

HEALTHY AGING

A GUIDE TO IMPORTANT HEALTH TOPICS AMONG
OLDER WOMEN IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY, 2010

INTRODUCTION

This Gallery Guide provides a snapshot of available data on several important health priorities facing older women in Los Angeles County. The Guide highlights several population indicators of health for older women in this racially and ethnically diverse region, addressing a range of topics, from health risk behaviors to social conditions such as food security, perception of neighborhood safety, and economic insecurity. The intent of this Guide is to help facilitate further community dialogue about women’s health policies and planning of programs and services for this aging segment of the population. The Guide is not meant to provide a comprehensive overview of women’s health issues in this region. A list of key publications and resources on other important topics such as Alzheimer’s disease and informal caregiving are also provided.

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GEOGRAPHY OF LOS ANGELES COUNTY

Los Angeles County (LA County) is one of the largest counties in the United States, with an estimated 10.4 million residents, covering over 4,000 square miles. This region includes 88 incorporated cities and large unincorporated areas.

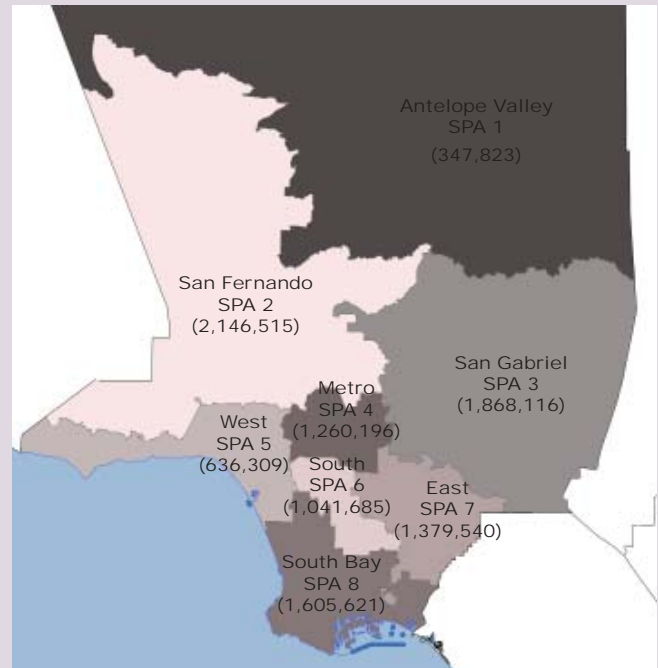
SERVICE PLANNING AREAS (SPAs)

For planning purposes and ease of service delivery, the County of Los Angeles is divided into eight geographical regions known as Service Planning Areas or SPAs (see Figure 1a). Six of the eight SPAs have more than a million residents and are more populous than many states in the United States. SPAs range from rural and vast regions to densely populated urban areas. The racial/ethnic mix, poverty rates, and health indicators vary by SPA, requiring tailoring of many services to the community being served.

DEMOGRAPHICS & DIVERSITY

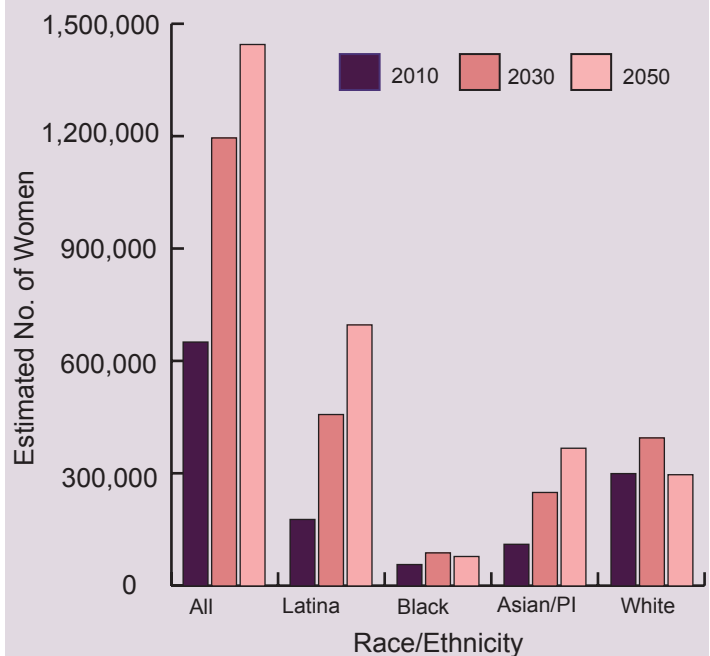
LA County has about an equal number of men and women, with a majority in the age range of 18-39 years (32%) and 40-64 years (30%). LA County contains one of the nation's most racially and ethnically diverse populations. The majority of the population in the County is Latino (an estimated 4,944,987 or 47%). Whites (30%), Asians/Pacific Islanders (13%), African Americans (9%), and Native Americans (1%) make up the remaining groups. As the population ages, this diversity is expected to increase, especially among women age 65 years and older (Figure 1b). Currently, about 41% of adults, men and women, residing in LA County were not born in the United States and about 36% speak a language other than English at home.³ More than 100 languages are spoken in this populous region.⁴

