

Editorial

**Census shows dramatic change is coming**

Robert Howard

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We knew this country was "greying." But the latest **census** numbers from Statistics Canada point out that the changes to Canada's demographics are going to have a profound effect on health care, social policy, political influence, spending (and advertising), housing and development, even reading and television.

There are now nearly five million Canadians over the age of 65 - a record - and that number is increasing faster than the number of working-age Canadians and the number of children in the country.

What might have come as more of a surprise was that Canadians 100 years of age and older are the second-fastest growing age group. Last year, 5,825 Canadians had passed the century mark, up 25 per cent in five years. Health issues linked to aging - cancer, diabetes, dementias, lack of mobility - will require more of our health system. While many seniors live into old age in good health, others do not.

The difference is often early diagnosis and intervention, and governments are going to have to find a way to drive, and fund, that.

Grey power - what seniors want of their governments, whom they vote for, what they read and watch, how and where they travel, what they spend their money on - will only become stronger.

Younger generations, already struggling to earn a living as good as their parents enjoy, will have less influence and less say. That's going to create new dynamics and tensions in this country.

Canada is not just greying. It is changing in some very fundamental ways. We need to talk about that.

Robert Howard

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Local / News

## **Burlington neighbourhoods the most youthful**

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The area with the Hamilton **Census** Metropolitan Area's largest young population is in Burlington, bounded by Dundas Street, Upper Middle and Tremaine and Orchard roads.

A healthy 31.7 per cent of its residents are 14 years of age and under.

The second-largest youthful zone is also in Burlington, bounded by Orchard, Upper Middle, Dundas and Appleby, and has 28.4 per cent of its citizens in that category.

Hamilton is home to the third largest - with 26.1 per cent - in the area bounded by Upper Gage Avenue, Rymal Road East, Upper James Street and the old city boundary with Glanbrook.

Michelle Zimic, 39, has lived at Upper Wentworth and Rymal for five years and has two kids: Naomi, 4, and Nigel, 6.

"The house we chose had all the must-haves for our family," said Zimic. "It had a fenced yard, a finished basement and trees."

Where Zimic lived previously, there weren't any trees, something that "just didn't seem right" to her family. There were no finished basements for her kids to use, and not much of a back yard, either.

"It's a lot more money you have to put into a house if there's no landscaping done and your basement isn't finished."

The area also has a lot of open spaces and parks for children to use, including Turner Park, and boasts amenities such as community centres, grocery stores and the Les Chater YMCA.

There's also Blessed John Paul II Elementary School and St. Jean de Brébeuf Secondary, which are within a few blocks of each other.

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Hamilton's new year's baby was Matthew Bosc, born to Pamela and Michael. John Rennison, The Hamilton Spectator

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Local / News

## East Hamilton pocket big draw for older adults

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The Hamilton **Census** Metropolitan Area's largest aging population lives in the area bounded by Queenston Road, Nash Road South, King Street East and the old city boundary just west of Centennial Parkway.

A hefty 40.2 per cent of its residents are over 60. The CMA includes Grimsby and Burlington, but all three of the largest aging populations are in the City of Hamilton.

Trish, who is 65 and did not want her last name used, has lived at Centennial Parkway and Queenston Road for 30 years.

"Everything is at your fingertips - a grocery store, a drugstore, a hospital," she says. "Plus, I don't have to sit in a car for hours and hours just to get to the place where I can do my shopping."

Easy access to amenities is a top priority for the seniors who live there. There are clusters of shops.

In one plaza, there's a bank, grocery store, dental office, dollar store and a variety of small restaurants that sell everything from pizza to burgers. And Eastgate Square at Centennial Parkway North and Queenston Road is fairly close by.

The older homes in the area tend to be more spacious than those downtown; the back and front yards are also generally bigger.

Noise and pollution were also factors in Trish's decision to leave the city's core behind decades ago. She'd had enough of the construction, sirens and noise from cars, and wanted to move to a place that was "much quieter."

Also, along with the construction came an obstructed view: "I want to look up and see sky, not buildings. And this area provides that sky I want to see."

The local CMA's second-largest aging population, with 37.1 per cent of its residents over 60, is at Stone Church Road, Garth Street, Upper James Street and Twenty Road.

