

Healthy Aging in Toronto

Board of Health
May 27, 2024

Overview

- Healthy aging
- Older adult population in Toronto
- Health status of older adults in Toronto
- Enhancing healthy aging
- Recommendations



Healthy aging

“The process of developing and maintaining the functional ability that enables wellbeing in older age.”

World Health Organization, 2020



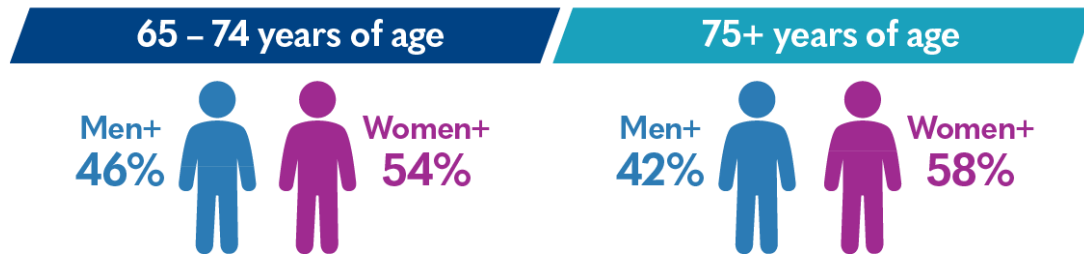
World Health Organization 2020

Large population of older adults in Toronto

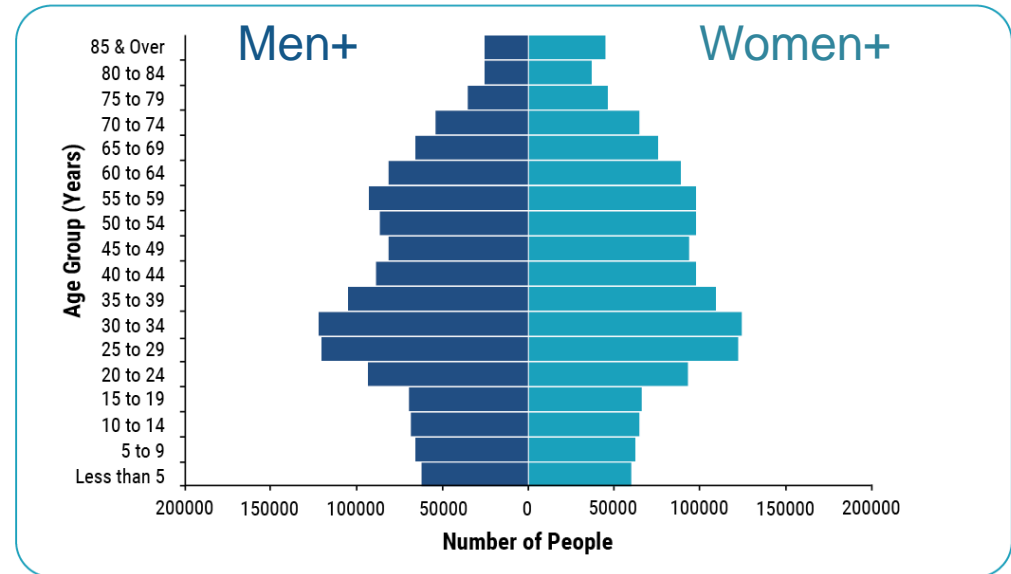
2021

477,000 adults aged 65 years and older

- 41% of older adults are racialized
- More women+ than men+



