



CONSORTIUM FOR CITIZENS
WITH DISABILITIES

EFFECTIVE LIVABLE COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTS FOR THE ELDERLY MAY PREVENT UNNECESSARY DIMINISHED HEALTH AND DISABILITY

A briefing was held by AARP on community living arrangements for the elderly. Presenters at the forum were representatives from State legislators and department of transportation, housing advisors, metropolitan planners, and policy specialists related to livable communities.

Summary From 2010 to 2020, the older adult population will increase 50%. Eighty percent of adults over the age 65 will live in metropolitan areas and 64% will live outside the principle cities. Thus, there is a need to examine conditions that will provide better access for persons who are elderly to needed human services and promote community cohesiveness. Living arrangements need to address fostering independence through sharing facilities that meet a variety of needs for all. There is a relationship between housing, employment, transportation and community services. Thus, there is need for coordination of local and state policies to address the needs of elderly people. There are economic hardships for the elderly based on housing needs. For instance, in 2009, 48% of people over 65 with mortgages, and 59% renters paid more than 30% of their income on housing.

Disability Prevention Issues Community living arrangements with built environments that accommodate physical and mental impairments are critical to prevention of disability. At age 65, 39% of the population is disabled, and 53% at age 75. Older adults have a strong desire to live in their own homes and communities. Nearly 90% of people over the age of 65 want to stay in their homes as long as possible. In 2008, only 3.7 % of older people moved compared with 13.7 % of people under age 65. Communities designed with effective public health systems with clean air, effective consumer transportation safety, opportunities for physical activity, safe travel, and opportunities for self sufficiency of vulnerable elderly population, may contribute to prevention of disability.

Activity There is on-going study of policies that enable persons who are elderly to live in healthful communities that prevent diminished health and disability.

Principle People who are elderly should be able to live in healthful environments that compress morbidity and extend quality life years.