

Hawai'i's 2020 Vision: *The State of Active Aging*



A White Paper on Aging for the 21st Century



Executive Office on Aging,
Department of Health



UNIVERSITY of HAWAII*
KAPI'OLANI
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

KUPUNA EDUCATION CENTER

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It is the year 2013. Two years have passed since the leading edge of the boomer generation reached 65 in the U.S., in Hawai'i and in much of the world. The pace of this transition is about to quicken. Over the past 5 decades, Hawai'i has been aware of the aging of its population with the creation of its Commission on Aging (later called the Executive Office on Aging), its creation of the county-based area agencies on aging, its participation in numerous White House Conferences on Aging and its attempt to create a state-sponsored social long-term supports and services insurance program. While the growing older adult population has stimulated an on-going discussion of the long-term needs of older adults, the dialogue has tended to focus principally around viewing aging as sick care and in terms of long term supports and services needs. This sick-care perspective has highlighted the myriad health and social service needs and cost of the frail and dependent population. Great concern is expressed about the need for more financing, more services and more workers required by a burgeoning, high maintenance tsunami.

In the meantime, there has been inadequate acknowledgement of the value of viewing age as an asset. Our aging population represents a growing natural resource that can be tapped for the greater good. How does Hawai'i begin to recognize the power and potential of older adults and the boomers to pursue and promote active or successful aging? This report is an attempt to create the foundation for reshaping state policy on aging. This is an attempt to position Hawai'i before the 2nd decade of the 21st Century to transition into a State of Active Aging.¹

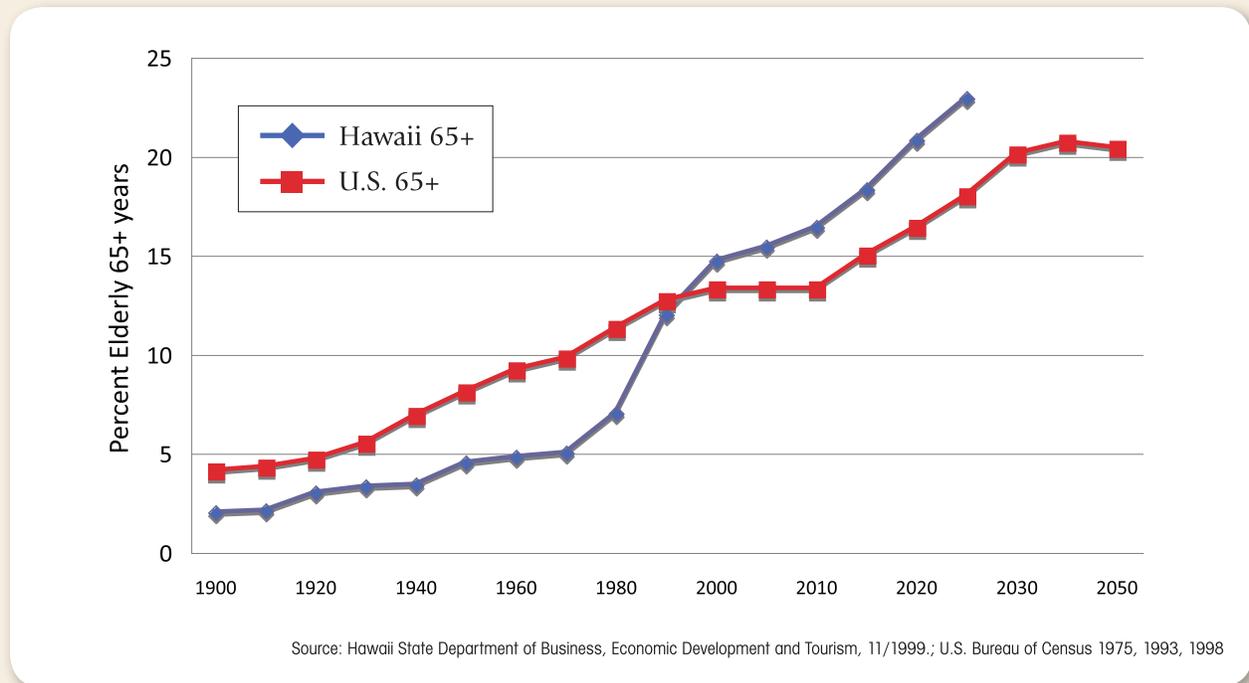
Aging Demographic Trends: Changes and Challenges

