

TAKEAWAYS



# The Demographics of an AGING POPULATION

An Executive Summary on the Impact of Aging Populations on Healthcare Environments

## INSIDE YOU WILL LEARN ABOUT:

The ways older adults are categorized by demographers.

U.S. population projections and trends.

The ways growth in the aging population could affect the healthcare design industry.

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## The Demographics of an Aging Population

### Demography 101

The U.S. Census Bureau uses the term “older population” to denote persons aged 65 and older. There are several subcategories within the older population group, including:

Young-old = 65-74 years

Old = 75-84

Oldest-old = 85 and older

Baby boomers are defined as the population cohort born between mid-1946 and mid-1964. During these years, a sharp, unprecedented increase in the birthrate was observed. According to the Census Bureau, there were 76.4 million baby boomers living in the United States in 2012 (Ortman, Velkoff, & Hogan, 2014).

### Population Projections

The older population (aged 65 and over) will nearly double in the next four decades, rising from 43.1 million in 2012 to 83.7 million in 2050. Most of this growth will occur between 2010 and 2030 as baby boomers reach age 65. The first of the baby boomers turned 65 in 2011; the last will turn 65 in 2029. In 2030, more than 1 in 5 (20.3%) U.S. residents will be counted among the older population—the largest proportion on record. Baby boomers will be better educated and more racially and ethnically diverse than previous generations of older adults.

The oldest-old (aged 85+) is the fastest-growing segment of the total population, doubling by 2036 and tripling by 2049. By 2050, 4.5% of the U.S. population will be aged 85 and over, up from 2.5% in 2030.

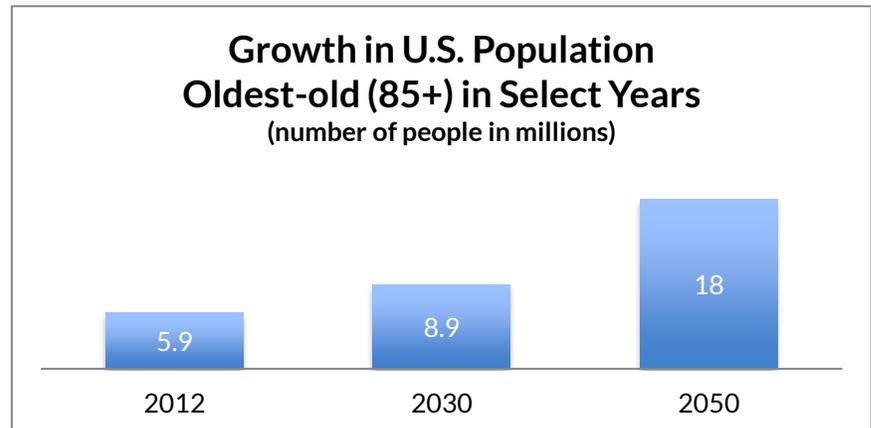
### Implications for the Healthcare Design Industry

At every life stage, the baby boom generation has exerted a tremendous influence on American society. As the baby boomers age, their numbers and needs will be felt most intensely in the healthcare and social service sectors. Demographers describe the baby boom population bulge as the “pig in the python.”



The top three causes of death among adults aged 65+ are complex chronic conditions requiring frequent healthcare provider visits and hospitalizations:

- 1) Heart disease
- 2) Cancer
- 3) Chronic lower respiratory disease



Older adults are much more likely to be hospitalized than younger adults. According to the most recent National Hospital Discharge Survey (2010), persons aged 65 and over were hospitalized at a rate nearly three times that of all other age groups. The top three causes of death among adults aged 65 and over are complex chronic conditions requiring frequent healthcare provider visits and hospitalizations:

- 1) Heart disease;
- 2) Cancer; and
- 3) Chronic lower respiratory disease.

The rapid growth in the oldest-old population is especially significant as people aged 85 and older are more likely to experience conditions that necessitate hospitalization and long-term care.

Alzheimer's disease and related dementias will grow rapidly with the aging population. In 2014, 5 million people aged 65 and over were living with Alzheimer's disease. The number of people 65+ with Alzheimer's disease is projected to nearly triple to 13.8 million by 2050, further increasing demand for hospital, skilled nursing, and home health care (Alzheimer's Association, 2014).

Changes in the sex/gender structure of the older population are predicted in the next 40 years. The life expectancy among men is projected to increase more rapidly than for women, resulting in a narrowing of the gap between men and women living into the oldest ages and a decrease in the number of women living alone. This trend may increase demand for residential care options accommodating older couples (Ortman, Velkoff, & Hogan, 2014).



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