The number of Pennsylvania residents age 85 and older is projected to grow by nearly 40 percent by 2030.

Pennsylvania’s older population can be at greater risk for chronic illnesses and in need of long-term care. Fifteen percent of Pennsylvania’s population is age 65+ with over 310,000 residents age 85+. Pennsylvania’s age 85+ population – the age group that is most likely to need long-term care services – will grow 37% from 2007 to 2030. This ranks Pennsylvania near the bottom (48th) in the nation in the projected growth rate of the 85+ population.

Most prefer to receive long-term care at home; however, Pennsylvania spends almost 90 percent of the state’s Medicaid funds on institutional care.

The majority of Americans age 50+ (89%) want to stay in their homes for as long as they can. Almost 2.1 million Pennsylvanians rely on Medicaid, and 11% are age 65+. Home and community-based service (HCBS) waivers allow Medicaid recipients to receive Medicaid funding for in-home care. In Pennsylvania, Medicaid allows some to choose in-home care instead of nursing home care. In 2006, 25,570 Pennsylvanians 65+ and adults (18-64) with disabilities received a waiver. There were no people 65+ or adults (18-64) with disabilities who waited to receive a waiver in 2008. On average, the Medicaid program can provide HCBS to three people for the cost of serving one person in a nursing home. Pennsylvania spends 11% of its Medicaid long-term care dollars for older people and adults with physical disabilities on home and community-based care – ranking it 39th in spending on home care services for this population.

Pennsylvania has the 9th highest average nursing home private pay rate in the nation at $247 per day.

In 2007, Pennsylvania’s nursing homes had an occupancy rate of 91%. This care is expensive. In 2008, Pennsylvania had the 9th most expensive nursing homes in the country, with an average private pay daily rate of over $240. The rates in Pennsylvania for home health aides averaged $19 an hour for private pay and $28 an hour for Medicare-certified, with adult day care averaging $63 a day.

Over a third of Pennsylvania’s nursing homes rated above average in health inspections.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) created a five-star quality rating to help consumers compare nursing homes. CMS rates nursing homes on health inspections, staffing, and quality measures.

The health inspection process is comprehensive and conducted by a trained team of objective surveyors. Recent studies have found that non-profit nursing homes generally deliver higher quality of care. In 2007, 48% of Pennsylvania’s nursing homes were for profit (47%, non-profit; 5%, government-owned).

Few Americans have long-term care insurance.

Nationally, about 7 million long-term care insurance policies were in effect in 2005, and the typical purchaser was age 61 with assets over $100,000. Cost is a major factor in the decision to purchase long-term care insurance. In 2008, premiums for a married couple in their sixties were about $3,000 a year. Pennsylvania has not adopted the most recent long-term care insurance recommendations from the National Association of Insurance Commissioners (NAIC).
The data utilized in this report is the most recent publicly available data collected for all states.


5Ibid. Medicaid 1915(c) Home and Community-Based Service Waiver Participants, by Type of Waiver, 2006. Data Source: The Kaiser Commission on Medicaid and the Uninsured (KCMU) and The University of California at San Francisco's (UCSF) analysis based on The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) Form 372, December 2009, Table 5. "Medicaid 1915(c) Home and Community-Based Service Programs: Data Update" available at http://www.kff.org/medicaid/7720.cfm. URL: http://www.statehealthfacts.org/comparetable.jsp?ind=241&cat=4


9Ibid. Page 44.

10Ibid. Page 66.

11Ibid. Page 59.

12Ibid. Page 60.

13Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. Note: These data are updated monthly. Data for this brief was pulled on November 3, 2009. URL: http://www.medicare.gov/NHCompare/Include/DataSection/Questions/ProximitySearch.asp

14BMJ 2009 (British Medical Journal); 339:b2732. URL: www.pnhp.org/nursing_home


