

POLICY FORUM

We Must Prepare for Aging— Our Own, and That of Our State

Introduction

We all grow older. It's inevitable, unavoidable, inescapable, and a shared experience that we are reluctant to share. Worse, we aren't sure how it will affect us and unclear how we should prepare.

Despite evidence to the contrary, we believe that it will be OK. We will have health care and income from Medicare and Social Security; we paid for it, we deserve it. We have our homes and apartments, neighbors and friends. This is our community—we live here, we've watched it grow, and we helped make it what it is. We vote. We will be listened to. Right?

Between the Baby Boomers who are pushing the demographic shift, the sandwich generation trying to parent our parents and our children, and those children who are ill prepared to carry us into the future, it's past time to increase our engagement with the future we all face.

This issue of the *North Carolina Medical Journal* questions what we know about aging and proposes—widely and wisely—that we think not just of aging, but of healthy aging. Social drivers of health like income, health care, housing, nutrition, safety, and security in the context of aging are explored and discussed, and best practices are described and proposed.

We all grow older. May we also grow wiser. NCMJ

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