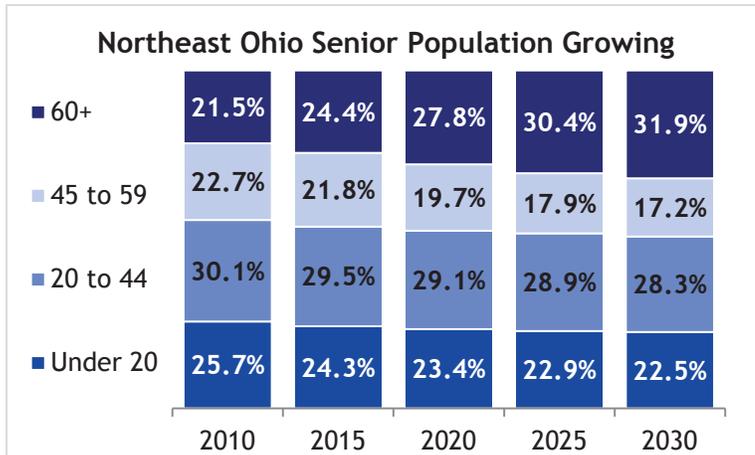


Seniors in Northeast Ohio



The growth in the senior population has important implications for health and social service delivery. Economic data shed light on workforce and poverty trends among Northeast Ohio seniors, while information on housing characteristics provides insight into their living situations and housing cost burdens. Health data, such as insurance coverage and incidence of disease and disability, can indicate service needs. Taken together, the information presented here is a snapshot of the opportunities and challenges seniors face in living long, healthy, engaged lives in Northeast Ohio.



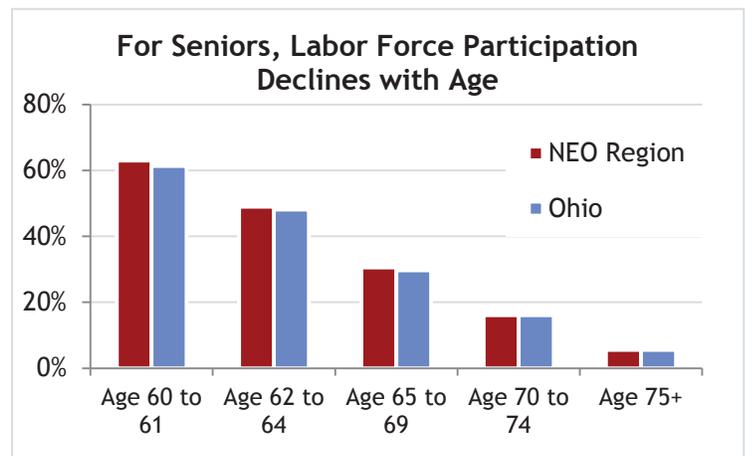
Seniors aged 60 and over were only 21.5 percent of Northeast Ohio’s population in 2010. By 2030, this group’s population share is projected to grow to 31.9 percent, outnumbering youth under 20 years old. This projected proportion is higher than that of the state (28.7 percent).

About 934,935 people age 60 and over currently call Northeast Ohio home.

Source: Scripps Institute of Gerontology.

Income

Labor force participation is the percent of the population that is either employed or looking for work. Although some workers retire early, in recent decades the overall trend for seniors ages 65 to 69 has been increased labor force participation. In Northeast Ohio, 26.9 percent of people age 60 and over are employed or looking for a job, with labor force participation declining with age. The unemployment rate is 5.9 percent for this group, compared to 5.5 percent among all Ohio seniors.



Source: 2011-2013 American Community Survey.

Among Northeast Ohio households with people 60 years old and over, 44.1 percent have earned income, at an average of \$50,769 per household. Less than half (49.5 percent) of Northeast Ohio households over age 60 have retirement income, but 76.5 percent receive Social Security payments averaging \$17,763 annually. Although income from Social Security helps keep many seniors out of poverty, in Northeast Ohio 8.7 percent of residents over age 60 live in poverty. An additional 9.6 percent are living near poverty, between 100 and 150 percent of the poverty threshold. Over 9 percent of seniors receive food stamps through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), compared to 14.7 percent of the overall population.



Health

Good health, including physical, mental, and emotional aspects, is important to achieving and maintaining a high quality of life. Having health insurance to assist with covering the cost of medical expenses is often an important consideration in seeking care. Fortunately, similar to the poverty-reducing impact of Social Security, health insurance coverage among seniors tends to be nearly universal due to Medicare, a federal government health insurance program for people age 65 and over. In Northeast Ohio, 99.6 percent of people age 65 and above have health insurance coverage of some kind. Over 97 percent carry public insurance (Medicare, Medicaid, and/or military and veterans benefits); 64.2 percent of these publically insured seniors also carry private secondary coverage such as employer-based or direct-purchase insurance.