Figure 1a. LA County Population Estimates by Service Planning Area (SPA)^{1,2}



SOURCE: County of Los Angeles Department of Public Health Strategic Plan 2008-2011. <http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/docs/StrategicPlan>

Figure 1b. Projected Population of Women Age ≥ 65 Years in LA County by Race/Ethnicity



SOURCE: State of California, Department of Finance, Race/Ethnic Population by Age and Sex, 2000-2050. Sacramento, CA, July 2007.

ECONOMIC INSECURITY

Poverty continues to impact a large number of Angelenos, with disparities seen among older women of different racial/ethnic backgrounds...

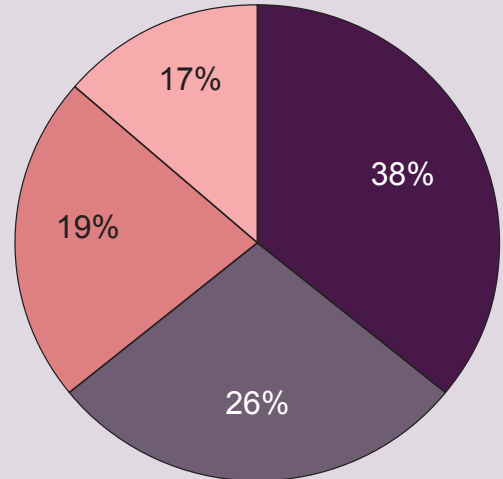
- In 2007, nearly 250,000 (43%) of all women age 65 years and older who live in LA County reported a household income of less than 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) (Figure 2).³
- Among Latinas age 65 years and older, more than 100,000 (67%) reported household incomes of less than 200% of the FPL.³

ELDER INDEX

Using FPL as an indicator of poverty may not tell the entire story...

- Many older Angelenos living above 200% of the FPL are unable to meet basic living expenses if actual costs of housing, medical care, food, and transportation are taken into account. For service planning purposes, the California Elder Economic Security Standard™ Index (Elder Index) may be a more accurate measure of income adequacy and economic security (Table 1).⁵
- According to this index, both singles and

Figure 2. Reported Household Income of Women Age ≥ 65 Years Living in LA County, 2007



At or above 300% of FPL
 100%-199% of FPL
 200-299% of FPL
 Below 99% of FPL

SOURCE: 2007 Data, California Health Interview Survey. Accessed Sept. 24, 2010. <http://www.chis.ucla.edu>.

couples age 65 years and older who rent, need more than twice the amount established by the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) Guideline to meet basic living expenses (Table 1).⁵

FOOD SECURITY

A large number of women living in LA County are not food secure...

Table 1: The California Elder Economic Security Standard Index (*Elder Index), 2009⁵**

