New National Forum makes the business case for retaining older workers

Older adults, either by necessity or choice, are working long past the retirement age. So, what is the business case for hiring older workers, and how are companies attracting, training and retaining them? Do employers successfully tap into older workers’ expertise to benefit both company and employees? And what, exactly, do older workers want from their work life? How can their continued employment positively impact the economy, communities and aging in the United States?

These questions are sure to spark lively debate during a new National Forum, “Employing Older Workers Makes Good Business Sense” (March 24, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.), sponsored by CVS Health, and held during the 2015 Aging in America Conference in Chicago, Ill.

Ken Dyckwold, CEO of Age Wave and ASA Board Chairman, will give the keynote, addressing “Retirement Research and Economic Insecurity Among Older Adults.” In 2014, Age Wave collaborated with Merrill Lynch on a national study, “Work and Retirement: Myths and Motivations,” which busted many myths about retirement. For example, seven out of ten pre-retirees want to work in retirement, and more than half of pre-retirees launch into a new line of work. And though some may work for financial reasons, many others are motivated by social or emotional reasons. Also, retirement no longer means a time of decline, but instead most often means a time of re-engagement as well as leisure.

Lori Trzwinski, of AARP’s Public Policy Institute, will address the Future of Work/Wow. Trzwinski, an expert in mortgage lending, reverse mortgages, housing finance reform, foreclosure and consumer debt, directs AARP’s Future of Work/Wow project, a multiyear project aimed at developing policy solutions to work challenges faced by older Americans. Her presentation will offer participants a comprehensive outline of the financial challenges that lie ahead for baby boomers.

Mary Alexander, vice president of strategic partnerships and healthcare integration at Home Instead Senior Care, will speak on the employers’ perspective of older employees and how they can positively impact business.

Phyllis Snyder, senior adviser at CARL, Jerold Barson Jr., director of strategic Recruiting/Military, Allied Barton Security Services, and Forum moderator Barbara Hoernig, consultant at Mass Workers and Workforce for CVS Health, will stress the skills and competencies inherent in an older workforce. The following four panels will address the older workers’ perspective on job-seeking, employment and transitions: Debra Carter, national director of the National Caucus & Center on Black Aging; Genie Cohen, CEO of the International Association of Jewish Vocational Services; Susan Collins, executive director of The Transition Network; and Sarah Bigger, CEO of Experience Works.

Nonprofit consultant Laura Robbins will discuss “we are all old together” as a positive view of aging, a particularly entrenched issue in today’s hiring practices and workplaces, possibly through rebranding age as an advantage in the workforce. Robbins is the Guest Editor for the Fall 2015 issue of Generations journal, which will focus on that same topic.

Three out of five retirees launch into a new line of work.

By 2020, the tail end of the Baby Boom Generation will reach age 65, and many in that cohort likely will face an extended work life. This National Forum also will offer perspectives on how we can ensure that these workers, who have so much to offer, remain engaged and in the talent pipeline.

Aging in America’s National Forums fill up quickly, so be sure to register for the Conference and this event now at http://aging.org/asia, or call 415-974-9560 to add to an existing registration.

The $15 fee for this Forum includes coffee service and offers four CEUs.

New National Forum tackles social and health disparities

Social and health disparities remain an entrenched problem in the United States. The 2010 enactment of the Affordable Care Act meant that for the first time America was on par with other developed nations in offering its population a measure of health security. To meet ACA requirements, however, health systems and managed care organizations must have new, innovative ways to address health disparities to achieve the ACA’s triple aim—improving the experience of care, improving the health of all populations and reducing the per capita cost of healthcare.

Another new National Forum, “Social and Health Disparities in Aging,” offering guidance on easing disparities, is scheduled for March 27, 2015, from 9 a.m. to noon during the 2015 Aging in America Conference in Chicago, Ill. The cost is $15 for Conference registrants and includes three CEUs, as well as coffee service.

This National Forum’s diverse panel of experts will lay out the issue of where we stand as a nation when it comes to social and health disparities, address the gender and sexual orientation perspective on such disparities, and speak to working models seeking to improve social and health disparities in the African American, Asian, Latino and Native American communities.

The Forum’s speakers are contributing authors to the Winter 2014-15 issue of Generations, “The Health of Older Adults: Social and Health Disparities in Aging,” which covers an array of topics related to social and health disparities. Martha Pelayo, Healthy Aging Regional Collaborative Director of the Health Foundation of South Florida (guest editor for Winter 2014-15 Generations), together with Steven Wallace, professor at the UCLA Fielding School of Public Health, will set the stage and discuss health literacy. Karen Fredricksen-Golden, a professor in the School of Social Work at the University of Washington, and Nancy Hooyman, professor of gerontology also at the University of Washington, will present perspectives from gender and sexual orientation and address gender inequalities in long-term care.

Health conditions such as diabetes, heart disease and depression, and instances of suicide are more prevalent in certain racial and ethnic populations, yet these are difficult to address. The U.S. Administration on Aging’s TimMcNeil, University of Hawaii Professor and Generations Editorial Advisory Board member, and Collette Browne, Miami Veterans Affairs Healthcare System internist and geriatrician Dr. Willy Valencia-Rodrigu and San Francisco State University gerontology professor Darlene Yee-Melichar will speak on this problem and how certain models might ameliorate it. Professor Jeanette Takamura, dean of the Columbia School of Social Work, will wrap up the Forum with a discussion on policy, research and program response to these issues.

Attendees will gain a broad understanding of social determinants of health and how they affect health disparities throughout life; learn about the latest laws and policies addressing sexuality and gender; understand disparities from the perspective of different racial and ethnic groups; learn how immigrant status, level of acculturation and access to care can explain the relationship between these variables and disparities; and how we might close the disparity gaps through forging good policy at the state and federal levels.

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