

# P R E F A C E

**T**he population of older people in the United States is growing at a rate that is unprecedented in American history. No matter what our age or career path, the continued growth in the number and proportion of older people in the United States impacts us all. Health status is an important variable in determining the length and quality of life. And, as we grow older, health status is no longer taken for granted. Older people commonly assert that, “when you have your health, you have everything.” Most people do not consider themselves as old until their health begins to fail.

Knowledge about illness and medications, physical activity, nutrition, sexuality, health care delivery, and death and dying is useful to facilitate our own healthy aging and that of our kin. Although reading about ways to maintain health and reduce the effects of illness does not guarantee that we will change our behaviors to increase our chances of a long and healthy life, it is a beginning. For those planning careers in health and human services, this information is key to providing effective care to their future patients and clients.

## AUDIENCE

This text is designed for use in college-level courses in health and aging. Students enrolled in these courses usually come from diverse fields, such as biology, medicine, dietetics, social work,

psychology, nursing, sociology recreation, public health, and allied health professions. Some students are preparing to work with older people, while others may just wish to know how to help themselves and their loved ones age successfully. Students often share this text with their older family members because it is written in a style that the layperson can understand. The material in this book can meet the needs of graduate students and professionals who want to continue their education in health and aging. Finally, we have found that the book is being used by older people and family members.

## NEW TO THIS EDITION

This text includes chapters that address all that major influences on the health of older persons. It is amply referenced to enable advanced students to student health issues in more depth. In this edition, we have given more attention to helping readers better understand the nature of research to enable them to read and interpret current research, both in professional journals and in the news.

For the fourth edition, the majority of the text has been revised to reflect the rapid expansion of knowledge about health and aging:

- Demographics have been updated and content on the four major minority elder populations has been expanded.

- The theories of aging have been consolidated to summarize the major lines of thinking to explain how we age as well as interventions to slow or forestall the aging process.
- New Chapter 5: Chronic Illnesses: The Major Killers addresses the five major chronic illnesses affecting elders, their characteristics, diagnosis, prevention, and treatment with particular attention to the cardiovascular diseases, cancer, stroke, chronic lung diseases and diabetes.
- The text includes an extensive discussion of Medicare and its changes, including Medicare Part D and the important influences that health care financing play on the care elders receive.
- New information has been added on areas of concern for individuals in nursing homes: physical restraints, chemical restraint, pressure ulcers, and institutional elder abuse. A new section describes how to use the Medicare site to assess the quality of local home health services and nursing homes.
- A new section on legal protection and advocacy for those who are mentally ill has been added.
- The physical activity and nutrition chapters incorporate the latest recommendations for elders with focus on the role of exercise and nutrition in the prevention and treatment of disease and disability.
- Preventive health care for elders addresses primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention and recommendations of the U.S. Preventive Task Force.
- The long-term care chapter has been expanded to include new information about the regulations affecting nursing homes and the changes in care that have come about, as well the movement to make nursing homes more like home and less like an institution.
- The chapter on death, dying, and grief is updated to include the newest information on Oregon's Death With Dignity Act, advance directives, and the Terri Schiavo case.
- This edition provides an extensive bibliography and reputable web-associated resources to supplement the written material in the text, reflecting the needs of adult learners and allowing for more in-depth study of many topics.
- Interactive exercises, such as “What is Your Opinion?” and end-of-chapter activities provide students an opportunity to apply their knowledge to real-life experiences.
- New case studies, most from Rebecca's personal experience as a physician, illustrate the complexity of care involved in working with elders.
- All photographs are from Marianne Gontarz York, who is both a photographer and social worker. We are sure you will agree that they capture a vibrant, sensitive, and realistic portrait of older people.
- Additional instructors' resources are available at [www.mhhe.com/ferrini4](http://www.mhhe.com/ferrini4).

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It has been twenty years since we began to write the first edition of this text. During those years, Armeda has continued as the chair of the Department of Health and Community Services and has taught countless students about health and aging. She is now close to full retirement from the California State University, Chico. Over the years, her interest in health and aging has moved from the theoretical to experiential as she is now over 60 years old.

Over the last 20 years, Rebecca has married, birthed five children (Justin, Allison, Joshua, Davis, and Kai), and worked in preventive medicine, hospice care, and nursing home medicine and administration. She currently works as Medical Director for Edgemoor, a county-run long term care facility in Santee, California.

We are thankful for the various forms of assistance we have received from many individuals. Armeda's students at California State University at Chico were assigned earlier versions of this text in the course, “Health in the Later Years” and offered valuable feedback. Daughter/sister, Jennifer Ferrini, provided helpful editing, and Rebecca's husband, Jeff Klein, and children put many needs on hold

during the writing process. Rebecca Campbell, with help from Rebecca Ferrini, developed the index and the online Instructor's Manual.

We would like to dedicate this edition to Albert Ferrini, father and grandfather, who died in 2005 after a brief illness at the age of 93. He was so proud that his daughter and granddaughter wrote a book that he had all the editions on his end table for years. He served as a good role model for healthy aging as he ate well and exercised vigorously until the last month of his life.

We would also like to thank those instructors who reviewed the previous edition and provided

us critical feedback to use in preparation of this edition: Betty Boyle, West Chester University; Mark Kelley, University of Wisconsin-La Crosse; Mary Helen McSweeney, University of Scranton; and Debra Sheets, California State University-Northridge.

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**Armeda F. Ferrini**  
**Rebecca L. Ferrini**