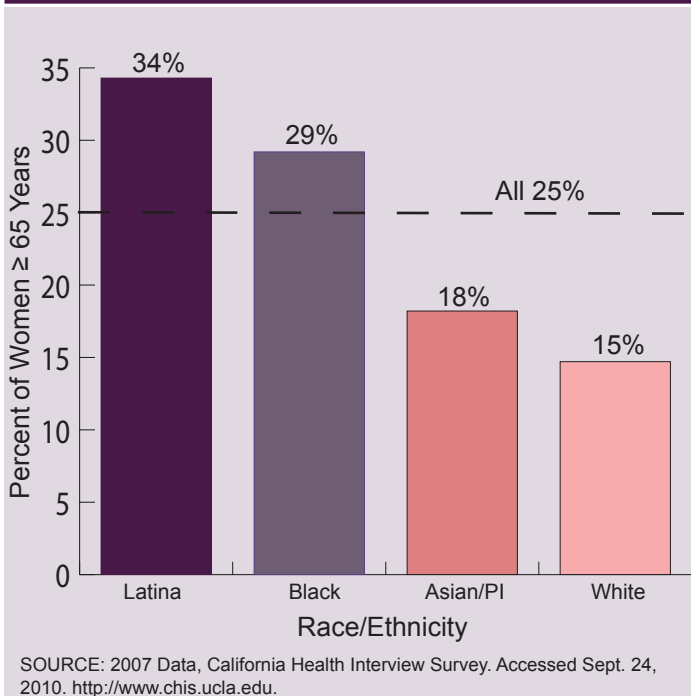
	<u>Elder Person</u>			<u>Elder Couple</u>		
	<u>Owner without mortgage</u>	<u>Owner with mortgage</u>	<u>Renter, one bedroom</u>	<u>Owner without mortgage</u>	<u>Owner with mortgage</u>	<u>Renter, one bedroom</u>
California	\$17,079	\$31,735	\$21,763	\$25,950	\$40,605	\$30,634
Los Angeles County	\$14,766	\$32,640	\$22,841	\$21,666	\$39,539	\$29,741
Los Angeles City	\$16,329	\$35,118	\$23,101	\$23,228	\$42,017	\$30,001

**Elder Index* components include: housing, food, transportation, health care, and miscellaneous expenses (see reference 5).

⁵ *LA County* excludes LA City and *LA City* excludes all other cities in LA County except for LA City.

- Nearly a quarter (25%) of all women age 65 years and older living in households with incomes less than 200% of the FPL were not food secure in 2007 (Figure 3).
- In 2007, black women and Latinas age 65 years and older living in households with incomes less than 200% of the FPL were more likely to report not being food secure than Asian/Pacific Islander and white women from the same age group (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Percent of Women Age ≥ 65 Years Living in Households with Incomes < 200% FPL in LA County who are Not Food Secure by Race/Ethnicity, 2007

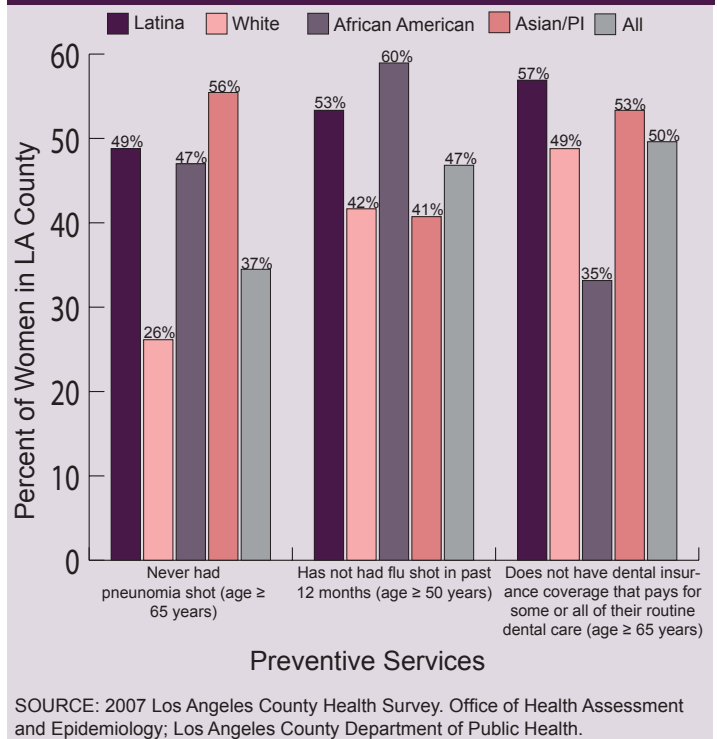


ACCESS TO CARE

Although most women age 65 years and older in LA County have Medicare coverage, disparities in access to care and utilization of services remain prevalent...

