



OLDER AMERICANS 2010

Key Indicators of Well-Being

The Federal Interagency Forum on Aging-Related Statistics

The Federal Interagency Forum on Aging-Related Statistics (Forum) was founded in 1986 to foster collaboration among federal agencies that produce or use statistical data on the older population. Forum agencies as of July 2010 are listed below.

Department of Commerce

U.S. Census Bureau
<http://www.census.gov>

Department of Health and Human Services

Administration on Aging
<http://www.aoa.gov>

Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality
<http://www.ahrq.gov>

Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services
<http://www.cms.hhs.gov>

National Center for Health Statistics
<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs>

National Institute on Aging
<http://www.nia.nih.gov>

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation
<http://www.aspe.hhs.gov>

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
<http://www.samhsa.gov>

Department of Housing and Urban Development

<http://www.hud.gov>

Department of Labor

Bureau of Labor Statistics
<http://www.bls.gov>

Employee Benefits Security Administration
<http://www.dol.gov/ebsa>

Department of Veterans Affairs

<http://www.va.gov>

Environmental Protection Agency

<http://www.epa.gov>

Office of Management and Budget

Office of Statistical and Science Policy
<http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/inforeg/statpolicy.html>

Social Security Administration

Office of Research, Evaluation, and Statistics
<http://www.ssa.gov>

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Foreword

Americans age 65 and over are an important and growing segment of our population. Many federal agencies provide data on aspects of older Americans' lives, but it can be difficult to fit the pieces together. Thus, it has become increasingly important for policymakers and the general public to have an accessible, easy-to-understand portrait that shows how older Americans are faring.

Older Americans 2010: Key Indicators of Well-Being (Older Americans 2010) provides a comprehensive picture of our older population's health and well-being. It is the fifth chartbook prepared by the Federal Interagency Forum on Aging-Related Statistics (Forum), which now has 15 participating federal agencies. As with the earlier volumes, readers will find here an accessible compendium of indicators drawn from the most reliable official statistics. The indicators are again categorized into five broad groups: population, economics, health status, health risks and behaviors, and health care.

Many of the estimates reported in *Older Americans 2010* were collected in 2007 and 2008, the years straddling the large-scale financial downturn that began in December 2007. Thus, although this was an economically challenging time, the data reported in *Older Americans 2010* do not in all cases reflect this crisis. The Forum did produce a short report, *Data Sources on the Impact of the 2008 Financial Crisis on the Economic Well-being of Older Americans* at the end of 2009 that provides information about data sources that may shed light on the effects of the economic downturn on the well-being of older Americans.

While federal agencies currently collect and report substantial information on the population age 65 and over, there remain gaps in our knowledge. Two years ago, in *Older Americans 2008*, the Forum identified six data need areas: caregiving, elder abuse, functioning and disability, mental health, pension measures, and residential care. In *Older Americans 2010*, we provide updated information on the status of data availability for those specific areas and add a new call for data on end-of-life issues. We continue to appreciate users' requests for greater detail for many existing indicators of well-being. The Forum encourages extending age reporting categories, oversampling

older racial and ethnic populations, collecting data at lower levels of geography, and including the institutionalized population in national surveys. By displaying what we know and do not know, this report challenges federal statistical agencies to do even better.

The *Older Americans* reports reflect the Forum's commitment to advancing our understanding of where older Americans stand today and what they may face tomorrow. I congratulate the Forum agencies for joining together to enhance their work and present the American people with a valuable tool. Last, but not least, none of this work would be possible without the continued cooperation of millions of American citizens who willingly provide the data that are summarized and analyzed by staff in the federal agencies.

We invite you to suggest ways in which we can enhance this biennial portrait of older Americans. Please send comments to us at the Forum's website (<http://www.agingstats.gov>). I hope that our compendium will continue to be useful in your work.

