

The Aging and Elderly Population



This document provides an update to information in the *2001 Aging Services Environmental Scan*.

Highlights

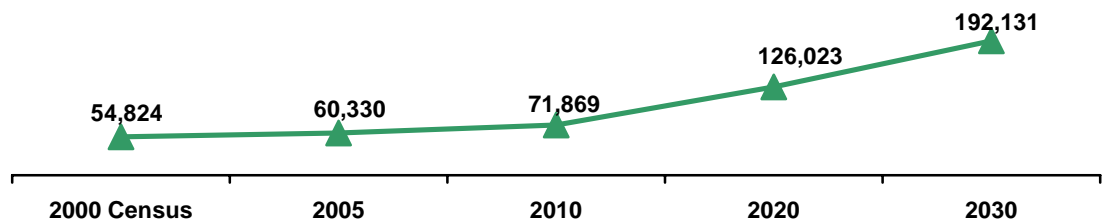
Between 1990 and 2000, the senior population increased 26%. The number of older adults is expected to increase from 7% of the population today to 20% by 2030. The growing numbers are

attributed to aging "Baby Boomers" (individuals born between 1946 and 1964) and increasing life expectancies. Older adults are benefiting from generally healthier lifestyles, better nutrition, and advancements in medical care. The keys to maintaining quality of life and avoiding expensive long-term care are maintaining healthy lifestyles and preventing disabling accidents and chronic conditions. The challenge for our community is to ensure that older adults and caregivers have the information and services they need to support themselves and family members as they age.

Q. Why focus on older adults?

Based on the most recent Census data (2002), **an estimated 54,333 (7%) of Travis County residents are currently age 65 or older. By 2030, this number is expected to climb to 192,131 (20%) of the total population** (Texas State Data Center). As individuals age they may need additional services to stay healthy or address chronic and/or disabling conditions. It is important to focus on this group because they are going to be a larger percentage of the total population and will consume more of the resources. The needs of the older population are multi-faceted and complex. Community planning efforts must take into account the changing demographics and prepare for the short and long term needs of this group.

Projected Population of Travis County Residents Ages 65 +



(Source: 2000 Census, US Bureau of the Census as compiled by the Texas State Data Center)

Q. Who are older adults?

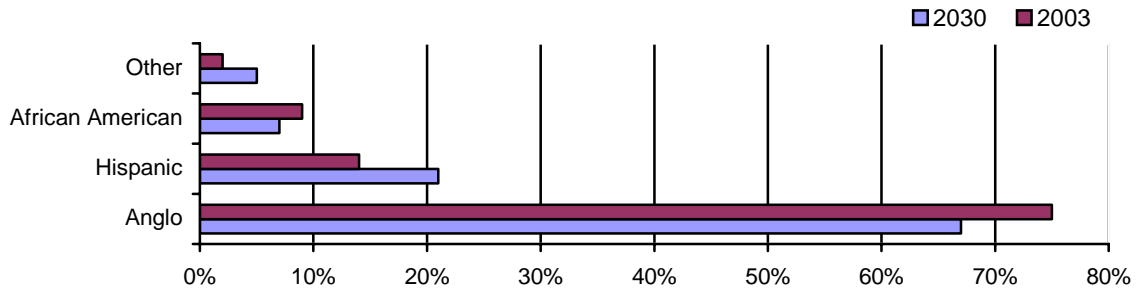
Census data from 2002 estimates that 6.1% (3,300) of Travis County residents ages 65 and older live at or below the poverty threshold -- currently \$719 per month for an individuals and \$906 per month for two (www.census.gov). The national median income of households with older persons in 2001 was \$33,938. Median income for older males was \$19,688 while median income for females was \$11,313. Older adult Anglo households had higher incomes of \$34,661, than African-Americans at \$26,610, and Hispanics at \$24,287 (www.aarp.org).

Females comprise 57% of the older adult population while males make up 43%. Typically, the ratio of women to men increases as people age beyond 65 years because women tend to have longer life expectancies. This creates special issues for older women, who are more likely to live alone, have higher out-of-pocket healthcare costs, and have lower incomes than their male counterparts.

Frequently Asked Questions about the Aging and Elderly Population

Currently, three-fourths of the older adult population is Anglo. The ethnic/racial profile of older residents will change in the coming years as younger Hispanics make up a larger percentage of the population. As the demographic composition of the population changes so will their needs – cultural differences and lower socioeconomic status, for example, may present challenges related to aging and long term care.

