

# ILC Policy Report

*Longevity News and Trends in the U.S. and abroad*

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## The International Longevity Center-USA

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### Inside this issue:

<i>News from the U.S. Government</i>	1
<i>International News</i>	2
<i>News from the Not-for-Profit Sector and Beyond</i>	4

ILC Policy Report prepared by  
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## ILC Annual Report Focuses on Caregiving

The ILC has published its Annual Report for 2006, which is entitled “Caregiving: As Its Population Ages, America Looks To Its Caregivers.” The Report highlights the issue of caregiving and discusses the ILC’s efforts in this area, as well as its numerous other activities. The ILC’s Caregiving Project for Older Americans is an action-oriented collaboration that aims to improve the nation’s caregiving workforce through training, the establishment of standards, and the creation of a career ladder. The Project is a joint venture of the ILC-USA and the Schmieding Center for Senior Health &

Education (SCSHE), and combines the resources of a policy research center with a clinical outpatient and health education program. In addition, the annual report also reviews the ILC’s work to promote awareness of the importance of sleep to healthy aging, its efforts to combat ageism, which is the denial of basic human rights of older persons, and its various other initiatives and endeavors in the U.S. and abroad. The Annual Report also discusses the activities of the ILC’s eight sister centers. It can be found at [www.ilcusa.org/pub/annual.htm](http://www.ilcusa.org/pub/annual.htm).

## News from the U.S. Government

**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):** The CDC, in collaboration with the Merck Company Foundation, has released “The State of Aging and Health in America,” which presents the most current national data available on 15 key health indicators for older adults related to health status, health behaviors, preventive care and screening, and injuries. This issue focuses on several areas of particular concern, including preventing cognitive

decline, addressing end of life issues, and reducing falls among older adults. It also profiles innovative approaches around the U.S. to help ensure that key information on the health of older adults is readily available. Lastly, it includes several calls to action to improve the health and well-being of older adults, including reducing health disparities particularly in racial and ethnic minority populations, encouraging people to communicate their wishes about end-of-life care, and improving the oral

## News from the U.S. Government (cont'd)

health of older adults. The report is at [www.cdc.gov/aging/saha.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/aging/saha.htm).

**Government Accountability Office (GAO):** The GAO has released the following reports and testimonies: “Older Workers: Some Best Practices and Strategies for Engaging and Retaining Older Workers”; “Medicare Spending: Preliminary Findings Regarding an Approach Focusing on Physician Practice Patterns to Foster Program Efficiency”; “Health Care Spending: Public Payers Face Burden of Entitlement Program Growth, While All Payers Face Rising Prices and Increasing Use of Services”; “Private Pensions: Increased Reliance on 401(k) Plans Calls for Better Information on Fees”. These are at [www.gao.gov](http://www.gao.gov).

**Hearings:** The Senate Special Committee on Aging held a hearing “Boomers and the Budget: What Does it Mean for America’s Seniors?” on February 15<sup>th</sup>, and a hearing titled “The Aging Workforce: What Does it Mean for Businesses and the Economy?” on February 28<sup>th</sup>. Hearing information is at <http://aging.senate.gov/>

[hearings.cfm](http://hearings.cfm). The Senate Finance Committee held a hearing “Medicare Payment for Physician Services: Examining New Approaches” on March 1<sup>st</sup>. Hearing information is at <http://finance.senate.gov/sitepages/hearing030107.htm>. The House Ways and Means Committee Subcommittee on Health held a hearing on “MedPAC’s Report on the Sustainable Growth Rate (SGR)” on March 6<sup>th</sup>. The Subcommittee also held a hearing on Medicare Program Integrity on March 8<sup>th</sup>. Hearing information is at <http://waysandmeans.house.gov/hearings.asp>. The House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform held a hearing on “Waste, Fraud, and Abuse in Pharmaceutical Pricing,” on February 9<sup>th</sup>. Hearing information is at <http://oversight.house.gov/story.asp?ID=1168>. The House Committee on Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health held a hearing “Exploring Options for Improving the Medicare Physician Payment System” on March 6<sup>th</sup>. Hearing information is at [http://energycommerce.house.gov/cmte\\_mtg/110hearingsheld.shtml#hehear](http://energycommerce.house.gov/cmte_mtg/110hearingsheld.shtml#hehear).

## International News

**Canada:** Statistics Canada has published a report entitled “A Portrait of Seniors in Canada: 2006,” which provides a wide range of statistics on the well-being and wellness of people aged 65 and over. The report describes how seniors are living longer, with the average 65-year-old Canadian expecting to live another 19.2 years, and are financially better off, better educated, and more active than earlier generations. However, the report also points out that the characteristics of younger seniors aged 65 to 74 differ from those of their counterparts aged 85 and over, in respect to health, cultural origins, financial situations, living arrangements and other areas. In addition, rising rates of obesity are evident among Canadians of all ages and seniors are no exception, which can threaten the gains made in health and life expectancy. More information is at [www.statcan.ca/Daily/English/070227/d070227b.htm](http://www.statcan.ca/Daily/English/070227/d070227b.htm).

