



October 31, 2014

Report on the Response of the  
Science Museum of Virginia to the  
Impact of the Aging of Virginia's Population



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Pursuant to Code of Virginia §§ 2.2-5510 and 51.5-136, the Science Museum of Virginia submits this report of its progress in addressing the impact of the aging of Virginia's population.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Conti", is positioned above a horizontal line.

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October 31, 2014

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### Executive Summary

The Science Museum of Virginia is committed to serving all audiences and maintains accessibility to Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) as one its core values. We strive to create intergenerational interpretive experiences so that dialogue about STEM can be exchanged among all ages. We are currently studying the impact the Science Museum has on a number of underserved populations, with senior adults being one that we are actively reaching out to.



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### Agency Description

The mission of the Science Museum of Virginia is to inspire Virginians to enrich their lives through science. The Museum is a catalyst for inspiration, a place that sparks curiosity and generates ideas in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). Through hundreds of experiential exhibits, awe-inspiring artifacts and interactive technologies, the Museum presents dynamic science programming to hundreds of thousands of guests each year.

The Museum features permanent exhibitions about space, health, electricity, and the earth—to name a few—and hosts visiting exhibitions from around the world. The Dome theater, at 76 feet, is the largest screen in Virginia and provides guests with the ultimate immersive experience.

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1. One of the Science Museum's strategic objectives this year is to develop specific strategies to identify and reach audiences that are considered "underserved". We are currently partnering with key organizations to expand opportunities for underserved audiences to visit and developing a funding model to support these audiences. We have been reaching to regional senior housing facilities and arranging special visits to the Museum for these groups.
2. The Museum offers a weekly, Lunch Break Science lecture that features expert speakers on a variety of science subjects. This series is attended by approximately 50 seniors each week. The Science Museum also partners with Bon Secours on a "Living Ethics" speaker series each fall that is heavily attended by seniors. The Museum's recently digitized Dome theater has served seniors for more than 30 years with a wide array of giant screen offerings.

3.

### **Permanent Exhibition Galleries**

#### **Boost!**

Boost! opened in 2013 as the Museum's first new permanent exhibition in over a decade. This cutting-edge gallery takes a non-traditional approach to health and wellness, but inspires guests of any age to make a change of their own.

Live cooking demonstrations, daily discussions about nutrition are specifically targeted to an older, mature audience focused on continued healthy and quality of life. Three featured components of the exhibition are focused on evaluation and improving your memory over time. In this lighthearted experience, adults return on a frequent basis to improve their body, mind and lifestyle.

#### **Journey Through Life**

The Journey Through Life gallery investigates the nature of DNA, delves into the world of Cellular exploration and discusses the benefit of healthy living. This immersive experience boasts over 100 hands on experiments and also features a discussion on bioethics which explores ethical issues in scientific innovation.

#### **The Dome Theater**

The Museum unveiled an unparalleled immersive experience in The Dome in 2014. Over the past 30 years, The Dome has been a destination for adult guests and they have enjoyed a wide range of educational topics from space, history, biology and geography to name a few.

Along with the new technology, the programming capabilities for The Dome have grown exponentially. Cosmic Expeditions combine an astronomy feature with an innovative live presentation. This new astronomy programming allows guests to experience everything in space from the creation of the universe to the cataclysmic forces ravaging the night skies. Each expedition allows guests to travel the full expanse of the universe alongside our astronomer, creating a unique and personalized experience during each expedition. We have added evening programs for adults that are consistently sold out.

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**Living Ethics Lecture Series**

The Bon Secours Virginia Health System and the Science Museum of Virginia collaborate on a dynamic lecture series intended to provide an opportunity for the community to reflect on what it means to live ethically in a complex world. Developed specifically for an adult audience, these lectures have covered a broad range of topics from personal health, managing healthcare and the impacts of technology in our society.

4. N/A

5. The Science Museum of Virginia offers a rate for all guests age 60 and above. We do not breakdown the age ranges more specifically for our analytical purposes.

FY 2010	11,199
FY 2011	10,917
FY 2012	12,426
FY 2013	11,855
FY 2014	12,601

6. N/A

7. The Science Museum is constantly adapting to the needs of its audiences. By using formative and summative evaluation techniques, we will ensure that any new exhibit experiences are well-suited for the needs of aging adults.

8. N/A

9. The Museum's publications and website are consistently evaluated to ensure that they are audience friendly for a variety of audiences. Our font choices and printing methods are reviewed annually with our printing partners to ensure readability. All of our publications are made available electronically on our web site and through the Library of Virginia. We also provide call center support to those individuals who seek information and are unable to use our traditional communications.

10. See Item #1

11. The median age of the Science Museum's work force is definitely increasing. The Museum is committed to celebrating the experience of its employees and finding ways to accommodate any specific needs that they have, within the bounds of DHRM policies.