Estimated Prevalence of Behavioral Health Issues

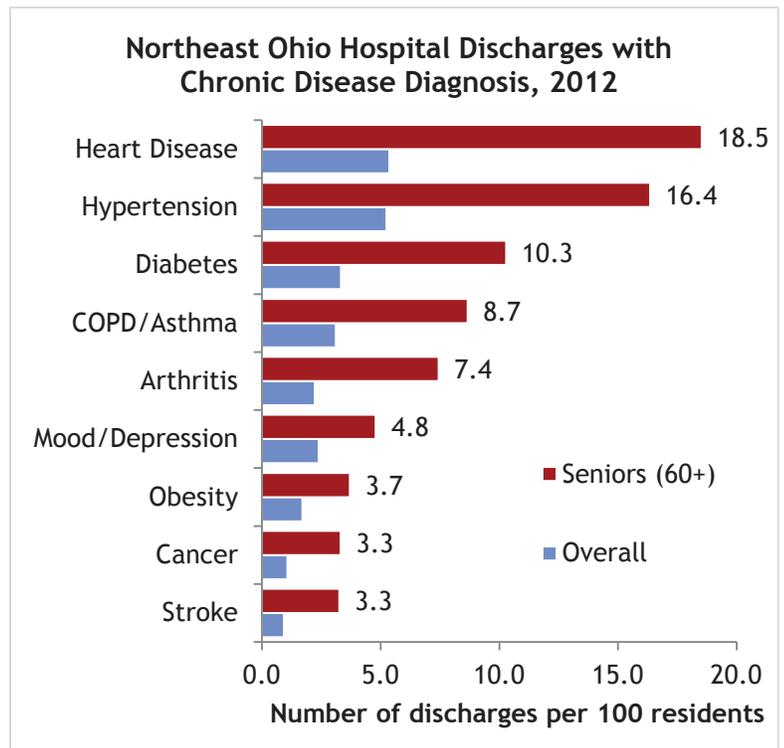
	Estimated prevalence in Northeast Ohio, 60+ years old
Any mental illness (including serious)	120,568
Serious mental illness	15,557
Substance abuse or dependence	28,403

Source: The Center for Community Solutions; based on SAMHSA, Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality, National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 2013.

Behavioral health, including mental illness and addiction, continues to be an important component of overall health as people age. Compared to the general adult population, non-institutionalized seniors have lower rates of behavioral health problems. However, issues such as depression and social isolation can become more pronounced as physical capacity decreases and social-emotional supports decline.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, nationally about 80 percent of people age 65 and over struggle with at least one chronic disease. By preventing or controlling chronic conditions, seniors are more likely to remain healthy with a high quality of life.

Chronic diseases can be difficult to quantify at the county level, but some insight can be gained from hospital discharge data. In 2012 discharge records, the most common chronic disease diagnoses for seniors in Northeast Ohio were heart disease and hypertension. In general, discharge data indicate that hospitalization for chronic diseases is much higher among seniors than the overall population. These increased rates do not necessarily indicate higher disease prevalence, but do illustrate potential issues with accessing care and the greater health toll that chronic diseases can have on seniors.



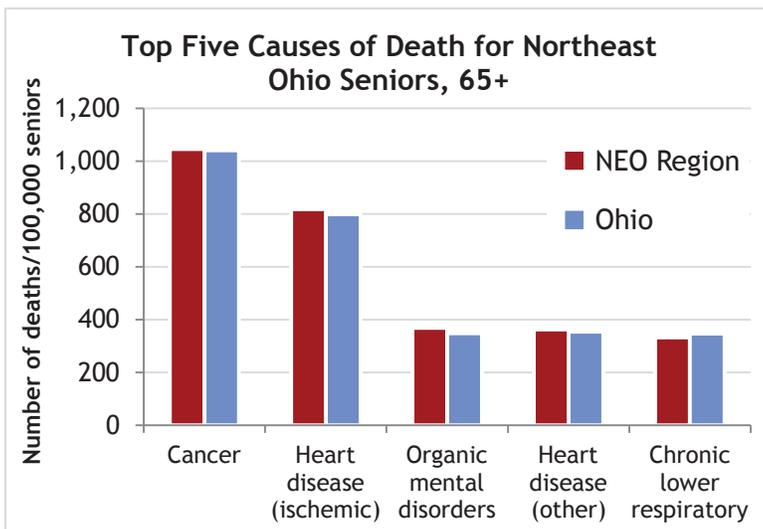
Source: The Center for Community Solutions; Ohio Hospital Association, 2012.

Disabilities, especially those that limit people’s ability to care for themselves and carry out important functions of daily life without assistance, affect seniors’ quality of life and influence the range of necessary community and medical supports. Over 34 percent of people 65 and over in Northeast Ohio have some disability, with ambulatory difficulties being the most common.

