

The Older Michiganians Act and Michigan's Aging Network

*A brief for the Governor-elect and Incoming Legislators
from the Michigan Commission on Services to the Aging – January 2019*

The Older Michiganians Act (Act 180 of 1981) (OMA) created the Commission on Services to the Aging within the Executive Office of the Governor to oversee Michigan's implementation of the Older Americans Act of 1965. OMA created an Office of Services to the Aging as an autonomous entity within the Department of Management and Budgetⁱ. It authorized the designation of Area Agencies on Aging and established certain programs relating to older persons.ⁱⁱ

The Michigan Commission on Services to the Aging (CSA) is a 15-member body appointed by the Governor. Among the duties of the CSA are to serve as an effective and visible advocate for aging and older persons in all government decisions; advise the Governor, Michigan Legislature, and the Aging and Adult Services Agency (AASA) concerning coordination and administration of state programs serving older persons; make recommendations to the Governor and Legislature regarding changes in federal and state programs, statutes, and policies; and approve the state plan and budget required by the Older Americans Act of 1965.

Michigan's 16 Area Agencies on Aging are federally mandated to provide home and community-based services to older adults and people with disabilities. The CSA performs an annual review of plans submitted by each region's Area Agency on Aging. The review and formal approval of these plans, along with participation in four in-person public hearings, enable Commissioners to identify key issues and patterns involved in serving Michigan's older adults across the State and make recommendations for improvement. The CSA formed a 4-member Advocacy Committee in 2016 charged with taking the lead on creating an action plan addressing priority issues approved by the full CSA.

The Michigan Commission on Services to the Aging (CSA) is advised by the State Advisory Council on Aging (SAC), a 40-member body appointed by the CSA to study aging issues and recommend policy to the Commission. The advisory council membership reflects the demographic and geographic diversity of Michigan's older population.

A Snapshot of Michigan's Senior Population

"Michigan is aging faster than the rest of the United States" was a recent newspaper headline based on research conducted by veteran Michigan demographer Kurt Metzger in June of 2018. As part of his research, he identified that ***"in 2025, those over the age of 65 will outnumber those under age 18 for the first time in many Michigan counties, just six years away"***.

The rest of the nation is, on average, 10 years behind, and will see the same demographic shift by 2035.

A number of factors contribute to this demographic shift: a lower replacement birth rate, a large Baby Boomer generation, extended length of life, and lower incoming immigration levels. In the last five years (2012-2017), provision of in-home services, community services, and caregiver services in Michigan have

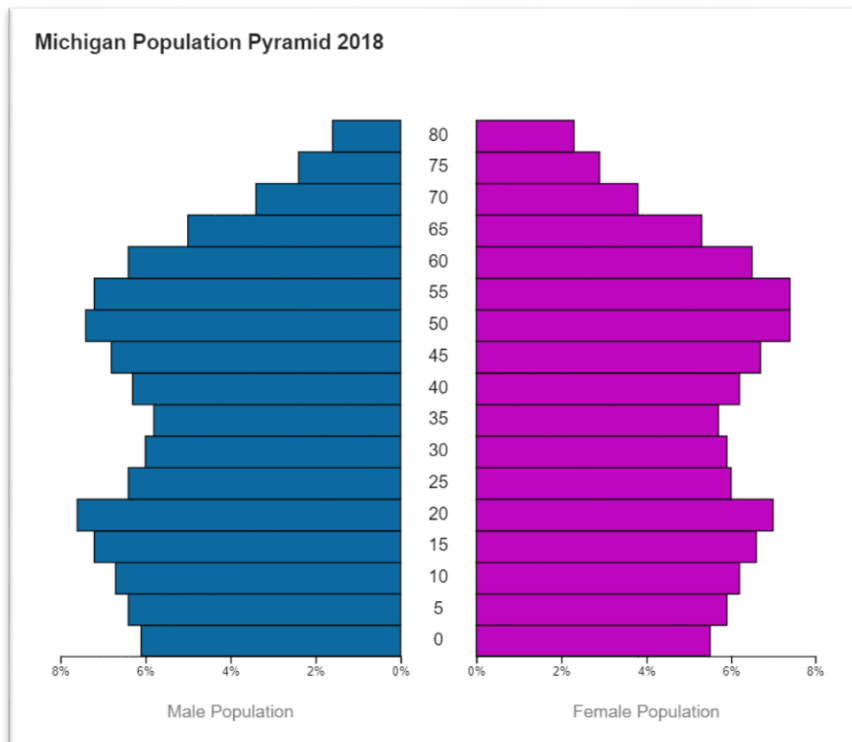


increased by 17-20%. In the coming years, those who are currently in their 50's and 60's will age into later adulthood, requiring higher levels of care and service. The 85+ age group is the fastest growing segment and will more than double by 2030. This has tremendous implications for the future of senior services in Michigan, which already faces a lack of resources (funding) to serve an even smaller population.

