



STRATEGY 11

Promote Aging in All Policies

The Office of the Governor and the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, in collaboration with organizations such as the UNC Institute of Government, the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners, the North Carolina Coalition on Aging, North Carolina Community College System, and AARP NC, should work together to educate policymakers at all levels on promoting an “Aging in All Policies” framework similar to “Health in All Policies.”

Desired Result – State policy development will include considerations of direct and indirect impacts of rules and laws on the health and well-being of older adults.

Why does the task force recommend this strategy? –

By 2028, 1 in 5 North Carolinians will be aged 65 and older, and by 2038 it is estimated that 95 out of 100 counties will have more people aged 60 and older than under age 18.³⁵ Healthy aging is influenced by social, physical, and economic factors. State and local policies can have a direct impact on these factors, supporting and enhancing the ability of people to live independently in the community. Implementing evidence-based policies to promote the well-being of older adults can help to prolong older adult independence and reduce the likelihood of using expensive health care services.³⁶ An Aging in All Policies lens helps to consider impacts of policies on aging and older adults and promotes a common language across sectors, which can remove barriers to allow for more coordinated efforts to maintain older adult health and well-being. Having champions and leaders who can facilitate promotion of this approach will ensure that aging is embedded in all decision-making.

Context – The Health in All Policies framework is a collaborative approach that integrates health considerations into a broad array of policymaking across all sectors.³⁷ This collaborative approach is based on the links found between health challenges and societal structures, such as transportation, access to healthy food, and education.³⁸ This framework can be similarly applied as a lens to assess how policies support or negatively affect how people can maintain their health, well-being, and independence as they grow older.

In 2020, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 2021–2030 the decade of healthy aging with a global initiative to improve the lives of older adults.³⁹ As part of the initiative, proactive policies to ensure equitable aging are encouraged. With the assistance of a database of action plans for aging, tools and resources are provided to policymakers to inform them of updated policies to support aging populations.

How would this impact the health of older adults?



Policy that considers safe housing needs for older adults can help prevent in-home falls and other injuries.



Policy that promotes accessible walkways and transportation will allow older adults, as well as all other age groups, to continue to move around the community safely.



Policy that targets accessible nutritious food will improve the health of older adults.



Policy that encourages financial savings, accessible communities, availability and affordability of internet services, and supports for maintaining independence in the community will help older adults maintain or grow their social connections.

What is Health in All Policies and how does it apply to Aging in All Policies?

“The goal of Health in All Policies is to ensure that decision-makers are informed about the health, equity, and sustainability consequences of various policy options during the policy development process. A Health in All Policies approach identifies the ways in which decisions in multiple sectors affect health, and how better health can support the goals of these multiple sectors.”

The concept of Aging in All Policies proposes a similar approach to understanding how policy decisions may influence or impact how different groups experience the aging process and their ability to live independently in the community.

– American Public Health Association. *An Introduction to Health in All Policies.*
https://www.apha.org/-/media/Files/PDF/factsheets/HiAPGuide_4pager_FINAL.aspx