

SERVICES TO THE AGING IN MICHIGAN

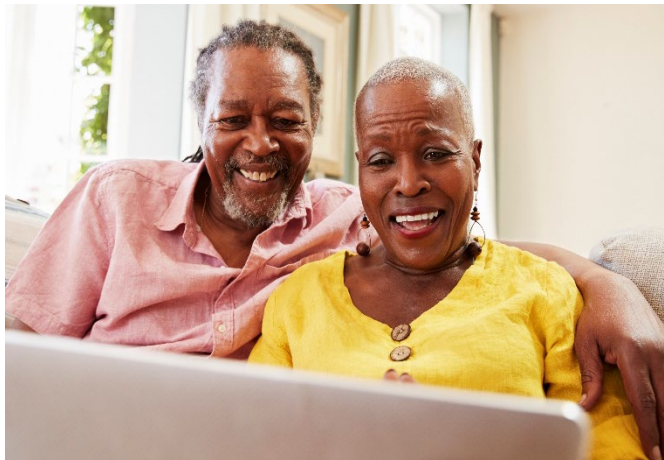
An information brief from the Michigan Commission on Services to the Aging
March 2021

The Older Michiganians Act (Public Act 180 of 1981, as amended) created the Commission on Services to the Aging. It also authorized the designation of local area agencies on aging and established certain programs and services to address the needs of older persons.

The **Michigan Commission on Services to the Aging** is a 15-member body, whose members are appointed by the Governor to serve three-year terms (see attached membership list). The Commission is an independent voice for older persons in Michigan and oversees budgets, grants, and policies of the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) Aging and Adult Services Agency (AASA). Among the duties of the Commission are to serve as visible advocates for older persons; to advise the Governor, the state Legislature and the Department of Health and Human Services about the needs of older persons and the programs that serve them; to make recommendations to the Governor and the Legislature regarding changes in federal and state statutes, programs and policies; and to approve the state plan and budget required by the federal 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 persons with disabilities. The Commission reviews and approves action plans and annual budgets submitted by each region's area agency on aging.

The Commission receives advice and assistance from the **State Advisory Council on Aging**, a 40-member body appointed by the Commission to study aging issues and to recommend policies to the Commission.



The Commission's annual review of local area agencies on aging plans and budgets, as well as guidance from the State Advisory Council, input from experts in the Department of Health and Human Services, and regular public hearings held throughout the state, enable Commissioners to identify key issues, barriers, and patterns involved in serving older adults across the state. From this knowledge, the Commission sets priorities for further study and makes recommendations for improvement. A five-member **Advocacy Committee** coordinates and provides leadership for the priorities approved by the Commission.

This information brief will focus on current issues that the Commission has identified as especially important to ensure that older adults throughout the state receive the services that they need to survive and thrive.

A Snapshot of Michigan's Older Population

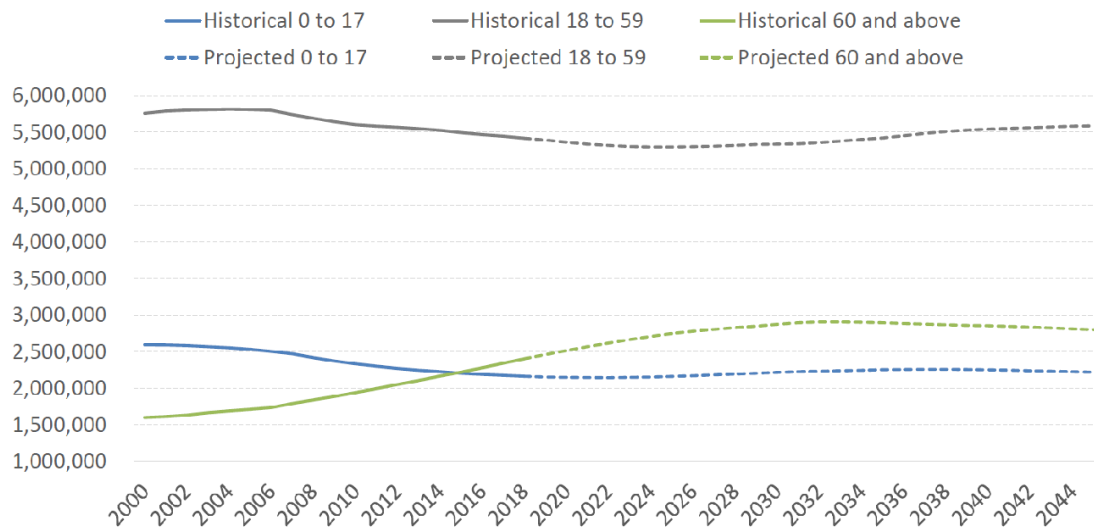
The state's growing older population is driving the need for policies, programs, funding, and advocacy to improve the quality of life for aging adults in Michigan. In 2010, Michigan's population age 60 and older stood at 1.8 million. Today, 2.4 million residents are 60 or older - almost one-quarter (24.4%) of the state's total population. A person age 60 or older resides in 38% of all Michigan households.

