Successful Aging in Johnson County: A Market Analysis

Prepared by: The Johnson County Consortium on Successful Aging

June, 2005
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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In addition, we also would like to express our appreciation to Steve Atkins, Linda Kopping, Elizabeth Selk, Carol Thompson, Ralph Wilmoth, and Connie Benton-Wolfe for their help in creating the vision to guide this research. A number of students from the University of Iowa made critical contributions to this effort. Erin Heiden, Anne Kissick, Julie Wagner, Lora Washington, Sara Hill, Andrea Harmon, Scott Kallee-meyn, Sanjana Raghavan, and Poonam Bhakta are commended for providing valuable assistance.

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The Johnson County Consortium on Successful Aging resolved that local community efforts are critical to providing opportunities for older residents to age successfully. Communities help to provide health and supportive services, accessible and affordable housing options, opportunities to age successfully, and facilitate transportation and mobility.

The Consortium conducted a market analysis of the opportunities to age successfully in Johnson County. The objectives of this analysis were to compile information that will help prepare the county to meet the challenges and opportunities of population aging, and to identify specific issues that warrant further attention. In particular, the Consortium conducted a detailed demographic portrait of older adults in Johnson County; compiled an inventory of the programs, services and policies that targeted older adults; determined how well the needs and preferences of older adults were being met; and proposed four recommendations that will make Johnson County an even friendlier place for older adults.

The market analysis revealed that it is hard to describe the typical older person who lives in Johnson County. There is a mix of married couples, widows and widowers, and persons who have never been married. Women outnumber men, but this does not become so apparent until after the age of 80. Some people are in good health, others are not doing so well. In short, there are more than 8,300 individuals in Johnson County who happen to be over the age of 65.
The market analysis of programs, services, and policies pertaining to older adults suggested that Johnson County stands apart as a great place for seniors. This community provides an abundant supply of programs and services that can help older adults age successfully. One of the most notable features is the abundance of healthcare services and providers. There are few reasons to think that older persons cannot receive health care when needed, cannot remain at home as long as possible and cannot successfully navigate the challenges presented by age-related changes in health status.

The housing supply in Johnson County also appears to be well-suited for the majority of older adults, and may help many older adults to age-in-place. Moreover, Johnson County offers ample opportunity for older adults to engage in a number of different activities. Such a breadth and depth of opportunities for older adults to age successfully supports the conclusion that Johnson County is a friendly place for older adults.

While this market analysis constituted a critical step forward in defining exactly how Johnson County is a friendly place for older adults, the work fell short on two points. First, the analysis did not investigate several important, perhaps more subtle, issues. Second, the analysis provided no specific responses to questions that concern how the county will meet the needs of a growing aging population that also is becoming increasingly diverse. The analysis did not reveal how Johnson County can become an even friendlier place for older adults.
The Consortium on Successful Aging resolved that the larger community must work together to make Johnson County an even friendlier place for seniors, and the Consortium would like to make the following four recommendations:

1. Request the Johnson County Board of Supervisors, the cities, and the Chamber of Commerce, and public and private organizations to:
   a) Adopt resolutions to be a senior-friendly community.
   b) Ask their departments/committees to recommend ways their entity could be more senior-friendly.
   c) Appoint representatives of all generations to their boards and committees.

2. Use the four follow-up studies (Health and Supportive Services, Transportation, Housing, Successful Aging) being completed by the Consortium to:
   a) Define specific needs of seniors in Johnson County.
   b) Identify best practices and viable responses.
   c) Obtain the support that will allow stakeholders to address the needs.

3. Create a high-quality independent, current and comprehensive repository of programs/services/policies that pertain to older adults in Johnson County.

4. Recruit, through a collaborative effort, a professional staff person (i.e. aging specialist) to implement the recommendations just presented.
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THE DEMOGRAPHIC IMPERATIVE

Americans are living longer than ever before. Children who are born today can expect to live for an average of 78 years, members of the baby boom generation should expect to live at least another 30 years, and many persons who just entered their eighth decade of life should expect to enter their ninth. As individuals live longer, the population of older adults grows larger. The current population of older Americans is twice what it was in 1960, and it is expected to double again over the next 25 years. The age wave will become most apparent between 2010 and 2020 as the baby boomers reach and surpass the age of 65. By the middle of the 21st century, older adults will outnumber children and youth for the first time in U.S. history.

![Graph showing the number of people age 65 and over, by age group, selected years 1900-2000 and projected 2010-2050.](image-url)
The aging population already has established itself across the state of Iowa. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 561,000 Iowans are over 60 years old and this group constitutes nearly 20% of the state population. Only Florida, North Dakota, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia have a higher proportion of older citizens. In regard to the oldest old, Iowa ranks second and barely trails North Dakota in the percentage of citizens over the age of 85. Moreover, Iowa’s aging population is projected to increase by more than 55% over the next 20 years. By 2025, the number of older Iowans could reach almost 786,000 and represent more than 1 out of every 4 citizens.

Researchers, program planners, and public policy makers have been anticipating these issues for some time now, and in many ways, the state of Iowa is ahead of the curve in planning and implementing responses to the challenges and opportunities presented by the increasing number of older citizens.
However, many of these efforts have been directed toward older Iowans in general and have occurred on a state-wide basis. Less attention has been directed to the various challenges and opportunities faced by local communities. This is somewhat problematic because population aging has spread unevenly across the state. On one hand, older adults already represent more than 25% of the residents in some of Iowa’s most rural and least populated counties. On the other hand, the absolute growth of the older population has been greatest in more urban areas such as Des Moines, Dubuque, and Iowa City where the older adult population still represents a smaller percentage of the total population.

This irregular dispersion has different implications for each community; local planning and policy efforts should acknowledge and respond to these substantive differences among older Iowans. Persons who get older in the rural communities where they grew up are different from those who have stayed in or re-located to more urban areas.
The Johnson County Task Force on Aging resolved that local community planning efforts are critical to providing opportunities for older residents to age successfully. Communities that provide affordable housing, supportive programs and services, encourage civic engagement, and facilitate mobility, correspond with a population that will remain independent, well functioning and involved in community affairs. Following on this, the Task Force recruited a consortium of local members of the aging network to conduct a formal market analysis of the opportunities to age successfully in Johnson County. The objectives of this analysis were to compile information that will help prepare program administrators, service providers, and policy makers to meet the challenges and opportunities of population aging, and to identify specific issues that warrant further evaluation. The results of this initial analysis have been compiled in the remainder of this report.
JOHNSON COUNTY IS A FRIENDLY PLACE FOR SENIORS

In some respects, the work completed by the Johnson County Consortium on Successful Aging was easy. Instead of starting from scratch or staring at a blank canvas, the Consortium already knew that Johnson County was well-recognized as being a friendly place for persons in general and seniors in particular.

