

Senior Women of Marin, Demographic Data: Prepared by Moreva Selchie

Excerpted from demographic findings as reported in the Strategic Plan Data Focus Report of Marin Health and Human Services, Division of Aging (2007). This report includes data from several sources.

Participants in our study understood that the difficulties facing senior women are a concern for all. As Director Trunzo puts it in the 2008 Great Age newsletter: "Reaching out to elder persons is everyone's responsibility, and we can start within our own neighborhoods." Programs of intergenerational connectiveness such as the Fairfax Vest Pocket (FVP) Community, a shared intergenerational housing project, and the Jewish Family and Children's Services Senior Companion Program (including teen involvement) show what can be done.

The statistical breakdowns by gender in the report indicate that senior women are particularly challenged in their older years. The data reveal realities of lower income and education, more health difficulties and more isolation of senior women in the county.

Income and Education:

Estimated Median Household Income Marin adults 65+ (2001)

Married female 73,000

Married male 79,000

Single female 30,000

Single male 41,000

Women's sources of income are slightly more from social security, SSI, and family members and slightly less from pensions, assets and employment in comparison with men.

The education graphs in the report show female education levels peaking especially with high school and some college, and male levels peaking with college graduate and post-graduate degrees.

Isolating Factors:

A much higher number of women over 65 live alone in Marin compared to California as a whole: Marin County 54.8%; California 31.4%.

29.3% of Marin women 65+ are married compared to 66.2% of Marin males.

39.9% of the women are widowed and 14.2% of the men.

22.9% of the women of this age group are divorced compared to 11.3% of the men.

55% of Marin's senior women live alone. As reported in the Older Adult Health Survey, 2001,

68% of women aged 75 or older live alone compared to 40% of the men over 75.

Only 45% of women over 75 see people daily.

Seniors 65+ who feel lack of transportation limits activities tend to be female.

Seniors who were limited in their daily activities in the past month by pain were more likely to be women. Seniors who had fallen in the past year were more likely, also, to be women. And the seniors who had had bad days due to mental health problems in the past month were more likely to be women.

This data excerpted by gender highlights particular challenges and disadvantages of senior women. It is also

important to note the emphasis in the Division of Aging Data Report (p. 2) on the:

".... Interconnectedness of needs and issues that affect older adults. The current structure of financing and delivery of services and programs for older adults are fragmented. A more holistic view towards a well co-ordinate delivery system of programs for older adults is sorely needed."