



**OSH 2022**  
Educate • Motivate • Activate!

# The Aging Workforce

Diane Stein, United Steelworkers Tony Mazzocchi Center  
Lisa Baum, United Steelworkers Local 9544

# Poll question!

## Why are you attending this workshop?

- I'm a worker who is getting older
- I represent workers who are aging
- I'm a safety and health activist
- I have friends and/or family with these concerns

# And another poll question!

## I believe aging makes life...

- More difficult
- Less difficult
- Some of both
- No change

# Aging: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly

- What are some things that get better with age?



- What are some things that get more challenging with age?



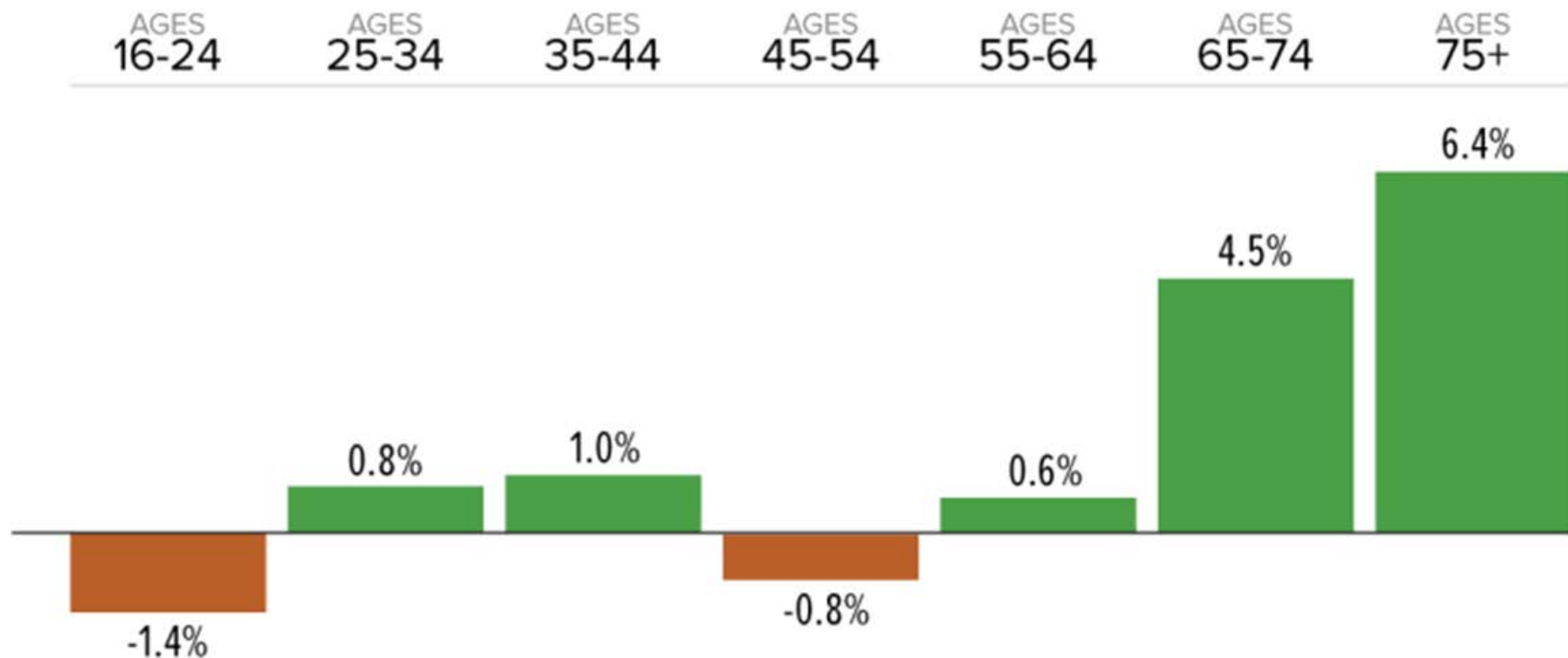
# Workers retiring later

- By 2024 workers over the age of 65 will be a quarter of the U.S. workforce. (The Chronicle, 2017)
- ***Update:*** 2 million more workers than expected have retired since the pandemic began. (U.S. Census Bureau)



