

SASH NEWS

Support and Services at Home

May
2018

SASH is a caring partnership among Vermont [Nonprofit Housing Providers](#) | [Area Agencies on Aging](#) | [Home Health Providers](#) | [Mental Health Providers](#) | [Vermont Hospitals](#) & Primary Care Providers



Stereotypes about older adults are out of date and destructive. We're living longer and healthier than ever, with lifespans in the U.S. 30 years longer compared to 100 years ago. Rather than lengthening the period of old age, these 30 years have resulted in a longer middle age -- extending the period when workers are at their most productive and creative.

Countering False Perceptions About Older Adults

The average lifespan in the U.S. is approaching 79 years. **We're living longer and healthier than ever, with older adults contributing much of the fuel that keeps our economy humming.** Yet stereotypes about and biases against older people still linger. Why?

Implicit bias -- the unconscious stereotyping of people based on that to which we've been exposed -- holds much of the blame. We've been raised on a steady diet of advertising that equates youth (and only youth) to beauty, TV sitcoms that poke fun at older adults, and humor that portrays older people as clueless and out of touch. Like it or not, we all have absorbed these perceptions -- consider, for example, how often people say they are "having a senior moment" when they forget something. [Project Implicit](#), based at Harvard University, offers a series of [tests to uncover implicit bias](#). Take a test and unwrap your *own* implicit bias about aging.



Changing the Conversation: Words Matter

A growing chorus is sounding the call to "reframe aging" in a realistic light, starting with the language we use. The following table, based on research from the nonprofit [FrameWorks Institute](#), is from the Vermont's Department of Disabilities, Aging & Independent Living's "[Let's Talk about Aging](#)" handout, part of its [Reframing Aging in Vermont](#) initiative.

Instead of...	Use...
Elderly, senior, senior citizen	Older adult, older person, older Vermonter

They, them (older as "other")	We, us, all of us
"Silver tsunami"	Changing demographics
Getting old, "battling" aging	Building momentum; gaining knowledge & experience
Deterioration, decline, loss	Wiser; gaining wisdom, knowledge, experience

Older Vermonters Fuel Our State's Economy

The myth: Older adults don't buy much and are an economic burden. *The reality:* While comprising only 41% of the state's population, **Vermonters 50 and older account for 47% of the state's gross domestic product (GDP) and contribute \$14.1 billion in consumer spending**, or 62% of the state's total. This and other myth-busting facts come from an [AARP-commissioned analysis by Oxford Economics of Vermont's "longevity economy"](#). As the website notes, "Contrary to conventional wisdom, older Americans are fueling (not funneling from) the nation's economic growth and business opportunities."

Economic contribution of the Longevity Economy VT		
GDP	\$14.2 billion	48%
Jobs	221,000	51%
Employee compensation	\$8.2 billion	47%
State & local tax	\$1.5 billion	52%

Meanwhile, the latest [2017 report from the U.S. Census Bureau](#) shows that Vermonters 55 and older comprise over 27% of the state's workforce. Among state employees, the number of workers 65 and older grew nearly a whopping 32% from FY 2016 to FY 2017, according to the current [State of Vermont Workforce Report](#).

Stereotypes Hinder Public Policy & Impact Health

Negative perceptions about aging not only propagate myths (e.g., that older adults can't learn, that declining health is inevitable as we age), they impede public support for policies that would improve the lives of older individuals, notes Dr. Barbara Resnick of the University of Maryland, [writing in *Geriatric Nursing*](#).



Beyond that, perceptions about aging have a direct impact on individual health. **People with negative views about growing old recover more slowly from illness as they age and live on average 7.5 fewer years** than those with positive attitudes, according to [research cited by the World Health Organization](#). Meanwhile, a [2014 study](#) found that exposing older adults to subliminal positive messages about aging several times a month improved their mobility and balance -- crucial measures of physical function.

The Economic Value of Older Vermonters

Writing in the *Times Argus* earlier this year, Mary Hayden, development and communications director for SASH partner [Central Vermont Council on Aging](#), highlighted the many benefits healthy older adults bring to our state. "Older Vermonters are working well beyond traditional retirement age, continuing to contribute to federal/state revenues, Social Security and payroll taxes for Medicaid and Medicare," she wrote, adding that this demographic has one of the highest volunteer rates in the country and contributes in many ways that save health-care and taxpayer dollars. [Read](#)



[her letter here.](#)

Professional Development Opportunities

Please refer to the [statewide SASH Calendar](#) for details about these and other offerings.

- May 18 - **Fresh Start Leader Training** (UVM Health Network), Burlington
- May 22 - **Opiates: Scientific, Political & Social Perspectives** (Howard Center), Burlington
- May 27 - **Older Adult Legal Issues (V4A)**, Webinar
- May 18 - **Fresh Start Leader Training** (UVM Health Network), Burlington
- May 18 - **Advocacy Issues on Fire** (Tri-State Learning Collaborative on Aging), webinar

- May 21 - **3SquaresVT Basic Training** (Hunger Free Vermont), White River Junction
- May 22 - **Opiates: Scientific, Political & Social Perspectives** (Howard Center), Burlington
- May 23 - **Preventing Abuse, Neglect & Exploitation with Vulnerable Adults** (Seneca Institute), webinar
- May 23 - **NH Antimicrobial Stewardship Symposium 2018** (NH DPH), Concord, NH
- May 24 - **3SquaresVT Basic Training** (Hunger Free Vermont), Newport
- May 29 - **3SquaresVT Basic Training** (Hunger Free Vermont), St. Albans
- May 30 - **3SquaresVT Basic Training** (Hunger Free Vermont), Barre
- May 30; June 6, 13, 20, 27 - **Introduction to WRAP** (Copeland Center for Wellness & Recovery), webinar
- May 31 - **3SquaresVT Basic Training** (Hunger Free Vermont), Brattleboro
- May 31 - **Preventing Abuse, Neglect & Exploitation with Vulnerable Adults** (Seneca Institute), webinar
- June 5 - **Preventing Abuse, Neglect & Exploitation with Vulnerable Adults** (Seneca Institute), webinar
- June 7 - **Better Health Conference 2018** (CT Partners in Health), Hartford, CT
- June 7 - **3SquaresVT Basic Training** (Hunger Free Vermont), Rutland
- June 12, 13, 19, 20 - **Chronic Pain Self-Management Program Leader training** (UVM Health Network), St. Johnsbury
- June 20 - **How Nurses Can Foster Positive Interactions with Patients Who Have Substance Use Disorders** (Institute for Research, Education & Training in Addictions), webinar
- June 20 - **TSLCA Summit - Embracing the Options: Supporting End-of-Life Care in Your Community**, Lebanon, NH

SASH Online Resources

Referral Forms & Contact List: Visit sashVT.org/connect.
Training information, Staff Tools & Resources: Visit the [Forum](#).
SASH Job Opportunities: See [positions available statewide](#).



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