Katherine K. Wallman
Chief Statistician
Office of Management and Budget

Acknowledgments

Older Americans 2010: Key Indicators of Well-Being is a report of the Federal Interagency Forum on Aging-Related Statistics (Forum). This report was prepared by the Forum's planning committee and reviewed by the Forum's principal members, which include Edwin L. Walker, Administration on Aging (AoA); Steven B. Cohen, Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ); Thomas Nardone, Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS); Howard Hogan, U.S. Census Bureau; Thomas Reilly, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS); Raphael W. Bostic, Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD); Joseph Piacentini, Employee Benefits Security Administration (EBSA); Peter Grevatt, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA); Edward Sondik, National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS); Richard Suzman, National Institute on Aging (NIA); Ruth Katz, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE), Department of Health and Human Services; Katherine K. Wallman, Office of Management and Budget (OMB); Daryl Kade, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA); Manuel de la Puente, Social Security Administration (SSA); and Dat Tran, Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

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The Forum's planning committee members include Saadia Greenberg, AoA; David Kashihara and D.E.B. Potter, AHRQ; Emy Sok, BLS; Amy Symens Smith and Wan He, U.S. Census Bureau; Gerald Riley, CMS; Meena Bavan and Cheryl Levine, HUD; Miranda Moore and Daniel Puskin, EBSA; Kathy Sykes, EPA; Ellen Kramarow and Julie Dawson Weeks, NCHS; Elizabeth Hamilton, NIA; Helen Zayac Lamont, ASPE; Rochelle Wilkie Martinez, OMB; Ingrid Goldstrom, Beth Han, and Jennifer Solomon, SAMHSA; Howard Iams, SSA; Dorothy Glasgow and Cathy Tomczak, VA; and the Forum's Staff Director, Elena M. Fazio.

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About this Report

Introduction

Older Americans 2010: Key Indicators of Well-Being (Older Americans 2010) is the fifth in a series of reports produced by the Federal Interagency Forum on Aging-Related Statistics (Forum) that describe the overall status of the U.S. population age 65 and over. Once again, this report uses data from over a dozen national data sources to construct broad indicators of well-being for the older population and to monitor changes in these indicators over time. By following these data trends, more accessible information will be available to target efforts to improve the lives of older Americans.

With the exception of the indicator on nursing home utilization, for which new data are not available at this time, all indicators from the last edition reappear in *Older Americans 2010*. The Forum hopes that this report will stimulate discussions by policymakers and the public, encourage exchanges between the data and policy communities, and foster improvements in federal data collection on older Americans. By examining a broad range of indicators, researchers, policymakers, service providers, and the federal government can better understand the areas of well-being that are improving for older Americans and the areas of well-being that require more attention and effort.

Structure of the Report

Older Americans 2010 is designed to present data in a nontechnical, user-friendly format; it complements other more technical and comprehensive reports produced by the individual Forum agencies. The report includes 37 indicators that are grouped into five sections: Population, Economics, Health Status, Health Risks and Behaviors, and Health Care. A list of the indicators included in this report is located in the Table of Contents on page IX.

Each indicator includes the following:

- ◆ An introductory paragraph that describes the relevance of the indicator to the well-being of the older population.
- ◆ One or more charts that graphically display analyses of the data.
- ◆ Bulleted highlights of salient findings from the data and other sources. The data used to develop the indicators and their accompanying bullets are presented in table format in Appendix A. Data source descriptions are provided in Appendix B. A glossary is supplied in Appendix C.

Selection Criteria for Indicators

Older Americans 2010 presents 37 key indicators that measure critical aspects of older people's lives. The Forum chose these indicators because they meet the following criteria:

- ◆ Easy to understand by a wide range of audiences.
- ◆ Based on reliable, nationwide data (sponsored, collected, or disseminated by the federal government).
- ◆ Objectively based on substantial research that connects them to the well-being of older Americans.
- ◆ Balanced so that no single area dominates the report. Measured periodically (not necessarily annually) so that they can be updated as appropriate and show trends over time.
- ◆ Representative of large segments of the aging population, rather than one particular group.

Considerations When Examining the Indicators

Older Americans 2010 generally addresses the U.S. population age 65 and over. Mutually exclusive age groups (e.g., age 65–74, 75–84, and 85 and over) are reported whenever possible.

