

Growing Demand for Long-Term Care

In 2011, the largest generation in history – the Baby Boomers – will begin turning 65, resulting in a rapid increase in the number of older Americans. In addition, the aging population is living longer, often with chronic illness and disabling conditions. Given these demographic trends, we can anticipate significant growth in the demand for long-term care.

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.

- The number of Americans who need long-term care is expected to increase from approximately 12 million today to **27 million** in 2050.^{1,2}
- Baby boomers will turn 65 between 2011 and 2030.³
- From 2007 to 2030, the population of adults age 65 and older is projected to increase by **89%**, more than four times as fast as the U.S. population as a whole.⁴
- By 2030, the number of adults age 65 and older is projected to be **72 million** or **19.7%** of the total U.S. population (up from 12.9% currently). By 2050, this group is projected to increase to **90.6 million**.^{5,6}
- From 2007 to 2030, the population of individuals age 85 and older is projected to increase by **74%**.¹
- By 2030 the number of adults age 85 and older is projected to be **9.6 million** or **2.6%** (nearly doubling the current 1.8%) of the total U.S. population.^{1,4} By 2050, this group is projected to increase to **19.2 million**, a 118% increase over 2030.⁶
- The states with the greatest projected growth in the number of people age 85 and older from 2007 to 2030 are: **Alaska (+297%)**, Nevada (+176%), Arizona (+135%), Wyoming (+126%), and New Mexico (+123%).⁴
- For individuals born in 2010, the projected average life expectancy is almost **81 years** for women and almost **76 years** for men.⁷ For individuals born between 1959 and 1961, the middle of the baby boomer years, average life expectancy was almost 73 years for women and almost 63 years for men.⁸
- As of 2010, 5.1 million people age 65 and older have Alzheimer’s Disease. It is estimated that by 2050, **13.2 million** seniors will have Alzheimer’s Disease, a 259% increase. Of this group, the number of adults age 85 and older with the disease will have quadrupled over the same time period.⁹

Sources

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