

## Aging Matters, Locally and Globally

The Institute on Aging in the School of Community Health, College of Urban and Public Affairs, at Portland State University announces a new initiative called, “Aging Matters, Locally and Globally.” The mission is to enhance the lives of older persons who lack adequate resources in the United States and in less developed regions of the world. The goal is to test service learning and community development models for identifying and addressing some of the needs of vulnerable older adults in the U.S. and abroad.

To meet this goal, the Aging Matters initiative will provide a forum to identify and promote innovative policies and programs that respond to the varied housing, health, and social concerns of low-income individuals with chronic care needs. The Initiative has two main arenas, local and global, represented by current demonstration sites in Portland, Oregon and Nicaragua.

The **local arena** begins with the premise that older persons prefer to remain in their homes as they age. This is true for people who own their homes as well as



people who rent, including individuals who reside in subsidized housing. Older individuals with limited resources are at increased risk of nursing home placement if they develop a chronic illness, disability, or cognitive decline. The focus of the local arena is to stimulate local housing and service providers, public agency personnel, researchers, and educators to interact with each other so that creative approaches for sustaining

vulnerable older adults in the community are devised and implemented.

The **global arena** aims to mobilize members of the local community, government, and non-governmental organizations to address urgent and chronic needs of older persons in developing nations that lack policy and economic



structures for addressing the aging of their populations. PSU students and faculty have been working with community-based organizations and government officials in Nicaragua to develop

sustainable strategies, including recruiting and training new professionals with knowledge of aging issues, to address the needs of older Nicaraguans.

In both arenas, building partnerships and a multi-disciplinary approach are key elements in the implementation of interventions that aim to increase the capacity of the local community to address urgent, moderate and chronic needs of older persons. Specific activities will include:

- Expert workgroups
- Community-based demonstration projects
- Model development
- New research
- Educational forums designed to meet diverse audience needs
- Service-based learning

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