

Senior Spotlight

Are America's Communities Ready For An Aging Population?

(NAPSA)—A new study, the most comprehensive report ever on the aging-readiness of America, finds that less than half of American cities and counties have plans in place to meet the needs of aging baby boomers. The baby boom generation—born between 1946 and 1964—is rapidly approaching retirement age.

The study, called “The Maturing of America: Getting Communities on Track for an Aging Population,” was conducted through a partnership with the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging, the International City/County Management Association, the National Association of Counties, the National League of Cities, and Partners for Livable Communities, and funded by MetLife Foundation. The results show that although many communities have some programs to address the needs of older adults, very few have fully assessed what it would take to make their community “elder friendly.”

Studies indicate that the vast majority of Americans would prefer to remain in the communities where they live as they age, in order to stay close to family and friends.

Key findings of the report include the following:

- **Health Care**—In one-third of communities surveyed, older adults do not have access to a range of needed preventive health care services, such as health education, community-based health screenings and counseling on prescription drug programs.

- **Nutrition**—Eighty percent of communities have programs providing home-delivered meals for older adults, though only 25 percent provide nutrition education for seniors.

- **Exercise**—More than one-third of communities do not have

What's Needed

- Preventive health care, such as health- and lifestyle-education
- Nutrition education to promote healthy eating
- Age-appropriate fitness programs
- Larger and easier-to-read road signs
- Home modification programs
- Emergency medical information on every senior, in a community, as well as a system to track individuals with Alzheimer's disease
- Single point of entry for information and access to ALL aging information and services in the community



fitness programs for older adults, though 86 percent report having biking/walking trails.

- **Transportation**—Many communities are not addressing the mobility needs of an aging population. For example, only 40 percent of communities reported having road signage that meets the needs of older drivers.

- **Aging/Human Services**—Although it is expected that aging baby boomers will demand it, many communities do not offer a comprehensive single point of entry for information and access to all aging services.

“The aging of the population will have a dramatic impact on America's cities and counties,” said Sibyl Jacobson, President of MetLife Foundation. “This report sheds light on how our towns and cities can prepare to handle the aging boom. By taking action now, communities can avoid problems and improve the quality of life for all citizens, as well as for older adults.”

The report is available at www.n4a.org.