



Columbine Health Systems
Center for Healthy Aging
COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY

SEPTEMBER 2020 NEWSLETTER

A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

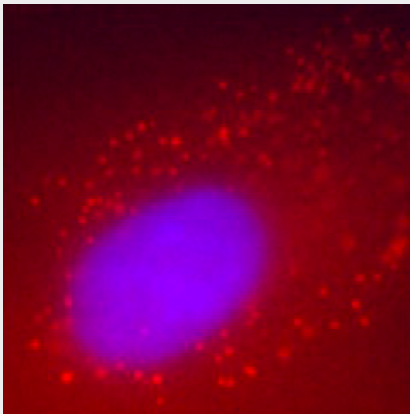
Greetings to you from the Columbine Health Systems Center for Healthy Aging. Fall is in the air, students are back on campus, the days are getting a little shorter, and we are all holding our breath to see how the fall semester unfolds. We have been able to successfully reopen the Center for clinical trials, research, and limited lecture activities, thanks to the hard work of Annette Foster, Operations Manager for CHSCHA, and Ali Murphy, Administrative Assistant, who have tirelessly responded to the changing safety guidelines and evolving needs of our faculty to ensure that we can conduct safe practices.

Almost exactly one year ago, I sat in my office on my first day as the new director in very quiet and mostly empty Center for Healthy Aging and sent my first “Note from the Director” by a plain email to many of you, expressing my gratitude for entrusting me to grow this nascent Center into a nationally recognized catalyst for interdisciplinary research on aging. As I reflect back on the first year, it’s remarkable to see how different things look today. Our core team has grown from myself and my two extraordinary associate directors, Deana Davalos and Karyn Hamilton, to a team of seven full-time staff. The offices in the Center are full, we have received over \$4.5 million in external funding and have hosted five clinical trials. The talent, innovation, and passion of our campus, faculty, community collaborators, and supporters has been the fuel that has ignited our progress and has guided us throughout the tumultuous events of the first year.

The Columbine Health Systems Center for Healthy Aging exists to be a catalyst for interdisciplinary collaboration across all colleges and disciplines at CSU. We will continue to work to serve you, to pivot and adjust to the challenges in the coming months, and to engage you. You, our community, are essential guideposts as we look forward into an unknown but exciting next year. I invite you to explore our website healthyaging.colostate.edu and the rest of this newsletter for more content and opportunities to engage.

Warmest Regards,
Nicole Ehrhart

Agging News



[CSU study finds clues to aging in 'junk' DNA](#)

via CSU's *Source*



[Both parties need to create a pro-aging party platform](#)

via *The Hill*



[The 73rd World Health Assembly endorses A Decade of Healthy Ageing initiative](#)

via *WHO*

COVID-19 Screening in Senior Care Facilities

Researchers leading the Center for Healthy Aging's **Longitudinal COVID-19 Screening in Senior Care Facilities** have now completed 23,000 COVID-19 tests to-date in senior residential care communities throughout Colorado. The study is fueled by a [\\$4.3 million grant](#) from Governor Polis after an earlier pilot study of six care facilities showed that the number of new cases in facilities can be diminished by identifying asymptomatic people who are COVID-19+ and asking them to stay home (workers), or if they're residents, by isolating them from other residents. To moderate the spread, researchers are administering weekly COVID tests to workers and residents, as one-time testing or less frequent testing has not provided early-enough warning of an impending outbreak. Additionally, genomic sequencing of the virus detected in the pilot facilities revealed that outbreaks were more often happening because the virus was spreading from person-to-person within the facility, rather than being repeatedly introduced to the facility via separate events.

With the funding from the State of Colorado, the pilot study was expanded to 32 facilities that will continue to be tested throughout 2020. Genomic sequencing in the new, expanded cohort will test how the virus spreads during this current period of "Safer at Home" social guidelines, as compared to the restrictions imposed by the March 2020 stay-at-home order.

With additional funding from the [Boettcher Foundation](#), the screening study is also comparing how the virus spreads in senior care communities versus a college campus (CSU) because it's likely that "one size does not fit all" when it comes to recommendations and mitigation strategies. Ongoing results from this study show that a high percentage of workers in senior care facilities that have had an outbreak have antibodies to COVID-19, suggesting that workers have been exposed to the virus in the workplace.

[Columbine Health Systems](#) and [Vivage Senior Living](#) have been active, forward-thinking partners in this ongoing work. The Center for Healthy Aging would also like to recognize our key partners and co-principal investigators: [Greg Ebel](#) (professor, Microbiology, Immunology and Pathology), [Sue VandeWoude](#) (director, One Health Institute), and [Kristy Pabilonia](#) (director, Clinical Diagnostics, CSU Veterinary Health System).

