



The Healthspan Imperative Press Kit

Press Release

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New Film *The Healthspan Imperative* Draws Awareness to the Issue of the Aging of the American Population

Martha Stewart-Narrated Film Features Insights from Leading Aging Research Experts

Washington, D.C., August 7, 2014 – The Alliance for Aging Research and the Healthspan Campaign announce the release of *The Healthspan Imperative*, a landmark new film Narrated by Emmy Award-winning television show host and best-selling author Martha Stewart, it takes a close look at the challenges brought about by an aging American population and the scientific quest to increase our healthspan, the length of time we spend free of the costly and harmful conditions of old age.

The U.S. population is in the midst of a major demographic shift. It is getting older—and quickly. By 2030, the U.S. 65 and over population will have doubled since the turn of the century. Thanks to advances in technology, people will also live longer.

This, however, does not come without consequences: Longer lifespans, coupled with the explosion in the older population, is expected to produce a “Silver Tsunami” of costly chronic diseases and disabilities of aging. Finding a way to avert this impending disaster will be this country’s next great priority.

The *Healthspan Imperative* shares how the world’s best scientists, doctors and professionals are working toward finding ways to turn back the clock through aging research. This film features exclusive interviews from aging research experts who give their frank, unfiltered insights on the gravity of the challenges and their hopes for a solution through aging research.

Experts include:

- Nir Barzilai, M.D., Albert Einstein College of Medicine of Yeshiva University
- Marie A. Bernard, M.D., National Institute on Aging
- Laura Carstensen, Ph.D., Stanford Center on Longevity
- Dana Goldman, Ph.D., University of Southern California
- Brian Kennedy, Ph.D., Buck Institute for Research on Aging
- James Kirkland, M.D., Ph.D., Mayo Clinic
- Rick I. Morimoto, Ph.D., Northwestern University
- S. Jay Olshansky, Ph.D., University of Illinois at Chicago



- Dan Perry, Alliance for Aging Research
- Felipe Sierra, Ph.D., National Institute on Aging

Aging research, the film shows, is not science fiction. There are discoveries being made that demonstrate that the aging process can be altered and that chronic diseases can be postponed or even prevented. But in order to make this happen, more federal support for aging research and more collaboration among research agencies are a necessity. The film lays out a convincing case that delaying aging would provide immense financial benefits to both the U.S. and global economy.

“The Healthspan Imperative explores one of our country’s biggest challenges,” says Sue Peschin, MHS, president and CEO of the Alliance for Aging Research. “Chronic diseases of aging are a tremendous threat to not only our health care system, but to the well-being of older adults and their family caregivers. As this film shows, research into the underlying biological process of aging has the potential to extend healthy years of life, but only if we increase our federal investment. The most effective strategy in ‘bending the cost curve’ in health care will be preventing age-related chronic diseases in the first place.”

The film is available online at www.healthspancampaign.org/film. The webpage also includes resources on how to share the film and to learn more about the issue of the aging of the American population. To raise awareness about the film, the Alliance has launched a social media campaign using #healthspan on Twitter.

Funding for the film was provided by Allianz, Battelle, The Retirement Research Foundation, the Buck Institute for Research on Aging and the Glenn Foundation for Medical Research.

For a media kit, please visit: <http://healthspancampaign.org/film/press/>

For more information about the film or to connect with any of the experts, please email Noel Lloyd at nlloyd@agingresearch.org or call 202.370.7825.

About the Alliance for Aging Research

The Alliance for Aging Research is the leading nonprofit organization dedicated to accelerating the pace of scientific discoveries and their application in order to vastly improve the universal human experience of aging and health. The Alliance was founded in 1986 in Washington, D.C., and has since become a valued advocacy organization and a respected influential voice with policymakers. Visit www.agingresearch.org for more information.

About the Healthspan Campaign

The Healthspan Campaign is a coalition of organizations with a mission to help advocate for research into the basic biology of aging through consensus building, communications outreach and political strategy. For more information, visit www.healthspancampaign.org.