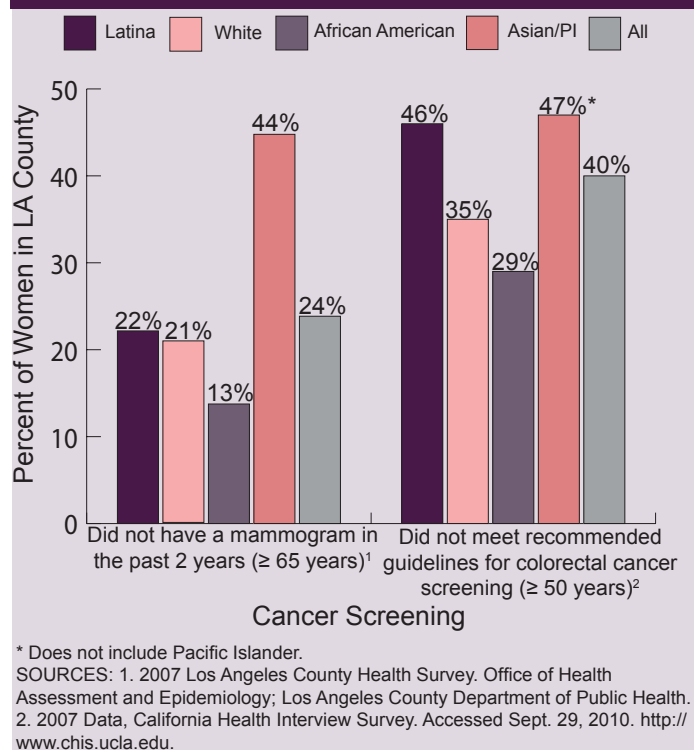
- In 2007, 50% of women age 65 years and older reported that they do not have dental insurance coverage that pays for some or all of their routine dental care (Figure 4a).
- In 2007, about 22% of Latinas and 44% of Asian/Pacific Islander women age 65

Figure 4a. Utilization of Preventive Services by Older Women in LA County by Race/Ethnicity, 2007



years and older reported that they did not have a mammogram for breast cancer screening within the past 2 years (Figure 4b).

Figure 4b. Cancer Screening Among Women in LA County by Race/Ethnicity, 2007



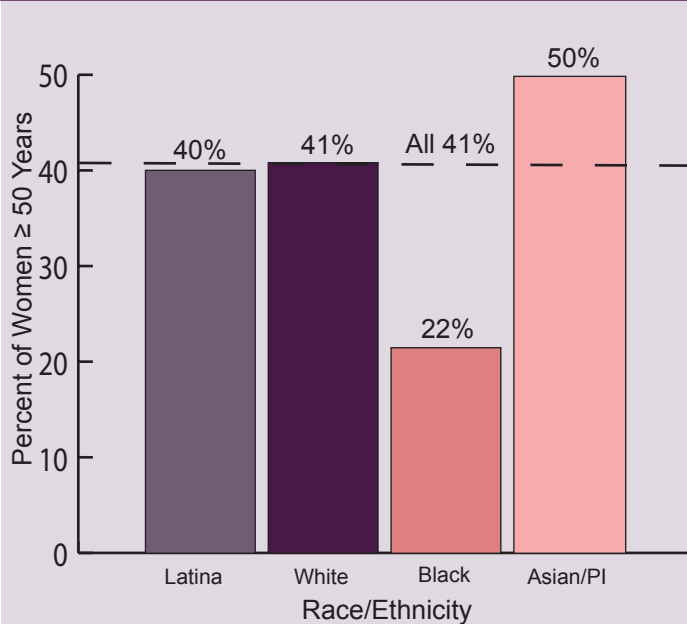
- In 2007, over 46% of Latinas and 47% of Asian women age 50 years and older did not meet recommended guidelines for colorectal screening (Figure 4b).

OSTEOPOROSIS & FALLS

Osteoporosis and falls are significant concerns for many older women in LA County...

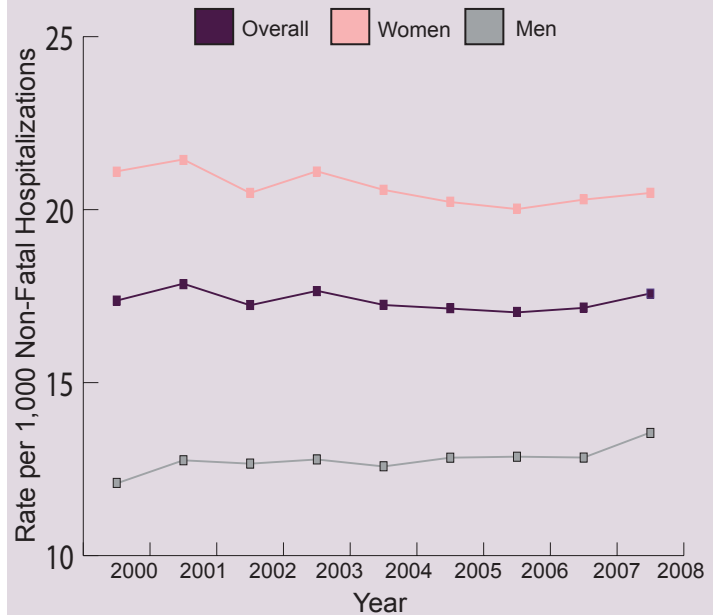
- Osteoporosis and falls, along with conditions like arthritis, contributes to and are potential consequences of frailty - a syndrome that is characterized by a decrease in lean body mass, weakness, poor endurance, exhaustion, slowness, and low activity.^{6,7}
- In 2001, more than 40% of LA County women age 50 years and older who ever had a bone density test, reported being diagnosed with bone loss, osteopenia or osteoporosis (Figure 5a); more current