Racial/Ethnic Composition of Travis County Residents Ages 65+



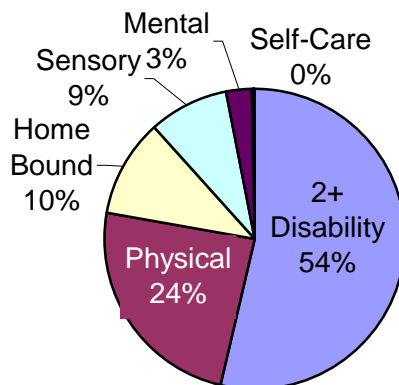
(Source: 2000 Census of Population, US Bureau of the Census as compiled by the Texas State Data Center, Texas A&M University)

Q. What are the food and nutrition needs of older adults?

Food stamp participation rates for individuals 65+ in Travis Co. jumped in the last year, from 1,295 in June 2002 to 2,429 in June 2003. This change is a result of a new simplified application process and decline in the economy (Texas Dept. of Human Services). Meals on Wheels and More reports a 33% increase in client caseload over the last year. Not all older adults get the food and nutrition they need. Failure to meet food and nutrition needs contributes to poor health outcomes. Individuals that struggle with hunger are at higher risk for stroke and poor brain function. Additionally, adequate food intake is necessary to ensure the effectiveness of prescription drugs – a critical issue for older adults, many of whom take numerous medications (America's Second Harvest 2000).

Q. What are the health and wellness issues for older adults?

% of Persons 65+ by Type of Disability



(Source: 2000 Census of Population, US Bureau of the Census as compiled by the Texas State Data Center, Texas A&M Univ.)

According to the US Census, more than 20,000 Travis County residents (37%) who are age 65 or older have a disability. Disability can result in difficulty managing activities of daily living and/or needing long term care. Disability impacts the sexes differently, for example, more women suffer from sensory disabilities while more men have physical disabilities.

Disability is a major reason for placement in residential care facilities. Focusing on preventing injuries and chronic disease, promoting healthy lifestyles, and teaching self-management techniques can decrease the impacts of disability.

Injuries resulting from falls are the most common single cause of restricted activity and a common

reason for nursing home placement. Programs that intervene to help disabled and elderly people live independently can decrease long-term health care costs by preventing the need to move to more

Frequently Asked Questions about the Aging and Elderly Population

costly care facilities (CDC 2003). Estimates indicate that **within the next three years, 20% of all Travis County households will be caring for older adult relatives**. Caregiving impacts not only the individuals providing care but the larger community. It's estimated that nationally, businesses lose \$11-29 billion annually due to employees providing care for older adults (Met Life).

Access to prescription drugs is one of the most significant healthcare issue for older adults. For older adults, this is the fastest growing healthcare cost. One in five older adults in Texas report difficulties paying for prescriptions (AARP). More than 60% report paying more than \$50 out-of-pocket per month for prescriptions. **Older adults address cost problems by taking less than amount prescribed, not filling prescriptions, delaying prescription refills and diverting funds from other areas to cover costs**. Nationally, on average, women have more out of pocket healthcare expenses than men.

The most common chronic conditions affecting older Americans today are: arthritis, hypertension, heart disease, cancer, diabetes, and stroke. At least 80% of older Americans have one of these conditions; 50% have at least two (CDC 2003). **Arthritis (e.g., Rheumatoid Arthritis, Lupus, etc.) affects 50% of older adults in Travis County. The leading causes of death for individuals ages 65+ were heart disease, cancer, and influenza** (www.tdh.state.tx.us).

Based on statewide estimates, more than 1,600 (1.9%) older Travis County residents are not insured (www.hhsc.state.tx.us). In FY2002, 15,443 aged and disabled residents of Travis County were Medicaid eligible. That same year, the State of Texas provided nursing facility and community care services to 4,034 aged and disabled residents in the County. However, **recent State and Federal budget cuts to community care services for the aged and disabled totaled more than \$2.8 million for Travis County** (CPPP, June 2003).

