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# Health Care for the Homeless: An Aging Demographic 2006 to 2010

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## Abstract

**Background:** Health Care for the Homeless medically cares for and collects data about homeless patients.  
**Objectives:** To study demographics, health care needs unique to the rapidly growing elderly female population.  
**Methods:** De-identified surveys completed at 300 national clinics  
**Results:** Increase in elderly females. Improved illness, cancer screen, but still below national averages .  
**Conclusion:** Subset is susceptible to age, gender-related disease, mental health illness, lack of coping skills and poor resources.

## Background

- Health Care for the Homeless (HCH) program is a grant program that funds 208 grantees in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.
- In 2010, HCH projects served 805,064 patients, 90.3% of which were living at or below the federal poverty level
- In 2010, 1.59 million people spent at least one night in an emergency shelter, transitional housing program.
- 2.8% of this population was over the age of 62.
- Elderly homeless expected to increase by 33% between 2010 and 2020 and double by 2050.

## Methods

- Data collected by the Agency for Health Care Research and Quality (AHRQ) and reported to the Uniform Data Systems (UDS).
- Data collected in de-identified surveys and published in aggregate annual, national reports
- Frequencies of key demographic variables and diagnostic, preventative health variables examined across 2006 to 2010
- Data were compared graphically and statistically using non-parametric Chi-square tests

## Results

Table 1, Demographics

	2006		2010		CHANGE	
	PATIENTS	% TOTAL	PATIENTS	% TOTAL	PATIENTS	% TOTAL
<b>Total Patients</b>	701,623	100.0%	805,064	100.0%	103,441	114.7%
<b>Age</b>						
<20 years old	118,411	16.9%	125,959	15.6%	7,548	-1.2%
20-64 years old	565,489	80.6%	657,159	81.6%	91,670	1.0%
≥65 years old	17,723	2.5%	21,946	2.7%	4,223	0.2%
<b>Gender</b>						
Total Male	402,780	57.4%	453,326	56.3%	50,546	-1.1%
<b>Race</b>						
Caucasian	232,299	33.1%	353,131	43.9%	120,832	10.8%
African American	244,585	34.9%	265,696	33.0%	21,111	-1.9%
Hispanic or Latino	148,291	21.1%	178,232	22.1%	29,941	1.0%
Asian/Pacific Islander/American Indian/Alaska Native	24,040	3.4%	32,973	4.1%	8,933	0.7%
Unreported/Refused to Report	52,408	7.5%	129,802	16.1%	77,394	8.7%
>1 Race	--	--	23,462	2.9%	--	--
<b>Housing Status</b>						
Shelter	278,405	39.7%	284,488	35.3%	6,083	-4.3%
Transitional	82,663	11.8%	107,927	13.4%	25,264	1.6%
Doubling Up	112,518	16.0%	176,018	21.9%	63,500	5.8%
Street	70,704	10.1%	75,310	9.4%	4,606	-0.7%
Other	67,274	9.6%	79,818	9.9%	12,544	0.3%
Unknown	56,051	8.0%	47,041	5.8%	-9,010	-2.1%
<b>Income as Percent Poverty Level Known</b>						
≤100%	534,116	76.1%	632,625	78.6%	98,509	2.5%
101-150%	36,444	5.2%	38,991	4.8%	2,547	-0.4%
151-200%	8,994	1.3%	15,816	2.0%	6,822	0.7%
>200%	9,689	1.4%	12,965	1.6%	3,276	0.2%
Unknown	112,380	16.0%	104,667	13.0%	-7,713	-3.0%
<b>Insurance, % Total Population</b>						
Uninsured	492,026	70.1%	522,165	64.9%	30,139	-5.3%
Medicaid	153,041	21.8%	205,246	25.5%	52,205	3.7%
Medicare	23,880	3.4%	29,607	3.7%	5,727	0.3%
Other Public Insurance	15,416	2.2%	24,748	3.1%	9,332	0.9%
Private Insurance	17,260	2.5%	23,298	2.9%	6,038	0.4%

