Would your organization be interested in hosting a no cost presentation on healthy aging? To schedule a talk, please call Karen Lowe Graaham of the Rush CEDHA Community Engagement/Outreach Core, at 312-942-6118.

Thank You

We at the Rush Center of Excellence on Disparities in HIV and Aging (CEDHA) invite you to contact us at any time. Your participation may help to improve the lives of those living with HIV or at risk for HIV in this and future generations.

Sincerely,

The Rush CEDHA Team

Sexuality and Healthy Aging

### Myths
- Older persons are not interested in sex.
- Older persons do not have sex.
- Older persons know about safe sex practices.
- Older persons do not get STIs (sexually transmitted infections).
- Older persons do not get infected with HIV (human immunodeficiency virus).

#### Things you should know
- Forty percent (40%) of men and 15% of women over the age of 70 have had sex in the last six months.
- Forty-six percent (46%) of men and 12% of women over age 70 stated a satisfying sexual relationship was important to their quality of life.
- Only 50% of men over age 45 who were single and had sex in the last six months used a condom for protection from STIs and HIV. Only 67% of women over age 45 who were single and had sex in the last six months stated that a condom was used for protection from infections.
- Five-percent (5%) of men and women over age 45 reported having genital warts. 7% of men and 2% of women reported having gonorrhea. 3% of men and women reported having genital herpes.
- One out of every 6 persons living with HIV are over the age of 50.

#### Things you should do
- **Consider** the risks to your health before you have sex.
- **Talk** about HIV and other STIs with each partner before you have oral, anal, or vaginal sex. Learn as much as you can about each partner’s sexual history and substance use.
- **Ask** your partner(s) if they have recently been tested for HIV and encourage those who have not been tested to do so.
- **Use** latex condoms and water-based lubricants to prevent STIs and HIV with sex.

When To Get Tested for HIV
- If you have more than one sexual partner, or if you have a new sexual partner.
- If you are a man who has had sexual encounters with other men at least once a year.

If You and/or Your Partner Are HIV Positive
- **Use** latex condoms and water-based lubricants to prevent other sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and possible infection with a different strain of HIV.
- If only one of you has HIV, use a latex condom and lubricant every time you have sex.
- Make sure the partner with HIV is on Highly Active Antiretroviral Therapy (HAART).

Key Conclusions
- Sexual health is an important part of healthy aging.
- Be honest with yourself about your sexual and substance use behavior.
- Be open and discuss your concerns with your doctor.
- Know the risk factors for STIs & HIV.
- Be proactive: protect yourself and others; plan what to say up front.
- Avoid engaging in sexual activity when using substances.
- Seek testing if you feel you have been exposed to STIs or HIV.

Substances and Healthy Aging

#### Myth
- Older persons do not use substances that could be bad for their health.
- Using substances does not affect risky sexual activity

#### Things you should know
- Excessive alcohol consumption (more than 30 drinks a month or more than 4 drinks in a two-hour period) is reported in 17% of men and 7% in women over age 65. Binge drinking occurs more frequently in older persons.
- About 10% of persons over age 50 reported ever using cocaine or street drugs and 2% reported use in the last year.
- About 12-15% of older persons had prescription drug misuse as an underlying reason for seeking medical attention.
- Use of substances tied to engaging in more risky sexual activity.

#### Things you should do
- Drink alcohol in moderation and avoid drinking too much in one session.
- Be careful using prescription drugs for sleeping and pain.
- Do not use illegal drugs (drugs not prescribed by your doctor).

If You Do Use Substances
- **Consider** counseling and treatment for your substance use.
- **Avoid** engaging in sexual encounters.
- **Use** protection if engaging in sexual activity while using substances.
- **Get** tested for HIV test at least once a year.
- If injecting drugs, **Always** use clean needles and syringes. **Never** share needles or syringes. Be careful not to expose yourself to another person’s blood. **Get** vaccinated against hepatitis A and B viruses.

Sources: