

The SENIOR Act

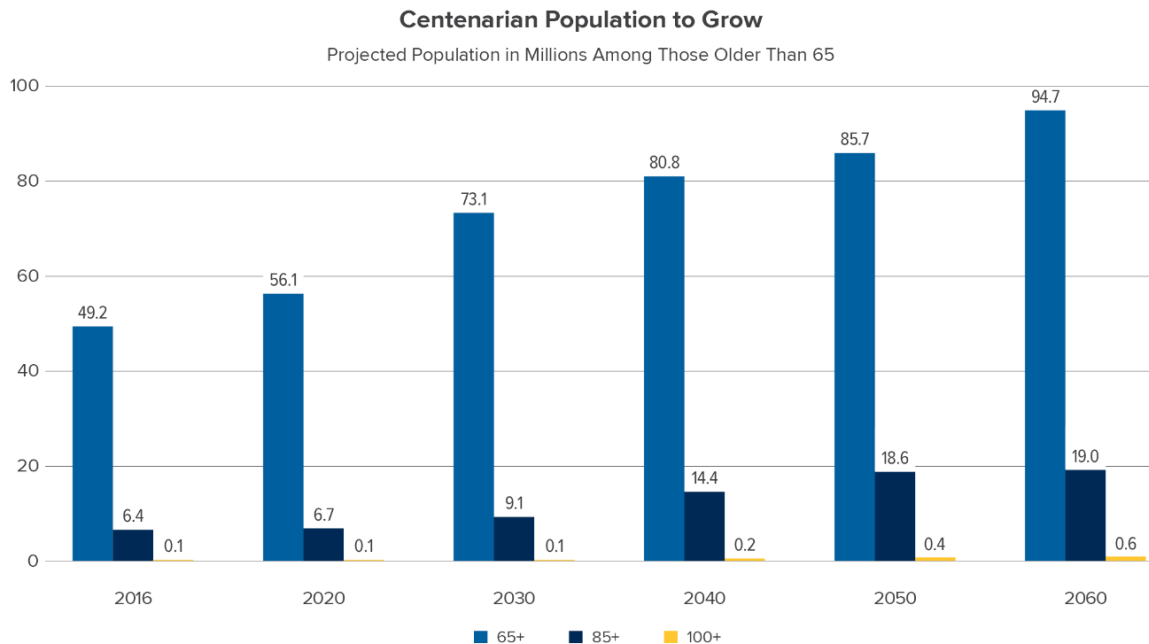
Addressing Infrastructure Needs for Long-Term Care*

As the population ages, so does the infrastructure needed to care for them.

The U.S. Census Bureau projects that by 2060 one in every five Americans (94.7 million) will be over age 65, and the over-85 population will have tripled. **The Safeguarding Elderly Needs for Infrastructure and Occupational Resources (SENIOR) Act** addresses the imminent need for investing in infrastructure to support this aging population.

By 2050, the number of individuals needing long-term care (LTC) services is expected to double, and the number of seniors with cognitive decline and memory impairment is expected to increase five-fold. Every day 10,000 individuals turn 65, and over half of the U.S. population will need long-term care at some point in their lifetime.

As LTC facilities prepare for tremendous growth in the aging population, the infrastructure required to support these seniors lags behind in both the short- and long-term future. **The SENIOR Act** ensures that our nation has the foundational elements needed to care for its rapidly aging population.



Note: The official population estimates for the United States are shown for 2016; the projections use the Vintage 2016 population estimate for July 1, 2016, as the base population for projecting from 2017 to 2060.

From U.S. Census report "Demographic Turning Points for the United States: Population Projections for 2020 to 2060"

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017 National Population Projections.

**Long-term care includes assisted and independent living, memory care communities, and nursing homes*

Senior Housing Sustainment and Relief Fund

The SENIOR Act establishes a Senior Housing and Sustainment Relief Fund to ensure that we can meet the LTC needs of our nation's rapidly aging population. This \$100 billion fund: 1) builds upon critical infrastructure demands for infection prevention and control; 2) invests in LTC broadband and telehealth capabilities; 3) creates a sustainability fund to ensure seniors' long-term care needs are exceeded; and 4) invests in LTC workforce training and development. Specifically, the SENIOR Act:

Provides Resources for Infection Control: LTC facilities have undergone much during the COVID-19 pandemic. Lessons learned regarding the devastating impact of social isolation and the importance of effective investments in infection control have led to basic infrastructure improvements that can boost the health, safety, and quality of life for seniors in congregate care settings. The basic improvements from this past year should be expanded upon and shared in a nation-wide effort to strengthen LTC resilience in the wake of this pandemic and for future capacity needs.

When faced with an airborne disease, air filtration and purification systems, in addition to upgraded HVAC units, are a vital but costly measure to mitigate infection rates. The aftermath of COVID-19 has left LTC facilities with potential solutions for preventing other illnesses, but without the capital required to purchase such systems. Other much needed improvements include touchless fixtures and the renovation of common areas for infection control.

Improves the Lives of Seniors Through Technology: One common understanding over the past year has been the effect of social isolation on our population. This detrimental experience has affected none more so than the seniors living in LTC facilities. Therefore, ensuring a robust telehealth capacity for LTC residents should be an essential part of any health care infrastructure. Building out connectivity and access to telehealth will provide LTC with the capability to consult medical experts when they are most needed.

Advancing upon the steps taken in 2020 for telehealth access is helpful but creating an environment for LTC facilities to not only connect, but to also reimagine the devices and platforms they utilize for connection, will truly prepare our nation for the incoming aging population.

Targets Sustainability Dollars to Keep LTC Provider Doors Open: Ensuring LTC remains resilient following the COVID-19 pandemic stabilizes senior living communities for the current and future needs of America's aging population. Injecting immediate funding into LTC will bolster a provider's ability to increase occupancy and hire caregivers.

Develops Workforce for Senior Housing Sustainment: Providing sound occupational resources for those eager to serve our nation's senior population is essential to any investment in LTC infrastructure. Establishing a pilot program that distributes grant funding for evidence-based approaches to increase earnings and create apprenticeships will keep local LTC facilities competitive so they will attract individuals seeking jobs. A LTC workforce development pilot project incentivizes making new positions into careers, rather than temporary employment opportunities.

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