Q. What are the facts about Elder Abuse?

The Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services, Adult Protective Services Division completed 8,831 in-home investigations of abuse in Travis County during the five-year period 1998-2002, validating abuse or neglect in 61% (5,377) of these cases. **In 2002, there were 1,878 completed investigations, 1,291 of which were validated**. Over the five year period the number of investigations has risen slightly every year. Physical neglect was the most common allegation, followed by medical neglect and physical abuse. In 1996, the National Elder Abuse Incident Study estimated that 84% of all elder abuse cases were not reported to authorities (NCEA 1998).

Approximately 85% of perpetrators in elder abuse cases are family members with the most common being an adult child or a spouse.

Profile of Typical Elder Abuse Victim

- Female
 - White
 - Over 70, most likely over 80
 - Annual Income \$5,000 - \$10,000
 - Not able to care for self
 - Sometimes experiences confusion
- (NCEA 1998)

Q. What are housing concerns for older adults?

The majority of older adults (89%) want to live in their own homes as long as possible. In Travis County, older residents occupy about 52,000 households. The cost of housing is a serious concern for older adults on fixed incomes. Homeowners still must pay for insurance, taxes, and maintenance. Although rents appear to have decreased somewhat in the Austin area, the most recent fair market rents range from \$565 for an efficiency to \$911 for a 2-bedroom apartment. (Austin American Statesman 2003; HUD 2003). In addition, **there is a 3 to 24 month waiting list for subsidized senior housing in the Austin area, with waiting lists ranging from 25-70 individuals depending on the facility** (McIver & Associates).

Accidents that lead to injury are a major reason for placement in long-term care facilities. Home modifications, such as wheelchair ramps or bathroom grab bars, can increase independence and prevent injury. Older adults may also require supportive services (e.g., cleaning, cooking, home repairs, and transportation) in order to remain independent in their own homes.

Frequently Asked Questions about the Aging and Elderly Population

Q. What are the transportation needs of older adults?

It is estimated that there are 2.1 million older adults ages 65+ who are transportation disadvantaged in Texas (HHSC 2002). Transportation is a critical issue for the majority of older adults. The availability of adequate transportation impacts whether or not older adults can meet their needs such as going to the doctor, going grocery shopping or attending events at the senior center. The inability to access transportation threatens the ability of older adults to maintain their independence and meet their basic needs. Additionally, it increases the likelihood that they will become isolated and inactive. Inadequate transportation is also a problem for family members who must miss work and rearrange schedules to accommodate the transportation needs of older adult family members.

Q: What can I do to help?

Contact the United Way Capital Area's Volunteer Center at 512-323-1898 or search for volunteer opportunities on the United Way website at <http://www.unitedwaycapitalarea.org/volunteer/index.htm> to volunteer with a local elderly service organization.

Additional Information

- To access the 2001 Aging Services Environmental Scan, visit the CAN website: <http://www.caction.org>. To obtain a copy of this document, The CAN Community Overview, or any other CAN report, please visit the CAN website, email Brenda Ahrens at bahrns@austin.isd.tenet.edu, call 512-414-8203, or write the Community Action Network, 1111 W. 6th Street, Suite B220, Austin, Texas 78703
- For information about services for the elderly, refer to the 2-1-1 Texas community resource database at <http://www.uway-austin.org/gethelp/index.htm>

Other helpful websites:

Area Agency on Aging: <http://www.aaacap.org/>

Family Eldercare: <http://www.familyeldercare.org>

Meals on Wheels: <http://www.mealsonwheelsandmore.org>

Seton Healthcare Network: <http://www.seton.net/Wellness/GoodHealthforSeniors/index.asp>

Retired Senior Volunteer Program: <http://www.rsvpaustin.org/>

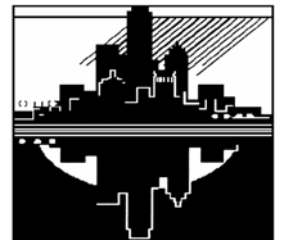
Texas Dept. on Aging: <http://www.tdoa.state.tx.us/>

Texas Health and Human Services Commission: <http://www.hhsc.state.tx.us>

Texas Dept. of Human Services: <http://www.dhs.state.tx.us/>

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services: www.cms.hhs.gov/medicaid

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**CAN Partners: Austin Area Research Organization ~ Austin Independent School District ~ Austin Area Human Services Association
Austin Area Interreligious Ministries ~ Austin Travis County MHMR Center ~ Capital Metro ~ City of Austin
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