The third largest, in the area of Fennell Avenue East, Upper Sherman, Upper Gage Avenue and Mohawk Road, has 36.7 per cent in the senior bracket.

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Local / News

**Canada's wee baby boom**

Torstar News

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Canada has a new baby boomlet, according to the latest **census** figures.

The number of children aged four and under jumped 11 per cent between 2006 and 2011, the biggest increase in 50 years. It's a stark contrast to the rest of the story from Tuesday's release of the 2011 **census**, which says Canada is turning grey.

Statistics Canada attributes the rise in children to a slightly higher fertility rate and an increase in the number of women - themselves the children of baby boomers - who are in their child-bearing years, between 20 and 34. The biggest increases in children occurred in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Quebec and Nunavut. Ontario was a laggard, notching just a 5 per cent increase in this age bracket.

Meanwhile, seniors now account for a record proportion of the country's population. And in a sign of the times, centenarians - those aged 100 and older - are now the second-fastest growing age group after those aged 60 to 64. There were 5,825 Canadians who had lived a century or more in 2011, up 25 per cent since 2006.

The first release of data in February from the 2011 **census** showed Canada had 33,476,688 people, a 5.9 per cent increase over the 2006 **census**. Now, new **census** numbers released Tuesday by Statistics Canada on the age and sex of Canadians reveal more about the changing face of the population, which is roughly split between men (49 per cent) and women (51 per cent).

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Local / News

**GOING GREY; Latest census findings show Hamilton has a higher-than-average population of seniors - a call to action for health-care officials**

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St. Peter's Hospital president Rebecca Repa isn't fazed by the growing number of seniors calling Hamilton home.

But she'll worry if more of them start calling Hamilton hospitals home.

The latest **census** numbers from Statistics Canada show our city has a higher percentage of older adults than the national average. We're also tops in Ontario for the number of over-65ers living in our health-care region.

"These numbers are a call to action for us ... to keep our population healthier as we age," said Repa, who heads the complex continuing care hospital for Hamilton Health Sciences that specializes in caring for older patients. "Our hospitals are set up for episodic care, but what we're facing is the need for chronic disease management."

New **census** data shows the population of Canadians aged 65 and older has increased by 14 per cent to almost five million since 2006. That's 14.8 per cent of the national population.

Locally, we're ahead of the greying curve with 81,575 seniors in the city and 115,560 in the **Census** Metropolitan Area, which includes Burlington and Grimsby. That represents about 16 per cent of our municipal population.

Repa said health-care planners are very aware of those numbers - including more than 200,000 seniors in our provincial health-care region. "Healthy seniors don't consume any more system resources than a healthy young adult," she said. "But sick seniors do."

Seniors are three times more likely to need hospitalization and spend more time in hospital than younger patients.

Hospitals already have "senior-friendly" strategies to deal with falls, loss of muscle mass and dehydration, Repa said.

"But we need more energy dedicated to preventing illness and enabling healthy aging," she said, noting Hamilton has higher-than-average rates of diabetes and heart disease.

The solutions are as simple as better transit and as difficult as finding new funding for in-home care and other senior supports, said Carolyn Rosenthal, past president of the Hamilton Council on Aging.

Just getting to the doctor is tough for some seniors, she said. Missed checkups can turn small problems into a trip to the hospital. "Making the bus easier to use, or just widening sidewalks for someone with a walker, can make a world of difference," she said.

Rosenthal is also heartened by Ontario's budget decision to add dollars to "woefully underfunded" home-care programs and commit to a seniors' care strategy.

"We need to reallocate those finite (health-care) resources, but it will be a tough sell," she said.

A Hamilton researcher is hoping to provide the ammunition needed for more investment.

McMaster University professor Parminder Raina is heading the Canadian Longitudinal Study on Aging, a national study investigating how we age. The 20-year study will follow 50,000 people, investigate 11 chronic conditions and explore the effects of everything from eating habits to employment on health.

"This data will be critically important for public policy precisely because of the (**census**) numbers we are seeing today," said Raina. "The goal is not just to live long, but to live long and healthy."

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Health-care officials say more attention must be paid to healthy aging to help Hamilton care for its cresting grey wave. Gary Yokoyama, The Hamilton Spectator

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