

Dear XXX:

The average age of America's population is increasing at unprecedented rates. The current life expectancy for Americans is averaged at 77.9 years; and those over 70 can expect to live an average of 14.9 additional years. Improved medical care and prevention efforts have likely contributed to this extraordinary increase in life expectancy. For the first time in history, a sizeable number of individuals in their eighties and beyond avoid major chronic diseases and remain healthy, active and productive. But more research is needed to understand healthy aging.

To shed light on the secrets that allow some people **to live long and age well** the National Institute on Aging (NIA) of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) is conducting the project, **Insight into the Determination of Exceptional Aging and Longevity (IDEAL) Study**. **The aim of this initiative is to better understand the aging process and more importantly to identify the genetic, biologic, and behavioral factors that contribute to healthy and productive aging. What is the IDEAL Study?**

The IDEAL Study is an extension of the Baltimore Longitudinal Study of Aging (BLSA), a research project initiated in 1958 to study "normal" human aging and age-related conditions. This premier U.S. Federal Government supported study has contributed important scientific information about the aging process through over 1000 research and consumer publications in areas ranging from cardiovascular function to personality and cognitive functioning as we age.

Over the course of five years, the IDEAL Study seeks to enroll 500 healthy individuals aged 80 or older. Once enrolled, qualified participants will come to the BLSA clinical center in Baltimore, Maryland every year to receive a comprehensive assessment including a medical examination and tests of strength, stamina, mental sharpness, and coordination. This information will be used to identify the unique factors that allow some individuals to have a longer life while maintaining good health.

How can your organization engage with IDEAL?

As an organization that has direct contact with healthy seniors within your community, we would like to schedule an hour-long educational session for your residents/clients/volunteers to introduce them to the IDEAL study. Our team will present the background and purpose of the study, discuss eligibility criteria and answer any questions participants may have about participating in a research study. Your clients will be able to make an informed decision before selecting to participate in the eligibility screening process.

If your organization is unable to host an educational session there are other ways to help with our recruitment efforts. Organizations can agree to hang recruitment posters throughout their facilities, include a brief article or public service announcement in your upcoming newsletters, or disseminate a message about IDEAL through your existing communication channels, such as electronic listservs, mailings, or community events.

By partnering with NIA to help recruit for this landmark study, your organization will make a substantial contribution to the science of longevity research and the effort to identify key factors that maintain

Organizational Recruitment Letter

11/8/10

health and reduce the burden of diseases and disability in older Americans . We sincerely hope that your organization will join us in this effort.

An IDEAL team member will follow-up with your organization within the next two weeks, but if you or your organization is interested in helping to recruit for this landmark study or you have any questions, please contact XXXX at XXXX@westat.com at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,

XXX