[You Have the Power to Improve Your Cellular Powerhouses](#)

Maureen Walsh, M.S., CSU Dept. of Health and Exercise Science

[Hurry up! It could be good for your brain](#)

Devin Wahl, Postdoctoral Fellow, CSU Dept. of Health and Exercise Science

[Vegetarianism for a Long Life?](#)

Rylee Price, Samantha Schilling, and Laura Wild
CU-Boulder Dept. of Integrative Physiology

COVID-19 Expert Panel Q&A

COVID-19 Expert Panel Series

Thursday, Sept. 3 | 1 PM MDT

Submit questions for the panel to ali.murphy@colostate.edu.

Free Zoom Webinar

Register at: <https://col.st/bpEly>



Join the Center, Senior Access Points, and CSU Extension for our fourth webinar in the COVID-19 Expert Panel Series. These informative sessions are open to the public, our community partners, and service providers to answer all of your COVID-19-related questions. Panelists include CSU faculty experts in gerontology, infectious disease, biosafety, mental health, food safety and geriatric medicine.

Watch our last panel [here](#). Register in advance [here](#) for the Sept. 3 webinar. E-mail ali.murphy@colostate.edu with any questions you have for our panelists!

Healthy Aging Speaker Series

Our next talk in the Healthy Aging Speaker Series is Sept. 17 at noon! [Neha Lodha](#), an assistant professor in the Dept. of Health and Exercise Science and director of the Laboratory for Movement Neuroscience and Rehabilitation, will speak on factors that influence driving competence in older adults and ways to prolong and promote safe driving as we age.

E-mail ali.murphy@colostate.edu to register and receive the meeting password. Catch up on Dr. Aga Burzynska's August lecture [at this link](#).



HEALTHY AGING SPEAKER SERIES

Featuring:
Neha Lodha, Ph.D.

"Determinants of driving function in older adults"

Thursday, Sept. 17
12 P.M. MDT
Virtually on Zoom

Register by email to ali.murphy@colostate.edu



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An update from the Healthy Cognitive Aging Lab

Director [Allison Bielak](#) and postdoc Chris Brydges of the [Healthy Cognitive Aging Lab](#) in the Dept. of Human Development and Family Studies have completed their final NIH report regarding a recent R03 grant and supplemental award. The researchers reanalyzed data from four different, already completed activity interventions for older adults, focusing on a newly developed, sensitive measure of cognition, called intraindividual variability (IIV). IIV measures changes from moment-to-moment in how fast a person responds to a reaction time task. The more variability a person has, the worse their memory, and the greater their risk of developing a brain disease like dementia. Before Bielak's grant, IIV had never been used to detect cognitive changes after an activity program. Bielak and Brydges analyzed the [LIFE Study](#), [Synapse Project](#), [Baltimore Experience Corps Trial](#), and the [EXCEL Study](#), each of which had different physical, social, and mental activity programs. Overall, they found that IIV can be lowered after participating in activity programs, but not always. It seems that a person might have to do a lot of the activity over a long period of time to reduce IIV, and someone who has mild cognitive problems might be more likely to lower their IIV. Future directions in the Healthy Cognitive Aging Lab will study how brain health can be altered through a variety of physical, social, and mental activities.

Research Studies Currently Enrolling

Fit Cancer Exercise Program

The Physical Activity for Treatment and Prevention Lab (PATP) in CSU's Dept. of Health and Exercise Science is enrolling cancer survivors in an exercise program, beginning mid-September. The Fit Cancer Program is a supportive group-based exercise program designed for cancer survivors at any phase of the cancer journey. Visit [this link](#), email patplab@colostate.edu, or call **970-491-4653** for more info.

Knee Osteoarthritis Study

Researchers from CSU's Department of Health and Exercise Science are recruiting adults to participate in a study that investigates solutions to muscle and joint pain in arthritis. [More information can be found here](#), by e-mailing Karyn Hamilton at tracd@colostate.edu, or calling **970-491-3961**.

Relocation and Transitional Experiences (RELATE) Study

[The Health, Emotion, and Aging Research Team \(HEART\)](#) is looking for individuals and couples, aged 50+, who are planning to move into any type of senior housing facility to participate in a study. The study includes surveys and assessments related to physical and mental health, which are spread out across 3-4 months. Call **970-491-0871** or email HEART@colostate.edu for more info.

MY-SKILLS Online Intervention for Chronic Pain

Researchers from Occupational Therapy and Human Development and Family Studies are researching the effects of gentle movement and education for pairs of people who experience chronic pain. Participants will be enrolled in 16 online sessions: two sessions per week for 8 weeks. Email study coordinator Barbara Gibson at movementANDeducation@colostate.edu or [visit this link](#) for more information.

COVID-19 Support Services for Older Adults

The Columbine Health Systems Center for Healthy is now offering virtual and telehealth services to address the needs of older adults affected by COVID-19. After an initial needs/wants interview, participants will be enrolled in an 8-week program that exposes them to key services listed below. At the end of the program, participants will work with a care coordinator to select a customized "menu" of services to continue participating in via video modules and physically-distanced interventions. For more information, call [970-235-0083](tel:970-235-0083) or email healthyaging@colostate.edu.