Reviewing Hawai'i's demographic growth trends from 1980 to 2035, it is apparent that the overall population of Hawai'i is expected to grow by 65 percent.² By comparison, those 60 years of age and older will increase 310 percent and those over 85 and older are expected to experience a hyper-growth rate of 1,158 percent during this same 55 year period. Numerous factors are contributing to this demographic revolution. The in-migration of older adults from the U.S. mainland, lower mortality rates, improved public health practices, advances in medicine and pharmaceuticals and declining birth rates among most ethnic groups are resulting in this age boom.

Historically, Hawai'i has long been a state with a larger proportion of younger people. However, as noted in Figure 1, the percent elderly over 65 has overshot the national average since the year 2000 and today, there are very few states in the Union with faster elderly population growth rates. Hawai'i is particularly challenged since as an archipelago state, all islands are required to create their entire aging network of services and delivery infrastructure and cannot share services or workers readily.



Figure 1: Hawai'i's Elderly Growth Rate Explodes Past National Average After Year 2000



Active Aging: The New Paradigm

Increasingly, there have been more discussions about the need to consider the importance and value of a paradigm shift in aging policy. That shift calls for changing our view of aging from only sick care to also consider well care, from aging as pathology and geriatric syndromes to aging as an asset. There is a movement caused by multiple factors and in part related to the chronic shortage of healthcare workers and the shortage of funding for long-term supports and services. Given the rapid growth of the older adult population, it is unlikely that Hawai'i will ever have enough resources to address the demand for long-term supports and services. More attention needs to be placed on moderating this demand with methods including an active aging approach. While not referencing the long-term supports and services demand issue directly, other programs are supporting an active aging approach given the potential that it offers to address workforce needs, civic engagement, well-being and intergenerational cohesion.

At the present time, there is a wave of activities focusing on active aging and the positive themes of well-aging. The World Health Organization's 2002 Active Aging Policy Framework has been widely regarded as the major milestone for the international support for this movement. Within the past decade, terms such as positive aging, encore careers, vital aging, Third Age, productive aging, successful aging and healthy aging among others are becoming more commonly used. Additionally, new concepts such as generativity, returnment and active life expectancy are all reflecting this paradigm shift. We are also witnessing the conceptual clarifications of the dimensions of wellness. New academic respectability is emerging as institutes such as the Center for Positive Aging, Aging in Work, Positive Aging Resource Center, Center for Successful Aging and Center for Creative Aging among many others are established in multiple locations throughout the U.S. and the world to develop innovative programs using an assets-based perspective.

New journals, newsletters and numerous books on wellness and positive aging themes are also appearing in increasing frequency. Conferences both national and international including many sponsored by AARP, the Active Aging Consortium for Asia Pacific (ACAP) and the International Council on Active Aging are occurring regularly.

What is Active Aging? There are a number of different perspectives related to active aging that are promoting individual well-being in later life. For example, the concept of successful aging proposed by Rowe and Kahn in Figure 2 point to three principal components: physical, mental and social fitness. They suggest that successful aging is characterized by a “low probability of disease and disease-related disability, high cognitive and physical functional capacity and active engagement with life”³

This perspective implies that all three facets need to be fulfilled if one is to have aged successfully and not be a burden on society.⁴ The responsibility for success is placed on the older adult without any reference to social policies or the availability of an age friendly infrastructure.