Figure 1, Total Patients by Gender

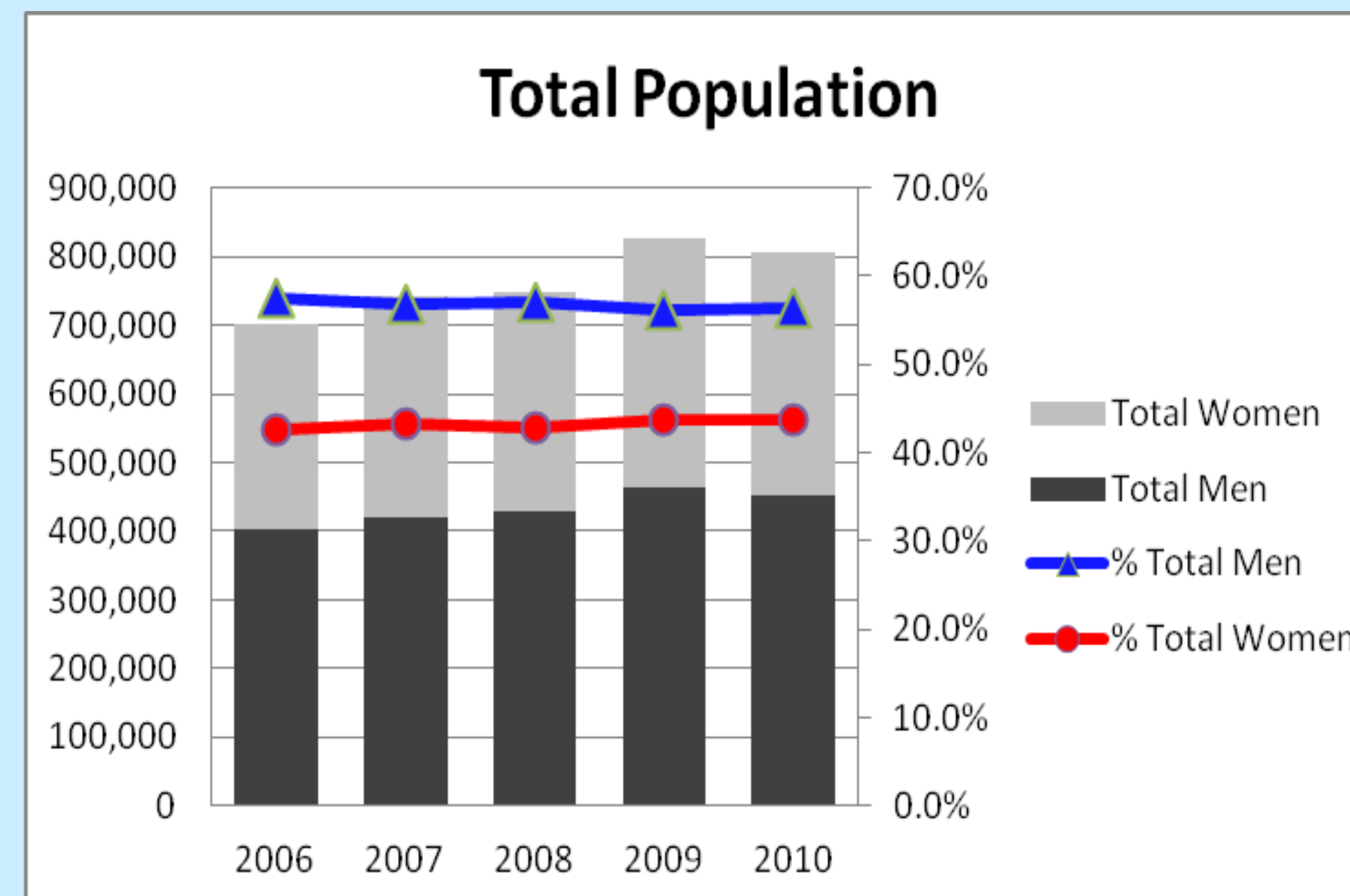


Figure 2, Elderly Patients aged ≥65 years old by Gender

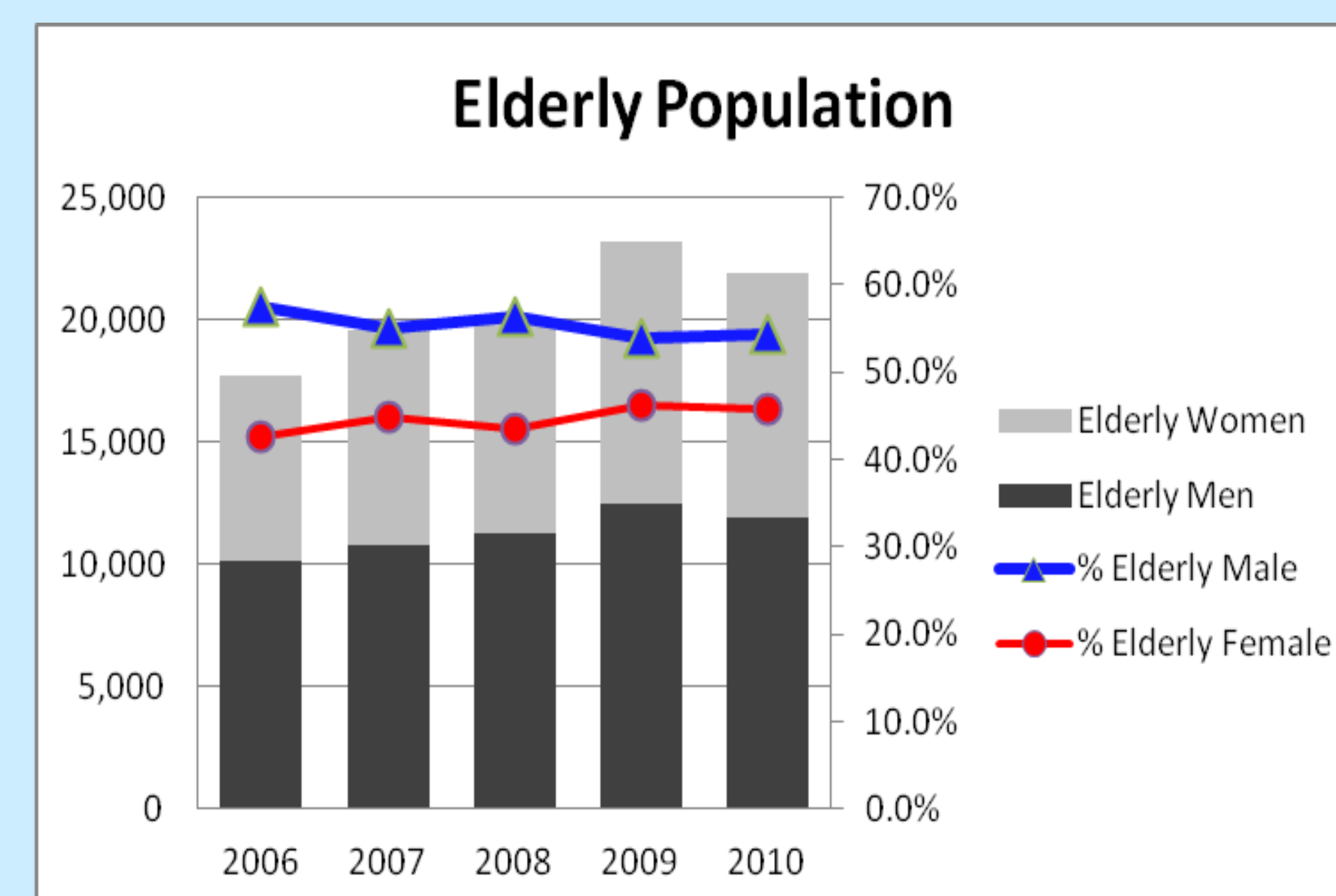


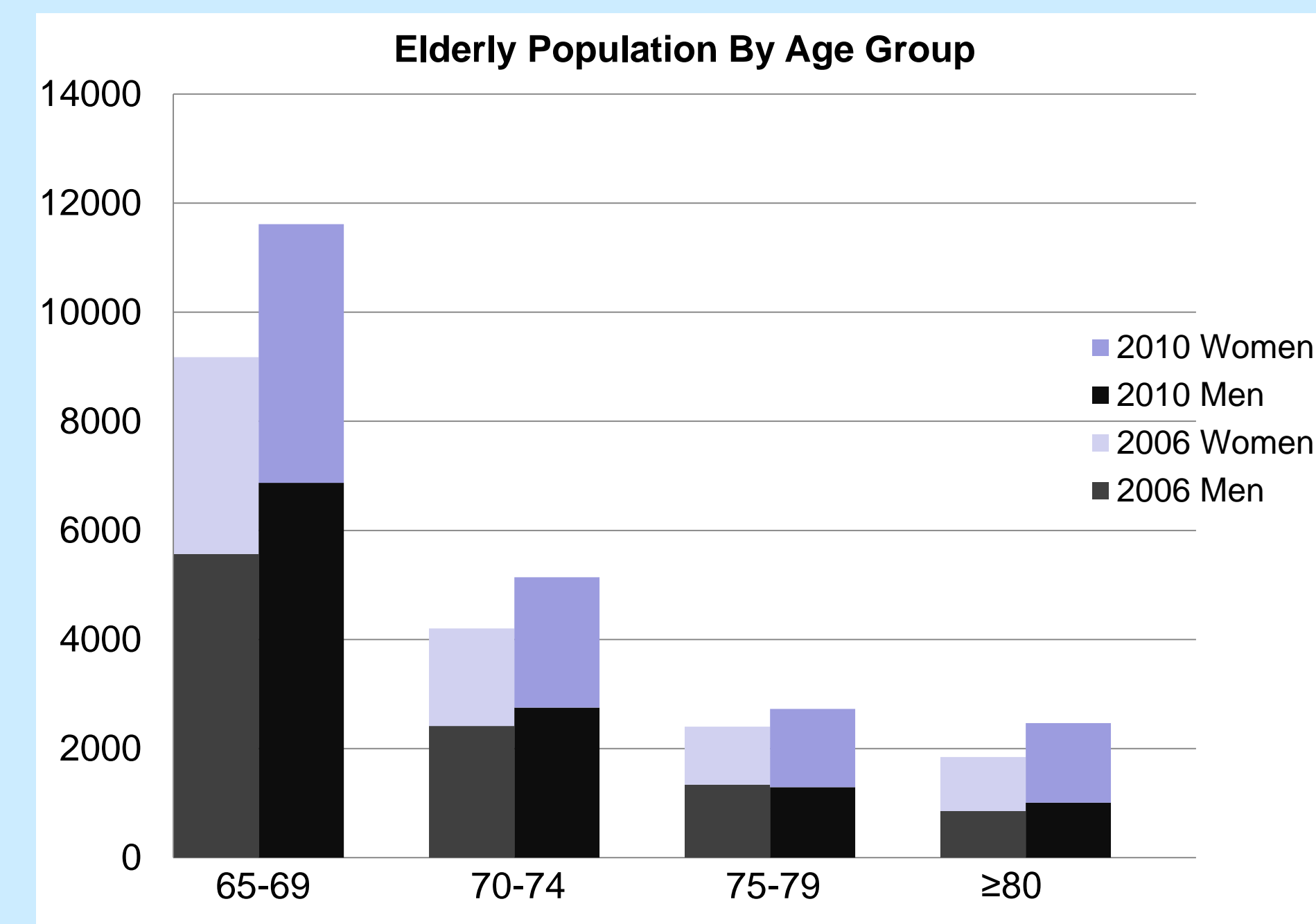
Table 3, Select Primary Diagnoses

	2006		2010		CHANGE	
	PATIENTS	% TOTAL	PATIENTS	% TOTAL	PATIENTS	% TOTAL
<b>Cardiovascular Related Disease</b>						
Diabetes Mellitus	34,637	4.9%	51,256	6.4%	16,619	1.4%
Heart Disease	8,087	1.2%	9,933	1.2%	1,846	0.1%
Hypertension	62,495	8.9%	92,790	11.5%	30,295	2.6%
Overweight/Obese	--	--	11,574	1.4%	--	--
<b>Substance Abuse/Mental Health Disease</b>						
Alcohol Abuse	21,483	3.1%	21,555	2.7%	72	-0.4%
Other Substance abuse (excluding tobacco)	23,572	3.4%	26,884	3.3%	3,312	-0.1%
Tobacco	--	--	11,695	1.5%	--	--
Depression/Mood Disorders	34,520	4.9%	63,833	7.9%	29,313	3.0%