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About the Film

- *The Healthspan Imperative* looks at our country's next great priority: solving the challenges brought about by the aging of the American population.
- The 15-minute film was produced by the Alliance for Aging Research for the Healthspan Campaign, a national initiative led by a coalition of organizations and researchers that advocates for research into the basic biology of aging in order to extend healthspan.
- It is narrated by Emmy Award-winning television show host and best-selling author Martha Stewart.
- The film features interviews with some of the best and brightest experts in the field of aging research, including:
 - Nir Barzilai, M.D., Director of the Institute for Aging Research, Albert Einstein College of Medicine of Yeshiva University
 - Marie A. Bernard, M.D., Deputy Director, National Institute on Aging, NIH
 - Laura Carstensen, Ph.D., Professor of Psychology and founding Director, Stanford Center on Longevity
 - Dana Goldman, Ph.D., Director, Schaeffer Center for Health Policy & Economics, University of Southern California
 - Brian Kennedy, Ph.D., President & CEO, Buck Institute for Research on Aging
 - James Kirkland, M.D., Ph.D., Director, Robert & Arlene Kogod Center on Aging, Mayo Clinic
 - Rick I. Morimoto, Ph.D., Director, Rice Institute for Biomedical Research, Northwestern University
 - S. Jay Olshansky, Ph.D., Biodemographer, University of Illinois at Chicago
 - Dan Perry, Founder, Alliance for Aging Research
 - Felipe Sierra, Ph.D., Director, Division of Aging Biology, National Institute on Aging, NIH
- The film is available to view and download at www.healthspancampaign.org/film. This page contains resources to help educate about the issue.
- The film was funded by Allianz, Battelle, The Retirement Research Foundation, the Buck Institute for Research on Aging and the Glenn Foundation for Medical Research.
- The Alliance will be sending out information on social media about the film using the #healthspan. (The Twitter handle for the Alliance is [aging_research](#) and the Twitter handle for the Healthspan Campaign is [hscampaign](#).)



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The Issue

- Americans are living longer. Over the last 150 years, life expectancy has doubled for people in the developed world.
- In 2011, the first of the Baby Boomer Generation turned 65. By 2030, one in five Americans will be past that age. By then, the 65 and older population is projected to be twice as large as it was in 2000. It is estimated to grow from 35 million to 72 million. Note: More stats of this kind are available at www.silverbook.org.
- This combination of increased lifespan and an aging population has resulted in a “Silver Tsunami,” an impending wave of chronic diseases that will place a major burden on health care systems, economies, individuals and caregivers.
- Eighty percent of seniors have at least one major chronic condition, and half have two or more. And it’s not cheap. Chronic diseases of later life are costing the nation more than \$1 trillion per year—a figure expected to increase to \$6 trillion by the middle of this century.
- The National Institute on Aging (NIA) is still vastly underfunded at about \$1.1 billion a year, out of the approximate \$32 billion a year the National Institutes of Health (NIH) receives overall. In real-world terms, for every dollar appropriated to NIH, only about 3.6 cents goes to the NIA.



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The Promise of Aging Research

- Scientists who study aging are in general agreement that the process is not set in stone. The aging process can be sped up by genetics or poor lifestyle choices...but it can also be slowed down. This means that research that slows aging has the potential to extend healthy years of life and simultaneously postpone the costly and harmful conditions of old age.
- These scientists are finding many processes that lead to the development of chronic diseases also contribute to the aging of our bodies.
- The National Institutes of Health has recognized the value of aging research. Of the 27 institutes and centers at the NIH, 20 are now collaborating in a "Trans-NIH Geroscience Interest Group" in order to better understand the relationships between the biological processes of aging and age-related chronic diseases and disabilities.
- At a time when medical research is feeling the financial pinch, Congress should consider a new funding model for coordinated research into aging across both the NIH and other federal health and research agencies. Such an approach would avoid a tap on existing funds as well as the "disease-versus-disease" battle that plagues NIH appropriations year after year. Disease-specific research will always remain important, but this approach would augment collaboration and help lift all boats.
- One of the most effective strategies in "bending the cost curve" in health care is preventing age-related chronic diseases in the first place. An October 2013 study published in *Health Affairs* hypothesizes that it will be possible by 2030 to develop interventions that increase human life expectancy at age 51 by 2.2 years—and that most of those added years would be spent in good health. These researchers also estimate that the increase in healthy years of life would have an economic benefit of approximately \$7.1 trillion by the middle of this century.



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About the Healthspan Campaign

Founded in 2012, the Healthspan Campaign is a coalition of organizations dedicated to advocating for research into the basic biology of aging. Its research agenda has been endorsed by more than 100 of the world's most prominent scientists, clinicians and aging experts.

Scientists have made impressive progress in the understanding of human aging. They now generally agree that aging is malleable and capable of being slowed—that it is possible to make life at 80 feel more like life at 60. This has opened the door for breakthroughs in fighting the single risk factor common to nearly every disease: aging itself.

By better understanding this “common denominator” of aging, scientists could usher in a new era of preventative medicine. But there is a significant gap between this promising basic research and its clinical application.

The Healthspan Campaign remains dedicated to closing this gap through consensus building, public awareness campaigns, educational documents and public policy outreach.