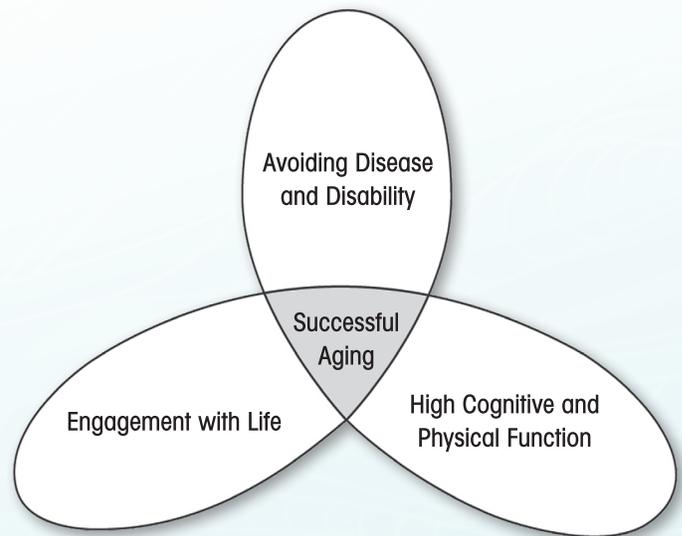


Figure 2: Concept of Successful Aging by Rowe and Kahn

Another related perspective may be referred to as positive aging. Within this view, the focus is on an individual older adult developing a set of skills or characteristics to maintain a happy and less stressful lifestyle. Personality or individual skills such as the ability to mobilize resources, to maintain flexibility and optimism, to make affirmative life choices, to find meaning, to cultivate wisdom and new learning, to strengthen relations, to help, to express gratitude and forgiveness are said to be characteristics of positive aging.⁵

Productive aging is another related perspective that refers to “activities that produce goods and services, whether paid or not, and that focuses attention on the contributions that older adults make at (paid) work, in volunteer capacities and with caregiving”.⁶ Finally, there are those that have attempted to address spiritual well-being. Works such as “From Ageing to Sage-ing” and others have promoted the importance of meaningful aging.⁷ The existential question of ‘why survive’ and how does one shift from success to significance and from activity to impact? This approach suggests that it is possible to transcend physical decline, illness and frailty if one is grounded with a strong desire to leave a personal legacy.

The last conceptual model makes reference to productivity, meaning, positive lifestyle and social fitness for active aging by referring to “engagement”. The revised conceptual model by the Sloan Center on Aging and Work refers to the need to engage as we age as depicted in Figure 3. Engagement, a concept that Rowe and Kahn referred to in their definition of successful aging is elaborated to include volunteer activities, caregiving activities, paid employment and educational activities or lifelong learning. As Jay Bloom points out, “Hawai’i’s kupuna should be engaged and not just honored or celebrated. Unless we are engaged in our later years, we are just dying longer, not living longer.”⁸ Again, as with the aforementioned models or concepts, the focus is

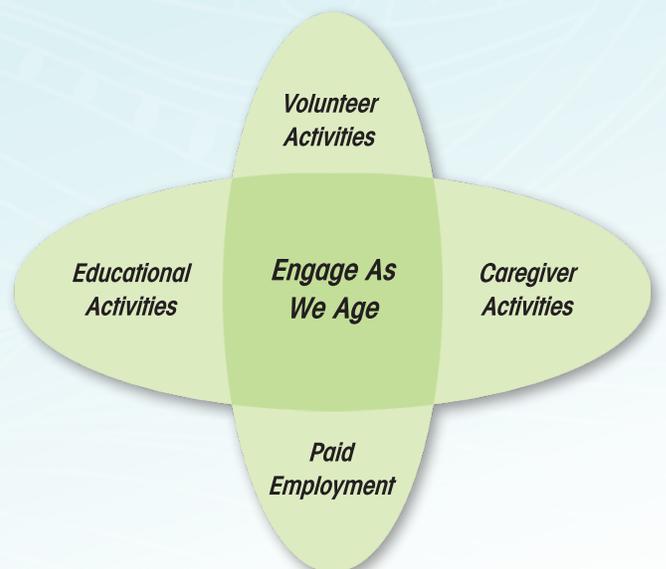
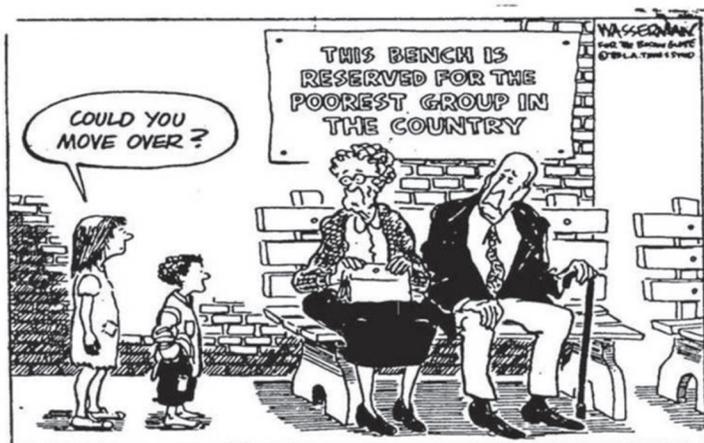