Anxiety including PTSD	11,393	1.6%	25,069	3.1%	13,676	1.5%

Table 4, Women's Health Screening

	2006		2010		CHANGE	
	PATIENTS	% GROUP	PATIENTS	% GROUP	PATIENTS	% GROUP
<b>Screening Exams</b>						
Mammogram	5,300	10.3%	9,294	12.2%	3,994	1.9%
Pap Test	28,602	12.8%	38,622	14.5%	10,020	1.7%
<b>Abnormal Findings</b>						
Breast Findings	632	11.9%	1,120	12.1%	488	0.1%
Cervical Findings	1,876	6.6%	3,348	8.7%	1,472	2.1%

Figure 3, Age and Gender



## Summary

- Elderly homeless population is increasing; elderly females rising more rapidly than males.
- Elderly female population has unique co-morbidities of chronic disease, age-related cognitive impairment and frailty, mental illness, and gender-related disease.
- Trends of increased mammograms, pap tests, diabetes, hypertension, mental illness screens, but still well below national averages.
- Fewer patients living in homeless shelters, on the street; more in transitional living facilities, doubled-up
- Fewer patients uninsured; more Medicaid, Medicare, other public and private insurance.

## Conclusion

- “Elderly” population may be substantially larger than age-defined calculations due to pre-mature aging, co-morbidities associated with homelessness.
- Targeted evaluation, social and health care related management are crucial.
- Primary care efforts must be matched by public health and policy initiatives
- Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA) should help alleviate unmet needs.
- PPACA to provide \$11 billion to Health Centers over the course of 2011 through 2015

## Contact Information

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