

2005 to 2025 Projections:

During 2005- 2025, the percentage of the Pennsylvania population aged 65+ years is expected to increase from 15.2% to 21.0% (Table 3). The percentage of persons aged 65+ years projected to have arthritis/chronic joint symptoms will increase from 1.3 million in 2005 to nearly 1.9 million in 2025.

Table 3

Projected Pennsylvania population aged >65 years for 2005-2025 and number with arthritis/chronic joint symptoms (CJS), by year – Behavior Risk Factor Surveillance System, United States			
YEAR	NO. (in thousands)	% PA population	No. with arthritis or CJS (in thousands)
2005	1,867	(15.2)	1,320
2015	2,092	(16.8)	1,476
2025	2,659	(21.0)	1,872

*On the basis of sex-specific rates of arthritis/ CJS in Pennsylvania.

The aging population in Pennsylvania is a critical issue facing the economic, medical, and public health systems in the state. With the current estimates of projected population aged >65 years for 2005- 2025, **decreasing the impact of arthritis becomes an even more essential issue** requiring effective public health interventions to improve function, decrease pain, and delay disability among Pennsylvanians with arthritis.

Future Directions

The Pennsylvania Department of Health hopes to:

- Improve the quality of life for people affected by arthritis.
- Have current state arthritis programs reach more people.
- Develop and evaluate culturally appropriate programs to better serve diverse communities.
- Fund evaluation efforts to develop effective programs having the lowest possible cost.
- Develop health communication programs to increase physical activity among minority communities, the elderly, and people of low socioeconomic status.