Disability Prevalence—Northeast Ohio

	65 to 74 years old	75 years and older	Total senior population (65+)
Ambulatory—serious difficulty walking or climbing stairs	14.4%	30.3%	21.7%
Independent living—difficulty doing errands alone	7.4%	25.1%	15.5%
Self-care—difficulty bathing or dressing	4.3%	12.6%	8.1%
Hearing	8.4%	20.5%	13.9%
Vision	3.5%	8.9%	5.9%
Cognitive	4.4%	12.5%	8.1%
Any disability	23.2%	47.7%	34.4%

Source: 2011-2013 American Community Survey; data reported for age 65+ due to availability constraints.

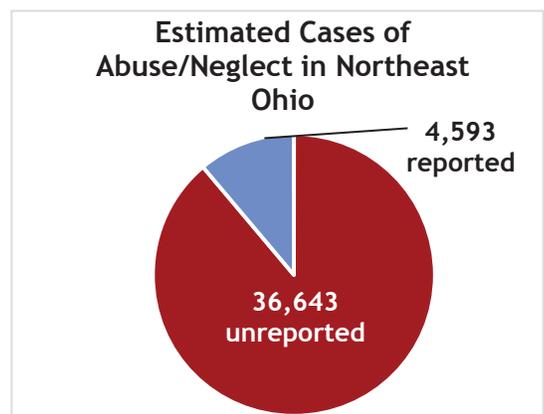


As expected, mortality rates go up with age, with many of the top causes of death related to the chronic diseases discussed earlier. In addition to malignant neoplasms (cancer), ischemic heart disease (related to blocked blood flow in the heart), and organic mental disorders (such as dementia), the top causes of death among seniors in Northeast Ohio include other heart disease and chronic lower respiratory diseases.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, 2009-2013.

Elder Abuse and Neglect

Elder abuse can take many forms, including physical, emotional, or financial abuse, exploitation, or neglect. Many of these cases are unreported, making it difficult to quantify the magnitude of the problem. The Ohio Family Violence Prevention Project estimates that 41,236 cases of elder abuse or neglect occurred in Northeast Ohio in 2014. Of those, only 4,593 were reported to Adult Protective Services (APS).



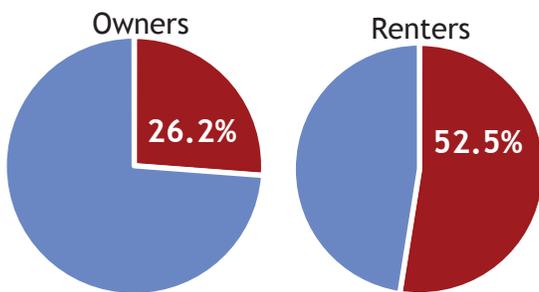
Housing

As seniors age, some reside in institutional facilities, such as nursing homes. Others rely on home and community-based services (HCBS) for care and assistance. In Northeast Ohio, 4.1 percent of the population age 65 and over, or 25,994 people, live in nursing facilities. This is the same as the proportion of seniors in nursing facilities statewide. Residence in nursing facilities increases sharply with age; people 85 years old and over account for 49.8 percent of the senior nursing home population in Northeast Ohio.

Home and Community-Based Services

Some seniors need care that nursing facilities provide but can be served more effectively, in terms of both cost and outcomes, in their homes and communities. Home and community-based services (HCBS) include adult day care, personal care services, transportation, nutrition and meal assistance, and home modifications such as ramps and grab bars. Medicaid's Elderly, Blind, and Disabled (EBD) program covers some HCBS for eligible seniors who cannot afford the services they need.

Seniors Paying More than 30% of Income for Housing in Northeast Ohio



Source: 2009-2013 American Community Survey.

Of the 573,714 non-institutional senior households in Northeast Ohio, 79.4 percent live in housing units that they own themselves. The remaining 20.6 percent rent.

The generally accepted threshold for housing affordability is spending less than 30 percent of household income on housing expenses. Senior renters struggle more than senior homeowners with unaffordable housing. The median rent for a senior in Northeast Ohio ranges from \$514 to \$754 per month depending on the county; to afford this rent, a household needs to have an annual income of \$20,560 to \$30,160.

As they age, seniors face issues that are unique compared to those experienced by other portions of the population. Although public programs like Social Security and Medicare reduce poverty and make essentials such as health care more readily available, disability, chronic disease, elder abuse and neglect, and accessible and affordable housing pose distinct challenges.

The growing senior population means that systems from health care to taxation will need to evolve to accommodate changing demographics and an altered population needs profile. For example, HCBS can make it easier to age in place, but the needs and abilities of future seniors should also be taken into account when planning housing developments, transportation systems, and communities. Further, Community Solutions' report, [Aging Ohio: The Impact of Demographic Change on State Fiscal Policy](#), found that impacts of an aging population, including reductions in sales and income tax revenue, are expected to result in a net \$1.9 billion state budget shortfall by 2035. Addressing these challenges requires a long-term planning horizon for policy leaders, senior-serving organizations, and funders; advocacy for policies that assist low-income and disabled seniors in accessing the resources they need; and adequate funding for services.



For references, data tables, and information about seniors in other Northeast Ohio counties, visit www.CommunitySolutions.com/NEORIO-Seniors.