There are several indicators that support this assertion. Johnson County has been widely cited as a friendly place to live no matter what a person’s age. For example, over the past three years American Demographics rated the Coralville-Iowa City area in the top 10 of “Up and Coming” places to live. Expansion Management magazine ranked Iowa City third in terms of “livability.” FORBES magazine ranked Iowa City, the largest city in Johnson County, as one of the “Best Small Places for Business and Careers.” Kaplan’s ranked the University of Iowa as one of the best values in university education. The Milken Institute recognized that Johnson County hosts one of the best small metro economies. Men’s Journal listed the area as an attractive, healthy and safe place to live. Organic Style ranked Iowa City as the healthiest community in the mid-west. Outside magazine listed Iowa City as a top ten college town. Planet Out ranked Iowa City as one of the top twenty locations for same-sex couples. Sperling’s rated Iowa City among the least stressful places to live. USA Today named Iowa City as one of the "Best Educated Cities." Utne Reader selected Iowa City as one of America’s "Most Enlightened Towns."
More pertinent here, AARP rated Iowa City as one of the 15 best places to retire. *Business Week* cited Iowa City as a top retirement spot. The HON Foundation ranked Iowa City as one of the healthiest cities in America. *Seniors Place* said the county was a great retirement spot. *The Wall Street Journal* featured Iowa City as an exemplary place to retire.

The Consortium agreed that these basic indicators support the notion that Johnson County already has succeeded in responding to the challenges and opportunities brought by the growing older adult population. In fact, using a grading system recently established by the AARP Livable Communities project, the Consortium rated Johnson County well above average on ten indicators identified as critical components of a livable community for aging individuals.

**The 15 Best Places to Reinvent Your Life**

*By Grace Lichtenstein, Elaine Robbins, and Michael Dupuis*

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<th>City</th>
<th>State</th>
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<tr>
<td>Fayetteville, Arkansas</td>
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<tr>
<td>San Diego, California</td>
<td>California</td>
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<tr>
<td>Loveland/Fort Collins, Colo</td>
<td>Colorado</td>
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<td>Gainesville, Florida</td>
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<td>Sarasota, Florida</td>
<td>Florida</td>
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<td><strong>IOWA CITY, IOWA</strong></td>
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<td>Portsmouth, New Hampshire</td>
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<td>Santa Fe, New Mexico</td>
<td>New Mexico</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asheville, North Carolina</td>
<td>North Carolina</td>
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<td>Raleigh/Durham/Chapel Hill, N</td>
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<td>Ashland, Oregon</td>
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<td>Charleston, South Carolina</td>
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<td>San Antonio, Texas</td>
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<td>Bellingham, Washington</td>
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<td>Spokane, Washington</td>
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These basic indicators have not gone unnoticed and may help explain why Johnson County experienced the second largest growth among older residents across Iowa’s 99 counties between 1990 and 2000. Arguably, because Johnson County already is considered to be a friendly place for older adults, many individuals are choosing to stay in Johnson County as they reach their retirement years. Others may see Johnson County as an attractive retirement community and are relocating here upon retirement. Others with long-term health care needs are moving to Johnson County to be with their adult children and/or be in close proximity to the assorted health care options.

Another feature that may make Johnson County an appealing retirement destination is the lack of a large population. While the recent increase among older adults has been substantial, the county remains much less crowded than other, more urban areas where many older adults live such as Des Moines in Polk County and Cedar Rapids in Linn County.
Still, upon further consideration, the Consortium resolved that a more in-depth examination of the market pertaining to successful aging in Johnson County was necessary. After all, many of these ratings and indicators rely on gross measures such as the average level of education among the population or the number of hospital beds per capita. The measures really do not provide any indication of how well the county does in addressing more nuanced issues such as providing accessible and affordable housing options for older adults who have acquired some health problem or physical disability. The ratings provide no indications as to the effectiveness of community support programs in meeting the needs of the poorest and most isolated older adults. The ratings provide no evaluations of the adequacy of local policies that promote work and volunteer opportunities that meet the needs and preferences of older adults. All of these are considered to be critical features among those communities that are most likely to promote successful aging.

The Consortium also resolved that contemporary ratings provide no real indication of how well Johnson County will hold up under the increasing pressure brought about by the growing population of older adults. The Consortium did not really know what structures should be supported by the county, which directions should be pursued, and why certain choices should be avoided as the aging population grows. If Johnson County is to remain a friendly place or if the county aspires to become an even friendlier place for older adults, then more specific information needed to be collected and analyzed.
RESEARCH WITH A PURPOSE IN MIND

Besides trying to improve the opportunities for older adults in Johnson County to age successfully (defined by a lack of impairment associated with disease and disability, a desired amount of social, spiritual and intellectual engagement, and a sense of security concerning financial, housing and other matters), the Consortium acknowledged that older adults can be a significant asset to the county. Promoting opportunities for successful aging can have a positive impact on Johnson County in general. Any effort to make Johnson County an even friendlier place for seniors will also make Johnson County an even friendlier place for everyone. On a basic level, older adults possess a significant amount of wealth, and make valuable contributions to local economies and to the social capital of the communities in which they live. For example, active and healthy older adults increase the consumption of goods and services. Employers benefit from older adults who bring a lifetime of experience, reliability and flexibility to part-time and seasonal positions. Non-profit organizations benefit from experienced senior volunteers who enhance program and service delivery, and mitigate staffing shortages.
In conducting this market analysis, the Consortium made three other assumptions. The first was to embrace the diversity of older individuals. It is already known that older adults differ from each other along several dimensions. Vision and hearing, physical strength and appearance, and intellectual ability are some of the more obvious distinguishing characteristics but older adults also differ in terms of labor force participation, housing needs, consumption patterns, and use of professional healthcare services. Some older persons are independently wealthy and draw income from a number of sources such as pensions, investment returns, and salaries. Other older persons receive nothing more than a monthly Social Security check. The Consortium considered these differences in conducting the market analysis.

Beyond incorporating individual differences, the Consortium also assumed that the market analysis must anticipate change. The current group of older adults does not necessarily provide an accurate reflection of what the older population of Johnson County will look like in the next 10 to 20 years as the baby boomers reach and surpass their 65th birthdays.
Finally, the Consortium assumed that the plan must be developed so that it can be implemented within the specific context of Johnson County. To accomplish this, the Consortium did not rely exclusively on national or state statistics to reach conclusions about what should be done for older adults living in Johnson County. Instead, the Consortium made a substantial effort to collect data from individuals and organizations within Johnson County. This deliberate approach to study the people and programs of Johnson County lent a certain increased amount of credibility to the market analysis. The Consortium also made a considerable effort to involve as many local officials, community leaders, organization directors, and older citizens as possible in the study process. These individuals provided insights that helped define research findings, identify viable alternatives, and shape practical recommendations.

If the baby boomers actually change the definitions of retirement and set new standards for growing old, will Johnson County really be prepared? What exactly is the county doing to anticipate how the baby boomers will change the definitions and standards of retirement? The Consortium assumed that what worked to make Johnson County so attractive to the current group of older adults may not necessarily work for the coming generation of older adults. The analysis attempted to anticipate the changing preferences and needs of older adults.
STUDY METHOD

This study consisted of a cross-sectional examination of the market structures involving programs and services for older adults in Johnson County. In particular, the market analysis was organized around four constructs that have been identified as critical components to creating a desirable community environment for older adults. These constructs reflect: (a) health and supportive services, (b) housing, (c) successful aging opportunities, and (d) transportation and mobility.

Information about these constructs was collected from five sources: (a) the 2000 US Census of the Population; (b) a survey completed by 1,068 older adults living in Johnson County; (c) a survey completed by more than 100 program administrators and service providers, (d) public information about programs and services as presented in brochures, handouts, reports and web-sites; and (e) key informant interviews.

