AGING DEMOGRAPHICS

Objectives:

To understand the aging demographic trends nationally and in New Mexico, particularly their relevance to care for the elderly, including economic impact and impact on the health care system.

To understand the effect of the “baby boomer” generation on future health care needs.

To be able to find United States and New Mexico aging population statistics on the internet in order to understand the relationship of population cohorts to health issues and planning for future health care services.

Overview:

Age is the best indicator of morbidity and morbidity is the single most important determinant of our use of health care services. What will the effect of a “graying of America” be on Medicare, Social Security and our health care system?

The United States is rapidly aging. In 1900, there were 76,303,387 people in the United States, 1,526,321 (2%) were age 65 and older and in 2000 there were nearly 35 million (12.4%) over 65. Census Bureau projections indicate that there will be over 69 million (20%) over 65 in 2030 and almost 80 million in 2050. Maintaining the health and independence of this rapidly growing segment of our population may take more than our federal health and insurance programs are able to handle. Long-term care, home health services, respite care, and other community-based services are increasingly important as the population ages.

How will services handle an increase of 34 million older Americans in the next 30 years? In addition, what will be the effect of one out of eight persons in this age group living below the federal poverty level?
Today many elders covered by Medicare and Social Security are financially unable to afford medications, home health care or long-term care services. Policymakers and health care providers are more concerned about the sheer size of the aging baby boomers than their share of the total population. By 2010 the first group of this cohort will begin to turn 65. The size of the group and the general aging of the overall population are important factors in shaping future health care and social policies and for planning for health care services, providers and certainly the financing of health and social services in the future.

Health problems such as heart disease, stroke, respiratory problems, dementia, and loss of hearing, sight, and mobility are common problems among the elderly. Many elderly, especially the oldest, old (85+) may require assistance with the tasks of everyday living. This group also has a higher incidence of chronic disease, higher percentage in nursing homes and needing assistance to maintain independent living status.

Growth of the Elderly Population
1900 to 2030

In New Mexico the total population in 1900 (twelve years before statehood) was 195,310, with only 5846 (3%) over 65. The 2000 census found 212,225 persons over 65 in New Mexico or 11.6% of the total population. Of those over 65, 11% were over 85.
National Distribution of Aging Population.

The following map graphically shows the percent of the country’s aging population. If you visit the website, CensusScope (http://www.CensusScope.org), you can view related charts and data for individual states. Note: At times, this site is unreliable, but the data is very useful if you can access the site.


Exercise

Go to the site for the map above. Note the population information for the states contiguous to New Mexico. Nationally, which state has the highest percentage of older Americans? Why do you think this is? Which state has the smallest? Why?
Over 85

This population is growing the fastest nationally and is the most likely to have chronic care needs. Nationally we have over 4 million Americans over the age of 85 and this will grow to 8 million by 2030 and by 2050 this group is expected to number 21 million.

In 2003 there were nearly 36 million people age 65 and over, just over 12% of the population. In the 20th century, this age group grew from 3 million to 35 million. Those over 85 (the oldest-old) grew from 100,000 in 1900 to 4.2 million in 2000.

The following diagram shows the “aging” of the 65+ population and 85+ population. Age Distribution of Older Americans, 1900–2000, and Projection to 2050

### New Mexico Population Distribution

Demographic Imperatives - US Census 2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New Mexico</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 60-64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 65-74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 75-84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 85 +</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total 65 +</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By Race/Origin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Hispanic White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amer. Indian/AN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic or Latino</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Householder Living Alone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 65 Living Alone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Households with Individuals 65+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**New Mexico Quick Facts:** New Mexico has the largest concentrations of Hispanics (42%) and the second largest concentration of American Indian/Native Alaskans (9.5%). New Mexico, Hawaii and California are the only states where non Hispanic whites comprise less than 50% of the total population.

**Over 65 in New Mexico:** The increase from 1990 to 2000 was 30%. The largest increases were concentrated in Lincoln, Catron, Dona Ana, Sandoval, Valencia and Bernalillo counties. The percentage of 65+ Hispanics and Latinos in New Mexico is the highest in the United States at 28.6% of the total Hispanic population. Texas has 16.7% and California 13.1%. New Mexico also has the second largest percent of American Indians/Alaskan Natives over 65 years of age. The highest is Alaska with 15.9%.
Exercises

Exercise: Go to UNM’s Bureau of Business and Economic Research (http://www.unm.edu/~bber/), and find the population of the county in New Mexico in which you were born or have a residence or in which you would like to practice medicine in the future.

