

Who Needs and Who Uses Long-Term Care?

Given that chronic illness and other physical and cognitive impairments increase with age, older adults use long-term care services in higher proportions than younger adults.

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.

- Over **12 million** Americans need long-term care to assist them in daily activities; **58%** of these individuals are age 65 or older.¹
- **Roughly 70** percent of those turning age 65 will have long-term care needs at some point in their lives.²
- Adults age 65 are estimated to need an average of **3 years** of long-term care. Twenty percent are projected to need long-term care for five years or more and 5% are projected to spend more than five years in a nursing facility.³
- The rate of need for long-term care services is **four times higher** among adults, age 85 and older, compared to adults age 65 to 84.⁴
- Nationally, **almost 82%** who are in institutional settings (e.g., nursing homes) are age 65 and older the proportion of individuals who are in institutional settings increases with age.⁵
- The median age for individuals receiving long-term care in institutional setting is 82 years.⁵
- About 67% of individuals receiving care in institutional setting are women.⁵
- **Over 60%** of those living in the community and have a need for long-term care services are 65 and older.⁶
- **69%** of home care users are 65 and older and **16%** are 85 and older.⁷
- Among older adults in 2007, **41 percent** had at least one disability; **11 percent** had a cognitive disability in addition to another type of disability.⁸
- **More than half** of older adults have more than one chronic condition and **11 million** live with 5 or more chronic conditions.⁹
- **Almost 20** percent of older Americans suffer from a mental illness.⁹
- **An estimated 5.1 million** Americans age 65 and older have Alzheimer’s Disease.¹⁰
- Medicaid is the federal/state health program for low-income individuals. Medicare is the federal health insurance program for older adults and certain disabled individuals. **More than one-quarter** of age 65+ individuals dually eligible for both Medicare and Medicaid have the five most frequent chronic conditions—ischemic heart disease, heart failure, Alzheimer’s and related conditions, diabetes, and rheumatoid arthritis or osteoarthritis.¹¹

Sources

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