

## Aging Today

# Innovation the key to successful aging

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BOB ROTH

We are an aging society and thanks to medical breakthroughs, Americans are living longer. At risk are publicly funded health, long-term care and income-support programs for older adults. The stress on these programs is a direct result of people now living longer, who are facing challenges with illnesses, diseases, cognitive deficits and other physical limitations that are associated with aging.

People like Ken Dychtwald, Ph.D., have been talking about this for decades and, to date, we are really a long way off from finding solutions that will help to alleviate the stress that this reality is going to put on our society.

Here are some facts that we are left to wrestle with. Two-thirds of all the people who have ever lived past the age of 65 in the entire history of the world are alive today. In 1776, the average life expectancy in our country was barely 36 years and the median age of our country was 16. During the time of our Founding Fathers, they never contemplated the aging of this great country. Today, the average life expectancy at birth is 79 and is steadily rising. We are now entering uncharted territory, and aging and living longer is humanity's new frontier.

By 2056, we will have more people 65 years and older in our country than we will have 18 years and younger. At present, 29 percent of older adults 65 and older are living at home alone, and this number is anticipated to continue to grow. This demographic shift is setting up our country for the "Perfect Storm."

While medical breakthroughs have enabled older adults to live longer, it's technological breakthroughs that are going to enable seniors to be able to live out their lives more comfortably and successfully.

So how can we do this? How are we going to prepare for this pandemic crisis that could bankrupt our country? We have to rely on old-fashioned American ingenuity and develop solutions for people to age successfully in place.

There is hope. There's a movement called Aging 2.0 that began in 2012 in the San Francisco Bay Area that is beginning to show hope and promise. Essentially, this is where the older adult world and Silicon Valley collide. Aging 2.0 is accelerating innovation to improve the lives of older

adults around the world. It's like nothing we've ever seen before. Essentially, the young brilliant minds that brought us the technological advances of the 21st century are beginning to work on developing innovative solutions for the aging adult population. I attended their national conference in San Francisco last November and was blown away by the innovations that have been created or that are in development that will reshape how we age.

Innovation will be essential for assisting us in providing care and care oversight for our aging demographic. With the impending shortage of caregivers in the workforce, there is a sense of urgency to find solutions for caregiving assistance and care oversight, and innovation will be the key.

Highlighted innovations that were profiled and celebrated at last year's Aging 2.0 National Conference in San Francisco were social robots, wearable sensors that help to prevent falls, belts that deploy airbags when a senior falls to cushion their landing and so much more.

The success of the Aging 2.0 movement has been centered on volunteer-run chapters being developed across the world. To date, there are over 40 chapters – spanning the globe with chapters across Europe, Asia, the United States, Canada, Brazil and Australia. This past June, the Phoenix chapter held its first start-up global search challenge. With over 120 people in attendance, six companies pitched their start-up innovations, and five judges determined the winner. The movement continues here in Phoenix with the Phoenix chapter holding a networking mixer intended to bring the attendees up to date on the chapter, the overall Aging 2.0 mission and to engage our community in celebrating innovations intended to assist our older adult community.

Thanks to American ingenuity and movements like Aging 2.0, our future is beginning to look brighter. If you are interested in learning more, feel free to contact me. Come join the movement.

*Bob Roth is managing partner of Cypress HomeCare Solutions, LLC.  
Visit [cypresshomecare.com](http://cypresshomecare.com).*

## **DETAILS**

**What:** Networking mixer

**Who:** Aging 2.0 Phoenix chapter

**When:** 5:30-7:30 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 8

**Where:** Silverado Care Community, 9410 E. Thunderbird Road, Scottsdale

**Register:** [bit.ly/2bdN0U8](http://bit.ly/2bdN0U8).

Original URL: [http://www.jewishaz.com/families\\_lifestyle/wellness/innovation-the-key-to-successful-aging/article\\_f9daf72c-6ef1-11e6-b83e-cf62f401e59c.html](http://www.jewishaz.com/families_lifestyle/wellness/innovation-the-key-to-successful-aging/article_f9daf72c-6ef1-11e6-b83e-cf62f401e59c.html)