Exercise: Go to the Census Bureau Home Page (http://www.census.gov/)
Go to American FactFinder (http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/BasicFactsServlet)
Look up population characteristics for New Mexico or your home state. Note: Summary Files 1 and 2 provide 100% or the short-form of the census. File 3 provides more detailed information contained in the long form or the US Census, but is a sampling of the population.

Exercise: Go to Census Bureau Home Page (http://www.census.gov/) and do a subject search (upper left hand corner). Explore topics such as aging, population projects, Native Americans, Hispanics. Use your imagination!!

Gender

Women outnumber men at every age among the elderly. The 2000 census indicated that women make up 58% of the population 65 and over and 70% of the population 85 and over. This reflects increased death rates for men than women at every age. In recent years male mortality has been improving faster than female mortality due to a reduction in the number of deaths due to heart disease.
While most men over 65 are married, most women are not. Most elderly women will outlive their spouses and are less likely to remarry than men. Older women are more likely than older men to be poor, live alone and to enter nursing homes and to depend on persons other than their spouses for care.

Ethnicity and Aging

The general US population is becoming more racially and ethnically diverse which carries over to the elderly population, but at a slower rate. About 84% of the elderly were non-Hispanic white in 2000 compared to 69% of the total population. By 2050 the elderly non-Hispanic white population will drop to 64% as the minority population moves in to old age. The older Hispanic population will grow from the current nearly 6% to over 16% in 2050. By 2028 the older Hispanic population will outnumber the black aging population. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Projections of the United States by Age, Sex, Race, Hispanic Origin, and Nativity: (http://www.census.gov/population/www/projections/natproj.html) 1999 to 2100; published January 2000.
Source: Population Resource Center

**Elderly Americans by Race and Ethnicity, 2000 and 2050**

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Demographic Profile (2001); and U.S. Census Bureau, Projections of the Resident Population by Age, Sex, Race and Hispanic Origin, 1999 to 2100
With the largest percentage of Hispanics in the United States, New Mexico will need to prepare for a large increase in our non Anglo populations. The white non-Hispanic elderly are expected to grow by 93%, while older “minority” status persons will grow by 328%. Hispanic elderly are expected to grow by 555%, non-Hispanic blacks by 160%, American Indian/Alaskan Natives (AI/AN) by 231% and Asians and Pacific Islanders by 693%.

New Mexico Race and Ethnicity

Source: www.CensusScope.org. Social Science Data Analysis Network, University of Michigan

Comprehensive data sources based on the 2000 Census for the American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) elderly population are limited. Data sources are primarily from the 1990 Census and Indian Health Service data.

An excellent source of information is the following:

Hispanic Population in the United States

American Indian or Alaskan Native Populations in the United States

Source: http://www.CensusScope.org, Social Science Data Analysis Network, University of Michigan

Age Distribution – Population Pyramids

When we want to examine the structure of a population and the potential for growth in that population, we use a basic tool in demography, the population pyramid. The population pyramid is a blueprint for interpreting the dynamics of a population.

In 1900, three demographic trends kept the population young.
• high fertility,
• declining infant and child mortality,
• high rates of international immigration

The elderly made up only a tiny share of the population, with more than half under the age of 25.
As adult health improved, the birth rate fell and immigration slowed. During the first half of the century this began to cause an aging in the population. This trend was “interrupted” by the post World War II baby boom.

By 1970, the baby boomers moved into their teens and early adulthood, creating a “bulge” in the pyramid below.

This period was followed by a decline in the birth rate. Women were slower to marry and had fewer children when they did marry. The birth rate sank to a new US low. This resulted in a rise in the average age of the population. By 2000 the “baby boomers” reached middle-age and the survival of the older ages increased. By 2030, the “baby boomers” will be 65 and older and projections indicate that the American population will be relatively evenly distributed across age groups, a cone or tunnel effect versus the pyramid that was evident in 1900 and is typical of developing countries that have high birth and morbidity rates. The US Census Bureau - IDP Population Pyramids [http://www.census.gov/ipc/www/idbpyr.html](http://www.census.gov/ipc/www/idbpyr.html) allows you to obtain current and projected population information and pyramids for other countries:
The New Mexico Population Pyramid for 2000 is very similar to the United States one above which shows the baby boomer aging population in the 35-54 age groups.

The growth of older populations has occurred as a result of reductions in death rates among the elderly and a lowering of the fertility rate. The increase is largely fueled by the 76 million baby boomers born between 1946 and 1964. This group will change the profile and expectations of growing old in the United States over the next 30 years as the cohort passes 65 and marches toward old age. The first of this generation turned 50 in 1996 and will be 85 in 2031 and the last of that generation won’t turn 85 until 2049. As the initial group of Baby Boomers reaches retirement age after 2010, the percentage of the population that is elderly will increase rapidly in the South and Midwest. Between 1995 and 2010 the proportion of elderly is expected to increase slightly in all regions but the Northeast, which will show a decline. After 2010, the proportion of elderly will increase rapidly as the share of the adult population declines.

