

# ORH Community Conversations: Supporting Older Adults in Rural Oregon

March 23, 2023

*The mission of the Oregon Office of Rural Health is to improve the quality, availability and accessibility of health care for rural Oregonians.*

*The Oregon Office of Rural Health's vision statement is to serve as a state leader in providing resources, developing innovative strategies and cultivating collaborative partnerships to support Oregon rural communities in achieving optimal health and well-being.*

## Upcoming Community Conversations:

**March 23, 12 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.:** Supporting Older Adults in Rural Oregon

**May 25, 12 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.:** Supporting Oregon's Critical Access Hospitals and Rural Health Clinics

**July 27, 12 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.:** Addressing Workforce Shortages in Rural Oregon

**Sept. 28, 12 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.:** Enhancing Population Health in Rural Oregon

**Nov. 16, 12 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.:** National Rural Health Day: Celebrating Rural Health in Oregon





## Today's Agenda

- ❖ Introduction, ORH programs
- ❖ Stephanie Hooper, AGE+
- ❖ Vanessa Becker, Douglas Public Health Network
- ❖ Your thoughts & questions



# Oregon Office of Rural Health: Programs to Support Rural Elders



- May 15-17, 2023 at the Seaside Civic and Convention Center

- RFP will be released April 3, 2023
- Proposals will be due May 8, 2023



Aging in Rural Oregon Online Community (on the Slack app)

More information:  
[ohsu.edu/forumonaging](https://ohsu.edu/forumonaging)

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# SUPPORTING OLDER ADULTS IN RURAL OREGON

Stephanie Hooper  
President



**Communities + Generations + Innovations**

# AGING IS CHANGING—AND CHANGING OREGON

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Within this decade, older adults will outnumber children under 18 for the first time ever.

The number of Oregonians 65+ will double by 2030. This permanent shift in our population affects individuals, families and communities, especially in rural areas where this shift is already underway.

While the challenges ahead are great, so is the potential—but we need to act now.

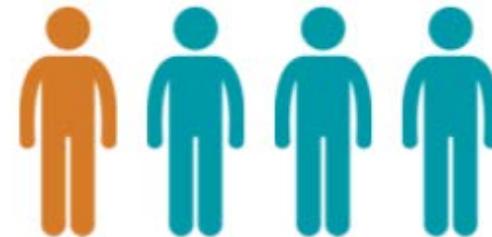
## IN OREGON...