Michigan's aging network knows that this demographic shift will be a significant challenge for all ages.

Right now, it is estimated that every day nearly 1 million Michigan residents provide informal care to family members or friends who are older, have chronic illnesses or other conditions that prevent them from handling daily activities such as cooking, cleaning or bathing on their own. Michigan's "family caregivers" make great sacrifices to help the person they are caring for continue to live at home, but without

additional support and access to good information or services, we will see higher utilization rates of institutional care. Greater support for Michigan families to care for their loved ones at home is key to the future and we are already seeing a growing need for this today.



The Longevity Economy Leaves Some Seniors Behind

Joseph Coughlin, founder of MIT's AgeLab writes "you might assume that more older people, by definition, means more demand for the sorts of products that have always been provided to older consumers. The reality is far more nuanced, however. The longevity economy is a story of wild, new varieties of older consumers who are arriving at their later years with unprecedented diversity in terms of tastes, demands, aspirations, and expectations for their own lives—all of which go well beyond what older consumers put up with even a generation ago."ⁱⁱⁱ

In Michigan, we have a large population of active seniors who wield tremendous economic power. They perform community service through volunteerism. Many provide essential care and support for spouses, relatives and friends who would otherwise require purchased services and supports. Unfortunately, a significant portion of older adults in Michigan are pushed to the sidelines of the longevity economy due to poverty, poor physical and/or mental health, or lack of access to services essential that allow them to age in place. When seniors are asked what is most important to them as they age, the almost universal response is to maintain their independence and live in their own homes.

Regional Challenges

The working-age population decreases in Michigan combined with older adult population increases will lead to many regional challenges – some unique and others consistent with patterns found around the state and country.

- In northwest Michigan and in some counties in the Upper Peninsula, 40% of the population is currently over the age of 60. Within three years, estimates are that fully half of those populations will be over the age of 60. Leelanau is currently the fastest aging county in Michigan.
- In northern lower Michigan, small communities are unable to find developers to build new homes suitable and affordable for older adults. Older housing stock is not adequate for the need – in quantity or accessibility, leaving older adults without safe, affordable housing as they age.
- In the Great Lakes Bay & Thumb Area, housing costs are unaffordable for older adults with many running at \$4,000 per month.
- In Flint, people are still lining up at 5:00 am each morning for water (as of August 2018). Many seniors are homebound and/or unable to carry heavy gallons of water and unable to access clean water.
- In southeast Michigan, over 800 people are on a waiting list for home-delivered meals.
- In west Michigan, even with a 17% increase in budget to pay direct care workers, there was a hiring shortage because direct care worker pay, contracted through local counties, was subject to local county employee pay grade regulations. With wages lower than fast food stores pay, direct care worker positions go unfilled.

And still, by working together, AASA and our 16 regional Area Agencies on Aging have developed remarkable and creative innovations to meet local challenges.

Regional Innovations

- Northeast Michigan has developed a strong base of volunteers to address transportation challenges and is developing training for law enforcement to appropriately respond in cases involving those living with dementia.
- The Great Lakes Bay & Thumb Area has been able to successfully bill Medicare for Care Transitions – producing economic savings by reducing re-hospitalizations and improving health outcomes. They have promoted development of telehealth options that are successfully taking hold among patients and providers.
- West Michigan has developed an elder refugee program addressing the specific needs of older adult refugees.
- Agencies in southwest Michigan have developed new programs and services to better serve veterans, including improved mental health services. One launched Operation Celebrate Elderly with a first Centenarian's lunch celebrating those over the age of 100 and another is offering mobile healthcare services with a new Mobile RV.
- Three area agencies on aging in southeast Michigan are collaborating to expand transportation successfully across county lines and meet older adult needs.

By continuing to work together, the service providers of the aging network from all regions in Michigan work diligently to develop innovative, cost-effective and efficient ways to serve Michigan's older adults with care, compassion and quality.

