

The following is a *brief* summary of the report, **Older Americans Update 2006: Key Indicators of Well Being** published by the Federal Interagency Forum on Aging Related Statistics.

Population:

By 2050, the population age 65 and over is expected to number approximately 90 million, up from 40 million in 2000, with the 85 and over segment expected to total over 25 million, up from 5 million in 2000.

The aging population in the US continues to be better educated than previous generations as well as more racially and ethnically diverse.

There is a great divide between males and females looking at marital status, specifically for those age 85 and above who are frequently determined to be the most needy. For example 58% of males as compared with 15% of females age 85 and above are married. Also, 35% of males and 77% of females are widowed at age 85 or older.

The divide between the sexes is also apparent in examining living arrangements. Of the 65 and older population, 72% of males and 42% of females report living with a spouse; 19% of males and 42% of females report living alone.

Interestingly, it is projected that the number of 65 and older Americans living alone will decline after hitting a peak in 1990.

Economics

The poverty rate is declining for the population age 65 and older. However, more elderly live in the low income bracket (100- 199% of the poverty threshold) than any other income bracket.

More people age 65 and older are engaged in the work force. Earnings are accounting for an increased percentage of income. There are significant increases in labor force participation for those age 62 and above as well as for those beyond age 70.

The median worth of white householders above age 65 is increasing while it is decreasing for Black householders, with a huge gap between the races.

Housing costs have increased and represent a higher proportion of spending. This is most significant for the elderly in the bottom fifth and top fifth of income brackets.

Health Status, Risks, Care

More females than males age 65 and older report hypertension, arthritis, and asthma. More males report heart disease, cancer, and diabetes.

Males report higher incidence of moderate and severe memory loss, while more females report more depressive symptoms.

Obesity is on the rise for males age 65 - 75 as well as for females age 75 and above. However, it is declining for females age 65- 74.

Alzheimers outpaces diabetes, pneumonia and the flu as the number one cause of death for Americans age 65 and older.

Of Medicare enrollees age 65 and older, hospital stays and skilled nursing facility stays are increasing while home health care visits are down. Consultations with and visits to physician offices are increasing.

Healthcare costs are increasing and decreasing depending upon the age bracket. *General healthcare* costs are up for those age 65 and above. However, for those age 65-74 and those 85 and above, costs are declining.

Prescription drug costs have more than tripled over the past 10 years. In 2002, Americans age 65 and above spent an average of \$740.00 as compared with \$542.00 in 1992.