Figure 3: Engaged As We Age

around the components of success for the individual older adult. Little to no consideration is given to infrastructure, barriers, social policies, cultural prejudices or the availability of age friendly communities in affecting the growth of more successfully aging older adults.

Figure 4: Intergenerational Conflict or Support



Collective Responsibility to Achieve the State of Active Aging.

As noted earlier, the World Health Organization in 2002 convened a conference to report on its Active Aging Policy Framework.⁹ In that report, the W.H.O. states that if aging is to be a positive experience, longer life based on active aging should be “the process of optimizing opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age.”¹⁰ Optimizing opportunities implies planning for infrastructural change. Achieving a state of active aging therefore applies to both individual and population group work.

A few approaches that readily recognize the value of this collective perspective include those that promote inter-generational and age friendly communities, age as an economic opportunity and a broader societal view of active aging. Implied from this broader social perspective is the understanding that structural changes are needed to assure the perpetuation of an active aging culture. While the creation of age friendly communities supports the active engagement and independence of older adults, they also promote intergenerational relations and a community for all ages. Promoting intergenerational relations addresses the challenge of moderating potential conflicts and resentments by young people against older adults as portrayed in the Figure 4. How can we steer clear of political parties transforming into a Party for the Old versus a Party for the Young? What changes to transportation, housing and culture are needed to organize geographic communities to become age friendly intergenerational communities? What do we do about the formation of de facto or planned age segregated communities? Creating an active aging ethic for aging older adults supporting intergenerational engagement and the transfer of skills and knowledge may be a way for older adults to be viewed as an asset and an important resource to strengthen communities for all ages.

It is also helpful to view age as an economic opportunity and as an antidote to a tendency of viewing aging primarily as an economic liability. As noted in the Figure 5, population aging represents needs and opportunities far beyond long- term caring. If and when young people realize that the burgeoning older adult population may affect any and all industries, it will be clear that employability and career advancement may be tied to understanding the needs of this population. Every business and industry will need to consider creating products and services for the older adult market. There is a potential for older adults to be viewed in a more favorable light and become a basis for employment and careers.