Figure 5a. Percent of Women Age ≥ 50 Years who Ever Had a Bone Density Test and were Diagnosed with Bone Loss, Osteopenia, or Osteoporosis in LA County by Race/Ethnicity, 2001



SOURCE: 2001 Data, California Health Interview Survey. Accessed Sept. 24, 2010. <http://www.chis.ucla.edu>.

Figure 5b. Non-Fatal Hospitalization Rates for Falls for Patients Age ≥ 65 Years in LA County by Sex, 2000-2008



SOURCE: Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development Hospital Discharge Data. Prepared by LAC-DPH-IVPP, Sep 20, 2010.

data are not available.

- From 2000-2008, women age 65 years and older were more likely to be hospitalized for falls and fall-related injuries than men in LA County (Figure 5b).

DEPRESSION

Depression is a chronic and disabling condition that affects two times as many women as men⁸...

- Depression affects 15-20% of older men and women (3 million people) in the United States;⁹ in LA County, 13% of women age 65 years and older were diagnosed with depression in 2007, as compared with 7% of men age 65 years and older.¹⁰
- Another 5 million people in the United States have subsyndromal depression, or symptoms that fall short of meeting the full diagnostic criteria for depression. Subsyndromal depression is especially

common among older adults.⁹

- According to the 2007 California Health Interview Survey,³ nearly 64,000 LA County women age 65 years and older reported having taken prescription medicine for emotional/mental health issues in the past year.

HIV/AIDS

Health risk behaviors that can lead to HIV/AIDS infection are a public health concern for several groups in LA County, including older women...

- HIV/AIDS infections affect women of all ages, with 2,293 cases reported among Latinas, 2,002 among black women, 903 among white women, and 187 among other race/ethnic women in 2009.¹¹
- In 2009, about 9% of all women living with HIV/AIDS in LA County were age 60 years and older.¹¹ Among Latinas with HIV/AIDS, 8% (185 cases) were 60 years or older. Likewise, 7% (148 cases) of black women, 12% (104 cases) of white women, and 13% (24 cases) of other race/ethnic women living with this disease were age 60 years or older.¹¹

SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS (STIs)

STIs are likely underreported among older women in LA County¹²...

- There are limited surveillance data on STIs for women age 65 years and older in LA County.¹²
- Although likely underreported,¹² in 2008, the reported rate for Chlamydia was 3.4 per 100,000 among LA County women age 65 years and older. In comparison, among women who were 55-64 years, the rate was higher at 15.2 per 100,000.¹²

AGE-FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENTS

Actual safety and perception of safety can be barriers to creating age-friendly spaces for physical activity promotion...

- Safety is one of the primary factors to consider in creating age-friendly spaces (Table 2).
- Nearly 1 in 5 LA County women age 18 years and older do not feel their neighborhood is safe from crime.¹⁰
- Among Latinas and black women, 27% and 26%, respectively, reported that they do not believe their neighborhood is safe from crime.¹⁰

Table 2. Factors to Consider in Creating Age-Friendly Spaces

Environment	• City is clean; regulations are enforced; noise levels and unpleasant/harmful odors are limited.
Green Spaces and Walkways	• Well-maintained and safe areas; adequate shelter, public toilets, and seating.
Pavements	• Well-maintained and able to accommodate wheelchairs, clear of any obstruction.
Roads	• Safe pedestrian crossings; pedestrian crossing lights allow adequate time for older people to cross the road and have visual and audio signals.
Safety	• All open spaces and public buildings are safe for the public; appropriate and timely use of street lighting and police patrols.

Source: World Health Organization. Global Age-Friendly Cities: A Guide, 2007. Retrieved September 2010 from: http://www.who.int/ageing/publications/Global_age_friendly_cities_Guide_English.pdf.

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For resources on other key issues in women's health please consult:

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