The remainder of this report is organized into four parts. First, a detailed demographic portrait of older adults in Johnson County was created, and this portrait paid particular attention to individual diversity and future population growth. Second, an inventory of the programs, services and policies that targeted older adults was compiled. Third, an analytic discussion concerning how well the needs and preferences of older adults were being met was conducted. Last, a set of conclusions and recommendations to make Johnson County an even friendlier place for older adults is presented.

All individuals who participated in this study process were informed about the goals and objectives, guaranteed that all personal information would remain anonymous, and told they had the right to recall or amend any information that was provided to the Consortium.
According to the US Census, Johnson County is home for 8,373 persons over the age of 65. Among Iowa’s 99 counties, Johnson County ranks eighth in the size of the older population, and second in the population growth among persons 65 and older that occurred between 1990 and 2000. In the next 10 years, the visibility of the aging population in Johnson County should become more apparent. The projected growth rate for older adults residing in the county is 55.2% for the next 20 years. Assuming life expectancy and migration trends remain constant, there may be as many as 12,000 older adults living in Johnson County by 2020. However, given the relatively low median age of the county, older adults will continue to represent less than 10% of the total population.
Geographic Distribution

According to the Census, 4,375 or 52% of Johnson County’s older adults live within the city limits of Iowa City, the county seat. Slightly more than 830 older adults (10% of the county population) live in Coralville, and 218 and 210 older persons live in North Liberty and Solon, respectively. Hills, Lone Tree and University Heights are home for 100 to 200 older adults, and less than 100 older adults live in Oxford, Shueyville, Swisher, Tiffin and the border town of West Branch. What is notable about some of the smaller, more rural communities like Hills and Solon is the comparatively higher concentration of older citizens (>15% of total population). In fact, slightly more than 1,900 (23%) older persons live in non-incorporated or rural areas of Johnson County.
Gender and Marital Status

Women make up 59% of the older population in Johnson County, and that percentage increases significantly as people age. Women represent 65% of all adults over 80 years old, and 72% of adults over age 85. Aging in Johnson County is a women’s issue.

Further, Johnson County differs from the rest of the State of Iowa by having a higher number of married and widowed individuals as opposed to divorced or individuals who have never been married. The significantly higher number of widows correlates with the increasing number of women in the higher age brackets. In all, 64% of older adults in Johnson County are married, 23% are widowed, and the remainder are divorced or single.

Race and Ethnicity

The racial composition of the aging population in Johnson County is striking for its homogeneity. Nearly 98% of the older adult population is Caucasian. The number of African, Asian, Hispanic, and individuals from other races amounts to approximately 200. Among these, Asian-Americans are the largest group consisting of 97 individuals. It is unlikely that racial diversity will increase substantially over the next 10 years as the composition of the baby boomers in Johnson County is 95% Caucasian. By way of comparison, racial minorities already represent up to 15% of the aging population in states such as California and Hawaii.
Health Status

In Johnson County, 1 out of every 4 older adults reported that their health status is good or excellent. A little more than 1 out of every 2 said their health status is fair. The remainder reported they are in poor health. According to the US Census, nearly 3,000 community residing older adults (37%) reported having at least one disability; 17% had one disability while another 20% reported having two or more. The rates were slightly higher among women and 151 individuals with a disability also lived in poverty.

More specifically, 1,016 community dwelling older adults reported having a sensory disability, 1,280 reported having a disability that limited their ability to go outside the home, 689 had a disability that limited their capacity for self-care. Mental disability affected 732 older community residents.
In terms of healthcare use, 92% of the survey respondents reported that they saw a general physician at least once in the past year, and 72% had visited a medical specialist at least once in the last 12 months. Also, 15% reported that they had an overnight hospital stay in the past year and 14% used an emergency service. In addition, 6% of the survey respondents used supportive services.

The majority of survey respondents indicated that the supply of health providers and hospital services was very important. The majority of respondents also indicated that the availability of health information and home health services was very important. Two out of three respondents indicated they wanted to learn more about health and long-term care.

More than 95% agreed that there were plenty of affordable health services in Johnson County. However, only 2/3 of the survey respondents commented on the affordability of home and long-term care services. Among these, nearly 1/3 suggested that there were not enough affordable long-term care service options.

**Health Services Used by Seniors**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Health Services Used by Seniors</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary Care Visit</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialist Visit</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overnight Hospital Stay</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency Room Visit</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support Services Visit</td>
<td>6%</td>
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</table>
Housing

Nearly 95% of the older adults in Johnson County reside in a household. Among these, 66% (N=5,150) reside in a family household and the remainder live in a non-family household. The majority of family households consist of a married couple with no children living at home. The majority of non-family households consist of persons who have no surviving spouse or who never married. The overwhelming majority of non-family households consist of women who live alone (N=1,947).

Three out of every four households are located in a single family home, and only 10% of these homeowners pay a monthly mortgage that exceeds 35% of their income. In contrast, 30% of those older adults living in an apartment pay more than 35% of their monthly income for rent. Altogether, 7 out of 10 older adults make no monthly housing payments but 4% of persons receive some assistance from family or government programs. Of all the households in Johnson County, 13% have at least one member who is over the age of 65. There are 253 grandparents (who are not necessarily over the age of 65) who are primary caregivers for grandchildren.
Slightly less than 450 older adults live in some type of residential care facility. Less than 100 older adults live within some sort of group quarters.

The majority of Johnson County senior residents say that they are very satisfied with their current housing situations. Only 4% reported that they were not satisfied with their current living situation. Slightly more than 76% own their home and prefer this living arrangement over the other options available. Over 90% of seniors who responded to the survey felt that Johnson County is a desirable place to live, and stated they had no plans to move in the next year. Among those who reported that they may move, 2 out of every 3 said they were going to stay in Johnson County. However, only 55% responded to a question concerning the affordability of housing options in Johnson County. Among those, only 1 out of 5 said there was a sufficient supply of affordable housing options.

While home modification are critical to helping persons age in place, only 2 of every 10 persons had significantly modified their home. These modifications largely involved installing shower grab bars. Few older adults reported doing anything else such as installing ramps, installing accessible cooking and cleaning appliances, or adding other safety devices.
Education

Johnson County’s population over the age of 65 is well-educated compared to the rest of the state. More than 80% of Johnson County’s older adults have earned a high school diploma or more. In contrast, slightly more than 70% of the state’s older population have received a high school diploma or have gone beyond a 12th grade education. As many as 1 out of every 5 older adults in Johnson County has an advanced professional or graduate degree.

According to the survey responses, over 1/3 of the seniors in Johnson County felt that education was important to them, and 2/3 said they would be willing to pay to participate in educational activities. In addition, 87% of the survey respondents thought there was an ample supply of educational opportunities. However, less than 10% reported that they actually participated in an educational program in the past year.

