

## Demographic & Economic Characteristics of an Aging Population

*The aging population in the United States is growing, in part due to the aging of the Baby Boomer generation. As this population increases, so too will the demand for long-term care services. This fact sheet provides a current description of the demographic and economic characteristics of older Americans.*

*This fact sheet is one in a series that provides basic information on the “who, what, where, when, why, and how” of long-term care. All the references accessed to produce this fact sheet are provided for further review.*

- In 2009, the number of Americans age 65 and older was estimated at **39.6 million** or **12.9%** of the total population. That same year, the number of Americans age 85 and older was estimated at **5.6 million** or **1.8%** of the total population.<sup>1</sup>
- As of 2005, the largest number of older Americans lived in the **South (36%)**, followed by the Midwest (24%), Northeast (21%), and West (20%) regions.<sup>2</sup>
- Nearly **one out of every five** people age 65 and older (19.2%) are non-White or Hispanic. By 2030, the proportion of older adult who are people of color will reach **29%**.<sup>3</sup> By 2050, this proportion will increase to **42%**.<sup>4</sup>
- **One-third** of people age 75 and older live alone.<sup>3</sup>
- **One of five** people age 65 and older live in a rural, non-metropolitan area.<sup>3</sup>
- **About 20.5%** of older adults have a bachelor’s degree or higher.<sup>5</sup>
- In 2008, the median income of older adults was **\$25,503** for males and **\$14,559** for females. Among households headed by someone age 65 and older, median income was **\$44,188**.<sup>5</sup>
- In 2008, **9.7%** or **3.7 million** adults age 65 and older had incomes below the poverty level. 5.8% had incomes below 50 percent of the poverty level and 11.2 percent were at 125 percent of the poverty level.<sup>6</sup>
- Medicaid is the federal/state health program for low-income individuals. About **5.9 million** or **10.2 %** of total Medicaid enrollees were age 65 and older as of fiscal year 2007.<sup>7</sup>
- Medicare is the federal health insurance program for older adults and certain disabled individuals. The number of adults eligible for both Medicare and Medicaid (“dual eligibles”) was approximately **8.8 million** in fiscal year 2005. **About two-thirds** were age 65 and older.<sup>8</sup>
- **More than half** of dual eligibles have incomes below the poverty level.<sup>9</sup>

### Sources

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