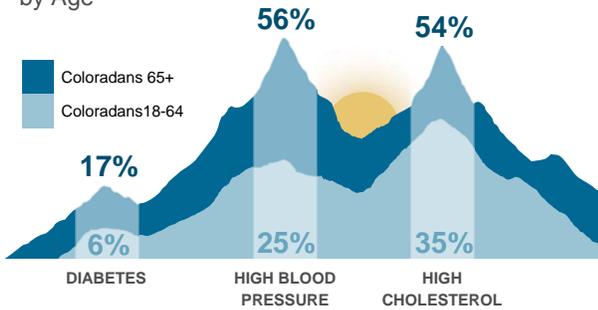




CHRONIC DISEASE: COLORADO ADULTS by Age¹



Elderly Americans living in poverty are **TWO TIMES MORE LIKELY** to have 3+ chronic conditions²

Seniors are the fastest growing age group in Colorado. Colorado is expected to see a 150% increase in adults age 65 and older between the years of 2010-2030.³

Health Status and Age

Colorado's seniors are generally healthier as compared to seniors around the country, but less healthy than the rest of Colorado's population. Further, seniors who live in poverty are more vulnerable to worse health and multiple co-occurring chronic conditions, such as diabetes, heart disease, and high blood pressure.

“ Ensuring that the right community supports are in place will allow seniors to live productive and healthy lives for as long as possible, which is their personal preference, but is also good public policy.

—Eileen Doherty, Gerontological Society

ANNUAL COST OF CARE: US SENIORS by Type of Care^{4,5}



By 2018
Colorado is projected to need:
8,500 more nursing and home care aides

4 out of 10

AMERICANS OVER AGE 65 live by themselves and are more likely to experience social isolation⁶

Access to Care

To adequately meet the health care needs of Colorado seniors, communities need a range of health care facilities and providers, including long-term care facilities, adequate primary care providers, and community-based support services. Long term care is often the source of care for seniors who need great assistance, but it is costly. Community-based services are still relatively new, but have proven to be much more affordable and highly preferred by seniors.

References

¹ Colorado Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2012.
² The Poor Pay More. George Kaplan, 2009.
³ Colorado Department of Local Affairs, 2011.
⁴ Federal Interagency Forum on Aging Related Statistics, 2012.
⁵ US Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2012.
⁶ AARP Foundation, 2012.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION

Colorado has the opportunity to be an even better state if we commit to ensuring that seniors in every community are able to maximize their health and thrive. To reach this goal, we must dedicate resources to meeting the needs of our growing senior population and address health inequities experienced by some Colorado seniors. For Colorado to be the healthiest state we need to recognize and meet the unique social and health care needs of all Colorado seniors.



CAPITALIZE ON COMMUNITY SUPPORTS

Helping seniors live as they want to and ensuring that those environments are safe and supportive of their choices and basic needs is key. Examples of community supports include building age-appropriate apartments, creating volunteer opportunities such as Boomers Leading Change in Health, establishing creative aging programs at central locations, and virtually connecting home-bound seniors.

IMPROVE CARE FOR MEDICAID SENIORS

The state is about to enroll an estimated 48,000 beneficiaries who are insured jointly by Medicare and Medicaid into the Accountable Care Collaborative (ACC). Many of these are low-income seniors who use Medicaid to pay for long-term supports and services. We must ensure that the ACC meets the needs of this population, connecting them to appropriate providers and services and coordinating care.

IMPLEMENT STATE PLAN ON AGING

Colorado has created a State Plan on Aging with funding from the federal Older Americans Act. The plan is comprehensive and includes access to care, work, and transportation, disease prevention and promotion, and home and community supports. As this plan is carried out, the state should be engage stakeholders, and strive for coordination with all agencies that serve seniors.

“ We must take steps to address the health disparities that negatively impact older adults and their families. We all have an important role in this work, especially in reducing health care costs, improving care coordination, and increasing efficiency.

—Kelli Fritts, AARP

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