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Protecting Older Adults from the Harms of Social Isolation and Providing a Continuum of Care During COVID-19

Trust for America’s Health Webinar
April 15, 2020

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The John A. Hartford Foundation
The John A. Hartford Foundation
Mission and Priorities

Dedicated to Improving the Care of Older Adults

Priority Areas:

- Building the field of aging experts
- Over $625 million in grants since 1982
- Testing & replicating innovation

Age-Friendly Health Systems
Family Caregiving
Serious Illness & End of Life
Aim: Examine how social isolation and loneliness impact health outcomes in older adults aged 50 and older, particularly among low income, underserved, and vulnerable populations.

- Committee Chair: Dan Blazer (Duke University)
- Study Director: Tracy Lustig (NASEM)
- Study Sponsor: AARP Foundation
NASEM Report: Social Isolation and Loneliness in Older Adults: Opportunities for the Health Care System (2020)

Social isolation: objective state of having few relationships or infrequent social contact

- 24% of U.S. community-dwelling adults age 65+ are socially isolated

  Harms include:
  - Associated with increased risk of premature mortality from all causes
  - Associated with approx 50% increased risk of developing dementia

Loneliness: subjective feeling of being isolated

- 43% of U.S. adults 60+ report feeling lonely

  Harms include:
  - Associated with higher rates of clinically significant depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation
  - Associated with nearly 4x increased risk of death, 68% increased risk of hospitalization, and 57% increased risk of ED visits
Collaboration Across Sectors Needed to Reduce Social Isolation and Loneliness

The Age-Friendly Ecosystem

- Age-Friendly Health Systems
- Age-Friendly Public Health
- Age-Friendly Policies
- Age-Friendly States
- Age-Friendly Universities
- Age-Friendly Cities

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• Age-Friendly Health Systems 4Ms can all help reduce isolation and loneliness:
  o What Matters
  o Medication
  o Mentation
  o Mobility

In partnership with:

• Age-Friendly Public Health Systems

and

• Area Agencies on Aging and other CBOs

ihi.org/AgeFriendly
Thank you!

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