type website addresses and search keywords) and mouse skills (pointing and clicking) are required.

10 a.m. – Noon

Location: Southdale Library, 7001 York Ave. S., Edina, MN 55435

Phone: 952-847-5900

Register Online at <http://www.hclib.org/pub/events/AllEventsAction.cfm>

January 22

SHiFT Discussion Group: Managing Your Career at Midlife

Sally Power, author of **The Mid-Career Success Guide**.

Location: Dunn Brothers Coffee in Loring Park, 7 p.m.

Contact: David Buck (612) 308-9394

January 29

SHiFT Discussion Group: Journeys in the Desert

Three individuals share stories about moving from the known to the unknown.

Location: Dunn Brothers Coffee in Loring Park, 7 p.m.

Contact: David Buck (612) 308-9394

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