Population distribution by age category and gender, Toronto, 2021



Population of older adults projected to increase

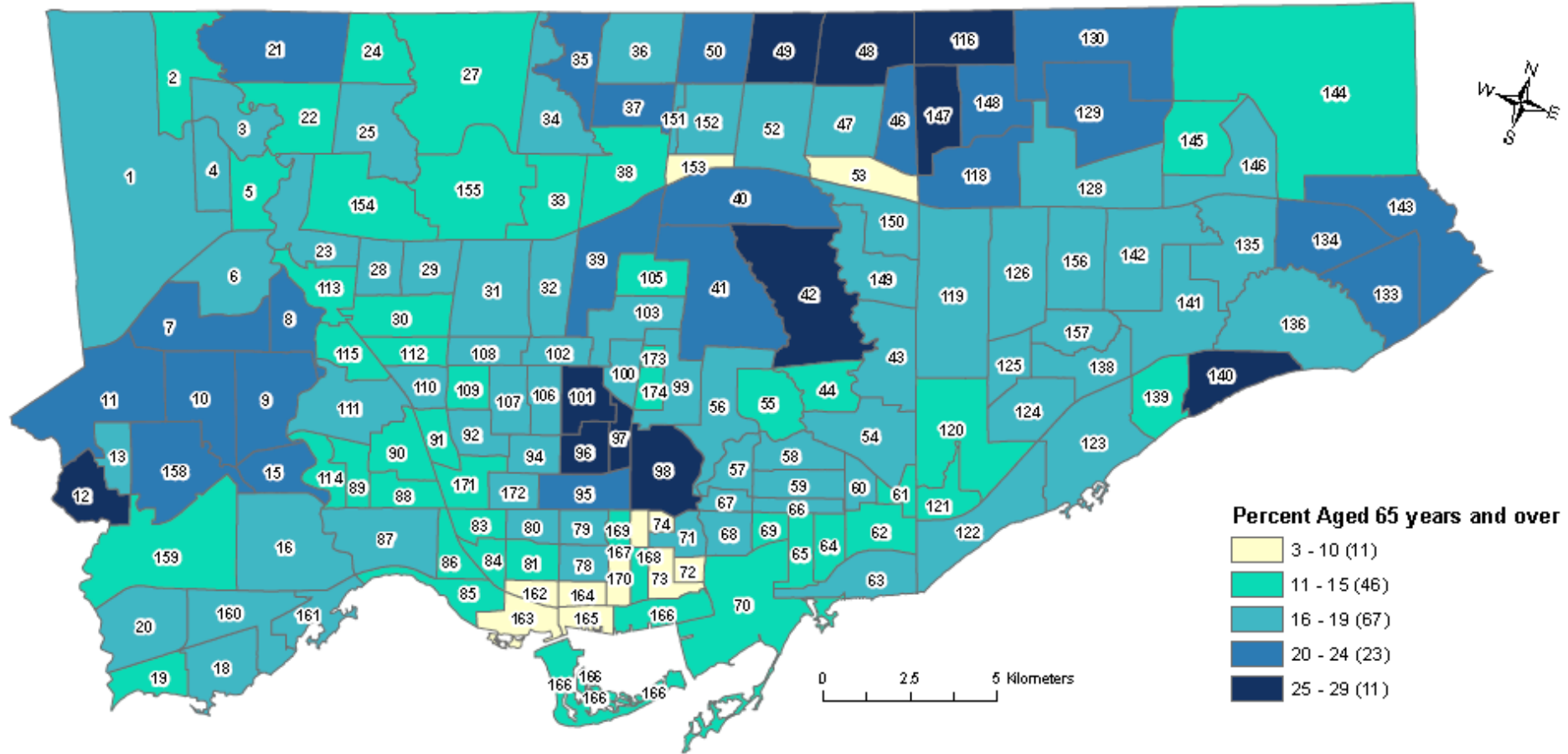
2041 (expected)

- 719,000 adults aged 65 years and older, which is a **50%** increase compared to 2021
- This includes
 - 18% increase in the 65 - 74 age group
 - **90%** increase in the 75+ age group



Older adults live in every neighbourhood

Percent of Population Aged 65 and Older by Toronto Neighbourhood



Social determinants shape health and well-being



Low income: 20% of older adults in Toronto were living below the low-income measure