# Annual Growth Rate in Labor Force by Age

2014-2024 Predictions



Source: BLS

# Why are older workers needed?



# Why are older workers needed?

- Institutional knowledge
- Work experience
- Life experience
- Stay in jobs longer
- Training the next generation of workers





# Being an older worker is dangerous to your health!

- Workers 65 or older have nearly **3X** the risk of dying on the job as other workers. (Death on the Job, 2019)
- Older workers have fewer injuries, but their injuries are more serious and costlier. (JOEM, 2017)

# What issues do older workers face?



# What issues do older workers face?

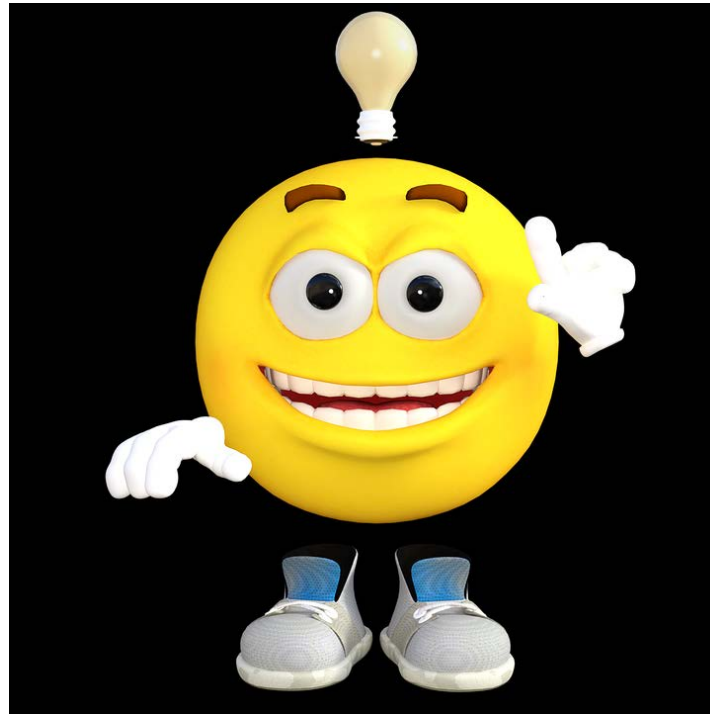
- Bladder (bathroom frequency)
- Vision
- Hearing
- Mobility
- Standing
- Balance
- Memory
- Dexterity (fine motor skills)
- Immunity (susceptibility to infection)
- Ergonomic injuries

# Menopause Effects

- Hot flashes
- Dry skin and eyes
- Sleep disturbance
- Urination problems (more frequent)
- Aches and pains
- Short-term memory loss
- Mood swings/anxiety



How can we make work better?



# Making it work: Work environment

- Improved lighting
- Dampened noise
- Lessened physical demands (lifting, standing, repetitive motion, awkward postures, fatigue) through better equipment & body positioning



# Making it work:

## Work organization & policies

- Adequate staffing levels
- Shorter work hours
- Breaks
- Work accommodations
- Health insurance
- Job training
- Age discrimination policies
- Health insurance
- Retirement plans



# Making it work: Beyond the workplace

- Retirement laws
- Social security
- Medicare & healthcare costs
- Age discrimination laws
- Access to public transportation
- Laws may vary depending where you live





# Universal Design



- Principle 1: **Equitable use**
- Principle 2: **Flexibility in use**
- Principle 3: **Simple & intuitive use**
- Principle 4: **Perceptible information**
- Principle 5: **Tolerance for error**
- Principle 6: **Low physical effort**
- Principle 7: **Size & space for approach & use**

# Older workers' issues are issues for ALL workers!



# BMW's Silver Tsunami

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iySjxmN2faI>

What will you do with this information back at your worksite?