Data availability and analytical relevance may affect the specific age groups that are included for an indicator. For example, because of small sample sizes in some surveys, statistically reliable data for the population age 85 and over often are not available. Conversely, data from the population younger than age 65 sometimes are included if they are relevant to the interpretation of the indicator. For example, in “Indicator 11: Participation in the Labor Force,” a comparison with a younger population enhances the interpretation of the labor force trends among people age 65 and over.

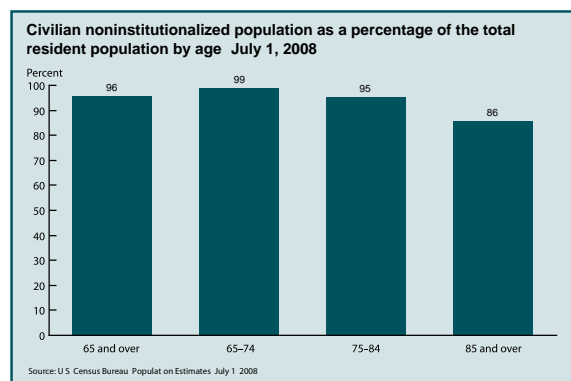
To standardize the age distribution of the 65 and over population across years, some estimates have been age adjusted by multiplying age-specific rates by age-specific weights. If an indicator has been age adjusted, it will be stated in the note under the chart(s) as well as under the corresponding table(s) in Appendix A.

Because the older population is becoming more diverse, analyses often are presented by sex, race and Hispanic origin, income, and other characteristics.

Updated indicators in *Older Americans 2010* are not always comparable to indicators in *Older Americans 2000*, *2004*, *Update 2006*, or *Older Americans 2008*. The replication of certain indicators with updated data is sometimes difficult because of changes in data sources, definitions, questionnaires, and/or reporting categories. A comparability table is available on the Forum’s website at <http://www.agingstats.gov> to help readers understand the changes that have taken place.

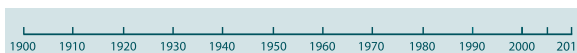
The reference population (the base population sampled at the time of data collection) for each indicator is clearly labeled under each chart and table and defined in the glossary. Whenever possible, the indicators include data on the U.S. resident population (i.e., people living in the community and people living in institutions).

However, some indicators show data only for the civilian noninstitutionalized population. Because the older population residing in nursing homes (and other long-term care institutional settings) is excluded from samples based on the noninstitutionalized population, caution should be exercised when attempting to generalize the findings from these data sources to the entire population age 65 and over. This is especially true for the older age groups. For example in 2008, only 86 percent of the population age 85 and over was included in the civilian noninstitutionalized population as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau.



Survey Years

In the charts, tick marks along the *x*-axis indicate years for which data are available. The range of years presented in each chart varies because data availability is not uniform across the data sources. To standardize the time frames across the indicators, a timeline has been placed at the bottom of each indicator that reports data for more than one year.



Accuracy of the Estimates

Most estimates in this report are based on a sample of the population and are, therefore, subject to sampling error. Standard tests of statistical significance have been used to determine whether the differences between populations exist at generally accepted levels of confidence or whether they occurred by chance. Unless otherwise noted, only differences that are statistically significant at the 0.05 level are discussed in the text. To indicate the reliability of the estimates, standard errors for

selected estimates in the chartbook can be found on the Forum's website at <http://www.agingstats.gov>.

Finally, the data in some indicators may not sum to totals because of rounding.

Sources of Data

The data used to create the charts are provided in tables in the back of the report (Appendix A). The tables also contain data that are described in the bullets below each chart. The source of the data for each indicator is noted below the chart.

Descriptions of the data sources can be found in Appendix B. Additional information about these data sources is available on the Forum's website at <http://www.agingstats.gov>.

Occasionally, data from another publication are included to give a more complete explanation of the indicator. The citations for these sources are included in the "References" section (page 66). For those who wish to access the survey data used in this chartbook, contact information is given for each of the data sources in Appendix B.

