



America Walks commends the World Health Organization on its' effort to build a strong global infrastructure for older adults. America Walks supports the right of older adults to age in place and is committed to providing safe, walkable communities that promote self-sufficiency by enhancing independence and mobility.

Background

The World Health Organization (WHO), located in Geneva, Switzerland provides global leadership on health matters, develops health standards, sets research agendas and provides technical assistance and support to countries seeking equitable access to care for its citizens.

WHO supports many global initiatives and participates in complex projects designed to provide equitable access to health care and defend the world's population against health threats. In September 2011, WHO hosted its first International Conference on Age-friendly cities in Dublin, Ireland. The conference brought senior leaders, CEO's, and municipal leaders together. A broad range of disciplines were represented at the conference, including representatives from the housing, health care, transportation, urban planning, academic and research communities.

By 2050, it is estimated that 2 billion people will be 60 years of age or older. As the global aging population increases, challenges will also arise. These challenges will present in the form of; strains on pension and social security systems increasing demand for health care, greater need for trained health workforce in gerontology, and an increasing demand for long-term care. Additional infrastructure will be needed to support this growing segment of the global population.

WHO recommends addressing these challenges in the following ways:

- Ensuring that older persons have a basic level of financial security
- Developing age-friendly environments
- Assuring availability and accessibility to effective health care
- Maintaining social patterns that influence the well-being of older adults

America Walks

America Walks supports the development of age-friendly environments that enhance the well being of older adults. Our national, state and local activities are focused on: 1) ensuring funding to support infrastructure for people of all ages to walk safely, 2) providing technical assistance and support for local communities

developing initiatives that support safe walking, 3) and working with national partners to promote walking as part of their mission and work plan.

America Walks thanks the World Health Organization for its commitment to older adults worldwide. Older adults should be assured a safe and supportive environment in which they can remain healthy and productive.

References:

The World Health Organization website: <http://www.who.int/about/en/>,
<http://www.who.int/ageing/en/>