

# Healthy Aging: The Role of Innovative Medicines

Patients with chronic conditions – and their loved ones – understand the critical role medicines play in ensuring longer, healthier and happier lives. But many older adults continue to lack treatment options or therapies to support healthy aging.

America's biopharmaceutical industry has taken great strides to address these unmet medical needs and improve health outcomes for patients.

**More than 400 medicines are in development for leading chronic diseases affecting older Americans:**

<p><b>Alzheimer's Disease</b> affects over 6 million Americans and 1 in 3 seniors die with Alzheimer's or some form of dementia.<sup>i</sup></p> <p><b>117</b></p> <p><b>Medicines in Development</b></p>	<p><b>Anemia</b> prevalence among the elderly ranges from 8-44%, with the highest rates found in men aged 85 or older.<sup>ii</sup></p> <p><b>20</b></p> <p><b>Medicines in Development</b></p>	<p><b>Osteoarthritis</b> affects 32.5 million Americans and is the most common form of arthritis among older adults.<sup>iii</sup></p> <p><b>53</b></p> <p><b>Medicines in Development</b></p>
<p><b>Kidney disease</b> is most prevalent in those over the age of 65 and it is believed 50% of those over the age of 75 have kidney disease.<sup>iv</sup></p> <p><b>22</b></p> <p><b>Medicines in Development</b></p>	<p>10.7% of older adults ages 57 to 85 in community dwellings reported having <b>chronic obstructive pulmonary disorder (COPD)</b>.<sup>v</sup></p> <p><b>19</b></p> <p><b>Medicines in Development</b></p>	<p>Among mental illnesses, <b>major depressive disorder</b> is the most common in older adults and one third of all adults living with depression do not respond to two or more antidepressants.<sup>vi, vii</sup></p> <p><b>56</b></p> <p><b>Medicines in Development</b></p>
<p>15.9 million or 29.2% of American adults aged 65 or older have <b>diabetes</b> (diagnosed and undiagnosed).<sup>viii</sup></p> <p><b>68</b></p> <p><b>Medicines in Development</b></p>	<p>Approximately 1 out of 3 American adults aged 65 or over has some form of vision-reducing eye disease – most commonly <b>cataracts, glaucoma</b> and age-related <b>macular degeneration</b>.<sup>ix</sup></p> <p><b>20</b></p> <p><b>Medicines in Development</b> (glaucoma and cataracts)</p>	<p><b>Heart failure</b> continues to be the leading cause of hospitalization among people over the age of 65.<sup>x</sup></p> <p><b>87</b></p> <p><b>Medicines in Development</b></p>



## Addressing Barriers to Care

As companies across the biopharmaceutical ecosystem continue to develop new medicines for the treatment of chronic conditions, meaningful action is needed to address barriers to care. Innovative medicines mean nothing if patients or their caregivers cannot access them.

Unfortunately, pervasive issues across the health care system are reducing access to innovative medicines and contributing to health inequities. **Chief among these barriers is that insurance is not working like insurance.**

- 22% of insured Americans say they have difficulty understanding, anticipating and navigating their insurance coverage.<sup>xi</sup>
- One in five (18%) insured Americans say they spent at least *two hours or more* on paperwork, phone calls and other administrative tasks with their insurance company to get coverage for needed medicines.<sup>xi</sup>
- Historically underserved populations have lower utilization of and adherence to prescribed medicines for many health conditions, even if they have insurance.<sup>xii</sup> This is due to a wide range of factors, including social determinants of health like housing, access to transportation, proximity to care and education.<sup>xiii</sup>

Our industry remains committed to developing treatments that can treat – or even cure – chronic conditions and contribute to healthier aging. To ensure patients and their caregivers can access these innovative medicines, policymakers must take steps to eliminate the unnecessary hurdles that have become commonplace in our health care system.

### Sources:

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- ii <https://www.aafp.org/pubs/afp/issues/2000/1001/p1565.html>
- iii <https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/osteoarthritis#:~:text=Osteoarthritis%20is%20the%20most%20>
- iv <https://www.cdc.gov/kidneydisease/publications-resources/ckd-national-facts.html>
- v <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fmed.2022.814606/full>
- vi [https://www.cdc.gov/aging/pdf/mental\\_health.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/aging/pdf/mental_health.pdf)
- vii Zhdanava M, Pilon D, Ghelerter I, et al. The prevalence and national burden of treatment-resistant depression and major depressive disorder in the United States. *J Clin Psychiatry*. 2021;82(2):20m13699. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.4088/JCP.20m13699>
- viii <https://diabetes.org/about-diabetes/statistics/about-diabetes#:~:text=Prevalence%20in%20seniors%3A%20>
- ix <https://www.aafp.org/pubs/afp/issues/1999/0701/p99.html#:~:text=Approximately%20one%20person%20in%20three,the%20loss%20of%20central%20vision>
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- xiii Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Social Determinants of Health: Know What Affects Health. September 2021. Available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/socialdeterminants/index.htm>