- ▶ **Technology assistance** to navigate mainstream video conferencing tools, get support for personal technology devices, and learn about community programs offering free technology and Wi-Fi
- ▶ **Guided social support groups** that address issues related to healthy aging, isolation, mental health, and caregiving. Games (e.g. Bingo) and shared virtual tours (e.g. Monterrey Aquarium) are also provided for social engagement.
- ▶ **Respite care**, performed by CSU students, to provide virtual/phone respite to family caregivers
- ▶ **Care coordination**, performed by Social Work and Psychology students, to assess needs and well-being, teach coping skills, and create future plans of care
- ▶ **Nutrition counseling**, performed by registered dietitian nutritionists, to address eating challenges or provide cooking and food safety tutorials
- ▶ **Music-Connection** led by CSU Music Therapy students using your favorite music. Resources can identify how music can be used at home to improve quality of life.
- ▶ **Exercise and wellness activities**, led by Health and Exercise Science students, including a variety of activities to promote flexibility, balance, toning, core stability, strength, cardiovascular endurance, and more
- ▶ **Animal-related activities**, offered by the Human-Animal Bond in Colorado (HABIC) program, to provide animal-related content in letters, photo stories, videos, and virtual animal therapy visits designed to increase well-being and address feelings of loneliness and isolation

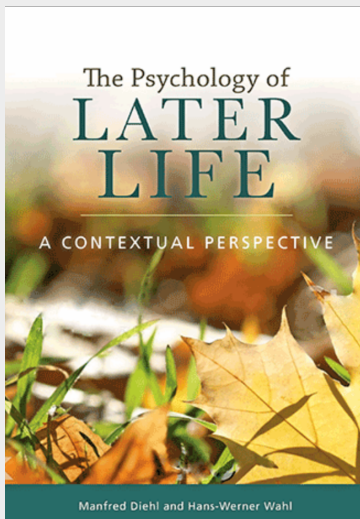
Aging Clinic of the Rockies New Caregiver Mentorship Program



Do you have experience providing care to an older adult AND interest in mentoring other, less experienced caregivers? The Aging Clinic of the Rockies at Colorado State University is seeking experienced caregivers to volunteer to help develop and pilot an exciting new program. The Caregiver Mentorship Program (CMP) will match experienced caregivers with a caregiver who is new to their role and seeking support.

The CMP leadership will provide initial and ongoing training to help caregiver mentors provide effective guidance to their mentees. The skills developed through the CMP are sure to benefit the mentors, mentees, and the mentee's care recipients. These include: maintaining compassion and empathy, mastering the art of self-care, and nurturing connections with the caregiver community, among others. Volunteers will be asked for a time commitment of 3 hours/week for 8 weeks. Services will be provided remotely until in-person visits are deemed safe. **For more information, please contact Ben Lotstein at: (970) 491-6795 or Ben.Lotstein@colostate.edu.**

The Aging Clinic of the Rockies is continuing their regular services throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, but in a virtual or tele-health setting. Larimer County residents can call [970-235-0083](tel:970-235-0083) or [visit this link](#) for info on ways to participate in senior peer counseling, caregiver individual therapy, a support group for caregivers, or general mental health therapy.



New book alert!

Distinguished professor Manfred Diehl of CSU's Dept. of Human Development and Family Studies has published a new book with co-author Hans-Werner Wahl. *The Psychology of Later Life: A Contextual Perspective*, published by the American Psychological Association, is a comprehensive review of decades of psychological research on aging: common myths and misconceptions, challenges, and opportunities about growing older. The book is designed for first- and second-year graduate students, as well as professionals working in the aging field. [Learn more here.](#)

Events and Happenings



Yoga at City Park
Mondays 10–11 a.m.
Wednesdays 9:30–10:30 a.m.
Sundays 5–6 p.m.

Join [Om Ananda Yoga](#) for socially distanced yoga! Limit 10 participants. Meet at entrance to the golf course between the fire station and the baseball fields. Bring your own props.



Flexibility in Retirement
Virtual Workshop
Saturday, Sept. 19
10–12 p.m.

New York Life Fort Collins agent [Joseph Vander Linde](#) invites you to a workshop about the four L's of retirement: Lifestyle, Liquidity, Longevity, and Legacy. [Register here.](#)



**Aging
Science
Talks**

The Lamming Laboratory at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and Mair Lab of Harvard, with support from the Glenn Foundation for Medical Research, present the [Aging Science Talks: Science for the Community](#).

Sept. 9, 10 a.m. MDT | Protein quality control: Basic mechanisms and new perspectives in the biology of aging
Sept. 16, 10 a.m. MDT | Aging Brain Part 1
Sept. 23, 10 a.m. MDT | Aging Brain Part 2

