CONTACT:
John Beilenson (on behalf of AFAR)
jbeilenson@aboutscp.com; 610-453-5993

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American Federation for Aging Research (AFAR) to Recruit 10,000 People 95+ for Groundbreaking SuperAgers Initiative

Record-sized community to help scientists understand the biological and genetic keys to exceptional longevity

NEW YORK, June 30 – Significant new insights into what enables an especially long as well as healthy lifespan are expected from a multi-year project launched today by the American Federation for Aging Research and Albert Einstein College of Medicine, in collaboration with the Boston University College of Medicine.

Dubbed the SuperAgers Initiative, this pathbreaking effort will begin by enlisting the help of 10,000 people 95 and older along with their family members – the largest group ever assembled to explore the biological and genetic underpinnings of exceptional longevity.

Members of this SuperAgers Community will have opportunities to share and celebrate the stories and "secrets" of their own unusually long lives. And they may be eligible to join the SuperAgers Family Study, a pioneering research effort designed to find the combination of genes and biology that creates very long lives.

The findings should help advance the ultimate goal of the growing scientific community focused on geroscience: Developing new therapies that target the aging processes and potentially address multiple age-related diseases and conditions at the same time.

The SuperAgers Initiative will kick off with a webinar from 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. ET on Thursday, June 30. Registration for the free virtual event, moderated by Judith Graham of Kaiser Health News, is here. Participants will learn details about the purpose, research, and science driving the SuperAgers Initiative and also hear from Elaine Oster, a NYC centenarian.

“There is plenty of important research that’s looking to develop medicines that prevent or treat the diseases of aging,” noted AFAR Executive Director Stephanie Lederman. “Our SuperAgers Initiative is looking to do something different, even if it seems obvious: Instead of studying sickness, we want to figure out what enables some of us to live healthy lives for an exceptionally long number of years.”

“And the most promising way to gain scientific knowledge about healthy aging is to look at those who have lived past their 95th birthday,” added Sofiya Milman, MD, MS, the director of Human Longevity Studies at Albert Einstein College of Medicine. She will be principal investigator for the SuperAgers Family Study, which will be conducted in collaboration with AFAR. “The relatively small numbers of these people studied to date has found some genetic drivers of slower aging that in the future will support new drug development. That suggests enormous promise for a resource and associated studies that can look much more deeply at this important population.”

About one of every thousand people in the United States is older than 95, the Census Bureau has estimated.

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The **American Federation for Aging Research (AFAR)** is a national non-profit organization that supports and advances pioneering biomedical research that is revolutionizing how we live healthier and longer. For more than four decades, AFAR has served as the field’s talent incubator, providing more than $189 million to more than 4,300 investigators at premier research institutions nationwide. A trusted leader and strategist, AFAR also works with public and private funders to steer high quality grant programs and interdisciplinary research networks. AFAR-funded researchers are finding that modifying basic cellular processes can delay—or even prevent—many chronic diseases, often at the same time. They are discovering that it is never too late—or too early—to improve health. This groundbreaking science is paving the way for innovative new therapies that promise to improve and extend our quality of life—at any age. Learn more at www.afar.org or follow AFARorg on Twitter and Facebook.