AGING IN PLACE AND TECHNOLOGY
How technology can influence aging in place?
Samuel Afoakwa, MPA, Grand Valley State University

INTRODUCTION
The study examines the concept of aging in place and how emerging technologies can aid seniors to age independently in their preferred residence. The paper further addresses some of the circumstances of the aged in developing countries (Ghana) that prevents their successful aging in place with the aid of these same technologies. Finally, the research explores the usage of advanced technologies that help older adults, aging in place, to transition smoothly into end life.

BACKGROUND OF STUDY
The number of people 65 and older in the United States is expected to increase to 55 million in 2020; to 88.5 million — or 20 percent of the population — in 2050. U.S. Census Bureau (2010)

61% of Older adults aged 65 want to age in their own homes.
Assistive technology for aging in place is expected to grow from $2 billion dollars to $20 billion in 2020.
Source: Pew research Center (2014)

BENEFITS OF AGING IN PLACE
Accessibility – Existing assisted living structures will not be able to absorb increasing number of seniors.
Affordable - Assisted living facilities are expensive compared to aging in one’s home
Accepted – 4 out of 5 seniors want to independently stay in their own homes and communities as they age.

IMPACT AREAS OF ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY FOR AGING IN PLACE
Communication
Security
Health and Wellness
Email, chat, video, social media, webcam, fall detection, home monitor, Telemedicine, Health apps, health wearables, Personal Emergency Response Systems (PERS)

RECOMMENDATION
Promote education on social awareness and receptiveness to technology usage.
Increase the support to community based programs.
Tax cuts on aging related devices
Implementation of housing policies that supports visitability to cut cost on acquisition of high end technology.

CHALLENGES OF TECHNOLOGY FOR AGING IN PLACE IN GHANA
Lack of social support and receptiveness
Low level of interest on technology usage
High cost of acquisition
Low literacy level on technology

The number of people 65 and older in the United States is expected to increase to 55 million in 2020; to 88.5 million — or 20 percent of the population — in 2050. U.S. Census Bureau (2010)