

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

March 5, 2021

Contact: Tessie Pollock

(614) 306-2391 - [tpollock@age.ohio.gov](mailto:tpollock@age.ohio.gov)

## **Ohio's Strategic Action Plan on Aging provides roadmap to ensure long, healthy lives, eliminate disparities and inequities**

*Strategies aim to make Ohio the best state to age in the nation*

**Columbus, Ohio** – Ursel J. McElroy, Director of the Ohio Department of Aging, today released Ohio's Strategic Action Plan on Aging (SAPA). The goals of the SAPA are that all Ohioans live longer, healthier lives with dignity and autonomy and that disparities and inequities among older Ohioans are eliminated. The SAPA prioritizes 15 issues to improve the lives of all older Ohioans. It then provides a menu of evidence-informed strategies to be implemented at the state and local levels to improve outcomes.

"While the Ohio Department of Aging willingly takes the role of coordinating, implementing, and tracking the strategies within the SAPA, we cannot achieve its goals alone," said Director McElroy. "The SAPA was developed with robust stakeholder input. That same collaborative spirit will be required to realize its vision that Ohio is the best place to age in the nation."

The SAPA's key issues are organized into six topic areas: community conditions, healthy living, access to care, social connectedness, population health, and preserving independence. Within each topic area, priority populations most affected by those issues are identified. Two principles guide this work: elder justice and equity. Elder justice is achieved by fostering and promoting systems, policies, and beliefs that value aging, dismantle ageism, and create an age-integrated society. Equity requires dismantling ageism and the compounding effects of ageism and other forms of discrimination.

To achieve the goals of the SAPA, Director McElroy is calling on state and local partners in the public and private sectors to act on the SAPA by aligning with its issues, advocating for policy change and funding, implementing one or more of the evidence-informed strategies, partnering and collaborating, and evaluating the state's progress.

Facilitated by the Health Policy Institute of Ohio under a contract with the Ohio Department of Aging, the SAPA builds on and aligns with the 2020 Summary Assessment of Older Ohioans, the 2019-2022 State Plan on Aging, and the 2020-2022 State Health Improvement Plan. It also builds upon the work of the COVID-19 Ohio Minority Health Strike Force.

The 2020-2022 Strategic Action Plan on Aging and supporting documents are available at [aging.ohio.gov/SAPA](http://aging.ohio.gov/SAPA).

**About ODA** – The Ohio Department of Aging serves and advocates for the needs of Ohioans age 60 and older, as well as their families, caregivers and communities. Programs include home and community based long-term supports and services, as well as initiatives to promote health and wellness throughout the lifespan. Visit [aging.ohio.gov](http://aging.ohio.gov).

###