Inclusive Healthcare Focus Group Series

Project Team:

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Acknowledgements

We are grateful for the sponsorship and consultation provided by:

Ronald Taylor & Anne Holmes Davis

Detroit Area Agency on Aging

Inclusive Health Care Taskforce Subcommittees

WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY

Background

➤ Inclusive Health Care Taskforce goal: "Develop a community action plan…to **integrate social and environmental determinants of health** to **reduce health disparities & close the gap on the technology digital divide**" (DAAA, 2024)

➤ **Five subcommittees** representing each of the social determinants of health: Health, Education, Economics and Retirement, Social and Community Context, Neighborhood and Built Environment

➤ The goal is to be **inclusive**, with **no one left behind**

Project Objectives

- Provide **meaningful community input** to **inform project implementation**. The project was designed to garner **focus group participant views** to inform each subcommittee:
  - **Health:** How older adult services relate to **health care** issues in our community.
  - **Education:** How older adult **access** services and strategies to **educate** people about **older adult services** in our community.
  - **Economics and Retirement:** How the task force can best **promote and provide information on retirement planning** for both younger and older adults through development of a **retirement planning toolkit.**
  - **Social & Community Context:** Development of a mobile app that is designed to connect older people, adults with disabilities, and family caregivers to community resources
  - **Neighborhood & Built Environment:** How the needs of older adults associated with Age Friendly Communities can be best implemented in our local communities

Project Overview

Project Team: Faculty and staff members at the **Wayne State University School of Social Work**

'**Community**' was defined for participants in terms of the DAAA service area: **Detroit, Hamtramck, Highland Park, Harper Woods, and the five Grosse Pointes**

Modalities:
Focus groups (58 participants across five focus groups)

Surveys (58 completed surveys from participants were analyzed)

Detroit Area Agency on Aging

- Provided **funding** for the project
- **Identified and recruited** focus group participants
- Worked collaboratively to **develop focus group questions** based on the identified information needs of each of the five taskforce initiatives

Center for Social Work Research

- Developed **focus group guides & short demographic surveys**
- **Moderated, recorded, and took notes** on each focus group
- Distributed $25 **gift cards**
- **Transcribed** the focus group sessions; and
- **Analyzed demographic data & major themes** identified for each focus group

Project Timeline

- Focus groups:
  - **Health Care:** November 28, 2023. St. Patrick Senior Center
  - **Education about health care:** December 4, 2023, Northwest Activity Center
  - **Neighborhood and Built Environment** : December 8, 2023, La Sed Senior Center (English and Spanish)
  - **Social and Community Context**: December 11, 2023, Northwest Activity Center
  - **Economics and Retirement**: December 12, 2023, St. Patrick Senior Center
- **Transcription & Analysis:** December 13-22, 2023, & January 8-24, 2024

Demographics

- **Age:** 26 to 98 years; **median=62 years**
- **Gender identity:** 19.0% male, **77.6% female,** 1.7% other
- Sexual orientation: **93.1% straight/heterosexual,** 1.7% gay or lesbian, 3.4% bisexual
- **Marital status**
  - 19.3% never married
  - 22.8% married
  - 21.1% divorced
  - 1.8% partnered
  - **35.1% widowed**
- **Race and Ethnicity:**
  - 4.8% American Indian/Alaska Native
  - 1.6% Asian
  - **61.9% African American**
  - 15.9% Hispanic or Latino
  - 9.5% White/Caucasian
  - 6.3% Other

Socioeconomic Status

Education	Employment status	Total <u>monthly</u> household income
• 12.5% less than 9th grade • 7.1% 9th-12th grade • 7.1% high school diploma or GED • 3.6% trade or vocational school • 8.9% associates degree • 16.1% some college • 12.5% bachelor's degree • **32.1% graduate degree or higher**	• 7.0% part time (< 29 hours per week) • **73.7% retired** • 3.5% student • 15.8% other	• **39.6 % $1,199 per month or less** • **39.6 % $2,000 to $4,999** • 20.8 % $5,000 and over

Technology Use

Used a computer in the last year (79.6 % yes)

Have an internet service connection where you live (76.8 % yes)

Internet Video health care visit (telemedicine) within the past year (26.8 % yes; most 1-2 visits; 66.6% somewhat/very satisfied)

Have a cell phone (90.9 % yes)