TODAY'S  
**75+**  
POPULATION  
WILL GROW



**87%**  
BY THE  
YEAR **2030**

**1 IN 4 PEOPLE WILL BE 65+ BY 2035**

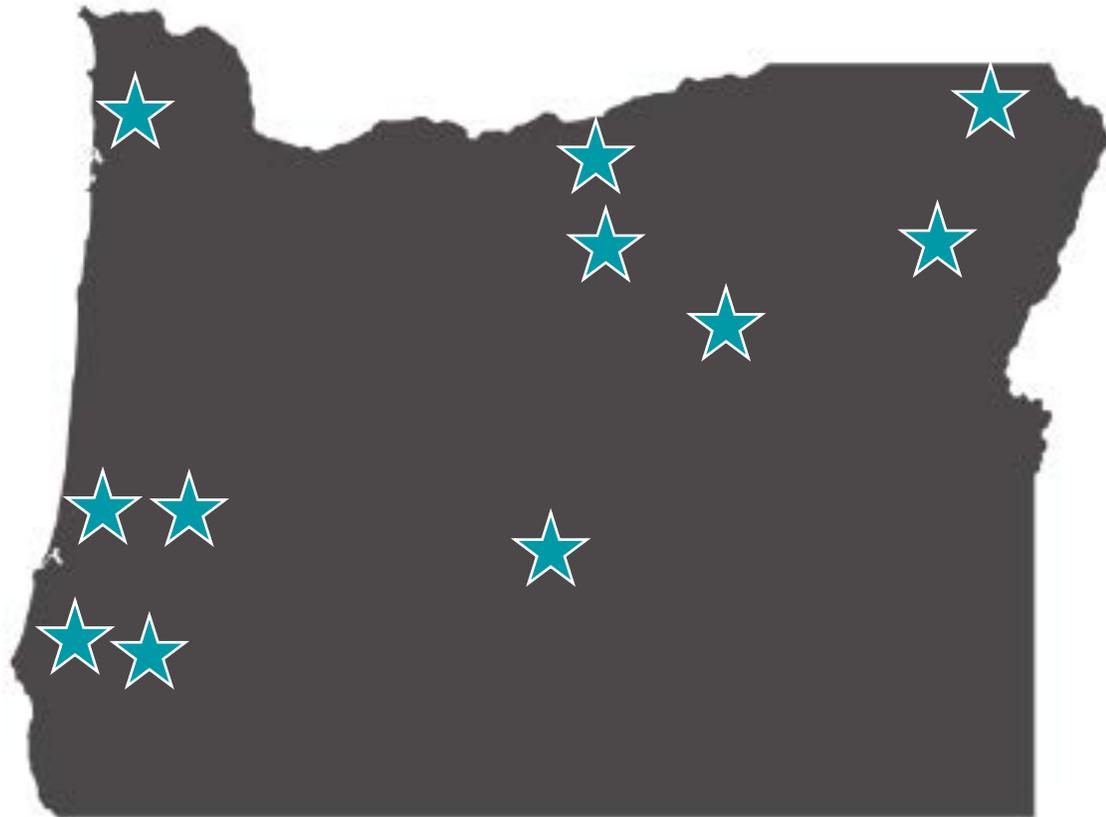


# RURAL OREGON IS AGING THE FASTEST

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COUNTIES WITH 25% OF RESIDENTS AGE 65+

Coos  
Josephine  
Douglas  
Curry  
Lake  
Wheeler  
Tillamook  
Clatsop  
Grant  
Gilliam  
Baker  
Wallowa



# WHAT WILL THIS MEAN FOR OREGON?

States, localities and communities will  
experience . . .

- Greater demand for services
- Opportunities for innovation

We also need to consider that older  
Oregonians will . . .

- Be more diverse
- Experience greater income inequalities



# ISOLATED, LONELY AND SCARED

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29%

of rural adults experienced depression and anxiety

20%

increase in “frequent mental distress” for Oregon seniors over the past three years

39%

of low-income adults report depression and anxiety

24%

Did not get needed mental health services



# COVID-19 REVEALED A TRUER PICTURE OF AGING

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## COVID HAS MADE CLEAR THE SERIOUS FISCAL CONSTRAINTS OF STATE GOVERNMENT, HIGHLIGHTING THE:

- Importance of older adult volunteers
- Potential and limitations of technology
- Effects of isolation and loneliness
- Gaps in delivery of goods and services
- Need for culturally appropriate services
- Limitations of current transportation options
- Demand for paid and unpaid caregivers
- Need for more accessible housing



# OLDER OREGONIANS ARE COST BURDENED

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## Median Personal Income for Rural Oregonians 75+ in 2017:

- Men: \$26,549
- Women: \$16,619



# OLDER OREGONIANS ARE HOUSING BURDENED

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## THE SUITABILITY FACTOR

### By 2035:

- Most rural older Oregonians (over 80%) live in owner households – and they want to continue to live in their home and community
- The home will increasingly become the site for long term care – yet only 4% of single-family homes offer three of the key design features, i.e., zero step entrances, single floor living and wide hallways/doors
- 41% of adults 65-79 and 71% of adults 80+ live with at least one disability



# OLDER OREGONIANS ARE DISTANCE BURDENED

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NEITHER RURAL COUNTIES NOR SUBURBS WERE PLANNED (OR INTENDED) AS HOME FOR ISOLATED, NON-DRIVING CITIZENS.

**57%**

of older Oregonians live in rural setting

**36%**

of 75+ households are without computers or cellphones

**40%**

of rural women 75+ live alone



# RURAL AGING: STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES

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## STRENGTHS

## CHALLENGES

Love of place



Distances

Networks of support



Thinness of services

High levels of volunteerism



Workforce

Effective informal communications



Connectivity (cell/broadband)

Ethos of self-reliance



Invisibility

# BUILDING ON RURAL STRENGTHS

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## IMMEDIATE RESPONSE USING ESTABLISHED ASSETS

- Neighbors helping neighbors
- This can be done informally
- Safe for all parties
- Assistance & friendly check-ins
- Matching older adults with trained volunteers
- Benefits everyone in a circle, including older adults who have opportunities to share their talents and skills



# LONG TERM OPPORTUNITIES FOR RURAL AGING

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## Increase broadband access

**62%** of counties across the U.S. did not have broadband internet.

## Consider Workforce Adjustments

The longevity bonus is real. How can organizations capture the benefits?