**Ireland:** The Economic and Social Research Institute has published a report “A Social Portrait of Older People in Ireland,” which presents a wide range of data related to the older population in Ireland. According to the report, one of the remarkable features of the older population in Ireland is how small it is and how little it has grown as a share of the total population over time. The total number of older people has increased slightly from 315,000 people in 1961 to 436,000 in 2002, but the proportion of older people has remained unchanged at 11%. This is attributed in part to higher birthrates through the 1980’s, high emigration in the 1950’s, thereby reducing the numbers of people in their 60’s now, and a slow rate of improvement in life expectancy. The report indicates that this will change, with projections showing that older people will comprise 20 to 23% of the population by 2036. The report then presents

## International News (cont'd)

data on income and poverty, access to services, and health status of the older population, and discusses additional data needs to help prepare for the growing older population. The report is at [www.esri.ie/UserFiles/publications/20070226102534/BKMNEXT088.pdf](http://www.esri.ie/UserFiles/publications/20070226102534/BKMNEXT088.pdf).

**Social Security Administration (SSA):** The U.S. SSA has issued its latest “International Update,” which reviews recent developments in public and private pensions. This issue covers the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Canada, Bahrain, and Pakistan. It is at [www.socialsecurity.gov/policy/docs/progdesc/intl\\_update/2007-02/index.html](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/policy/docs/progdesc/intl_update/2007-02/index.html).

**South Africa:** The South African government has issued a second discussion paper on “Social Security and Retirement Reform,” which reviews South Africa’s social security system and reform proposals, including the introduction of a national contributory public social security scheme. The paper discusses how ‘the existing structure of retirement provision in South Africa suffers from a serious fracture. The retirement funding environment has two separate fiscal pillars – a social old age grant that supports the poor and a tax-incentivised private pensions sector that provides greater fiscal incentives to higher-income individuals than to low-income individuals.’ The paper proposes a multi-pillar system including mandatory participation in a national social security system, social assistance grants to combat poverty, additional mandatory participation in private pension plans, and supplementary voluntary savings. The goal of the reform effort is to improve income security of the poor and strengthen the fabric of social solidarity in South Africa. The government’s discussion paper is at [www.info.gov.za/otherdocs/2007/soc\\_sec\\_retire.pdf](http://www.info.gov.za/otherdocs/2007/soc_sec_retire.pdf).

**United Kingdom:** The Stockholm Environment Institute has released a report “Greening the Greys: Climate Change and the Over 50s,” which outlines key findings on attitudes to climate change in the UK population aged 50 and over, and their contribution to

the UK’s carbon footprint. The report notes that as people grow older, they generally spend more time at home and engaged in leisure activities, which have implications for energy use and carbon emissions. It finds that older people have a larger carbon footprint than other age groups, due in part to high car dependency, holidays abroad, and other factors. The report also finds that this population is concerned about climate change and are motivated to take action. The goal of the report is to improve understanding of attitudes to climate change and how best to engage people, personally and collectively, to help meet the UK’s goal of a 20% reduction in carbon emissions by 2010. The report is at [www.climatetalk.org.uk/news\\_post?news\\_id=4](http://www.climatetalk.org.uk/news_post?news_id=4).

**United Kingdom:** The UK-based Alzheimer’s Society has published a report “Dementia UK,” which highlights the prevalence and economic cost of dementia in the UK. It finds that about 700,000 people currently have dementia, incurring an annual cost of 17 billion pounds (~\$33 billion USD), and these numbers will rise dramatically due to the UK’s aging population. According to the report, the total number of people with dementia in the UK is forecast to increase to 940,110 by 2021 and 1,735,087 by 2051, an increase of 38% over the next 15 years and 154% over the next 45 years. It notes that historically, a lack of attention to the needs of people with dementia has led to dementia care being delivered piecemeal and in an inefficient fashion, and that greater investment accompanied by careful planning will be needed in the years ahead in order to maximize quality of life for people with dementia and their families in an efficient way with the resources available. More information is at [www.alzheimers.org.uk/News\\_and\\_Campaigns/News/270207dementia\\_uk.htm](http://www.alzheimers.org.uk/News_and_Campaigns/News/270207dementia_uk.htm).

**United Nations:** The UN Commission on Social Development met in February and among its activities, a draft resolution was introduced, “Modalities for the first review and appraisal of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002,” which encouraged governments to enhance efforts to implement the

## International News (Cont'd)

recommendations if the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, which was adopted 5 years ago during the Second World Conference on Ageing. The resolution calls for greater cooperation and financial support by governments and stakeholders to review national and international activities in regard to aging-specific policies as well as mainstreaming aging and

gender into global agendas. The resolution is at [www.un.org/esa/socdev/csd/csod2007/Resolutions/res07.htm](http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/csd/csod2007/Resolutions/res07.htm). In addition, numerous side events were held during the Commission to highlight various issues affecting older people around the world. More information about this is at [www.globalaging.org/agingwatch/events/CSD/mipaa+5.htm](http://www.globalaging.org/agingwatch/events/CSD/mipaa+5.htm).