CSA's Four Legislative and Policy Priorities to Better Serve Michigan Older Adults

As part of its charge to advocate on behalf of older adults, the Michigan Commission on Services to the Aging has identified four priority issues currently facing older adults living in Michigan that require attention. As the older adult population in Michigan expands, these priorities will become more critical.



Transportation

Support transportation policies that mitigate barriers to meeting the needs and quality of life for older adults. Next to health concerns, transportation is a top issue for meeting the needs of older adults. As adults age, the need for transportation for basic needs such as food and clothing purchases becomes strained when mobility and/or access to transportation services are limited. One

example: bus routes often do not cross county lines that creates insurmountable barriers for many to get to critical healthcare appointments. Public transportation routes and hours decrease during evenings and weekend thus creating more mobility limitations.



Direct Care Worker Shortage

Support policies and programs designed to create a strong pool of well-qualified, trained and compensated direct care workers (DCWs). By 2022, Michigan will need 24,000 more trained DCWs than we currently have due to increasing numbers of older adults and people with disabilities.^{iv} Our direct care workers also need consistent and quality training to provide good care. A third issue

relates to retention through competitive pay and benefits. In many regions the payrate is so low that DCWs can secure better income and benefits by working as a cashier in local businesses like McDonald's.



Reduce Elder Abuse and Exploitation

Support policies and programs designed to minimize elder abuse and exploitation. Elder abuse or crimes against adults age 65 or older is growing in Michigan. Information and data suggest that over 1 million Americans over the age of 65 have been subjected to physical brutality, psychological abuse, sexual assault, or financial exploitation by an individual tasked with their care and support. It

is estimated that more than 400,000 experience some form of elder abuse. Elder abuse statistics estimate that up to 10% of elderly individuals eventually become victims of some type of abuse or neglect.



Access to In-home Meals & In-home Services

Support policies and programs designed to provide adequate access to home-delivered meals and in-home services. In 2017, over 1,000 people were on wait lists for home-delivered meals and over 5,000 people were waiting for in-home services. In home services are crucial to aging in place and produce cost-savings over

out-of-home residential care as evidenced by Michigan's successful MiChoice Waiver program. Michigan needs to develop appropriate funding resources to meet client needs, and to protect, preserve and improve the health and wellbeing of older adults - and their caregivers.

Relevant Reports from the State Advisory Council

Direct Care Workers (2016):

https://www.michigan.gov/documents/osa/SAC_DCW_REPORT_FINAL_5-2-16_330pm_525239_7.pdf

Baby Boomers – Now and in the Future (2014):

https://www.michigan.gov/documents/osa/SAC_Report_BABY_BOOMERS_Approved_11_21_2014_by_the_Commission_resaved_2_25_2015_489364_7.pdf

Caregivers of Persons with Dementia (2010):

https://www.michigan.gov/documents/osa/2010_SAC_Annual_Report_342159_7_472974_7.pdf

Commission Contact Information

Dona J. Wishart

Chair, Michigan Commission on Services to the Aging

Aging & Adult Services Agency

Michigan Department of Health and Human Services

333 South Grand Avenue, 4th Floor

Lansing, Michigan 48933

P.O. Box 30676

Lansing, Michigan 48909

517-373-8230

989 748-4060 (desk line)

989 942-0437 (cell)

L. Kathleen LaTosch

Commissioner, Michigan Commission on Services to the Aging

Chair, Advocacy Committee

248-807-1557 (Cell)

klatosch@gmail.com

ⁱ In 2015 the Office of Services to the Aging was changed from a Type 1 agency to the Type 2 Aging and Adult Services Agency becoming part of Michigan Department of Health and Human Services in Executive Order 2015-4, signed on Feb. 9, 2015: https://www.michigan.gov/documents/snyder/EO_2015-4_480863_7.pdf

ⁱⁱ [http://www.legislature.mi.gov/\(S\(2zjxxq555nrmy445jjuzie2a\)\)/documents/mcl/pdf/mcl-act-180-of-1981.pdf](http://www.legislature.mi.gov/(S(2zjxxq555nrmy445jjuzie2a))/documents/mcl/pdf/mcl-act-180-of-1981.pdf)

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.forbes.com/sites/josephcoughlin/2018/10/31/the-longevity-economy-is-challenging-the-investment-thesis-of-senior-housing-every-other-industry/#1c9a6cc521bd>

^{iv} State Advisory Council on Aging's 2016 Annual Report to the Michigan Commission on Services to the Aging regarding Direct Care Workers (DCWs)