

APR 21, 2016 @ 05:24 PM

## Why Millennials Should Be Worried About Aging America

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Aging isn't a senior issue; it's a multi-generational issue. With baby boomers turning 70 at a rate of 10,000 a day, America is becoming a "gerontocracy," aging guru Ken Dychtwald said in a press conference today, calling on presidential candidates, the media, and voters to address America's age wave. "The challenges among older people will be paid for by younger people. The weight on younger generations could be crushing."

Consider that 42% of the federal budget is spent on Medicare and Social Security today, and that spending will exceed 50% by 2030. "It's a devastating medical, fiscal, and inter-generational crisis!" Dychtwald warned. "Are candidates offering innovative solutions? No."

That's not totally fair. Of the five "aging" issues Dychtwald identifies, he says his top issue is wiping out Alzheimer's disease and related dementias. Donald Trump, whose father had Alzheimer's, has said that fighting Alzheimer's is a [top priority](#), while Hillary Clinton [promises](#) to double funding for Alzheimer's research from \$1 billion to \$2 billion a year over 10 years, and proposes tax credits for those who care for family members.

You'd think presidential candidates would be attuned to senior aging issues; after all most of them are old. At 74, Sen. Bernie Sanders is the oldest candidate; Trump is 69; Clinton is 68; Gov. John Kasich is 63; Sen. Ted Cruz is the exception at 45. When Social Security began, the average American could expect to live to 62. Today life expectancy is approaching 79 and steadily rising. By 2050, the number of Americans 65 and older is estimated to be 88 million, up from 46 million.

With those statistics in mind, here are Dychtwald's five issues, and some specific pressing questions for candidates—and voters.

Rethinking the definition of old. Is 65 or 67 the right marker of old age (for purposes of Old Age Survivor and Disability Insurance aka Social Security)? Should employers get tax incentives to hire older workers as they do in Singapore?

Fighting diseases of aging. Alzheimer's and related dementias affect one out of two people over 85, and can be a financial and emotional "sinkhole" for families. The number of Americans afflicted is expected to grow from 5 million today to 15 million by 2050. "This is a horrific disease that will be the blight of the aging world," Dychtwald said. What measures should be taken to eliminate Alzheimer's? Should families get tax breaks for caregiving, and should work-leave policies be altered?

Averting a new era of mass elder poverty. Half of Americans have no pensions beyond Social Security. Should Americans be forced to save for retirement like in the United Kingdom and Australia? Should there be affluence tests for entitlements to give more to those in need and less to those who have more means (like existing Medicare premium surcharges based on income). Ending ageism. What would you do to wipe out ageism? How would you alter transportation to make it universally-designed?

Helping elders find a meaningful role in society. The problem might not be the growing legions of older adults, Dychtwald said, but using creative ways to elevate their role. What's your biggest idea of what retirees can do for society?

Original URL: <http://www.forbes.com/sites/ashleaebeling/2016/04/21/why-millennials-should-be-worried-about-aging-america/#7169e8516676>