

Senior Adult Facts

Provided by the Task Force for Older Adult Ministries, compiled by Dr. Alma Belzer

FACTOID # 1

The unprecedented rapid growth of the older adult population nationwide and worldwide, and the resultant burden on the social and economic system demands that the church address this crisis. Currently 1 in every 8 Americans is age 65 or older and over 1 in 4 of these seniors live alone. Every hour, 330 Americans reach the age of 60. In two years, these same "baby boomers" will start turning 65. Every 10 years, the age 85+ population increases by 40%.

FACTOID # 2

Older Americans Month began when President John F. Kennedy designated May 1963 as Senior Citizens Month, encouraging the nation to pay tribute in some way to older people across the country. In 1980, President Jimmy Carter's proclamation changed the name to Older Americans Month, a time to celebrate those 65+ through ceremonies, events and public recognition. The following is a quote from President Carter's book, *The Virtues of Aging*, "*We worry too much about something to live on -- and too little about something to live for.*"

FACTOID # 3

Over one in four people age 65+ live alone. Half of women age 75+ live alone. Only 4% of the 65+ age group live in nursing facilities and over half of them receive no visitors. The majority of older adults live with relatives. More than eight out of ten long-term care services are provided by unpaid family caregivers. One in three family caregivers caring for older relatives are themselves aged 65+.

FACTOID # 4

Every minute of the day, three older adults are treated in the emergency department for a fall. Every hour, falls result in the death of two older adults. Every year, one in three persons over age 75 fall and 20% of these will have a moderate-to-severe injury. Persons who fall once are highly likely to have a second fall. See www.fallprevention.org for ways to reduce falls in the community. WHAT DOES THIS MEAN TO YOU AND YOUR CHURCH?

FACTOID # 5

"According to U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, as many as 214,000 Americans could be 100 or older by 2010. By 2050, that number could exceed 4,200,000." What may be more surprising is the fact that the fastest growing segment of our population is the 85+ age group! The ten states with the highest percentage of the total U.S. population are California (10.1%), New York (8.4%), Florida, Texas, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Ohio, New Jersey, Massachusetts and Michigan. That Florida is only 24th when it has the largest share of those age 65+ may be because the state attracts the healthier "young old" while those much older return to their origin state to be cared for by their families. Some states across the country are following Oklahoma's lead in forming a "Centenarian Club" to honor and celebrate the hundreds of hundred-year-olds in their state! www.ckokc.org/centenarian-club-of-oklahoma.

How can the consideration of these facts impact planning for senior adults in your congregations and communities?

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