

# Senior Health in San Mateo County — Current Status and Future Trends

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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## **We gratefully acknowledge funding from the following organizations:**

Sequoia Healthcare District  
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Peninsula Health Care District  
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### **About the Ecologic Institute**

Ecologic Institute is a private not-for-profit think tank for applied environmental research, policy analysis and consultancy with offices in Berlin, Brussels and Vienna in the EU, and Washington DC and San Mateo, CA in the US.

The Ecologic Institute, Washington DC, is an independent non-profit think-tank for applied environmental research, policy analysis and consultancy. Its mission is to promote transatlantic understanding of environmental policies, sustainable economic and political development, and environmental protection through research, publications, educational exchanges, and public events. The Institute cooperates closely with Ecologic Institute in Berlin, Germany.

### **About Sustainable San Mateo County**

Sustainable San Mateo County is a non-profit, 501(c)(3) public benefit corporation dedicated to the long term health of our county's economy, environment and social equity by educating about sustainability. Core programs include the Indicators Report, a Report Card of sustainability measures released annually since 1997, and the annual Sustainability and Green Building Awards Event which heightens community awareness about sustainability by honoring local businesses, community groups, and individuals that have demonstrated an outstanding commitment to sustainable practices. Founded in 1992 by a small group of forward-thinking San Mateo County residents, Sustainable San Mateo County is a community-based organization. It relies primarily on the support of volunteers who contribute hundreds of hours to conceive, plan, and execute programs. Operating funds come from individuals, businesses, government agencies, and foundations.

## Why another Study on Senior Health?

*In 2011 San Mateo County's population of 727,209 included 99,436 adults over the age of 65 years. This is an increase of more than 19 percent since 2000. Seniors now make up 13 percent of the county's population and their share is projected to rise to 18 percent by 2030.*

There is hence an immediate need to better understand the implication of this demographic shift and to plan appropriately for the future. While existing studies have examined particular aspects of senior health and the aging of San Mateo County, none has compiled as comprehensive an overview yet as this report.

### This report provides:

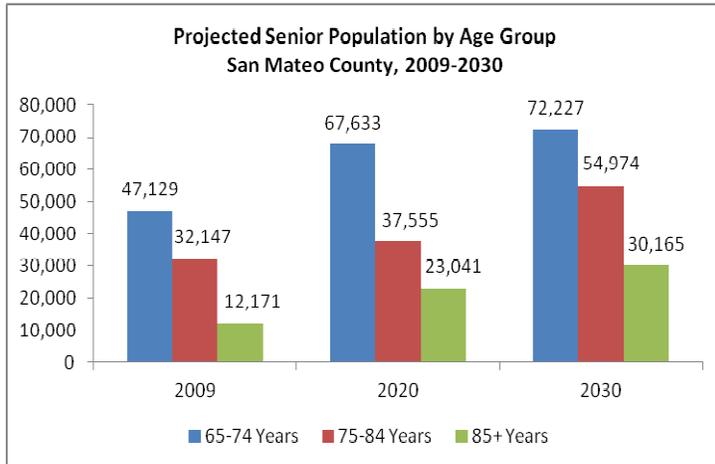
- ❖ A comprehensive compilation of statistics and information on senior health and well-being.
- ❖ A more fine-grained analysis of senior health by age group.
- ❖ Spatial information in the form of maps that illustrate where and how seniors live, including access to parks and open space, public transportation and medical care.
- ❖ A forward-looking to perspective using a time horizon up to 2030 to facilitate planning.
- ❖ A tool to promote issue-specific and broader debates among all stakeholders.

### This report does not provide:

- ❖ Explanations on the causal mechanisms driving some of the trends in health status among seniors.
- ❖ Policy analysis and evaluation regarding senior health.
- ❖ Specific policy prescriptions beyond the general conclusions that the data supply.