## News from the Not-for-Profit Sector and Beyond

**AARP:** AARP has issued a research report “Quality Assurance for Long-Term Care: The Experiences of England, Australia, Germany and Japan,” which profiles the efforts of these nations to ensure quality long term care services for their citizens. It finds that England’s system is characterized by a strong and quite adversarial regulatory approach, albeit one that is trying to make inspections more oriented toward outcomes, more focused on important issues, and more inclusive of users; Australia relies on a consultative relationship between providers and regulators, with education a major focus of the government’s activities; Germany relies heavily on the enforcement of contracts between providers and heavily regulated nonprofit organizations called “sickness funds” as the principal strategy for quality assurance; and Japan focuses on worker training and informal mechanisms to assure quality. More information is at [www.aarp.org/research/longtermcare/quality/2007\\_05\\_Itc.html](http://www.aarp.org/research/longtermcare/quality/2007_05_Itc.html).

**Boston College Center for Retirement Research:** The Center has released a new issue in brief “What Happens to Health Benefits After Retirement?” which examines the availability and cost of health insurance coverage at ages 55 to 64 and changes in coverage after retirement. It notes that such coverage appears to be slowly disappearing, due to rising health care costs, an aging workforce, and intensified global competition. This decline in coverage can seriously jeopardize retirement security for future generations. The brief is at [www.bc.edu/centers/crr/wob\\_7.shtml](http://www.bc.edu/centers/crr/wob_7.shtml). Another brief, “Phased

Retirement: Problems and Prospects” discusses the benefits of phased retirement, such as allowing workers to transition away from full-time work to something less stressful, allowing employers to retain experienced workers who have specialized knowledge of their job as well as of the larger organization, and extending work lives and thereby reducing pressure on employer-sponsored pensions and Social Security. It then discusses some obstacles to phased retirement, including its effects on defined benefit pension schemes, health insurance coverage, accommodating flexible schedules, and selecting employees for such an option. The brief finds that phased retirement is not yet very common, but may become more popular in the future, as the aforementioned obstacles are addressed. More information is at [www.bc.edu/centers/crr/wob\\_8.shtml](http://www.bc.edu/centers/crr/wob_8.shtml).

**Employee Benefit Research Institute (EBRI):** The EBRI has published an issue brief “How Are New Retirees Doing Financially in Retirement?” which examines the wealth of individuals between age 65 and 75 in retirement to see if this population is on track for a financially secure retirement. It finds that most new retirees are reasonably maintaining their income and assets, but those that are losing wealth are losing it rapidly and risk running out of money in retirement. The brief is at [www.ebri.org/publications/ib/index.cfm?fa=ibDisp&content\\_id=3781](http://www.ebri.org/publications/ib/index.cfm?fa=ibDisp&content_id=3781). Another brief “Retirement Plan Participation and Asset Allocation, 2004” presents data on asset allocation in defined contribution and 401(k) plans. It finds that since 1992, the percentage of family heads working for an employer that sponsored a retirement plan remained steady, at or

## News from the Not-for-Profit Sector and Beyond (cont'd)

just over 61 percent, but in 2004, just 46 percent of working family heads participated in their employer's retirement plan, a drop of more than 2 percentage points from 2001. The data also indicates the growth in defined contribution plans, with 56% of family heads having a defined contribution plan only in 2004, compared to 26% who had only a defined benefit plan. This is a significant change from 1992, when 42.3 percent had a defined benefit plan only and 40.8 percent had a defined contribution plan only. The brief is at [www.ebri.org/publications/notes/index.cfm?fa=notesDisp&content\\_id=3785](http://www.ebri.org/publications/notes/index.cfm?fa=notesDisp&content_id=3785).

**International Longevity Center – USA (ILC):** The ILS has published a report “Intimacy and Sexuality: Towards a Lifespan Perspective,” which discusses how as Americans live longer and more healthily, they are

capable of more years of sexual and intimate expression, yet barriers ranging from negative social attitudes to side effects of many commonly used medications threaten opportunity for, and quality of, sexual life. The report notes that sexual expression and intimate relationships have been linked to many health benefits, including longevity, fitness, sleep, fertility, mental well-being, and promotion of marital bonding. It states that better and more accessible knowledge and understanding of the ways in which sexuality influences health, and vice versa, are relevant for physicians, policymakers, employers, educators, and the public, and suggests a research agenda for future work in this area. It also offers recommendations to assist individuals in maintaining a healthy sexual and intimate life into their later years. The report is at [www.ilcusa.org/lib/pdf/IntimacySexuality.pdf](http://www.ilcusa.org/lib/pdf/IntimacySexuality.pdf).

**More newsletters and briefs available on the ILC website!**

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