Economic Well-Being

Older adults in Johnson County differ from the rest of the state in terms of economic well-being. Median household income for persons between the ages of 65 and 74 is $38,500, and slightly less than $29,000 for persons over 75. Only 3.5% of the older population is living in poverty compared to the state average of 8%. There are slightly more than 1,000 older adults who were defined as being “near poor.” In contrast, 12.5% of older adults in Johnson County have an annual income greater than $50,000 compared to a state average of 7.5%.
Employment and Volunteer Activity

Nearly 18% of older adults in Johnson County remain in the labor force, which is higher than the rest of Iowa. The Census data indicated that only 38 older individuals reported they were unemployed and looking for work. The remainder of the older population described themselves as not working or retired. The survey confirmed these findings. The overwhelming majority of survey respondents considered themselves to be retired, and only 17% reported that they currently were being paid to work. Of these, 34% worked full time. The survey responses also showed that men were much more likely to work than women. Slightly more than one of every two older adults agreed with the statement that there was ample opportunity to find work in Johnson County.

In regard to volunteer activity, 80% reported there was ample opportunity to engage in volunteer and other civic activities. Slightly more than 40% of the survey respondents indicated that they had volunteered at least once in the past month. However, the majority of these volunteers were engaged less than 5 hours per week.
Transportation and Mobility

According to the survey responses, approximately 92% of the older adults in Johnson County rely on private vehicles for their transportation needs, and 86% of these reported that they were able to drive themselves. Among this group, 70% reported that they drove daily. Less than 5% of the survey respondents indicated they had difficulty making it to healthcare appointments or driving to the store for groceries. By and large, the majority of older adults were happy with their ability to get around the county.

Nine out of every ten older adults can walk up to 50 feet without any problem; 1 out of every 2 exercise for 30 minutes at least four days each week. Still, almost 15% of the survey respondents indicated they found that walking around their neighborhood was difficult or unsafe.
What happens to a person as he or she grows older largely depends on individual characteristics. If a person is wealthy, well-educated, and has been free from disease and disability, it is more likely that he will age successfully. If a person is open to novel experiences and actively seeks out new opportunities, then she is less likely to be limited by the prescribed norms of what it means to be old.

Beyond this, the community in which one lives can have a significant impact on the aging experience. A community that offers geriatric specialty services may contribute to an individual living a longer, healthier life. A community that offers real and affordable housing choices may help an older individual conserve wealth and maintain the highest possible quality of life. A community that offers educational and financial planning assistance may help an individual understand changes in Medicare and Medicaid programs, and avoid making ill-advised investments. Having safe and secure hiking trails and sidewalks promotes physical activity and an individual’s sense of independence.

In the remainder of this section, the market supply of health and social services, housing, successful aging opportunities, and transportation services are documented. This review is not meant to be an exhaustive inventory or a list of all available programs and services. This review is meant to assess the market structures that currently are in place across Johnson County.
Health and Social Services

Most older adults living in Johnson County are in good physical and mental condition and have little need for intensive health and social services. Still, as persons grow older, they may face a greater number of diseases and disabilities, and generally end up using a greater amount of health and social services than younger persons. The availability of health and social services is highly valued by older adults.

Johnson County offers a wide variety of health and social services. These services include inpatient hospital care, outpatient care, preventive health services, allied health services such as dental and mental health, pharmaceutical and medical equipment supply services, end-of-life programs, home health and supportive services, residential long-term care, and home and community-based long-term care.

Inpatient Hospitals

There are three major hospitals in Johnson County which provide a total of 1,080 inpatient beds, suggesting that there is at least one hospital bed for every eight persons over the age of 65. The University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics (UIHC) is a tertiary care, teaching hospital with over 200 specialty practices and 772 inpatient beds. The hospital is ranked highly by the US News and World Report annual survey and is well-recognized as a leading academic medical center. Nearly 150 UIHC physicians have been recognized as among the Best Doctors in America. The hospital also serves as the primary clinical site for the University of Iowa Colleges of Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy, Dentistry and Public Health. These colleges also have been ranked highly and are well-regarded across the country.
Mercy Hospital of Iowa City is a community hospital that has provided care since 1873. Mercy is defined as an acute care community hospital and regional referral center for southeast Iowa with 234 inpatient beds, 16 of which are skilled nursing beds. The hospital offers a full range of medical services that cover 28 different specialty areas. Mercy Hospital is accredited by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations.

The Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center (VAMC) in Iowa City is a tertiary health care center and teaching hospital with 93 inpatient beds. The Iowa City VAMC offers a range of specialty services to the veterans across southeast Iowa. The VAMC has 40 medicine/neurology beds, 28 surgery beds, 10 intensive care beds, and 15 psychiatry beds.
**Outpatient Clinics**

Two of the hospitals feature geriatric assessment and special care clinics. The assessment clinics at UIHC are open 24 hours a week and the VA clinic is open for 16. The clinics accommodate older patients by appointment or physician referral. Their services include a complete clinical assessment covering nutrition, mobility, mental health, pain and sensory functions. The costs of these assessments usually are covered by Medicare, Medicaid or other insurance programs.

Outside of the hospitals, there are a number of outpatient health clinics and physician practices. Altogether there are 180 community-based primary care physicians in Johnson County (e.g., family physicians, internal medicine) and 11 of these are certified in geriatric care. In addition, there are 2,380 registered nurses in the county. In terms of the per capita supply of healthcare professionals, Johnson County ranks first among Iowa’s 99 counties.

The Iowa City Free Medical Clinic provides quality outpatient health care to residents of Johnson County. Services are available to uninsured and underinsured individuals who may not have access to care due to economic reasons, confidentiality, or other factors. In the previous year, the clinic served nearly 60 persons over the age of 65.

Johnson County Public Health, the Visiting Nurse Association, the Iowa City Free Medical Clinic offer preventive screenings for such health problems as high blood pressure, diabetes, and depression at the Iowa City-Johnson County Senior Center, community centers, and some faith-based organizations.
Allied Health Services

The county also leads the state in the supply of dentists. In addition, the UIHC - College of Dentistry offers a geriatric dentistry service that accommodates special needs patients such as those with dementia and provides care on an adjusted fee schedule. The College also provides a mobile geriatric dental program that offers care to residents in long-term care facilities in Johnson County and the four surrounding counties.

Johnson County provides a variety of mental health services for older adults and their families. These include support groups and counseling services. Help-lines, safe return programs and educational programs are available for persons with dementia and their caregivers. UIHC offers a Behavioral Health Senior Care Service that provides inpatient and outpatient care as well as outreach to nursing homes and assisted living facilities. The Community Mental Health Center of Mid-Eastern Iowa served more than 90 older adults in the past year and has staff dedicated to providing care at home to qualified older persons. The Mid-Eastern Iowa Council on Chemical Abuse (MECCA) served 13 older adults in the past year.

Johnson County also has a number of physical, rehabilitative and recreational therapy services to help older adults being discharged from a hospital or when they experience increased amount of physical disability.
The use of pharmaceutical medications is common among older adults, and the average 75-year-old uses at least five different prescriptions simultaneously. Johnson County leads the state with a total of 252 practicing pharmacists. Moreover, there are at least two professional prescription drug counseling programs. There also are three local Senior Health Insurance Information Programs sponsors in Johnson County which provide free information to older adults about Medicare in general and the prescription drug benefit program in particular, Medicare supplemental insurance, long-term care insurance, and the Iowa Medicaid program.

In addition to medication, older adults sometimes need medical equipment like oxygen tanks and walkers. Outside of the three hospitals, Johnson County features three stores that specialize in providing medical equipment.

