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Statement by Debra Whitman, AARP Executive Vice President on IOM Cognitive Aging Research Report

WASHINGTON, DC—AARP applauds the Institutes of Medicine (IOM) for its landmark report examining the impact of aging on brain functions. Co-sponsored by AARP, the IOM report, “**Cognitive Aging: Process in Understanding and Opportunities for Action**,” is one of the first comprehensive examinations of how age changes the brain and the way it works when it’s not due to neurodegenerative diseases such as Alzheimer’s and to provide specific actions individuals can take to reduce their risk of mental decline with age.

Debra Whitman, AARP’s Chief Public Policy Officer, said the research is welcome news for AARP’s 38 million members who say that staying mentally sharp is one of their top health concerns. In a recent AARP survey, 93% of respondents noted that brain health was very or extremely important, but few knew the ways that they could support their brain health.

“This research empowers consumers to take control of their health,” Whitman said. “By living a healthy lifestyle that includes being physically active and intellectually and socially engaged, you can positively help your brain’s health as you age.

“We hope that this report will begin to do for brain health awareness what the American Heart Association has achieved for heart health awareness, providing consumers with concrete actions to support their health. We echo the IOM’s call for increased attention and research on this vitally important topic.”

AARP offers resources for people interested in reducing their risk of mental decline and assisting those caring for someone with mental decline, including financial programs to help people 50-plus learn how to better manage their money, a fraud watch program to arm consumers with the tools they need to spot and avoid scams, and the nation’s largest driving refresher course. AARP’s Caregiver Resource Center offers expert advice, assisted living options, and resources for caregivers and senior care needs.

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About AARP

AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization, with a membership of nearly 38 million, that helps people turn their goals and dreams into real possibilities, strengthens communities and fights for the issues that matter most to families such as healthcare, employment and income security, retirement planning, affordable utilities and protection from financial abuse. We advocate for individuals in the marketplace by selecting products and services of high quality and value to carry the AARP name as well as help our members obtain discounts on a wide range of products, travel, and services. A trusted source for lifestyle tips, news and educational information, AARP produces AARP The Magazine, the world's largest circulation magazine; AARP Bulletin; www.aarp.org; AARP TV & Radio; AARP Books; and AARP en Español, a Spanish-language website addressing the interests and needs of Hispanics. AARP does not endorse candidates for public office or make contributions to political campaigns or candidates. The AARP Foundation is an affiliated charity that provides security, protection, and empowerment to older persons in need with support from thousands of volunteers, donors, and sponsors. AARP has staffed offices in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Learn more at www.aarp.org.

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