Of these, 75.5% have smartphones

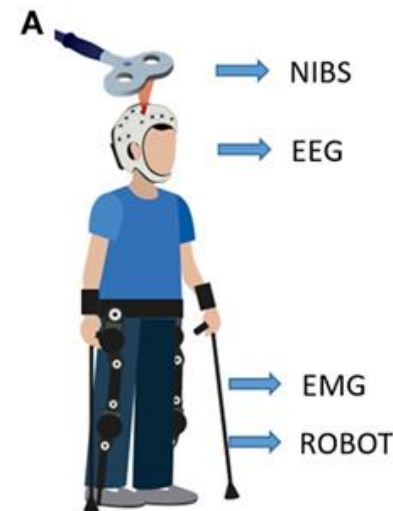# Focus Group Questions & Themes

Health Care Focus Group 4 M's: What Matters, Medication, Mentation, Mobility

- What Matters: cancer prevention, respecting autonomy in health care @ end of life, advanced care planning

- Medication: dependency on electronic devices (CPAP, heart & glucose monitoring); over-medication of seniors; monitoring side effects & re-evaluating medications

- Mentation: Recognizing signs & symptoms (dementia, anemia); seeking help; promptly addressing behavior changes, using self-care to address depression

- Mobility: Mental stress from pain & slow healing; impact of COVID-19 on mobility; concern about opiates for pain; importance of formal (paid support) and informal (friends/family) support

Health Care Focus Group: Emergent Themes

- **How we refer to older adults:** Older is not preferred term. Alternatives: seasoned, mature, senior (no clear consensus)

- **Drawing on strengths:** Memories of times when younger to ease current challenges (depression & pain); muscle memories when in physical therapy, motivation from younger generation

- Importance of being **active in local community** & **helpful to others**

Questions & Themes: **Education** Focus Group

- **How do you access community resources?: Networking**, attending events, community & senior centers, joining **organizations** (universal dementia, healthy black elders)

- **How can we design information to meet older adult needs?** Considering **diverse learning styles**, having a **real person** 'behind' contact information for follow up/questions, experiencing frustration with **scam calls**; addressing **discomfort with technology**; developing recognizable symbols for health care resources

- **What is needed for app development?** Teaching **navigation skills**, providing **support at senior centers,** recognizing potential information sources (TV, bus terminals, Facebook, Google, recreation centers); preventing scams

- **What kind of technology training is needed?** Providing technology education in neighborhoods; creating **senior 'hubs'** in community centers, training seniors **individually, partnering** (community organizations, churches, health care providers, private physicians)

Questions & Themes: **Education** focus group

- **What types of funding can address health disparities?** Obtaining funds through **Michigan lottery**, working with political representatives, promoting a **senior millage**, raising **awareness of senior needs**, advocating for initiatives within the community

- **Anything else to improve education? Changing negative mindset about caregiving**, considering paid support rather than family member caregivers, engaging in **open discussions about Alzheimer's/dementia**, making **healthcare systems accountable for access**, encouraging research participation

Questions & Themes: **Economics and Retirement** Focus Group

- **What should a retirement toolkit look like?** Overcoming Detroit vs. suburban **disparities**, teaching **financial literacy**, addressing financial **racial bias**, considering **cultural sensitivity,** recognizing limitations of Social Security, addressing complexity, **scams**, and predatory behavior of insurance providers, **passing on financial knowledge** to younger generations.

- **How would people use a toolkit? Providing information** about health insurance and financial planning for young people, **educating** about insurance to **prevent scams,** planning for retirement transition, making property decisions (stay or sell), planning daily diets to address health conditions, addressing **transportation issues**; receiving information on financial impact of events such as COVID-19.

Questions & Themes: **Economics and Retirement** Focus Group

- **What issues should be addressed by the toolkit?** Recognizing **reduction in benefits for City of Detroit employees**; addressing financial racial disparities, raising cultural awareness, promoting entrepreneurship, passing down financial knowledge

- **What should be format of the toolkit?** Addressing **different learning needs** (young vs. old)

- **What kind of seminars/meetings should happen? Facilitate inter-generational learning**, make training **inclusive** & not limited to specific schools, using language & terminology that resonates with **younger generations**, distributing **certificates of accomplishment**, involve Hollywood (cartoons, engaging content)