Specialized end-of-life care also is becoming more commonplace as the aging population grows. The UIHC offers holistic end-of-life services within a dedicated palliative care unit. There are two community-based hospice programs in Johnson County that offer direct patient care and support groups.
Support and social services play a critical role in maintaining a person’s health and also help those with a persistent disabling condition such as Alzheimer’s disease. Still, as discussed in the previous section, many older adults are unaware of the variety of supportive and social service options that are available to them.

Case management and geriatric assessment clinics play a key role in evaluating an individual’s needs and providing basic education about the different service options that are available in Johnson County. Case management provides entry into the healthcare system, links people to a full range of supportive and social services including home health care, nutrition programs, homemaker and chore assistance, emergency response, and transportation.

Elder Services, Inc. takes the lead role in coordinating home and community-based service delivery among 18 local agencies in Johnson County. Over 400 frail older adults were served in case management last year. These agencies are linked through a formal agreement administered by the Heritage Area Agency on Aging Case Management for the Frail Elderly Program. ESI served an additional 1600 people through their congregate and home delivered meals, chore, friendly visitor, and caregiver counseling programs. The geriatric assessment center at the UIHC Family Care Center conducts formal evaluations. Alzheimer’s disease and dementia evaluations are conducted by UIHC Department of Neurology.
There are several programs which provide health and supportive services to older persons living at home in Johnson County. These home health and supportive care services provide individuals post-hospital care as well as long-term care. They help with administering medical treatment, maintaining medical equipment, and providing assistance with routine chores. There are seven agencies within Johnson County that provide these services. The Visiting Nurse Association and Mercy Home Health serve the largest number of Medicare patients. For example, VNA served more than 500 older adults in the past year. Home health services also can be paid for by the older individuals and their families.

There also are a number of community-based health and social service programs in Johnson County. For example, adult day health care programs are designed to assist individuals who are experiencing significant physical and mental disabilities, but prefer to remain at home as long as possible. Adult day health care may keep persons from having to enter some sort of residential long-term care facility. There are three adult day health care programs in Johnson County. Pathways provided targeted care to 40 older adults last year, Systems Unlimited, Inc. provides care to older persons within the context of providing day care to all persons with disabilities. The other programs serve older adults as part of a larger population group.
Finally, Johnson County offers an array of health promotion, prevention and holistic services. Johnson County Public Health (JCPH) along with the Visiting Nurse Association offer older adult physical fitness assessments, and breast and cervical cancer early detection programs at the Iowa City/Johnson County Senior Center and other locations. The WISEWOMAN Program, provided by the JCPH and VNA, is a heart disease risk reduction program for low income older women. Several additional health promotion and prevention programs are offered through the hospitals and outpatient health clinics. The Holistic Healthcare Network of Eastern Iowa includes practitioners that offer acupuncture, chiropractics, feng shui, homeopathy, massage therapy, and yoga. UIHC Department of Internal Medicine has a staff expert in complementary and alternative medicine.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Health Services in Johnson County</th>
<th>Location of services</th>
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<td><strong>Inpatient hospitals</strong></td>
<td>University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics, Mercy Medical Center, Iowa City, Veterans Affairs Medical Center</td>
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<td><strong>Allied Health Services</strong></td>
<td>College of Dentistry, UI Behavioral Health Senior Care Service, County Community Mental Health Center, Mid-East Iowa Council on Chemical Abuse, Prescription Drug Counseling Program, Senior Health Insurance Information, Durable Medical Equipment, Parish Nurses Palliative Care Units and Hospice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Home and Community Based Services</strong></td>
<td>Case Management, Geriatric Assessment, Heritage Agency on Aging, Home Health, Adult Day Health Care Programs, Preventive and Holistic Healthcare</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Housing

The overwhelming majority of older adults would prefer to stay in their homes for as long as possible. Many older adults consider their homes a valued possession which adds to their quality of life. Following this, affordable and accessible housing options are critical to making Johnson County a friendly place for older adults.

There are a variety of housing options for older adults in Johnson County. As discussed in the previous section, the majority of older adults live at home in a single family dwelling or in an apartment. Most are satisfied with their housing situation, and only 4% require assistance with meeting their housing costs.

There are federal and state programs that provide assistance in the form of subsidized housing programs and rent support. In Johnson County individuals with low-incomes and who are over the age of 62 can receive rent reimbursement and funding for home repairs; those over 65 can receive rental vouchers. Also, home owners that meet income criteria can receive property tax assistance through the Johnson County Treasurer’s office. In addition, the Age & Income program assists low income property owners, who are over the age of 65, by providing a “suspend tax” benefit in which a lien is taken against the property, to be paid at time of death or when property is sold. The City of Iowa City Rehabilitation Program offers low interest loans to seniors to make home modifications and repairs. There are 534 rental assistance units targeted for older adults, and an additional 131 older households received rental assistance vouchers.

*Subsidized Housing in Johnson County*
For those older adults not living at home or in an apartment, there are a number of residential options. There is one continuing care retirement community (CCRC) that provides the full range of housing options for retired adults, from independent living through nursing home care.

There are six assisted living programs with 299 beds. Two of these programs are designated dementia special care programs with a total of 88 beds. Slightly less than 30% of the assisted living beds have been designated as affordable as opposed to being available at ‘market rate.’

There are eight nursing facilities in Johnson County which offer a total of 578 beds for those requiring medical assistance or continuing care. There is one residential care facility that provides high-intensity skilled nursing services with 114 beds and one hospital based skilled nursing unit with 16 beds.

As mentioned, a number of home modification programs are available to older adults who are over 65 years old. In addition, the county also has several housing contractors who could potentially complete home modifications. Universal designs are now featured as part of some housing developments located in Iowa City.
Successful Aging

The process of growing old encompasses continued development and new experiences, as well as the various changes in health status and functional ability. Successful aging begins with the pursuit of optimal wellness, and specifically involves the: (a) the absence or management of disease and disability, (b) the maintenance of intellectual and physical functions, and (c) engagement in meaningful activities. Aging successfully entails continued growth and development, and developing the capacity to respond optimally to the inevitable challenges of growing old. Leisure, physical, spiritual, and educational activities provide several benefits for older adults. These activities can replace work roles, expand on pre-retirement skills and interests, assist in maintaining a positive self-concept, self-reliance and independence, and promote overall well-being. In addition, participating in leisure, spiritual, and educational activities can help older adults deal more effectively with stressful life events through shared companionship, reduced feelings of loneliness, and increased ability to cope with significant life changes.

Figure 1: Components of Successful Aging
Leisure Opportunities

A wide array of cultural and recreational programs are available across Johnson County. The University hosts several national touring dance, music and theater productions. Iowa City and Coralville have established several community theater groups, and offer several venues for music festivals and individual performances.

Johnson County is home to the Lake Macbride water recreation area that feeds into the Iowa River. Besides aquatic recreation, the lake offers birding, camping, fishing, and a fossil gorge. There are ten golf courses and more than 20 fitness facilities, in addition to numerous University of Iowa and community recreation facilities.

