

Guest Editors' Introduction

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The Symposium, Aging in Place, in this issue of *Cityscape* explores the topic of affordable housing plus supportive services. Through an ongoing collaboration of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Office of Policy Development and Research (PD&R), and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE), this issue represents the shared interest in aging in place. Previous collaboration resulted in a synthesis of affordable housing plus services models in which “the relationship between older age, chronic illness and disability, and higher use of long-term care services is well established. In response to the rising demand for long-term care, consumer advocates, policy makers, and service providers have encouraged the development of new models of organizing and delivering health-related and supportive services that are attractive and affordable to older adults, particularly those who are poor or of modest means.”¹

The focus on aging in place parallels the Obama Administration’s emphasis on targeting resources to neighborhood needs. Considering that by 2030, we expect older adults (age 65 and older) to make up 20 percent of the population, doubling from 35 to 70 million people, preparing communities to meet the needs of the aging population is timely.

There is no one way of organizing affordable housing and services; successful models may build on existing resources in different ways. The purpose of this Symposium is not to catalog all models, but to highlight current thinking on linking affordable housing and supportive services to facilitate aging in place. Contributors to this issue are not selected as representative of the entire set of experts in this field; rather, our goal is simply to publish articles for this Symposium that would focus on models that effectively link older residents of assisted housing to supportive services.

In “Assessing the Quality of Care Found in Affordable Clustered Housing-Care Arrangements: Key To Informing Public Policy,” Stephen M. Golant, Pamela Parsons, and Peter A. Boling describe the need for rigorous evaluation of aging in place models to provide an evidence base on which to build. This article illustrates some complexities of evaluating the range of housing and services models that

¹ See Harahan, Sanders, and Stone, (2006).

encompass the multitude of federally subsidized housing settings (for example, HUD Section 202 and Public Housing or the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Section 515 program). The authors also identify implementation challenges for programs that bring supportive services (for example, assisted living or PACE—Program of All-inclusive Care for the Elderly) to the residents of subsidized housing. This article emphasizes that residents are part of the “structure” of the organization and must be taken into consideration when designing changes to support their aging in place.

In “Integrating Community Services Within a NORC: The Park La Brea Experience,” Susan En-guidanos, Jon Pynoos, Maria Siciliano, Laura Diepenbrock, and Susan Alexman explore expanding a model that developed in New York City's densely populated highrises, Naturally Occurring Retirement Community (NORC), to Los Angeles. The authors describe the growing pains associated with adapting a model to a new location and the implementation costs involved. Research conducted at Park La Brea highlights the critical importance of planning and implementing a supportive-services model to facilitate aging in place and demonstrates the opportunity to include resident volunteer opportunities.

In “Health-Related Needs Assessment of Older Residents in Subsidized Housing,” Victoria Cotrell and Paula C. Carder also describe the lack of empirical research on the services needs of older adults in subsidized housing. They highlight opportunities for partnerships between academics and services providers. By conducting a needs assessment, social work students at Portland State University gained valuable insight about the perceptions of health, well-being, and supportive services needs among aging residents of a subsidized apartment building. The article highlights the diversity of the aging population, including varying languages, cultural competency needs, and use of alternative treatments.

In “Health Indicators: A Proactive and Systematic Approach to Healthy Aging,” Fredda Vladeck, Mia Oberlink, Michal D. Gursen, Danylle Rudin, and Rebecca Segel remind us that, just by collecting baseline data (for example, diabetes indicators), we can positively influence practice. The authors also remind us of the fundamental importance of collecting assessment data to target services effectively and to measure their effects. In addition, the authors describe a shift in clinical practice from a reactive approach to a proactive approach that targets the right resources to the right people at the right time.

In “Aging in Place Partnerships: A Training Program for Family Caregivers of Residents Living in Affordable Senior Housing,” Alisha Sanders, Robyn Stone, Rhoda Meador, and Victoria Parker explore aging in place in the community and find that informal care provided by family caregivers is the critical link. In their study, most family members did not self-identify as caregivers. Out of respect for residents' privacy in an independent living setting, property staff may know little about their residents' supportive-services needs. Through building a partnership between property staff and family members, residents' ability to age in place can be reinforced. An unexpected benefit of studying the role of family caregivers was the support they gave each other when they began meeting with other caregivers whose family member lived in the same HUD-assisted property.

Articles included in this symposium of *Cityscape* are not peer reviewed. Rather, contributors represent scholars in the field of aging studies who have worked with PD&R and ASPE in recent years.² Contributors responded to a call for articles, circulated as an e-mail requesting articles to “explore the topic of affordable housing plus services strategies that link older residents to supportive services so that they can ‘age in place’.”

Affordable housing and supportive-services providers interested in models facilitating aging in place, as well as researchers designing evaluations of new approaches to affordable housing and services, will benefit from reading these articles.

References

Harahan, Mary F., Alisha Sanders, and Robyn Stone. 2006. *A Synthesis of Findings from the Study of Affordable Housing Plus Services for Low- and Modest-Income Older Adults*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Policy Development and Research; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, Office of Disability Aging and Long-Term Care Policy.

² Contributors to this issue of *Cityscape* were solicited by e-mail sent to 12 researchers whom the co-editors knew to be engaged in the discussion of affordable housing and services models. The April 1, 2009, e-mail solicited contributions “featuring the integration of affordable housing and supportive services for older adults.”