The aging of the Baby Boom generation, increased life expectancy, and a dip in fertility rates have resulted in a dramatic change in America's age structure. In short, our population is getting older. Older adults often fear living out their lives in a nursing home more than they fear death. These facts necessitate that our society take action to make sure that our older citizens can age safely and comfortably in their own homes. Aging is a fact and a process that can be replete with joy but also can be marked by a variety of health-related challenges that make living on one's own difficult or impossible.

Emory's Division of Geriatric Medicine and Gerontology is committed to maximizing the chances for older adults to age in their homes and communities. We do this by responding—through research, education, and community outreach—to problems that affect older Americans' ability to live independently.

**RESEARCH**

* By improving understanding of and treatments for the mechanisms that cause chronic and degenerative conditions in older people, including stroke, dementia, osteoporosis, congestive heart failure, and Parkinson's disease, we can make it possible for older Americans to age safely and successfully in their homes and communities with greatly reduced risk of immobility, falls, and frailty.

* We create care models that take elements of care now routinely provided in nursing homes and develop them as programs within private homes and communities.

* We develop sustainable exercise and dietary interventions in frail individuals ages 60 to 70 who could be bound for nursing homes.

“The primary mission of the division of geriatric medicine and gerontology is to work—through education, research, and community outreach—to maximize the chances for older adults to age in their own homes.”

—THEODORE M. JOHNSON II, MD, MPH
EDUCATION

• To understand health concerns unique to older Americans, our faculty and physicians are educating present and future health care leaders through intensive training programs in geriatric care.

• The Herbert R. Karp Fellowship in Geriatric Medicine is among those programs. Karp fellows are trained in geriatric assessment and management, nursing home care, the care of acutely ill geriatric patients, geriatric psychiatry, and palliative care, among other areas special to older patients.

• Our division collaborates with several educational organizations dedicated to improving the lives of older Americans. They include Emory’s schools of nursing and public health; the Southeast Center of Excellence in Geriatric Medicine; the Department of Veterans Affairs Geriatric Research, Education and Clinical Center; and the Atlanta Regional Geriatric Education Center; among others.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

• In partnership with community organizations, faith-based communities, and governmental agencies, we work to improve access to nutritious foods, health care, and meaningful activity.

• Our division draws expertise from and collaborates with local, regional, and national organizations and agencies such as Emory School of Medicine’s departments of psychiatry, cardiology, and neurology; the Georgia Tech Aware Home Research Initiative; Atlanta Regional Commission’s Healthy Aging Coalition; the Georgia Older Driver Task Force; and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

• We also offer community- and fitness- building activities, such as a tango study in which participants learn partnered dance to improve mobility, balance, endurance, and quality of life; and the Nintendo Wii Fit Balance Platform to assess and improve balance for older adults.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Emory’s Division of Geriatric Medicine and Gerontology engages in all of these endeavors with our primary mission in mind: to allow members of America’s aging population to look to the years ahead not with fear of being institutionalized but with a better opportunity to thrive in their own homes and communities. With the help of community and family members, healthcare professionals, and philanthropists who are attuned and responsive to the needs of older Americans, we can fulfill that mission. See the blue box to the left for some of the ways your support will make a difference.

If you are interested in supporting our work, please contact:

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