



Ruth Finkelstein

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Effective January 27, 2018, Ruth Finkelstein, ScD will be the Executive Director of the Brookdale Center of Healthy Aging at Hunter College and Professor of Urban Public Health. Dr. Finkelstein has devoted the last decade to transformation of our understanding of aging from a state of decline to a stage in the life course full of challenge and opportunity. Most recently, she served as the Associate Director of the Robert N. Butler Columbia Aging Center as well as faculty member at the Mailman School of Public Health at Columbia University. There, she was

responsible for translation of research to policy and practice, particularly in the areas of work, engagement, and built and social environments promoting aging well. Signature initiatives at Columbia included *The Age Smart Employer Awards*, honoring businesses who value workers of all ages, including older workers; *The Age Boom Academy*, an intensive annual course educating working journalists about specific topics in aging; and *Exceeding Expectations*, long form journalism and digital narrative following 20 New Yorkers over 81.

Prior to Columbia, Dr. Finkelstein was the architect of *Age Friendly New York City*, the award-winning initiative to make New York a great place to grow old. This public-private partnership between the Mayor's Office, City Council, and The New York Academy of Medicine built upon the World Health Organization's strategy. *Age Friendly New York City* focused initially on helping businesses better serve their older customers, enhancing the access of older adults to universities, and helping neighborhoods to address the specific issues of their older residents (*Aging Improvement Districts*). Program and policy change was realized in pools, parks, streets, schools, senior centers, and housing. Dr. Finkelstein's work has won awards, including "The Best Existing Age Friendly City in the World," 2013 and the Archstone Award. She has also been individually honored with a "Game Changer, 2012" award from *Metropolis Magazine* and as one of Next Avenue's 2016 "Influencers in Aging."

Prior to her focus on aging, she was a policy researcher in the fields of HIV/AIDS and substance abuse, with positions as Senior Vice President at The New York Academy of Medicine, Policy Director at Gay Men's Health Crisis, and Research Director at the AIDS Action Council in Washington DC. She is the recipient of numerous City, State, and Federal contracts and grants as well as grants from numerous foundations. Her publications have appeared in *The Gerontologist*, *JAIDS*, and *The American Journal of Public Health*, among others. She holds a doctorate in Public Health from Johns Hopkins, masters in Anthropology from Case Western Reserve, and numerous academic honors. Dr. Finkelstein is a plenary and keynote speaker at events around the world, ranging from the International Conference on Age Friendly Cities to the AMPLify Innovation Festival. She has spoken at the New York Times Summit on Cities, the American Association of Architects, the American Planning Association, the Gerontological Society of America, and the Global Coalition on Aging. She has advised numerous cities in the U.S. and elsewhere on creating environments that work for people of all ages. She represents the International Association of Geriatrics and Gerontologists (IAGG) at the UN, serves on the Program Committee for the Work and Families Research Network, is a Fellow of the New York Academy of Medicine, a member of WHO's Global Advisory Committee on Age Friendly Environments, and member of multiple academic associations.