## Start with familiar social media channels

Facebook, FaceTime and online support groups to address psychological, physical and social health needs.

## Continue telemedicine options

The pandemic increased these services, and we need to determine what works and expand.





**OREGON NEEDS AN  
ALL-HANDS-ON-DECK APPROACH**



# SHARED FUTURE OREGON

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## A MULTI-SECTOR PLAN FOR AGING (MPA)

A 10-year blueprint for multi-sector supports and services across the lifespan.

- Envisioned by cross-sector stakeholders
- Mandated by Executive Order and/or legislation
- Implemented by state agencies and local communities

A word cloud graphic centered around the text "SHARED FUTURE OREGON IMPACT AREAS". The words are arranged in a circular pattern around the central text. The words include: "Equity", "Address Invisibility", "Volunteers", "Healthcare", "Economic Development", "Workforce", "Housing", "Mental Health", "Education", "Accessibility", "Transportation", "Caregivers", "Living", "Cost of", and "Intersectional Awareness". The words are in various shades of blue and orange, with "SHARED FUTURE OREGON IMPACT AREAS" being the largest and most prominent.

Generations **Equity** Address Invisibility  
Economic Development **Healthcare** Volunteers  
**SHARED FUTURE**  
Housing **OREGON** Workforce  
**IMPACT AREAS** Living  
Accessibility **Transportation** Cost of  
**Caregivers** Intersectional Awareness

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# AGE+

**Communities + Generations + Innovations**

Championing a new vision for healthy and equitable aging for all Oregonians by empowering communities, linking generations and stimulating innovation to make longer life an opportunity, not a burden.

[www.ageplus.org](http://www.ageplus.org)



SUPPORTING OLDER ADULTS IN  
RURAL OREGON  
SENIOR EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PROJECT

Vanessa Becker, M.P.H.  
Douglas Public Health Network



## WHAT WE WILL COVER TODAY

- Senior Emergency Preparedness Need
- Elder Services Innovation Grant Project
- Progress & Next Steps

## WHY IS EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS IMPORTANT?

- Frequency of hazards such as wildfire and severe weather events are increasing
- Being prepared can make the difference between life or death in a disaster
- Being prepared builds resilience and improves recovery
- Being prepared can decrease anxiety, fear and loss that happen as a result of a disaster

### EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS



MAKE A PLAN



BUILD A KIT



BE INFORMED

# HOW IS PREPAREDNESS DIFFERENT FOR RURAL SENIORS?

A few scenarios/considerations that illustrate how preparedness is different for seniors living in rural areas

- Evacuation considerations (level two instead of level three?)
- Different kit items (medication, DME)
- Isolated seniors-physical isolation in remote rural areas
- Many hazards affect them disproportionately
  - Smoke or severe weather-health consequences
  - Generator use during power outages-fire risk in some disasters
- DME-oxygen, home dialysis, home health not being able to get to you etc. adds complexity
- Smoke detectors (changing batteries)

# ESI GRANT

- Partnership with Douglas Senior Services and Douglas Public Health Network
  - With additional support from Douglas County Sheriff's Office Emergency Management Division
- Leveraged expertise, networks and funds:
  - Expertise & Networks
    - Emergency preparedness
    - Public Health
    - Communications
    - Working with seniors-Meals on Wheels, Senior Dining sites
  - ESI funding, County Funding, Public Health Modernization Funding



# PROGRAM PROGRESS

1. Print materials
  - Developed professional infographic-way to communicate complex thoughts in a simple way
  - Family Emergency Preparedness Book
2. Purchased and assembled 400+ kits
3. Staff training
  - Senior Services & EP Outreach staff
4. Preparing first dining site (of 7) visits next week, followed by over 200 home delivery (Meals on Wheels)



# EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS FOR OLDER ADULTS



Know the **types of emergencies and hazards** most likely to happen locally.