*This executive summary provides a snapshot of the main findings of the report.*

## Socio-Demographic Profile

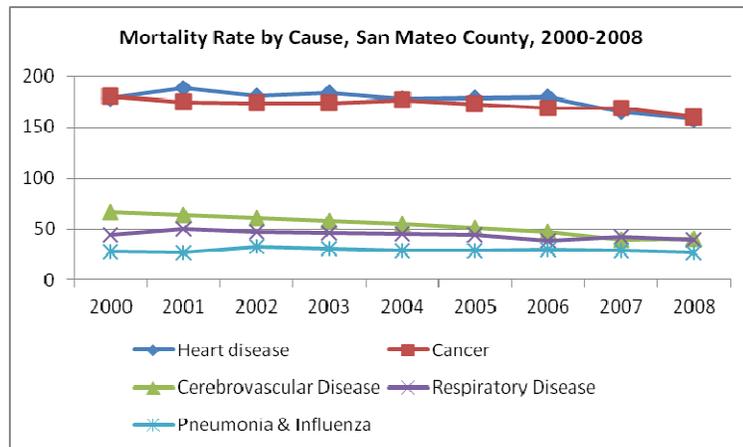


*Senior population will grow by 72% from 2009 to 2030.*

*The number of older seniors, those 85 years and older, will more than double.*

*While falling slightly, the main causes of death remain cancers and heart disease.*

*In contrast, mortality from Alzheimer's doubled between 2000 and 2008.*



## Income needed by seniors to cover basic expenses in San Mateo County

Living Situation	Annual income required according to Elder Index (2007)
Single, homeowner without mortgage	\$17,475
Single, renter	\$27,550
Single, homeowner with mortgage	\$42,987
Couple, homeowner without mortgage	\$26,149
Couple, renter	\$49,448
Couple, homeowner with mortgage	\$36,659

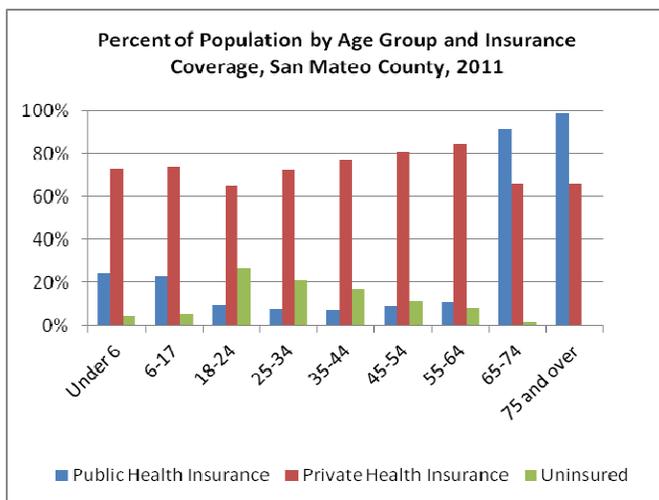
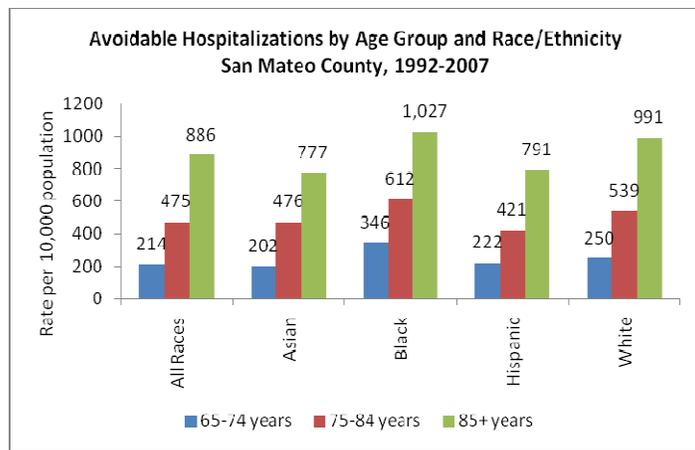
## Access to and Affordability of Healthcare