Data Needs

Because *Older Americans 2010* is a collaborative effort of many federal agencies, a comprehensive array of data was available for inclusion in this report. However, even with all of the data available, there are still areas where scant data exist. Although the indicators that were chosen cover a broad range of components that affect well-being, there are other issues that the Forum would like to address in the future. These issues are identified in the "Data Needs" section (page 63).

Mission

The Forum's mission is to encourage cooperation and collaboration among federal agencies to improve the quality and utility of data on the aging population. To accomplish this mission, the Forum provides agencies with a venue to discuss data issues and concerns that cut across agency boundaries, facilitates the development of new databases, improves mechanisms currently

used to disseminate information on aging-related data, invites researchers to report on cutting-edge analyses of data, and encourages international collaboration.

The specific goals of the Forum are to improve both the quality and use of data on the aging population by:

- ◆ Widening access to information on the aging population through periodic publications and other means.
- ◆ Promoting communication among data producers, researchers, and public policy-makers.
- ◆ Coordinating the development and use of statistical databases among federal agencies.
- ◆ Identifying information gaps and data inconsistencies.
- ◆ Investigating questions of data quality.
- ◆ Encouraging cross-national research and data collection on the aging population.
- ◆ Addressing concerns regarding collection, access, and dissemination of data.

Financial Support

The Forum members provide funds and valuable staff time to support the activities of the Forum.

More Information

If you would like more information about *Older Americans 2010* or other Forum activities, contact:

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Older Americans on the Internet

Supporting material for this report can be found at <http://www.agingstats.gov>. The website contains the following:

- ◆ Data for all of the indicators in Excel spreadsheets (with standard errors, when available).
- ◆ Data source descriptions.
- ◆ PowerPoint slides of the charts.
- ◆ A comparability table explaining the changes to the indicators that have taken place between *Older Americans 2000, 2004, Update 2006, Older Americans 2008, and Older Americans 2010*.

The Forum's website also provides:

- ◆ Ongoing federal data resources relevant to the study of the aging.
- ◆ Links to aging-related statistical information on Forum member websites.
- ◆ Other Forum publications (including *Data Sources on Older Americans 2009*).
- ◆ Workshop presentations, papers, and reports.
- ◆ Agency contacts.
- ◆ Subject area contact list for federal statistics.
- ◆ Information about the Forum.

Additional Online Resources

Administration on Aging

Statistics on the Aging Population
http://www.aoa.gov/AoARoot/Aging_Statistics/index.aspx

A Profile of Older Americans
http://www.aoa.gov/AoARoot/Aging_Statistics/Profile/index.aspx

Online Statistical Data on the Aging
http://www.aoa.gov/AoARoot/Aging_Statistics/Census_Population/census1990/Introduction.aspx

Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality
 AHRQ Data and Surveys
<http://www.ahrq.gov/data>

Bureau of Labor Statistics
 Bureau of Labor Statistics Data
<http://www.stats.bls.gov/data>

U.S. Census Bureau
 Statistical Abstract of the United States
<http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab>

Age Data
<http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/age.html>

Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics
<http://lehd.did.census.gov/led/>

Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services
 CMS Data and Statistics
<http://www.cms.hhs.gov/home/rsds.asp>

Department of Housing and Urban Development
 Policy Development and Research Information Services
<http://www.huduser.org/>

Department of Veterans Affairs
 Veteran Data and Information
<http://www1.va.gov/vetdata>

Employee Benefit Security Administration
 EBSA's Research
<http://www.dol.gov/ebsa/publications/research.html>

Environmental Protection Agency
 Aging Initiative
<http://www.epa.gov/aging>

Information Resources
<http://www.epa.gov/aging/resources/index.htm>

National Center for Health Statistics
 Health Data Interactive
<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/hdi.htm>

Longitudinal Studies of Aging
<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/lsoa.htm>

Health, United States
<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/hus.htm>

National Institute on Aging

NIA Centers on the Demography of Aging
<http://www.agingcenters.org/>

National Archive of Computerized Data on Aging
<http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/NACDA>

Publicly Available Datasets for Aging-Related
Secondary Analysis
[http://www.nia.nih.gov/researchinformation/
scientificresources](http://www.nia.nih.gov/researchinformation/scientificresources)

**Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning
and Evaluation, HHS**

Office of Disability, Aging, and Long-Term Care
Policy [http://www.aspe.hhs.gov/_/office_specific/
daltcp.cfm](http://www.aspe.hhs.gov/_/office_specific/daltcp.cfm)

Office of Management and Budget

Federal Committee on Statistical Methodology
<http://www.fcsm.gov>

Social Security Administration

Social Security Administration Statistical
Information
<http://www.ssa.gov/policy>

**Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services
Administration**

Office of Applied Studies
<http://www.oas.samhsa.gov>

Center for Mental Health Services
[http://www.mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/cmhs/
MentalHealthStatistics](http://www.mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/cmhs/MentalHealthStatistics)

Other Resources

FedStats.gov
<http://www.fedstats.gov>

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Highlights

Older Americans 2010: Key Indicators of Well-Being is one in a series of periodic reports to the Nation on the condition of older adults in the United States. The indicators assembled in this chartbook show the results of decades of progress. Older Americans are living longer and enjoying greater prosperity than any previous generation. Despite these advances, inequalities between the sexes and among income groups and racial and ethnic groups continue to exist. As the baby boomers continue to age and America's older population grows larger and more diverse, community leaders, policymakers, and researchers will have an even greater need to monitor the health and economic well-being of older Americans. In this report, 37 indicators depict the well-being of older Americans in the areas of demographic characteristics, economic circumstances, overall health status, health risks and behaviors, and cost and use of health care services. Selected highlights from each section of the report follow.

Population

The demographics of aging continue to change dramatically. The older population is growing rapidly, and the aging of the baby boomers, born between 1946 and 1964 (and who begin turning age 65 in 2011), will accelerate this growth. This larger population of older Americans will be more racially diverse and better educated than previous generations. Another significant trend is the increase in the proportion of men age 85 and over who are veterans.

- ◆ In 2008, there were an estimated 39 million people age 65 and over in the United States, accounting for just over 13 percent of the total population. The older population in 2030 is expected to be twice as large as in 2000, growing from 35 million to 72 million and representing nearly 20 percent of the total U.S. population. (See "Indicator 1: Number of Older Americans.")
- ◆ In 1965, 24 percent of the older population had graduated from high school, and only 5 percent had at least a bachelor's degree. By 2008, 77 percent were high school graduates or more, and 21 percent had a bachelor's degree or more. (See "Indicator 4: Educational Attainment.")

- ◆ The number of men age 85 and over who are veterans is projected to increase from 400,000 in 2000 to almost 1.2 million by 2010. The proportion of men age 85 and over who are veterans is projected to increase from 33 percent in 2000 to 66 percent in 2010. (See "Indicator 6: Older Veterans.")

Economics

Most older people are enjoying greater prosperity than any previous generation. There has been an increase in the proportion of older people in the high-income group and a decrease in the proportion of older people living in poverty, as well as a decrease in the proportion of older people in the low-income group just above the poverty line. Among older Americans, the share of aggregate income coming from earnings has increased since the mid-1980s, partly because more older people, especially women, continue to work past age 55. Finally, on average, net worth has increased almost 80 percent for older Americans over the past 20 years. Yet major inequalities continue to exist with older blacks and people without high school diplomas reporting smaller economic gains and fewer financial resources overall.

- ◆ Between 1974 and 2007, there was a decrease in the proportion of older people with income below poverty from 15 percent to 10 percent and with low income from 35 percent to 26 percent; and an increase in the proportion of people with high income from 18 percent to 31 percent. (See "Indicator 8: Income.")
- ◆ In 2007, the median net worth of households headed by white people age 65 and over (\$280,000) was six times that of older black households (\$46,000). This difference is less than in 2003 when the median net worth of households headed by older white people was eight times higher than that of households headed by older black people. (See "Indicator 10: Net Worth.") The large increase in net worth in past years may not continue into the future due to recent declines in housing values.
- ◆ Labor force participation rates have risen among all women age 55 and over during the past four decades. As new cohorts of baby boom women approach older ages they are participating in the labor force at higher rates than previous

generations. Labor force participation rates among men age 55 and over have gradually begun to increase after a steady decline from the early 1960s to the mid-1990s. (See “Indicator 11: Participation in the Labor Force.”)