## TOP 10 STEPS you or your loved ones can plan to stay safe in an emergency.

It is important to have an emergency plan in place, especially for older adults and individuals with medical or independent living needs as they are often the hardest hit during emergencies.



Create a **network of support** to help in an emergency, including help with transportation if you need to evacuate.



**Update your emergency contacts** and loved ones of your plan at least once a year.



Have copies of **Medicare, Medicaid and other insurance cards** in your emergency kit.



**Prepare emergency supplies** with food, water and essentials for you and your pets.



Prepare and have **back up for power outages** for your medical devices and cellphone.



Keep a **two-week supply of medications**, along with a list of allergies, and medicines you need regularly.



**Identify a evacuation shelter and/or friend** where you can evacuate.



**Pack/have an evacuation bag/ go kit.**



**Make a communication plan**, including written phone numbers and add to your kit.



## GO KIT

### USES:

- **Stuck in Vehicle**
- **Evacuation**
- **Emergencies Away from Home**

**TIP:** A Go Kit is a 3-day supply of essential items for survival and should be kept in your vehicle. Have one kit for each person that travels with you. Consider packing your Go-Kit in a backpack or a roller bag (if you are unable to carry a pack). Keep in mind that you may be walking a long distance to get back home or to safety if you happen to be away from home during a large-scale event such as the Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake. This starter kit from Douglas County Senior Services and Douglas Public Health Network provides some of what you need in your kit.

Circle what you still need and when your kit is complete, contact Senior Services and we will enter you in a drawing for a free NOAA radio. Some suggested items are listed to the right.

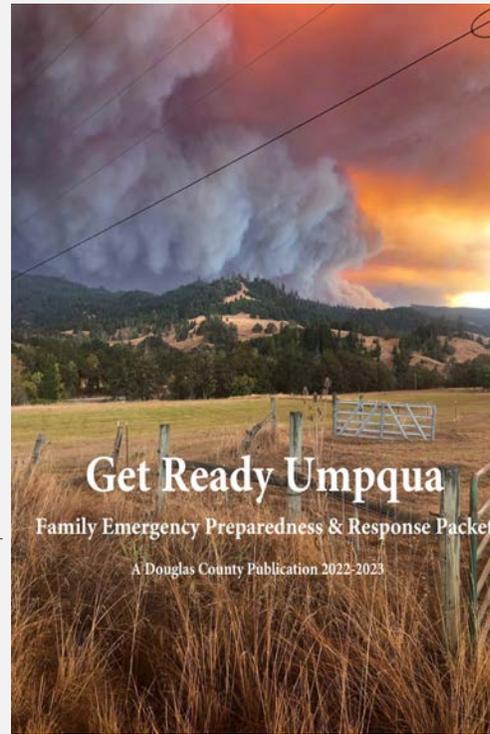
### Every consumable item in this kit should last you for three days.

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Water   | <input type="checkbox"/> Money — in small denominations | <input type="checkbox"/> Toilet Paper                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Food — lightweight/ no preparation needed     | <input type="checkbox"/> Blanket or sleeping bag        | <input type="checkbox"/> Leather and nitrile gloves              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> First aid supplies & prescription medications | <input type="checkbox"/> Extra cell phone charger       | <input type="checkbox"/> Poncho                                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Shelter building supplies                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Fixed-blade knife              | <input type="checkbox"/> Whistle                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Flashlight or headlamp                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Season-appropriate clothing    | <input type="checkbox"/> NOAA radio                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fire-starting method(s)                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Comfortable, sturdy shoes      | <input type="checkbox"/> N95 mask                                |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> Hand sanitizer                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Personal items: lip balm, hair tie, etc |

Talk to your health care provider about getting a two-week supply of necessary medications, to help stick to your regular schedules even if you're not able to get to a pharmacy. Add any over-the-counter medications to this medication kit, such as aspirin or other things that you take regularly. Add a small first aid kit to that medication kit. Many stores and pharmacies may be closed so it is important to plan for these supplies. Most emergency shelters do not have visual aids, mobility aids or durable medical equipment available, if you can get back ups and add them to your kit this will help ensure you can hear, see and use your usual medical equipment. Also add extra personal care and sanitation supplies such as adult briefs and pads, wet wipes, catheter and ostomy supplies etc.