*By 2030, seniors in San Mateo County are expected to have a higher prevalence of chronic diseases: 60% will suffer from more than one chronic illness, 25% will have diabetes, and 33% are likely to be overweight and obese.*

*The number of older adults suffering from Alzheimer's disease is projected to grow by 70%. And one in five county residents over the age of 65 is expected to have a physical or mental disability.*

*Avoidable hospitalizations indicate ineffective or lack of ambulatory care.*

*African Americans have highest rates in all age groups.*

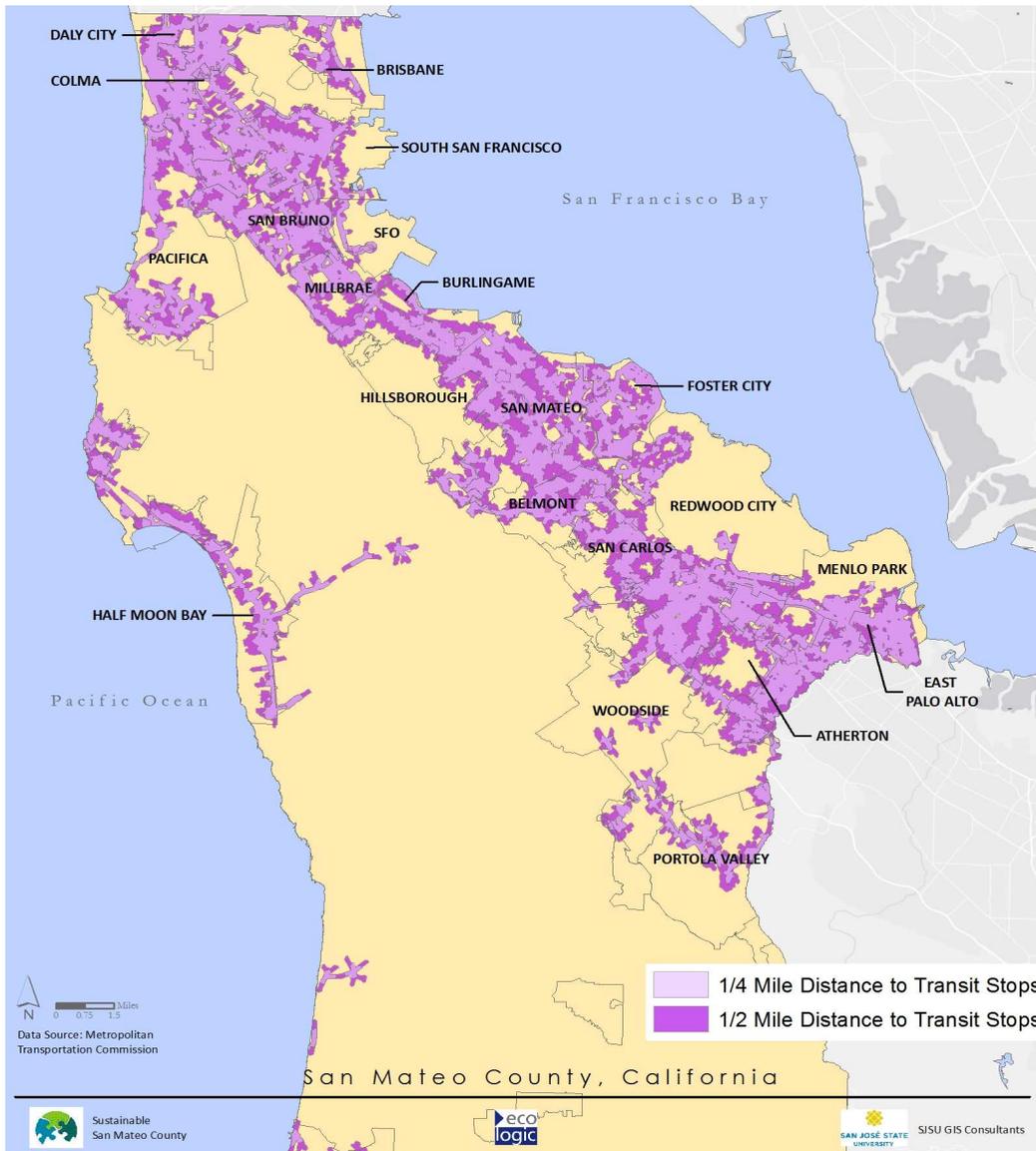


*Few seniors in San Mateo County are uninsured.*

*More than 60% of seniors have public and supplemental private coverage.*

# External Factors influencing Health Status

## Senior Population and Transit Access



Public transit is accessible within ¼ mile for 53% of seniors and within ½ mile for 73% of seniors. The least accessible towns are Hillsborough, Atherton and parts of Menlo Park. Coastside public transit is isolated from other parts of the county.

## Planning for the Future

Planning for tomorrow means listening today to the concerns of seniors, their families and the organizations serving them.

Among the top concerns relating to senior needs in the 2012-2016 Needs Assessment Survey conducted by the Area Agency on Aging are:

- ❖ Accidents
- ❖ Having sufficient money to live on
- ❖ Crime
- ❖ Caring for an older adult
- ❖ Obtaining information
- ❖ Transportation
- ❖ Isolation
- ❖ Receiving services

The county's Health System, the Department of Transportation, and many other agencies, non-profits and businesses are taking steps to meet the demands of tomorrow's seniors.

For more information, visit:

- ❖ San Mateo County Health System: <http://smchealth.org/>
- ❖ Area Agency on Aging: <http://smchealth.org/aas>
- ❖ San Mateo County Department of Housing:  
<http://www.co.sanmateo.ca.us/portal/site/housingdepartment>
- ❖ Behavioral Health and Recovery Services: <http://smchealth.org/bhrs>
- ❖ San Mateo County Division of Parks:  
<http://www.co.sanmateo.ca.us/portal/site/parks>
- ❖ San Mateo County Adult Protective Services: <http://smchealth.org/elderabuse>