The Coralville Recreational Center, Elder Service Incorporated, the Iowa City/Johnson County Senior Center, the Lone Tree Community Center, the North Liberty Community Center, and the Solon Senior Center provide a broad array of services and activities targeting older adults. Some examples include fitness classes, swimming and water aerobics, meals, transportation services, craft and social activities, support groups, and intergenerational programming.
**Health Promotion Opportunities**

Smoking cessation classes and individual counseling are offered by Johnson County Public Health, UIHC, Mercy Hospital, and the Veteran Affairs Medical Center. Individualized exercise counseling is offered by Johnson County Public Health, the Iowa City/Johnson County Senior Center and at several of the locations mentioned previously. Nutrition education programs are provided by the three local hospitals, Johnson County Extension, the VNA, Elder Services Inc., and JCPH.

**Educational Opportunities**

A variety of formal educational programs are designed for older adults in Johnson County. The Senior Center and the Senior College operated by the University of Iowa Alumni Association offer several lectures and classes to seniors across the county. Many community-based agencies and organizations also offer educational programs for older adults. These programs are provided throughout the county at senior centers, meal sites, hospitals, community centers, churches, and libraries. The University of Iowa and Kirkwood Community College also offer a diverse set of lectures and course offerings that may be of interest to older adults. While these courses are not aimed at a particular age group, older adults can easily enroll.
Faith-Based Organizations

Johnson County is recognized nationally for its religious diversity. The Consultation of Religious Communities is composed of 28 different faith-based groups that share a long history of meeting local needs. Most notably, thirteen congregations joined together to build and manage an 81 unit apartment complex for older and disabled persons in Iowa City called Ecumenical Towers. The Towers are located next to the Iowa City/Johnson County Senior Center.

Some of the faith-based organizations have special ministries for seniors including parish nurses, preparation for end-of-life, and home visitations for frail seniors. Some parishes provide hearing assistance devices and large print books during services and other programs. All of the organizations offer volunteer and service opportunities for older adults.

Supportive Services

There are several other programs and services that can help older adults age successfully. The Iowa Legal Aid society provides legal counsel to older persons with lower incomes. The Iowa City Crisis Center provides emergency assistance to older persons. There are six senior dining sites across Johnson County that serve over 350 individuals daily.
Employment Opportunities

Some older adults are interested in pursuing a second career or wish to be employed part-time. Successful aging also has been tied to labor-force engagement. Aging persons who continue to work (or who find a second career) are less likely to experience financial hardships and require public assistance. Older persons who engage in meaningful work also experience increased levels of satisfaction. Their labor force participation also provides benefits to the local economy.

There are over 2,600 businesses in Johnson County and more than 62,000 employees. As indicated, 17% of the aging population is employed and less than 40 older adults actively are looking for work. However, not all older adults think there are appropriate employment opportunities available to them.

Entry or reentry into the labor force may be difficult for some older adults without some sort of training, skill development or other type of assistance. There are four job training sites across Johnson County that provide seniors with employment training and placement assistance. The Hawkeye Area Community Action Program administers a Senior Community Service Employment Program and provides subsidized job training and work experiences for qualified older adults. There also is a Workforce Development office in Iowa City and two temporary employment agencies.
Volunteer Opportunities

Many older adults who age successfully also engage in volunteer activities. There are four volunteer programs which focus on providing opportunities for older adults. These include the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program and Friendly Visitors Program which are operated by Elder Services Incorporated. A Foster Grandparent Program is administered by Handicare. Johnson County also hosts a SCORE program (Service Corps for Retired Executives) that enlists retired older adults as counselors for small business owners.

The local hospitals also have large volunteer programs that are coordinated by staff directors. There are a number of other organizations that provide volunteer opportunities to older adults. For example, older adults have been recruited by local elementary schools to assist children outside of class. Seniors make up a substantial portion of the volunteer pool at the Johnson County Visitor’s Center, local museums, and the home delivered meals programs operated by Elder Services Incorporated through the Iowa City/Johnson County Senior Center. In addition, local churches and civic organizations provide a range of volunteer opportunities for older adults. The roles range from providing hands-on assistance to working as program support staff or administrators. The Iowa City/Johnson County Senior Center linked more than 500 older adults to volunteer opportunities in the past year.
Transportation and Mobility

Transportation and mobility are critical to the physical, social, and psychological well-being of older persons. Physical health depends on access to medical facilities, health promotion programs, and other social services. The ability to maintain an active social life also depends on an individual’s accessibility to family, friends, recreational and cultural activities. Important elements of psychological health are enhanced by mobility, affecting whether a person can maintain freedom from isolation and the ability to choose a range of activities.

Older persons rely heavily on private vehicles for their transportation needs. Iowa AARP offers a safe driver course for older adults who wish to sharpen their safe driving skills.

Rural residents who are older, disabled, or poor, appear to be more dependent on public or supportive transportation services. Overall, both urban and rural older women are less likely to rely on a private vehicle, and more likely to use public transportation, than are older men.
Transportation services in Johnson County vary greatly. Transportation operated by public agencies or supported by public funds are the most widely available options. These include Coralville Transit, Iowa City Transit, University of Iowa Cambus, and three private cab companies and shuttle services. The county also operates a specialized transportation service through the SEATS program. In addition, incidental transportation programs also are available. These programs provide transportation services that are “incidental” to the agency’s main purpose. For example, churches, assisted living facilities, hospitals, and nursing homes provide some transportation services to those in need.

Many older adults have no trouble walking 50 feet or more, and consider walking to be a primary form of exercise. Kent Park and Iowa City Parks include more than 20 miles of walking/biking trails. There is also a biking/walking trail that covers a large part of Johnson County. The Coralville Reservoir features a Veteran’s trail that is safe and accessible. Indoor walking opportunities exist at the University of Iowa, North Liberty Center, the Coralville Recreation Center, and the Iowa City Recreation Center. Downtown Iowa City and Coralville feature cut curbs, timed crossing lights and protected pedestrian walkways.
### Market supply of programs and services pertaining to aging successfully in Johnson County

| Health Services                              | Inpatient Hospitals  
|                                            | Outpatient Clinics  
|                                            | Allied Health Services  
|                                            | Home and Community Based Care  
| Housing                                     | Single Family Homes  
|                                            | Apartments  
|                                            | Continuing Care Retirement Community  
|                                            | Subsidized Housing  
|                                            | Assisted Living Facility  
|                                            | Nursing Facilities  
| Successful Aging                            | Leisure Opportunities  
|                                            | Health Promotion Opportunities  
|                                            | Employment Opportunities  
|                                            | Educational Opportunities  
|                                            | Volunteer Opportunities  
|                                            | Faith-Based Organizations  
|                                            | Supportive Services  
| Transportation and Mobility                 | Independent Driving  
|                                            | Assisted Driving  
|                                            | Driver Education programs  
|                                            | Para Transit  
|                                            | Public Transit  

Who is the typical older adult living in Johnson County?