Health Status

Americans are living longer than ever before, yet their life expectancies lag behind those of other developed nations. Older age is often accompanied by increased risk of certain diseases and disorders. Large proportions of older Americans report a variety of chronic health conditions such as hypertension and arthritis. Despite these and other conditions, the rate of functional limitations among older people has declined in recent years.

- ◆ Life expectancy at age 65 in the United States is lower than that of many other industrialized nations. In 2005, women age 65 in Japan could expect to live on average 3.7 years longer than women in the United States. Among men, the difference was 1.3 years. (See “Indicator 14: Life Expectancy.”)
- ◆ The prevalence of certain chronic conditions differs by sex. Women report higher levels of arthritis (55 percent versus 42 percent) than men. Men report higher levels of heart disease (38 percent versus 27 percent) and cancer (24 percent versus 21 percent). (See “Indicator 16: Chronic Health Conditions.”)
- ◆ Between 1992 and 2007, the age-adjusted proportion of people age 65 and over with a functional limitation declined from 49 percent to 42 percent. (See “Indicator 20: Functional Limitations.”)

Health Risks and Behaviors

Social and lifestyle factors can affect the health and well-being of older Americans. These factors include preventive behaviors such as cancer screenings and vaccinations along with diet, physical activity, obesity, and cigarette smoking. Health and well-being are also affected by the quality of the air where people live and by the time they spend socializing and communicating with others. Many of these health risks and behaviors have shown long-term improvements, even though recent estimates indicate no significant changes.

- ◆ There was no significant change in the percentage of people age 65 and over reporting physical activity between 1997 and 2008. (See “Indicator 24: Physical Activity.”)
- ◆ As with other age groups, the percentage of people age 65 and over who are obese has increased since 1988–1994. In 2007–2008, 32 percent of people age 65 and over were obese, compared with 22 percent in 1988–1994. However, over the past several years, the trend has leveled off, with no statistically significant change in obesity for older men or women between 1999–2000 and 2007–2008. (See “Indicator 25: Obesity.”)
- ◆ The percentage of people age 65 and over living in counties that experienced poor air quality for any air pollutant decreased from 52 percent in 2000 to 36 percent in 2008. (See “Indicator 27: Air Quality.”)
- ◆ The proportion of leisure time that older Americans spent socializing and communicating—such as visiting friends or attending or hosting social events—declined with age. For Americans age 55–64, 13 percent of leisure time was spent socializing and communicating compared with 8 percent for those age 75 and over. (See “Indicator 28: Use of Time.”)

Health Care

Overall, health care costs have risen dramatically for older Americans. In addition, between 1992 and 2006, the percentage of health care costs going to prescription drugs almost doubled from 8 percent to 16 percent, with prescription drugs accounting for a large percentage of out-of-pocket health care spending. To help ease the burden of prescription drug costs, Medicare Part D prescription drug costs, began in January 2006.

- ◆ After adjustment for inflation, health care costs increased significantly among older Americans from \$9,224 in 1992 to \$15,081 in 2006. (See “Indicator 30: Health Care Expenditures.”)

- ◆ From 1977 to 2006, the percentage of household income that people age 65 and over allocated to out-of-pocket spending for health care services increased among those in the poor/near poor income category from 12 percent to 28 percent. (See “Indicator 33: Out-of-Pocket Health Care Expenditures.”)
- ◆ The number of Medicare beneficiaries enrolled in Part D prescription drug plans increased from 18.2 million (51 percent of beneficiaries) in June 2006 to 22.2 million (57 percent of beneficiaries) in December 2009. In December 2009, 61 percent of plan enrollees were in stand-alone plans and 39 percent were in Medicare Advantage plans. In addition, approximately 6.2 million beneficiaries were covered by the Retiree Drug Subsidy (See “Indicator 31: Prescription Drugs.”)