- ❖ San Mateo County 24 hr Emergency and Advice TIES Line: <http://smchealth.org/TIES>

In addition, the **Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act** of 2010 supports seniors through new and improved programs and services, including:

Provisions of Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act	Going into effect
Improved state-level Consumer Assistance Programs (CAPs) services	2010
Pre-Existing Condition Insurance Plan	July 2011
New Summary of Benefits and Coverage Form allows easy comparison of plans	Sep 2012
New customer-operated Consumer Operated and Oriented Plan (CO-OP)	Jan 2014
Affordable health insurance exchanges	2014

## Conclusions

- ❖ San Mateo County is a rapidly aging county that is actively preparing for the “Silver Tsunami” through a variety of actions, including information and needs assessment, information and outreach campaigns, policy planning and implementation to expand and tailor services focused on senior health.
- ❖ More work remains to better understand how and where people want to live during retirement as well as the causes of health disparities by age, sex, race/ethnicity, socio-economic status and geography.
- ❖ Integrated and coordinated planning beyond traditional public health outcome focus is necessary to enhance quality of life for seniors in the county, including housing, transport and mobility, recreation and wellness, shopping and participation in the local economy.
- ❖ Ongoing initiatives such as SamTrans’ Senior Mobility Initiative, the Grand Boulevard Initiative and 21 Elements showcase the synergies between sustainability policies and health, including senior health.
- ❖ Quantitative performance metrics will be needed to evaluate the effectiveness. The private sector can also be involved more on senior health issues because a growing number of businesses serve specifically seniors.
- ❖ Senior health touches on the question of what kind of San Mateo County residents wish to build in the next 20 to 30 years. It is thus already part of a broader, ongoing debate.

*The report and summary are available for download:*

<http://sustainablesanmateo.org/senior-health>

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