

Number of US elderly will double by 2050, report says

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Aging Baby Boomers will strain country's health care system, Census Bureau says.

(HealthDay)— There will be almost twice as many elderly Americans in 2050 as there are now, posing serious issues for the nation's health care system, according to two U.S. Census Bureau reports released Tuesday.

"The United States is projected to age significantly over this period, with 20 percent of its population age 65 and over by 2030," Jennifer Ortman, chief of the Population Projections Branch at the [census bureau](#), said in an agency news release.

The number of people aged 65 and older is projected to reach 83.7 million by 2050, compared with 43.1 million in 2012, the bureau reported. This sharp rise is due to aging [baby boomers](#), who were born

between 1946 and 1964 and began turning 65 in 2011.

An aging population "will have implications for [health care](#) services and providers, national and local policymakers," Ortman added. She said businesses will also have to adapt to meet new demands as a rising number of elderly influences both the "family structure and the American landscape."

Baby boomer-influenced growth in health-care related industries began a few years ago, the agency said. According to the census bureau, there were about 819,000 health and social assistance-related facilities and businesses in 2011—a 20 percent jump from 2007.

As the population ages, the ratio of working-age Americans to retirees will change as well. According to the bureau, there were 22 people aged 65 and older for every 100 working-age people in 2012. However, by 2030, that will rise to 35 people aged 65 and older for every 100 working-age people, which means there will be about 3 working-age people for every person aged 65 and older.

By 2050, there will be 36 people aged 65 and older for every 100 working-age people.

But the Baby Boom generation will also begin to fade in influence, as well. According to the bureau, the number of boomers will decline to 60 million by 2030 and to only 2.4 million by 2060, when the youngest boomers will be 96 years old.

Baby boomers accounted for about 24 percent of the U.S. population in 2012. That will decrease to about 17 percent in 2030 and about 4 percent in 2050, the bureau said.

These trends are a global phenomenon, the bureau noted, with people

aged 65 and over accounting for a rising percentage of the populations of all developed nations over the next two decades. Seen from that perspective, the United States is expected to remain one of the "younger" developed countries during this time, with people aged 65 and older accounting for only about a fifth of its [population](#).

More information: The U.S. National Institute on Aging offers tips for [healthy aging](#).

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