



# Is San Diego Ready for an Aging Population? New Local Survey Reveals San Diego-Area Residents Concerned About Their City and Themselves as They Get Old; New Website, “By the Decades” Healthy Aging Checklist and Aging Communities Toolkit Offers Help

Thursday, July 11, 2013 - 07:00am

**Pfizer and Generations United challenge people and communities to define how they want to Get Old**

NEW YORK, N.Y., July 11 - More than eight out of ten people who live in the San Diego area believe they will live a long life but less than one-third of San Diego-area residents feel their community is very prepared to support an aging population. And while more than two-thirds of San Diego area residents think the quality of life for seniors is better now than in the past, there is an overall feeling of unpreparedness around San Diego-area infrastructure, according to a new survey commissioned by Pfizer, Inc. and Generations United, an intergenerational advocacy organization. The general feeling of lack of preparedness is seen across all generations - from Millennials to the Greatest Generation . With more than 10,000 people expected to turn 65 every day through 2030, community concerns reflected in the survey centered on inadequate transportation,

housing and caregiving for older people. Only a small portion of respondents feel their communities are very equipped in terms of healthcare facilities, home caregiving, transportation, and housing for older people.

Aging well means living in a community prepared to support people as they age. But 54 percent of respondents feel San Diego is not at all prepared to provide appropriate employment opportunities for an aging population and fully half of respondents feel being old is something to fear. On a more positive note, 65 percent of survey respondents believe that people who work past retirement age stay healthier longer and are happier.

“While we’ve seen many improvements in our society for aging populations in recent years, there are still many hurdles that need to be overcome,” says Dr. Freda Lewis-Hall, Chief Medical Officer for Pfizer. “The good news is that there is a lot we can do to protect and enhance our quality of life as we age, simply by committing today to healthy behaviors that help prevent or delay chronic disease.”

Chronic diseases are the leading cause of disability in the U.S. and according to the World Health Organization, eliminating three risk factors – poor diet, inactivity and smoking – would prevent 80% of heart disease and stroke, 80% of type 2 diabetes and 40% of cancers. Indicating an awareness of the importance of healthy choices, the survey revealed that 63 percent of San Diego-area residents are very comfortable with their current physical health and 74% are generally comfortable with their current age. However, only slightly more than half are also very comfortable about their future and less than half (49%) are very comfortable with getting older in general. Interestingly, more San Diego-area residents feel comfortable telling people their age (79%) than talking about politics (46%) or religion (62%).

To encourage more people to take a more active role in their health at every age, Pfizer is working with Generations United and others to ask San Diego to consider: how do you want to Get Old? Get Old is an initiative created by Pfizer to encourage productive conversation and actions around aging and living better. San Diego-area residents can visit a new Pfizer-sponsored website at [www.GetOld.com](http://www.GetOld.com) to join the conversation and to find information about healthy aging. Pfizer has also developed a Healthy Aging Checklist, organized by the decade, that provides simple health tips on everything from skin care to preventive care to men and women from their 20’s to their 60’s. Grantmakers In Aging has also created a series of toolkits, with the support of the Pfizer Foundation, that can be accessed here: *Age-Friendly Communities: The movement to create great places to grow up and grow old in America; Aging Power Tools* and *Age-Friendly America* for communities which want to develop strategies to ensure their citizens have the

transportation, housing, health care and employment opportunities needed to Get Old in their own community.

“Our communities should be places where we can grow up and grow old and where, no matter what our age, we feel connected and engaged,” says Donna Butts, Executive Director of Generations United, an advocacy organization focused on improving the lives of children, youth and older people through intergenerational strategies, programs and public policies. “Good communities, like lives well lived, don’t just happen. They require careful planning and nurturing. Let’s start thinking ahead to what San Diego needs to do to prepare for a healthy, older America.”

“The survey shows we have some work to do educating San Diegans about the many fine resources that are available in our community for seniors,” said Paul Downey, President/CEO of Senior Community Centers. “But it should also be taken as a wake-up call that we must be diligent about building a strong infrastructure to support the growing demands of an aging population. It is also a lesson for each of us, no matter our age, that we have both the opportunity and responsibility to do things that will keep us healthy, independent and able to fully enjoy our lives.”

#### Other Key survey findings

70% of respondents in the San Diego area agree their workplace values diversity of age but their top work related fear is not being able to get a new job (63%) followed closely by not being able to retire when planned (58%). Only 22% of respondents feel the community is very prepared to provide appropriate healthcare facilities for older people and just 16% feel the community is very prepared to provide home caregiving. Only 16% feel the San Diego area is very prepared with transportation options for older people and just 15% see San Diego as very prepared to provide housing for this population. 56% of San Diego-area respondents feel U.S. politicians portray older generations in a positive way and more than half (53%) feel the media does, too. A huge majority (94%) agree that technology allows you to stay connected with the people in your life but that it’s a lot of work to keep up with (74%).

The 2013 Get Old survey was fielded by Harris Interactive and included 300 respondents in the San Diego area, ages 18-plus. The survey was conducted between March 25 and April 12, 2013.

#### **About Pfizer, Inc.**

Pfizer employs 707 people at its La Jolla site. At Pfizer, we apply science and our global resources to bring therapies to people that extend and significantly improve their lives.

We strive to set the standard for quality, safety and value the discovery, development and manufacture of health care products. Our global portfolio includes medicines and vaccines as well as many of the world's best-known consumer products. Every day, Pfizer colleagues work across developed and emerging markets to advance wellness, prevention, treatments and cures that challenge the most feared diseases of our time. Consistent with our responsibility as one of the world's premier innovative biopharmaceutical companies, we collaborate with health care providers, governments and local communities to support and expand access to reliable, affordable health care around the world. For more than 150 years, Pfizer has worked to make a difference for all who rely on us. To learn more, please visit us at [www.pfizer.com](http://www.pfizer.com).

Pfizer Media Contact: MacKay Jimeson 212.733.2324 [mackay.jimeson@pfizer.com](mailto:mackay.jimeson@pfizer.com) Local Contact: Lucila Garcia Rational 360 323.646.2150