

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

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

NEW YORK, N.Y., July 11 – More than nine out of ten people who live in the Atlanta area believe they will live a long life, but less than one-third of Atlanta-area residents feel their community is very prepared to support an aging population. And while more than two-thirds of Atlanta-area residents think the quality of life for seniors is better now than in the past, there is an overall feeling of unpreparedness around Atlanta 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 45 percent of respondents feel Atlanta is not at all prepared to provide appropriate employment opportunities for an aging population and nearly four out of ten feel being old is something to fear. On a more positive note, 73 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 only slightly more than half, or 54 percent of Atlanta-area residents, are very comfortable with their current physical health although 69% are generally comfortable with their current age and six out of ten are also very comfortable about their future. Interestingly, more Atlanta-area residents feel comfortable telling people their age (85%) than talking about politics (44%) or religion (60%).

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 Atlanta 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. Atlanta-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 for men and women from their 20's to their 60's. Grantmakers In Aging has also created, with the support of the Pfizer Foundation, a series of toolkits 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 Atlanta needs to do to prepare for a healthy, older America.”

“This survey gives us a rare insight into what Atlanta’s population thinks about getting older in our city,” explained Maureen Kelly, President of the Thanks Mom and Dad Fund. Kelly went on to say, “While some of the information in this survey shows Atlanta in a better position to care for older generations compared to other cities, the results also provide us with a good understanding of where we can and must improve in order to best care for the growing population of older adults in Atlanta.”

#### Other Key survey findings

- 60% of respondents in the Atlanta area agree their workplace values diversity of age but their top work related fear is not being able to retire when planned (63%), followed closely by a fear of not being able to get a new job (46%) or being able to stop work when you want to (46%).
- Only 21% of respondents feel the community is very prepared to provide appropriate healthcare facilities for older people and just 25% feel the community is very prepared to provide home caregiving.
- Only 32% feel the Atlanta area is very prepared with transportation options for older people and just 25% see Atlanta as very prepared to provide housing for this population.
- 54% of Atlanta-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 Atlanta area, ages 18-plus. The survey was conducted between March 25 and April 12, 2013.

#### About Pfizer, Inc.

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Pfizer Media Contact: MacKay Jimeson 212.733.2324 [mackay.jimeson@pfizer.com](mailto:mackay.jimeson@pfizer.com) Local Contact: Marty Klein, OnTarget 404.797.0022 [marty@ontargetpa.com](mailto:marty@ontargetpa.com)