It is hard to describe the typical older person who lives in Johnson County. There is a mix of married couples, widows and widowers, and persons who have never been married. Women outnumber men, but this does not become so apparent until after the age of 80. Older adults in Johnson County are well-educated comparatively, but some seniors have not gone beyond a high school education. While the poverty rate in Johnson County is below average, some older adults are challenged to meet the costs of healthcare. Many more may be concerned that they do not have sufficient resources to afford potential long-term care costs. One out of five older adults, especially men, continues to work and as many as two out of every five serve as volunteers. Most older adults live in their own homes and want to stay there as long as possible, but there are others who live in apartments or residential facilities and are challenged to make their monthly payments. Some persons have been here most of their lives, while others have identified Johnson County as a retirement destination and recently relocated. Most seniors are in good health but one out of every five persons has some trouble with a common activity like getting dressed or taking a bath.
While there is not any sort of typical older adult in Johnson County, there are clusters or groups of older adults. There are the well-educated, wealthy couples who live in their own homes. There are several widowed women who live alone at home or in an apartment. There is a group of older adults who are not as well-educated, not as wealthy, not as healthy, and live in subsidized housing. There are men who continue to work as long as they can, others work part-time because they need the income. There are others who have resigned from the workplace altogether and have engaged in leisure and volunteer activities.

Such market segmentation may be useful to policy planners and program developers, but the more important point to embrace is that the older adult population is quite diverse. The older adult population in Johnson County is more integrated than older adult populations living in places like Hot Springs Village, Arkansas; Palm Springs, California; Sarasota, Florida, or other popular retirement destinations. Alternatively, the aging population in Johnson County is not like those found in rural parts of Iowa and other great plains states.

As the population continues to grow older, Johnson County should expect that the aging population will become even more diverse. The current group of older adults may become more frail and may face greater financial need. The racial and ethnic composition gradually will become more varied. As baby boomers age, family structures and housing arrangements will feature a greater number of ‘step’ relationships and co-habitation between parents and their adult children, some of whom may be over the age of 65. A greater number of older adults may participate in education and volunteer activities. The use of assistive technology (e.g., motorized wheelchairs) will become more commonplace.
In some sense, the aging population in Johnson County consists of 8,373 individuals and the future population may consist of more than 12,000 individuals who happen to be over the age of 65.
What exactly makes Johnson County such a friendly place for seniors?

The market analysis of programs, services, and policies pertaining to older adults suggests that Johnson County stands apart as a great place for seniors. This community provides an abundant supply of programs and services that can help older adults age successfully.

One of the most notable features is the abundant availability of healthcare services and providers. There is at least 1 inpatient hospital bed for every 8 older adults. There is a range of allied health services including geriatric dentistry clinics and pharmaceutical benefits management programs. There also are case management and home health services available throughout the county. There is at least one 1 physician for every 10 older adults, and 1 registered nurse for every 4 older adults. In short, there are few reasons to think that older persons cannot receive health care when needed, cannot remain at home as long as possible and cannot successfully navigate the challenges presented by age-related changes in health and financial status.

The housing supply in Johnson County also appears to be well-suited for the majority of older adults. Most older adults live in single family homes and own them outright, and many of the seniors in Johnson County report that they are happy with their housing situation and are not planning to move. There also are options for subsidized housing and residential care. There is an ample supply of intermediate and skilled nursing care beds; there are assisted living facilities and a continuing care retirement community. Altogether, the housing stock of Johnson County helps many older adults to age-in-place rather than relocate to another community. The variety of housing options also may have attracted older adults who have relocated to Johnson County from other locations.
Johnson County offers ample opportunity for older adults to engage in a number of different activities. The University of Iowa, the Iowa City Senior Center, Kirkwood Community College and other programs provide a range of educational opportunities. There are year-round recreational options including water sports, golf, tennis, hiking and biking trails, and indoor athletic facilities. Johnson County also provides an ample supply of popular and high quality arts and entertainment. Older adults have the option to join a wide range of faith-based organizations, and Johnson County appears to provide older adults with a sufficient amount of work and volunteer experiences. Such a breadth and depth of opportunities to engage in activities significantly adds to the notion that Johnson County is a friendly place for older adults.

Transportation and mobility does not pose a problem to the majority of older residents of Johnson County. Most older adults continue to drive, and there is a range of public and para-transit options available for those who need assistance. In addition, there are plenty of walking paths and trails, and the downtowns of Iowa City and Coralville feature cut curbs, highly visible crosswalk signals, and protected crosswalks for safe pedestrian traffic.
What can be done to make Johnson County an even friendlier place?

While this market analysis constitutes a critical step forward in defining exactly how Johnson County constitutes a friendly place for older adults, the work falls short on two points. First, the analysis did not investigate several important, perhaps more subtle, issues. Second, the analysis provides no specific responses to questions that concern how the county will meet the needs of a growing aging population that also is becoming increasingly diverse. The analysis does not reveal how Johnson County can become an even friendlier place for older adults.

For example, neither UIHC or Mercy Hospital has a geriatric inpatient unit. While the UI College of Nursing provides a specialty training program in geriatric care, the College of Medicine does not. This raises an important question: Just because our healthcare providers have a great deal of experience treating seniors, does that mean they have been trained formally to offer the latest, evidence-based approaches to geriatric care?

One way to assure that our seniors are receiving the best care possible would be to increase the supply of providers who have licensed or certified training in geriatrics. As the aging population grows and diversifies and Johnson County aspires to become an even friendlier place for seniors, the lack of such targeted geriatric health services and training efforts may become a more significant issue.

Further, the initial assessment did not provide enough information to determine if programs and services actually met individual demand. Are the number of adult day health care centers sufficient? Do we really have enough geriatric mental health providers? Do the persons who schedule health care appointments also insure that older adults have adequate transportation support?
The analysis did not provide any qualitative insight into how well the County meets the emerging preferences that older adults have concerning home and community-based care and holistic end-of-life care. How well does Johnson County really address the health of the whole individual and his or her family? How well does the County facilitate persons being able to live and die at home with minimal pain, surrounded by family and loved ones?

In regard to housing options, the market analysis did not ascertain the adequacy and affordability of housing options like assisted living. Are enough new homes being built with universal design features to help older adults who may experience an increasing level of disability and still want to remain at home as long as possible?

Moreover, the analysis did not determine why the abundant supply of housing contractors in Johnson County did not correspond with having a greater number of older adults complete the sorts of home modifications (e.g., installing shower grab bars, moving laundry to the common floor) that would allow them to remain at home as long as possible.

The analysis also did not evaluate the adequacy of connecting people to services. If older adults are to remain at home, then some efforts must be made to connect them to the programs and services that will allow them to do so (e.g., meal programs, exercise programs, health education seminars, etc.). Of all the older persons who currently live at home alone, how many are actually connected to the programs and services that will help them to navigate successfully the challenges of growing older?
The number of older adults who actually benefit from activities remains unclear. Are the education, arts and entertainment programs affordable to all older adults? Are they accessible to those older adults in nursing facilities? Do the persons in the rural parts of Johnson County engage in these activities as easily as those who live closer to the cities and towns?

Another important question concerns whether or not all older adults are provided opportunities to work and volunteer. Do widowed women who have financial needs also have realistic opportunities to work? What programs make use of volunteers for more than a few hours?

The initial analysis also did not resolve if having a car and being able to drive one’s self is the same thing as being able to come and go whenever the need arises. Do older adults avoid getting out because they find parking too difficult or the road lighting to be inadequate? The analysis did not determine if the para-transit services are meeting the particular needs of older adults who could no longer drive or who live in the rural areas. Are the public transportation routes designed to make it easy for older adults to access in terms of time and location of pick-ups?