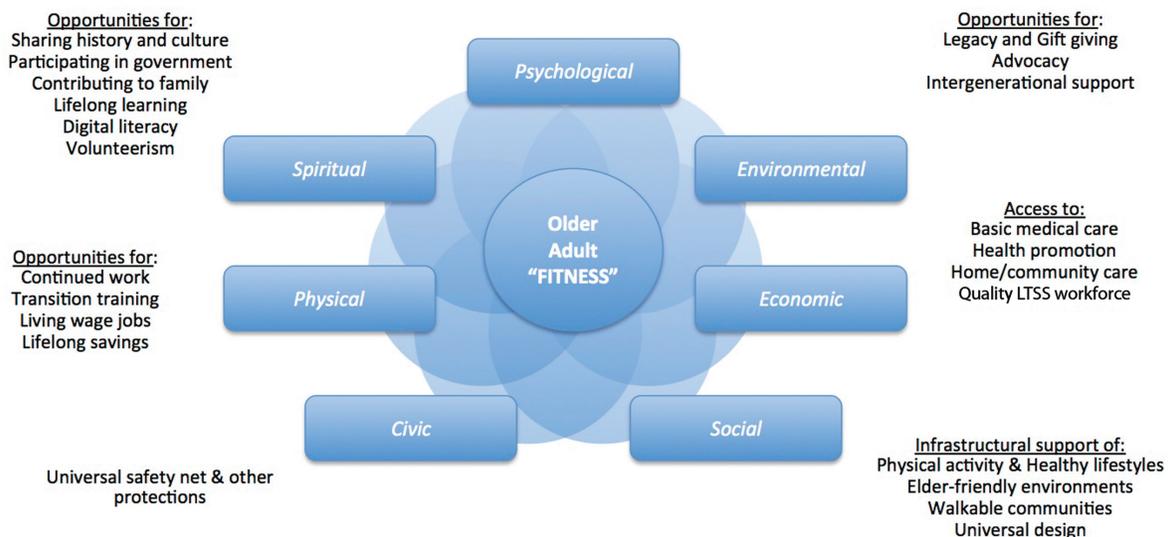
Figure 5: Age Friendly Industries

	CATEGORY	EXAMPLES
PRIMARY	Non-Med Caring	Direct care workers, non-medical home care, adult day care
	Equipment	Assistive technology, universal design
	Information	Elder-friendly programs, DVD, books, software
	Leisure	Active aging tourism, senior tourist activities, exercise club
	Finance	Pension products, reverse mortgage, asset management
	Housing & Facilities	Smart homes, care homes, ALF, universal designs
	Alternative Medicine	Anti-aging medicine, Hawai'i brand of aging & wellness
	Farming	Gardening, self-sufficient farming
SECONDARY	Non-Med Caring	Direct care workers, non-medical home care, adult day care
	Equipment	Assistive technology, universal design
	Information	Elder-friendly programs, DVD, books, software
	Leisure	Active aging tourism, senior tourist activities, exercise club
	Finance	Pension products, reverse mortgage, asset management
	Housing & Facilities	Smart homes, care homes, ALF, universal designs

Adapted Source: Takeo Ogawa, Asian Aging Business Center, Fukuoka, Japan. 2009

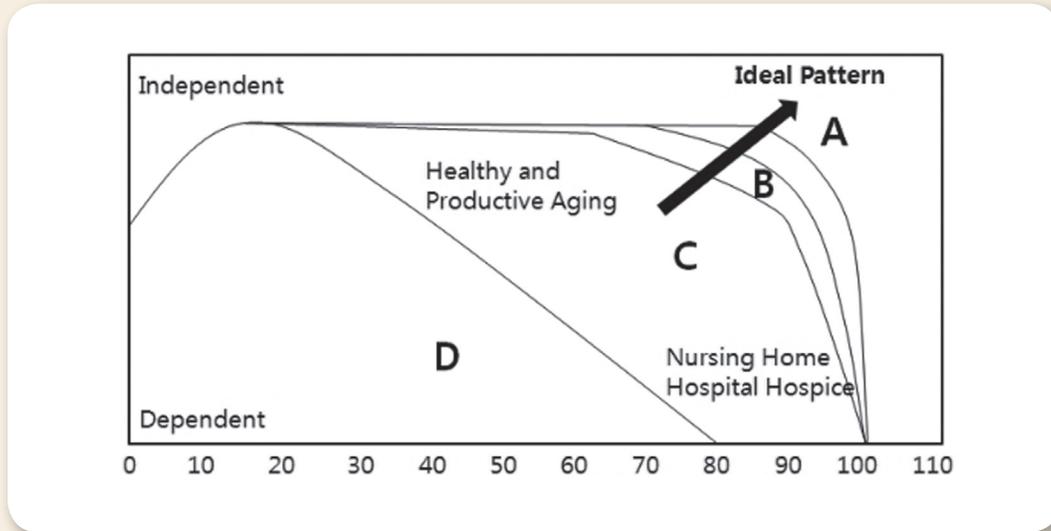
Finally, the Active Aging Consortium for Asia Pacific (ACAP) proposed the use of this paradigm in Figure 6 as a way of understanding active aging as a partnership between individual older adults, families, government, businesses and non-profits.¹¹ To promote active aging in terms of physical, social, economic and environmental fitness among others, coordinated planning will be needed to establish the infrastructural and attitudinal changes for an age friendly community. Thus, the goal of active aging is not longevity or the extension of our life expectancy per se. Instead, active aging calls for the prolongation of *active* life expectancy. As noted in Figure 7, this represents the time of active engagement and participation in society and the compression of the period of morbidity. How do we as a state assure that Hawai'i's kupuna can live life as healthy and as engaged contributors until the end of their natural life span with the least amount of time in need of long-term supports and services? That is the goal that is sought.