DOUGLAS COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH NETWORK



## PREPARACION DE EMERGENCIA PARA ADULTOS MAYORES



Conozca los tipos de emergencias y prepare un plan de emergencia, incluya la ayuda con el transporte si necesita evacuar.



Crece una red de apoyo para ayudar en una emergencia, incluya la ayuda con el transporte si necesita evacuar.



Prepare suministros de emergencia con alimentos, agua y otros artículos esenciales para usted y su mascota.

### LOS 10 PASOS PRINCIPALES que usted y sus seres queridos pueden planificar para mantenerse a salvo en una emergencia.

Es importante contar con un plan de emergencia, especialmente para los adultos mayores y las necesidades de vida independiente, ya que a menudo son los más afectados durante las emergencias.



Actualice sus contactos de emergencia y otros detalles de su plan al menos una vez al año.



Tenga copias de Medicare, Medicaid y otros tarjetas de seguro médico en su kit de emergencia.



Prepare y tenga un respaldo para cables de energía para sus dispositivos médicos y teléfonos celulares.



Mantenga un suministro para dos semanas, junto con una lista de alergias y medicamentos que necesita regularmente.



Identifique un refugio de evacuación y un amigo con quien pueda evacuar.



Empaque/ tenga una mochila de evacuación.



Haga un plan de comunicación. Incluya números de teléfono escritos y agréguelos a su kit.

# EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

## FOR OLDER ADULTS



Know the **types of emergencies and hazards** most likely to happen locally.

## TOP 10 STEPS

### you or your loved ones can plan to stay safe in an emergency.



**Update your emergency contacts** and loved ones of your plan at least once a year.

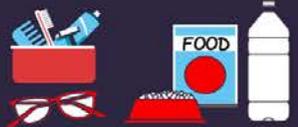


Create a **network of support** to help in an emergency, including help with transportation if you need to evacuate.

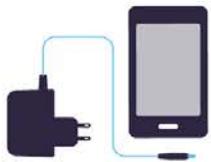
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## YOUR EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

You may not be with your family or your care providers when disaster strikes.

- Make a plan on how you will contact one another and where and how you will evacuate.
- Make a plan for if phone lines and internet are down, who will come check in on you and at what time after the disaster.
- Make a list of important phone numbers here, including loved ones, care providers and organizations that can help you.

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- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
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|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Hand sanitizer              |   |

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# STARTER KITS INCLUDE

Space blanket

Rain poncho

3 pairs disposable gloves

Hand sanitizer

Flashlight with batteries

2 boxes wooden matches

First aid kit

3 masks

Emergency signal whistle

1 roll toilet paper

Lantern with batteries

2 packages of freeze-dried food

Water sanitation chart and dropper for bleach

Douglas County Citizens alert flyer

Infographic

57-page Family Emergency Preparedness Booklet





## ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

- Grab-n-Go Binder
- Car kit
- NOAA radios
- Fire-Safe Seniors program flyers (US Fire Administration & CDC program)





## BARRIERS/CHALLENGES

- When buying in bulk you often get mismatched numbers of items
- Storage of kits requires space
- Printing and design-always budget beyond what you think you'll need and use a professional design person
- Make time for onboarding, devote staff and support training
- Create space for conversations, not just handing out stuff



## NEXT STEPS

- ✓ First (of 7) dining site presentation March 28<sup>th</sup>
- ✓ 200 home visits begin in April
- ✓ Applied for expansion funds with AARP Flagship Grant
  - ✓ Expansion to senior living communities



For more information, contact:

**Vanessa Becker, MPH**

Douglas Public Health Network

Public Information Officer & Public Health Modernization

541-817-6552

[vanessa@douglaspublichealthnetwork.org](mailto:vanessa@douglaspublichealthnetwork.org)

# Questions?

# Thank you!

Contact:  
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[Dragoon@ohsu.edu](mailto:Dragoon@ohsu.edu)