Last, the analysis did not determine exactly how older adults are providing value to the greater community of Johnson County. How does addressing the needs of older adults and providing them opportunities to age successfully correspond with increasing economic and social capital for other programs, services and population groups? After all, any effort to make Johnson County an even friendlier place for older adults should not be done in isolation. In meeting the needs of older adults and providing more opportunities to age successfully, the County should become an even friendlier place for everyone else.
This market analysis represents the first and only effort to document thoroughly the opportunities for successful aging in Johnson County. The Consortium agreed that the market analysis established that Johnson County is indeed a great place for older adults. The analysis revealed that the aging population is growing and becoming increasingly diverse, and older adults in Johnson County are provided numerous opportunities to age successfully. Yet the analysis suggested that many persons are not familiar with the range of programs and services that are available. The Consortium also agreed that many local program administrators, service providers and policy makers are not familiar with the varied needs and preferences of older residents, and are not necessarily prepared to address the changing needs and preferences that will be brought forth when the baby boomers reach and surpass their 65th birthdays.

The Consortium resolved that the market analysis did not go far enough to determine how exactly the county can meet the needs and preferences of the increasingly diverse population of older adults that will be living in and moving to the county over the next 10 years. The Consortium particularly is concerned that as the current group of older adults continues to age, there will be increasing demands for more affordable options to age successfully. There also will be challenges to meet the growing number of older adults who choose to live in the rural parts of the county.
In fact, the Consortium has initiated four studies that address these more specific concerns. One study focuses on the provision of health and social services, a second considers the adequacy and affordability of housing options, a third study examines the viability of opportunities for all residents to participate in activities that correspond with successful aging, and the fourth study considers how transportation services could be improved to meet the needs and preferences of older adults.

Finally, the Consortium agreed that these efforts to make Johnson County an even friendlier place for older adults must be embraced by a larger audience. County policy makers and planners must make a formal effort to incorporate the preferences and needs of older adults in more generally targeted activities. For example, program planners and policy makers could assure that housing developments are zoned in a manner that provides older adults realistic opportunities to age in place. Private and non-profit planning boards also should consider the interests of older adults more formally. This sort of commitment will assure that new construction such as recreation facilities, the convention center, and Kinnick Stadium incorporates the needs of older residents in Johnson County. Such an integrated approach may prevent costly mistakes such as not designing facilities in accordance with federal and state disability and discrimination laws. More important, this sort of integration of aging interests will make Johnson County an even friendlier place for seniors, and thus, increase the wealth of the county in terms of economic and social capital.
Executive Summary

The Consortium on Successful Aging resolved that the larger community must work together to make Johnson County an even friendlier place for seniors, and the Consortium would like to make the following four recommendations:

1. Request that the Johnson County Board of Supervisors, the cities, and the Chamber of Commerce and public and private organizations to:
   a) Adopt resolutions to be a senior-friendly community.
   b) Ask their departments/committees to recommend ways their entity could be more senior-friendly.
   c) Appoint representatives of all generations to their boards and committees.

2. Use the four follow-up studies (Health and Supportive Services, Transportation, Housing, Successful Aging) being completed by the Consortium to:
   a) Define specific needs of seniors in Johnson County.
   b) Identify best practices and viable responses.
   c) Obtain the support that will allow stakeholders to address the needs.
3. Create a high-quality independent, current and comprehensive repository of programs/services/policies that pertain to older adults in Johnson County. Such information should be used to:
   a) Help current residents prepare for and navigate their retirement years.
   b) Market Johnson County to persons who are considering relocating.
   c) Inform program administrators, service providers and policy makers about the diversity of older adults living in Johnson County, the current market supply of programs and services, and the changing needs and preferences of older adults.

4. Recruit, through a collaborative effort, a professional staff person (i.e. aging specialist) who will advise and support the efforts of governmental units as well as private and non-profit organization to implement the recommendations just presented. The aging specialist also should be charged to identify and develop novel efforts that will make Johnson County an even friendlier place for seniors.
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Iowa City, Iowa: Best in the Midwest. (September/October 2003). Organic Style pg 95.


Selected Program and Service Web Sites

Health and Social Services

UIHC
http://www.uihealthcare.com/uihospitalsandclinics/

Mercy, Iowa City
http://www.mercyic.org/

VAMC
http://www.visn23.med.va.gov/Service-Areas/IowaCity-VAMC.asp

Iowa City Free Medical Clinic
http://www.freemedicalclinic.org/

Johnson County Public Health
http://www.johnson-county.com/publichealth/index.shtml

Visiting Nurses Association
http://www.vnaic.org/

Iowa City-Johnson County Senior Center
http://www.icgov.org/senior/default.asp

UIHC - College of Dentistry
http://www.dentistry.uiowa.edu/index.htm

Behavioral Health Senior Care Service, UIHC

Johnson County Community Mental Health Center
http://communitymentalhealthcenter.org/index.html

Mid-Eastern Iowa Council on Chemical Abuse
http://www.meccaservices.com/

Senior Health Insurance Information Programs
http://www.shiip.state.ia.us/

Geriatric Assessment Clinic
http://www.medicine.uiowa.edu/igec/

Elder Services Incorporated
http://elderservicesiowa.com/index.html
Heritage Area Agency on Aging  
http://www.heritageaaa.org/index.html

UIHC Family Care Center  

UIHC Department of Neurology  
http://www.uihealthcare.com/depts/med/neurology/

Mercy Home Health  
http://www.mercyic.org/Services/home_health.cfm

Systems Unlimited  
http://www.sui.org/

Pathways Adult Daycare  
http://www.abbefamily.org/pathways/

Home safe program  
http://www.homesafeia.org/

Housing  
Iowa City Housing Authority  
http://www.icgov/housing/authority/index.asp

Johnson County Treasurer’s office  
http://www.johnson-county.com/treasurer/index.shtml

Successful Aging  
Lake MacBride water recreation area  
http://www.north-liberty.com/recreation/macbride.htm

Coralville Recreational Center  
http://www.coralville.org/reccenter.asp

North Liberty Community Center  
http://www.northlibertyiowa.org/rec/

Senior College, University of Iowa Alumni Association  
http://www.iowalum.com/srcollege/

Kirkwood Community College  
http://www.kirkwood.cc.ia.us/
Consultation of Religious Communities
http://www.avalon.net/~fbcic/mission.html

Iowa Legal Aid society
http://www.iowalegalaid.org/about/index.cfm?pagename=homepage

Iowa City Crisis Center
http://www.johnsoncountycrisiscenter.org/

Iowa City Workforce Development Center
http://www.iowaworkforce.org/region10/iowacity.htm

Retired Seniors Volunteer Program
http://elderservicesiowa.com/RSVP.html

Foster Grandparent Program – Handicare Inc
http://www.handicareinc.com/FosterGrandparentProgram/

Service Corps for Retired Executives (SCORE)
http://www.score.org/index.html

Johnson County Visitor’s Center
http://www.icccvb.org/about.asp

Transportation and Mobility
AARP Driver safety programs
http://www.aarp.org/families/driver_safety/

Coralville Transit
http://www.coralville.org/transit.htm

Iowa City Transit
http://www.icgov.org/transportation.htm

SEATS program

Kent Park