San Luis Obispo’s Vulnerable Seniors

The Hidden Poor
The Economically Challenged and Insecure
The Struggling to Get By

SLO County Commission on Aging

Kathleen Bellefontaine, Commission Chair
Thomas Clough, Outreach Committee Chair
Senior Volunteer Services Board Chair
Overview

- San Luis Obispo’s vulnerable seniors are a large, service intensive and dependent population segment
- Financial insecurity causes critical impacts on personal health and presents ongoing roadblocks to:
  - obtaining health care
  - maintaining safe/affordable housing
  - necessary transportation options
- The effect of this financial insecurity is a significant and growing cost to the county and hospitals
Staggering Numbers

- One in three California households do not have sufficient income to meet their basic costs of living
- this is nearly three times the number considered poor according to the Federal Poverty Level

In San Luis Obispo County
- Average Family Cost (2 adults & 2 children): $52,206
- 224% over Federal Poverty Level
- 23,421 Households Below Real Cost Measure
- 29% Seniors

Struggling to Get By
United Way of California – 2015
Staggering Numbers

San Luis Obispo County Rank for the highest number of Hidden Poor out of 58 California Counties:

• # 8 - Single elder head of household
• # 15 - Older couple head of household

UCLA Center for Health Policy
Counties with Highest Percentage of Hidden Poor Among Older Head of Household/ Spouse (Age 65 and over), California 2011, 2013
The Problem: Federal Poverty Guideline

- the current measure has remained virtually unchanged over the past 30 years

- it no longer provides an accurate picture of the differences in poverty among population groups or geographic areas

- it does not reflect socio-economic changes and trends

- it is long past time to update this measure to reflect changes in the nation’s economy and society
Today
• Almost **48 million Americans** are between age 64 and 84
• An additional **7 million Americans** are over age 85

By 2030
• There will be **74 million Americans** between age 64 and 84
• Another **9 million Americans** will be over age 85

By 2040
• There will be **83 million Americans** over age 65
• Another **15 million Americans** will be over age 85

**Source:** *2014 US Census Bureau Population Projections*
2014
National Council on Aging

• Over 23 million Americans aged 60+ are economically insecure—living at or below 250% of the federal poverty level (FPL)

• Almost 75% of Social Security recipients depend on Social Security for all or most of their monthly income

• Almost 50% of all senior households of color and senior single women households are economically insecure

• 78% of all senior households are financially vulnerable
Senior (In)Security at a Glance

Only 22% of senior households are secure in a majority of these areas:

- **Housing & Home Equity**
  - 45% spend nearly a third of their income on housing
  - 31% either rent or have no home equity to draw on

- **Healthcare**
  - 40% spend more than 15% of their income on healthcare

- **Budget**
  - 37% have no money left after meeting essential expenses

- **Assets**
  - 54% do not have financial resources to meet median projected expenses based on net worth and projected income

*From Bad to Worse – Senior Economic Insecurity on the Rise*

Policy Brief, July 2011 - Demos and Institute on Assets and Social Policy, Brandeis University
California State Plan on Aging 2013 - 2017
Projected Population 60 and Older

California Population Age 60 and Older in Millions

1950: 1.6
1960: 2
1970: 2.6
1980: 3
1990: 4.2
2000: 4.7
2010: 6.1
2020: 8.5
2030: 10.8
2040: 12.4
2050: 13.9
2060: 15.3
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PSA 17</th>
<th>Actual 2010</th>
<th>Projected 2030</th>
<th>Change</th>
<th>Percentage Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>San Luis Obispo</td>
<td>58,433</td>
<td>93,397</td>
<td>34,964</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santa Barbara</td>
<td>74,230</td>
<td>110,047</td>
<td>35,817</td>
<td>48%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>132,633</td>
<td>203,444</td>
<td>70,781</td>
<td>53%</td>
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Older Women & Poverty

- **20%** of older Californians live in poverty
  - average income of $25,000/year

- **20.2%** of single older women live below the Federal Poverty Level

- **32.2%** with higher incomes still fall below California’s *Economic Security Index*, which reflects the actual costs of meeting basic needs

- **60%** of all single elders of color face economic insecurity

*Source: UCLA Center for Health Policy Research, The Hidden Poor: Over Three Quarters of a Million Older Adults Overlooked by Federal Poverty Line, August 2015*
A Snapshot of Older Californians 65+

- 77% with HS diploma or higher
- 20% limited English proficiency
- 20% Medi-Cal beneficiaries
- 45% women living alone
- 43% with a disability

Over 120,000 grandparents have responsibility for basic needs of grandchildren

Sandi Fitzpatrick, Executive Director, California Commission on Aging

A Female Perspective on the Graying of California - 2015
Fair & Poor Health By Elder Index
Ages 65+ California 2013-14

47.3%

< 100% FPL

33.9%

> = 100% FPL but < Elder Index (Hidden Poor)

17.5%

Above Elder Index

Source: 2013-14 California Health Interview Survey
Long Term Care

- The likelihood of using LTC services increases with age.

- The likelihood of becoming disabled in two or more Activities for Daily Living or of developing cognitive impairment is 68% among those age 65 and older.

  - almost 7 out of 10 seniors will have substantial needs for supportive care.

- Almost half of all seniors will enter a nursing home at some point in their lives, even if only for a short rehabilitative stay.

Source: UCLA Center for Health Policy Research, The Hidden Poor: Over Three Quarters of a Million Older Adults Overlooked by Federal Poverty Line, August 2015
San Luis Obispo County
Adults 65+

- 38% of all elders age 65+ do not have enough income to meet their most basic needs, as measured by the Elder Index

- *that’s more than 13,000 elders struggling to make ends meet in San Luis Obispo County*

- A large number of additional elders (9,000 or 27%) with incomes above the FPL but below the Elder Index fall into the *eligibility gap: cannot make ends meet but do not qualify for supports*
Women Living Alone: Most Economically Vulnerable

Without the support from a partner’s income, and in the face of increasing costs and fixed incomes, over half of elder women living alone in San Luis Obispo County cannot make ends meet.
Renters Living Alone: Most Economically Vulnerable

- 8 out of 10 elder renters living alone in San Luis Obispo County are trying to survive on incomes below the Elder Index.
- 4 out of 10 elders who own their own home, even those who have paid off their mortgage, are unable to meet their basic needs.
## Critical Senior Community Challenges

- **Transportation Resources Designed for an Aging Population**
- **Nursing Homes, Assisted Living, Respite Care for Seniors, and End of Life Care**
- **Accessible Safety Designed Affordable Housing**
- **Healthcare Targeted to and for Seniors**
- **In-Home Supportive Services**
- **Low Income Housing Options**
- **Services Directed at Avoiding Isolation/Depression**

*SLO County Commission on Aging – April 2016*
A Call To Action

➢ More Senior Advocates & Expanded Partnerships to Address Critical Senior Issues

➢ Age Friendly Livable Affordable Communities

➢ Attitude Shift in Society

➢ Policy Focus on Providing Necessary Financial & Health Care Support

➢ Resources Directed at Solving Critical Senior Issues
A Few Examples
Stories and Concerns of Seniors

- Struggling with maintaining **affordable housing** caused by financial stress, high rents, eviction.

- Struggling with obtaining **access to medical care** caused by cost, transportation, current medical condition.

- Struggling to meet **basic needs**; food, shelter, medical, caused by limited financial resources.

- Struggling to obtain **in home support services** such as for personal care, home maintenance.

- Struggling with living alone and the effects of **isolation** and **loneliness**.