Until the last 50 years, most gains in life expectancy were from a decrease in child mortality. Now gains are coming from the end of life as greater proportions of 65 year olds are living to 85 and more 85 year olds are surviving in to their 90’s.

The size of the elderly population is projected to increase in all States over the next 30 years. During this period California and Florida will continue to rank first and second, respectively, in having the largest number of elderly. While New York and Pennsylvania ranked third and fourth, respectively in 1995, are expected to drop to fourth and fifth
place, by the year 2025. Texas would move from fifth place in 1995 to third place by the year 2025. New Mexico currently ranks 39th in the percent of residents Age 65 or older.

Although Alaska is projected to have the least elderly among the States over most of the 30-year period, it will have a high annual average increase in the elderly population (3.8 percent). In Alaska, the number of elderly persons is expected to triple over the 30-year period.

The population 65 plus is expected to double in the top seven States with the fastest-growing elderly population. The States with the most rapid expected percentile growth of the elderly population in rank order are: Alaska, Utah, Idaho, Colorado, Nevada, Wyoming, and Washington. These States are projected to have an average annual rate of change (growth) for the elderly that ranges from 5.1 to 6.9 percent between 1995 and 2025. About half the States are expected to have an average annual rate of change at 3 percent or greater during 1995 to 2025.

The aging of the “baby boomer” population after 2010 will have a dramatic impact on the growth of the elderly population. By the year 2025, the survivors of this cohort will be between the ages of 61 and 79. The average annual rate of change in the proportion of population 65 years and over for States shows only minor growth or loss during the periods 1995 to 2010. During the period 2010 to 2025 all States shows a rapid acceleration in the growth of the elderly population.

In 1995, Florida had the largest proportion of elderly (19 percent) of any State, and Alaska had the smallest at 5 percent. By 2025, Florida (with 26 percent) would remain the leading State with more than a quarter of its population classified as elderly. Alaska would still rank as the youngest with 10 percent. To further illustrate the rapid growth in elderly populations, only four States had at least 15 percent of their population in the elderly category in 1995. By 2025, that number would grow to 48 States. Only Alaska (10 percent), California (13 percent), and the District of Columbia (14 percent) would not meet this level. Between 1995 and 2025 the number of elderly are projected to double in 21 States.

Source: Population Projections for States by Age, Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin: 1995 to 2025
Paul R. Campbell, Population Projections Branch, Population Division
U.S. Bureau of the Census, October 1996.
Health and Functioning

### Life Expectancy at Birth and at Age 65 in Years, by Sex for 1900, 1950 and 2000

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>At birth Total</th>
<th>At birth Male</th>
<th>At birth Female</th>
<th>At age 65 Total</th>
<th>At age 65 Male</th>
<th>At age 65 Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>47.3</td>
<td>46.3</td>
<td>48.3</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>12.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>68.2</td>
<td>65.6</td>
<td>71.1</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>76.9</td>
<td>74.1</td>
<td>79.5</td>
<td>17.9</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>19.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


### Leading Causes of Death for Americans Age 65 or Older

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cause</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All causes</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heart diseases</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cancer</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stroke</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COPD*</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pneumonia, Influenza</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diabetes</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alzheimer's disease</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kidney diseases</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accidents</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Septicemia</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other causes</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*COPD = Chronic obstructive pulmonary diseases, which include bronchitis, emphysema, asthma, and other chronic respiratory diseases.
Note: Diabetes was the 3rd cause of death among American Indians and the 4th cause among black elderly.

The most common chronic conditions among those 70+ are arthritis, hypertension, heart disease, diabetes, respiratory diseases, stroke and cancer. Arthritis affects more than 60% of women and nearly 50% of men. This percentage increases with age. While arthritis is rarely fatal, it limits physical and social activities.
Chronic Health Conditions: Americans 70 or Older, by Race

Note: Whites and African Americans are non-Hispanic. Hispanics may be of any race.

Web Sites of Interest

UNM's Bureau of Business and Economic Research (http://www.unm.edu/~bber/)
Census Bureau Home Page (http://www.census.gov/ipc/www/idbpyr.html)
Censusscope: (http://www.censusscope.org)
American FactFinder (http://factfinder.census.gov/home/saff/main.html?_lang=en)

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