Older adults in Michigan are a very diverse group.

- Most older adults are female (56%).
- 63% live in urban areas of the state, while 37% live in rural areas.
- 86% identify as white; 11% identify as Black or African American; 2% as Asian; 1% identify as being two or more races.
- 90% graduated from high school; 25% have a bachelor's degree or higher.
- 17% live in poverty.
- Approximately 50,000 identify as Hispanic.
- Approximately 30,000 identify as Arab and Chaldean American.
- Experts estimate that 48,000 – 120,000 of the older adult population identify as members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community.

By 2030, an estimated 2.7 million residents will be 60 or over, with those over 65 outnumbering those under age 18 in many Michigan counties. **Individuals 85 and older are the fastest growing population segment in our state, which has significant implications for services, especially home and community-based services.**

Michigan population by age grouping



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates Program; MI DTMB, Labor Market Information & Strategic Initiatives, 2045 Population Projections

Michigan's older adult population is dispersed throughout the state and is rich in diversity. Older adults contribute in many ways to the beauty and strength of Michigan. The aging network is dedicated to helping older adults live well and thrive as they age. The Commission on Services to the Aging has identified the following issues that are critical to helping older adults live with dignity, meaning, purpose and independence.

Wait Lists for Services

In addition to information and assessment services, **the primary services provided by the area agencies on aging are nutrition services, including home-delivered and congregate meals, and in-home services.** There are wait lists for both these services, but the wait list for in-home services is especially troubling - it is large, statewide, and chronic. The Commission is currently focusing priority advocacy attention on efforts to address this chronic need by increasing the state's financial investment in home-based services.

Over the last six years, the wait list for in-home services has averaged 5,100 clients, with half of those clients waiting six months or longer for services. Older adults who remain on waiting lists are 5 times more likely to end up in nursing homes. The average annual cost for in-home services provided by the area agencies on aging is only \$1,250, with many unpaid family members and volunteers supplementing the paid direct care providers.

Direct Care Services and the Need for a Skilled Workforce

Long-term care for older adults is currently provided through facility-based care or by Michigan's network of home and community-based services. Direct care workers, including personal care assistants, provide the majority of paid in-home long term supports and services that help older adults age in place.

Pre-pandemic studies indicated that **Michigan needs an additional 34,090 direct care workers** to meet the anticipated demand for community-based care. While the majority of older adults and adults living with physical limitations have always preferred to receive their care in a community setting, the pandemic has significantly increased this demand, so it is likely that even more direct care workers will be needed in the future.

Issues related to the recruitment and retention of direct care workers are complex and inter-related. Addressing one without the others will be difficult. Wages for direct care workers are one obvious issue. The home and community-based service network faces recruitment and retention challenges because low wage levels make it difficult to compete with other industries. Yet, increased wages alone will not solve this problem. A recent Michigan demonstration pilot found that employer training helps recruit and retain needed workers. Accessible and affordable transportation is another barrier to maintaining an adequate workforce.



Changes to federal and state policies related to wage levels for direct care workers and reimbursement for direct care worker training can help address these problems.

Aging in Place

According to the AARP 2020 [Long Term Services and Supports Scorecard](#), Michigan ranks 30 overall and 29 when it comes to when it comes to meeting the long-term care needs of older residents and people with disabilities. Michigan invests more financial resources in facility-based care for older adults than in services that help them remain safely at home. Further and more importantly, study after study has shown that older adults prefer to age in the comfort of their own known homes, supported by their local community, where many have deeply established roots. Research shows that supporting an older adult to remain safely in their own home is a fiscally responsible choice that costs less than

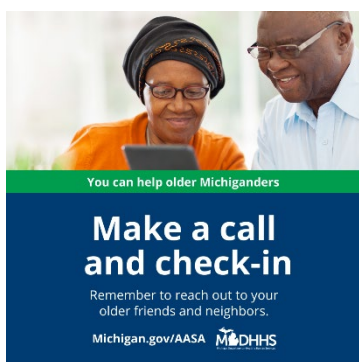
facility care. Individuals on waiting lists for in-home services are five times as likely to end up in the much more expensive and undesired nursing care.

