“We have met the aging and they are us…”

Jerry H. Gurwitz, MD
Chief, Division of Geriatric Medicine
University of Massachusetts Medical School
November 18, 2009
Maybe

aging isn’t

so bad!

Foofie Harlan, Age 76, New York Times  2-27-91
The Senior Boom

(aka The Silver Tsunami)
Why are there so many older people?
Life Expectancy

- 1900: Life expectancy at birth = 47 years
- 2005: Life expectancy at birth = 78 years
- 1950: Life expectancy at age 65 = 14 years
- 2005: Life expectancy at age 65 = 19 years
The Biggest Reason: The Baby Boomers

- 1946 - 1964
- 80 million born – 77 million still alive
- They start turning 65 on January 1, 2011
- Most will survive long beyond age 65
The Expectations of the Baby Boomers

- Best educated and wealthiest ever
- Grew up in the 1960’s
- Saw Medicare benefit their parents
U.S. Population 85+: the “oldest-old”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Millions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2050</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
So many women…

- Age 65-74: 122 women for every 100 men
- Age 75-84: 150 for every 100 men
- Age 85 and older: 250 for every 100 men
Age isn’t important unless you’re a cheese.

Helen Hayes (1900-1993)
Decline in Organ Function with Normal Aging

Onset of Symptoms

Physiologic Function

Age
Performance of Johnny Kelley
Boston Marathon 1928-1991
If you’ve met one old person, you’ve met one old person.

Jack Rowe
Growing old ain’t for sissies.

Bette Davis
The Challenges

- The burden of chronic disease
- Functional decline
- The ever growing costs of healthcare
- An inadequately prepared healthcare workforce and system
Chronic Medical Conditions

- 40% have at least 3 chronic conditions
- Taking lots of medications
- Numbers with chronic medical conditions continue to grow.
Functional Decline

- Activities of Daily Living
- Instrumental Activities of Daily Living
Medicare and Medicaid Spending is Rising

Congressional Budget Office
Who will care for the elderly? How will that care be provided?
A Not-So-Simple Prescription

- Emphasize prevention (diet, exercise, etc.)
- Improve the competence of healthcare providers to care for the elderly
- Address the issue of rising costs – change the way doctors and hospitals get paid!
- New approaches to caring for the elderly
Longest Confirmed Lifespan
Jeanne Louise Calment
(1875 – 1997)

“A kind God forgot me.”
Life should NOT be a journey to the grave with the intention of arriving safely in an attractive and well preserved body, but rather to skid sideways - Chardonnay in one hand – chocolate in the other – body thoroughly used up, totally worn out and screaming ‘WHO HOO’ – What a ride!
Jeanne Louise Calment
(1875 – 1997)
The End