

**Statement in support of the World Health Organization's
call to "Take a Stand Against Ageism"
from Terry Fulmer, President of The John A. Hartford Foundation**

September 30, 2016 (*New York, NY*) – In recognition of the World Health Organization's call to ["Take a Stand Against Ageism"](#) to mark the October 1st [International Day of Older Persons 2016](#), Terry Fulmer, PhD, RN, FAAN, president of [The John A. Hartford Foundation](#) and a researcher and authority on the care of older people, offers the following statement:

"The myriad and varied contributions that older adults make every day enrich our society and culture in ways that are priceless and irreplaceable. At a time when one person in the United States turns 65 every eight seconds, it is unconscionable that the negativity and destructiveness of ageism continues to warp the attitudes and behaviors of so many people and institutions.

"The John A. Hartford Foundation joins with the World Health Organization in calling on everyone to reflect on our views of aging and older people with an eye toward eradicating negative ageist stereotypes and the painfully real harm they inflict on the lives, health, and well-being of older adults."

Research has shown that older adults who harbor negative attitudes about aging:

- Live 7.5 years less than their peers who positively embrace it.
- Have a decreased will to live.
- Suffer impairment to memory and recovery from illness.
- Experience increased stress.
- Show less interest in living a healthy lifestyle.

The damage caused by ageism extends into the workplace and permeates our culture. Next year will mark the 50th anniversary of the Age Discrimination Employment Act of 1967, which prohibits discrimination against people 40 and older. Yet, a 2013 survey of 1,502 adults by AARP showed that two-thirds of workers between the ages of 45 and 74 said they have seen or experienced ageism.

A recent study by the Media, Diversity and Social Change Initiative at the [University of Southern California's Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism](#) helps illustrate how pervasive the negative stereotypes about older adults and age discrimination are in our culture. Out of 4,066 speaking characters in the 100 top U.S. films of 2015, only 11 percent were 60 or older. And just 10 roles considered leads or co-leads featured actors 60 or older at the time of the film's release, according to the study.

“We must stand together to make it clear that ageism, like sexism or racism, is unacceptable. That is why The John A. Hartford Foundation joined with five other foundations to support the [Reframing Aging Initiative](#), which seeks to counter the pervasive negative beliefs about aging that are barriers to improving the care of older adults. The fact that more people are living longer than ever before in history is one of the great success stories of modern times, and something we all should celebrate. Eradicating ageism is a crucial step toward that goal.”

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About Terry Fulmer, PhD, RN, FAAN

Dr. Fulmer is the President of The John A. Hartford Foundation, a private, nonpartisan philanthropy based in New York City and dedicated to improving the care of older adults. She is nationally and internationally recognized as a leading expert in geriatrics and is best known for her research on the topic of elder abuse and neglect, which has been funded by the National Institute on Aging and the National Institute for Nursing Research. She is an elected member of the National Academy of Medicine (formerly the Institute of Medicine). To learn more about President Fulmer, please visit www.jhartfound.org/about/staff/terry-fulmer. To learn more about The John A. Hartford Foundation, please visit www.jhartfound.org.

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