Figure 6: Fitness Paradigm for an Active Aging Hawai'i - Individual, Family, Community, Environmental Policy Vision



Source: Active Aging Consortium Asia Pacific website. www.acap.wellageing.com

Figure 7: Goal for Active Aging - Active Life Expectancy to the End of Natural Life Span Moderating the demand for Long-term Caring



Envisioning Hawai'i as a State of Active Aging: The year 2020 is a mere seven years away. In the meantime, it is encouraging that the Governor has adopted aspects of this Active Aging theme into his gubernatorial agenda called the “New Day in Hawai'i”. His plan for older adults was based on guiding principles such as caring for our kupuna as a core value, viewing aging as an asset and enhancing the quality of life of older adults.

Likewise, the Mayor of the City and County of Honolulu provided a glimpse of his vision for Honolulu during his 2013 State of the City Speech when he envisioned Honolulu to become an Age-Friendly City. He is in the process of organizing a steering committee that will begin laying out a long-range plan to establish the infrastructural changes to make Honolulu more livable for older adults.

This call for a proposed Active Aging Plan for Hawai'i envisions individual older adults enhancing their odds of achieving active life expectancy and not just longevity at all cost. Such a plan envisions older adults remaining fit – physically, nutritionally, mentally, financially, socially and civically. Such a plan envisions older adults actively engaged inter-generationally and continuously contributing to the greater good to build a community for all ages. Hawai'i stands to benefit by the growth of the older adult population and the enormous longevity dividend of experience and skills that they bring forth. To achieve that vision will require marshaling the resources that older adults and boomers can provide. This will not happen without coordinated planning and a long-term commitment to action.

Beyond the vision of active and engaged older adults contributing inter-generationally, this plan also proposes a vision of Hawai'i that sustains an active aging platform to perpetuate a culture. Figure 8 which is entitled “A Platform for Active Aging”¹² portrays a vision of Hawai'i to become a showcase for education and training, business opportunities, research, tourism and community development. This platform for active aging in Hawai'i can be the roadmap to guide Hawai'i to 2020. This roadmap will provide an opportunity to springboard our state both nationally and internationally to collaborate with other Age Friendly City initiatives such as in Portland, Oregon and Fukuoka, Japan.

Figure 8: A Platform for Active Aging - Showcasing Hawaii as an Open Museum



Adapted Source: Takeo Ogawa, Asian Aging Business Center, Fukuoka, Japan. 2009

Initial Recommendations: What will the work entail? What are the preliminary steps to move forward to develop Hawai'i as a State of Active Aging by 2020? We recommend the following:

1. Planning - Create an advisory group and develop a State Plan for Active Aging. All counties are encourage to do likewise. Before moving forward with a Plan, the University of Hawai'i should be consulted to identify indicators to monitor progress in achieving its planned objectives.¹³ Review the Hawai'i Summit: 2011 Report to determine to what extent its recommendations were implemented and to what extent work remains to be done. Review other recent publications, including the Profile of Successful Aging Among Hawai'i's Older Adults (January 2013) and other works conducted in Hawai'i, to be used as important references for planning and development purposes.
2. Active Aging One-Stop Shop – Create an inventory of active aging resources to assist active older adults seeking guidance for their Third Age stage of life for employment, education, volunteering and recreational opportunities. To date, all that we have are inventories for aging services for sick care.¹⁴
3. Economic and Workforce Development – Identify age-related economic opportunities and training for encore careers such as:
 - a. Create Hawai'i as an age-friendly employment environment that attracts and retains older workers and create positive initiatives for intergenerational workplaces. Managing a multigenerational workforce is becoming one of the top diversity training challenges for employers. National companies in Hawai'i such as CVS, Home Depot, McDonalds, Starbucks and now Disney are already pursuing corporate recruiting and retention strategies to attract older workers. Older adults age 50 and over are the fastest growing age group to start new businesses. Partner with employer groups and unions to address the value of retaining boomers in the workforce, to train older workers to maintain or upgrade their skill sets and to assist with the mentoring of subsequent generation of workers.