Questions & Themes: **Social and Community Context** Focus Group

- **What should the mobile app that is designed to connect older people, adults with disabilities and family caregivers to community resources include? Providing information** about facilities & resources for computer training, addressing password complexity, promoting **simplicity & clarity** in mobile app design, developing **easy navigation** for persons with limited computer skills, updating app regularly to **ensure security & searchability** by area, zip code, city

- **What other features?** Exercising **patience** for those not familiar with computers, tailoring training for older adults, considering **individual needs & learning styles**, **simplifying technology** for users struggling with complexity

Questions & Themes from **Social and Community Context** focus group

- **What technical things need to be taught?** Teaching people **how to use smartphones**, providing guidance on using apps, making **instructional videos** (Youtube) to guide individuals on using phones & apps

- **What are other considerations when teaching?** Understanding diversity in receiving information, going to churches, **targeting home-bound individuals** through tele-visits, marketing the app (door to door, billboards/electronic billboards, cable channels, book clubs, community councils, gadget give-aways, advertising through social media

- **What are other ways to make app accessible?** Creating a tech connection that **organized, screened, and safe**, matching **tech savvy teens and senior citizens** ('adopt a grandparent' approach)

Questions & Themes from **Neighborhood and Built Environment** focus group

- **How can our communities be more age friendly to older adults and younger people?** Providing **welcoming & inviting environments** where people can enjoy activities with others.

- **What are key issues facing older adults in housing & what should be done?** Addressing issues with unpleasant odors, management who say there is 'nothing they can do', promoting age diversity and better training of senior housing employees.

- **What are key transportation issues?** Addressing issues with **getting to doctor appointments** (services often arrive late or don't show up), providing more **transportation options**, supplementing existing city services, **addressing financial burden** associated with shared ride (Uber), improving DDOT route times, **coordination, & reliability,** expanding MetroLift eligibility.

Questions & Themes from **Neighborhood and Built Environment** focus group

- **What are key issues facing older adults in connectivity to the internet?** Providing **computer classes & internet** (particularly on Chromebooks), addressing **specific needs** (Social Security, Medicaid, health providers, banking services, promoting understanding of electronic medical records (MyChart) that provide health information, educating people about smartphones, **advocating for one's health** and asking necessary information

- **How can our communities best address supportive health care needs of older adults?** Supporting 24/7 caregivers, providing **bilingual caregiver support,** addressing waitlist issues for caregiver assistance, **speaking up** to raise awareness & address caregiver challenges

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Questions & Themes from **Neighborhood and Built Environment** focus group

- **How can we address barriers to aging in place?** Addressing **home repairs and maintenance** issues (limited income), helping people stay in their homes & communities through assistance from organizations (good neighbors, previously Chrysler Motors engineers), **emphasizing cost-effectiveness of support systems and enhanced quality of life compared with nursing homes**

- **How can we encourage cities to take action to improving communities so they work for all residents?** Taking **responsibility for maintaining properties** (uncut grass, rat problems), **advocating for action** by city authorities (calls for sewer problems/trash often go unanswered), **addressing gentrification** in areas undergoing development, dealing with city warnings/fines that put financial burden on homeowners, addressing concerns about additional demands for property improvements related to Gordie Howe Bridge, **urging city officials to be more proactive**

Recommendations

- **Health Care:** Promote ***autonomy,*** educate about ***recognizing health signs & symptoms***, address mentation (depression, dementia, pain), promote active mature adults in local communities.

- **Education:** Support ***diverse learning styles***, provide support from ***people, not just machines,*** provide individual support, educate people about tech in **local community** settings. Develop training & outreach for different learner needs, including ***Platforms*** (smartphone, tablet, computer), and ***Technology type*** (telephone, video, cameras, monitors, audio/video/text).

- **Economics & Retirement:** ***Address racial disparities***, promote ***cultural sensitivity,*** pass on ***knowledge from older to younger generations***

Recommendations

- **Social and Community Context:** Promote *intergenerational learning*, *simplicity* in technology, **teaching with patience,** diverse **marketing** of programs, *prevent scams.*

- **Neighborhood & Built Environment:** Provide a *welcoming* environment, address building and neighborhood problems, promote *community advocacy*, provide *linguistically and culturally understandable* materials & support.

Questions?

THANK YOU DAAA for the terrific opportunity to collaborate with you on this project!!

Contact the project team through Faith Hopp (faithhopp@wayne.edu)