COVID Impacts on Older Adults and Lessons Learned

The COVID pandemic has exposed the health vulnerabilities of older adults as they age.

As of March 1, 2021:

- 148,556 adults 60 and over have tested positive for COVID-19, representing 23 percent of all positive cases.
- 14,810 older adults have lost their lives due to this illness, representing 90 percent of all COVID-19 deaths.
- Those in nursing homes are especially vulnerable, with the loss of 5,549 long term care facility residents due to COVID-19.



The COVID-19 pandemic has reinforced the desire for older adults to remain in their own homes, and the critical role that the area agencies on aging play in safely supporting that goal.

Area agencies on aging have been instrumental in increasing the provision of home-delivered meals and other nutrition services for seniors so that they can stay safely at home during the pandemic. They have also continued to safely provide other in-home services, including direct care services, regular telephone contact with isolated seniors, and web-based services as appropriate.

With the increase in the older adult population, economic deficits caused by COVID-19, and the direct care workforce crisis all converging, now is the time to further evaluate the best ways to serve our older adults and identify solutions that will carry Michigan into the future.

Learn more about the Commission on Services to the Aging and the MDHHS Aging & Adult Services Agency by visiting Michigan.gov/AASA.

Key partners working with the Commission include the 16 area agencies on aging:

- Detroit Area Agency on Aging (Region 1A)
<https://www.detroitseiorsolution.org/>
- Area Agency on Aging 1B
<https://aaa1b.org/>
- The Senior Alliance, Inc. (Region 1C)
<https://thesenioralliance.org/>
- Region 2 Area Agency on Aging
<https://www.r2aaa.net/>
- Region 3A Area Agency on Aging
<https://www.kalcounty.com/hcs/aaa/>
- CareWell Services Southwest (Region 3B)
<http://carewellservices.org/>
- Branch-St. Joseph Area Agency on Aging (Region 3C)
<http://www.bhsj.org/aaa>

- Region IV Area Agency on Aging (Region 4)
<https://areaagencyonaging.org/>
- Valley Area Agency on Aging (Region 5)
<https://valleyareaaging.org/>
- Tri-County Office on Aging (Region 6)
<https://www.tcoa.org/>
- Region VII Area Agency on Aging (Region 7)
<https://region7aaa.org/>
- Area Agency on Aging of Western Michigan (Region 8)
<https://www.aaawm.org/>
- Region IX Area Agency on Aging (Region 9)
<https://www.nemcsa.org/>
- Area Agency on Aging of Northwest Michigan (Region 10)
<https://www.aaanm.org/>
- UPCAP/Upper Peninsula Area Agency on Aging (Region 11)
<http://upcap.org/>
- Senior Resources (Region 14)
<https://seniorresourceswmi.org/>

Statewide partner associations and coalitions include:

- Area Agency on Aging Association of Michigan
<https://4ami.org/>
- Michigan Directors of Services to the Aging
<https://michigandsa.org/>
- Michigan Association of Senior Centers
<http://www.miseniorcenters.org/>
- Michigan Dementia Coalition
<https://www.midementiacoalition.org/>

Commission on Services to the Aging roster as of March 1, 2021

Dona J. Wishart (Chair), Gaylord
Term Expires: 7/28/2021 or at the pleasure of the governor.

Mark G. Bomberg, Gladstone
Term Expires: 7/28/2023

William Bupp, DeWitt
Term Expires: 7/28/2022

Georgia Crawford-Cambell, Detroit
Term Expires: 7/28/2022

Nancy W. Duncan, Lansing
Term Expires: 7/28/2023

Walid A. Gammouh, Macomb
Term Expires: 7/28/2023

Marshall Greenhut, North Muskegon
Term Expires: 7/28/2022

L. Kathleen LaTosch, Ferndale
Term Expires: 7/28/2021

Dr. Peter A. Lichtenberg, Farmington
Term Expires: 7/28/2021

Guillermo Lopez, Lansing
Term Expires: 7/28/2022

Tene-Sandra Milton-Ramsey, Detroit
Term Expires: 7/28/2021

Michael L. Pohnl, East Lansing
Term Expires: 7/28/2023

Robert C. Schlueter, Leland
Term Expires: 7/28/2022

Linda K. Strohl, Sawyer
Term Expires: 7/28/2021

Kristie E. Zamora, Flint
Term Expires: 7/28/2023