- b. Hawai'i's tourism industry can develop niche tourist products and services for the older adult market. Are there intergenerational experiences and market opportunities for grandparent/grandchildren travel that are worth exploring? Can Hawai'i be showcased as a center for wellness training for the East Asian senior tourist, professional and educational training markets? This is an area that can grow and Hawai'i could be the leader.
 - c. Hawai'i's community colleges and universities can help older adults to re-career and stay in the workforce longer. Kapiolani Community College's Kupuna Education Center can offer assistance in comprehensive life planning and upgrading skills including offering and promoting lifelong and/or intergenerational learning opportunities for older adults. The University of Hawai'i and the East-West Center could help East Asian countries such as China, Japan and Korea as they see significant population declines and workforce shortages in the next few decades. These countries are looking for best practices that not only address the challenges for employers but for their societies as a whole.
 - d. Retirement planning seminars should promote encore careers. All too often, retirement seminars for retiring older adults have only discussed Social Security, pension and health benefits. Almost no effort is made to address the fact that retirees should expect to have an additional 20-30 bonus years. There is a need for pre-retirement workshops to broaden beyond financial issues to include planning for post-retirement activities with self-assessment of interests, skills and information about opportunities for assistance and training for encore careers.
 - e. Hawai'i can develop a high technology industry to address the needs of aging. Many technology companies such as Intel are investing heavily in research on how technology can assist the older adult population be better able to age in place effectively with fewer workers and while participating more actively in the community. Seize the opportunity to become a beta-site to test, evaluate and improve these emerging technologies in Hawai'i.
4. Community Engagement and Volunteer Development – Support the development of all counties wishing to achieve the status of an Age-Friendly City using W.H.O. indicators. Support geographic and high rise communities wishing to create naturally occurring retirement communities with support services. Efforts should be made to support the role of Chaminade's Center for Intergenerational Relations.
 5. Marketing – Promotion – Develop a media campaign, intergenerational photo contests and events to showcase innovative active aging programs. On-going marketing and promotional campaigns should be use to also expose evidence and practices of ageism and to create a wave of culture change.

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END NOTES

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- ⁷ Schachter-Shalomi, Z and Miller, R.S., From Age-ing to Sage-ing: A Profound New Vision of Growing Old. (1997). Warner Books: NY, NY. See also, Wong, P.T. (1989). "Personal Meaning and Successful Aging" Canadian Psychology. 30(3), 516 -525.
- ⁸ Jay Bloom. Personal communications. May 2013.
- ⁹ Active Ageing: A Policy Framework. WHO. April 2002 (Prepared for the 2nd United Nations World Assembly on Aging, Madrid, Spain.) http://whqlibdoc.who.int/hq/2002/WHO_NMH_NPH_02.8.pdf
- ¹⁰ Active Aging: A Policy Framework. WHO (2002): pp. 12.
- ¹¹ Active Aging Consortium Asia Pacific, see <http://acap.wellageing.com/>
- ¹² Model was adapted by concepts provided by Takeo Ogawa of the Asian Aging Business Center, Fukuoka, Japan
- ¹³ Refer to the Active Aging Index at <http://www1.unece.org/stat/platform/display/AAI/Active+Ageing+Index+Home>
- ¹⁴ Traci Toguchi, "Aging with Dignity: Social Options for Seniors". Printed as a public service by Traci Toguchi, HMSA and the Matsunaga Charitable Foundation, [1996]. We would like to thank Traci Toguchi for her pioneering work in creating this publication in 1996. Her 1996 publication is the basis of this recommendation.