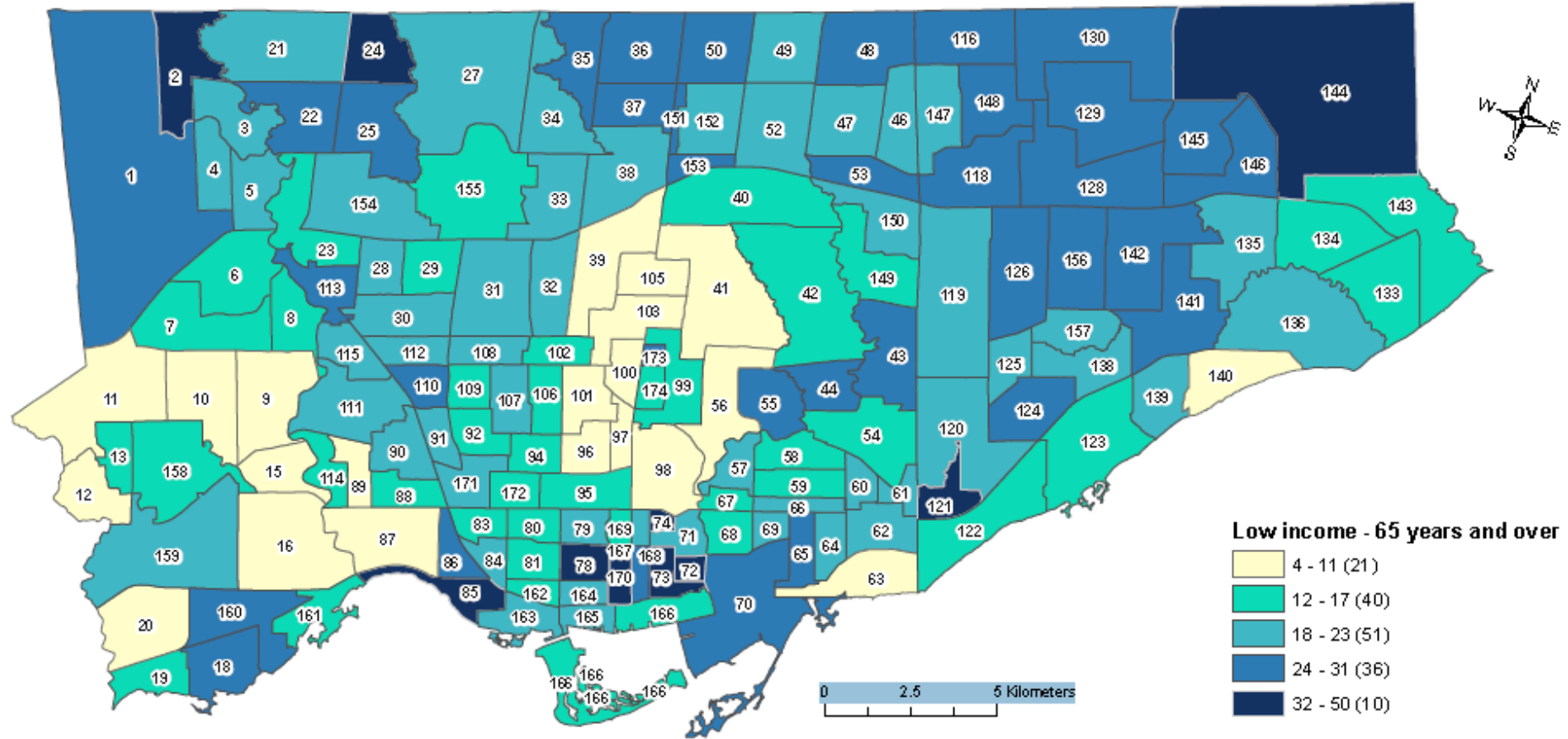
Food insecurity: 10% of food bank clients were older adults



Homelessness: 15% of people experiencing homelessness were 60 years and older

Understanding where low-income older adults live can promote equitable access to services

Percent of Low-Income Adults Aged 65 and Older by Toronto Neighbourhood



Health challenges increase with age, public health interventions can facilitate healthy aging



HYPERTENSION



DIABETES



CHRONIC
OBSTRUCTIVE
PULMONARY DISEASE



DEMENTIA



FALLS

Older adults face barriers to health and social support

Many older adults have access to regular health and dental care:

- The majority (over 95%) of older adults have access to a regular health care provider
- 68% of older adults have seen or talked to a dental professional in the last year

Challenges in access to health and social support:

- Need for more complex, specialized care, including home care and meal programs
- System navigation
- Accessibility and transportation

Social isolation and loneliness take a toll on health

Older adults are experiencing social isolation and loneliness impacting their health and well-being.

A 2023 survey found that:

- 40% of Canadians aged 50 years and older were at risk of social isolation.
- 57% have experienced loneliness.



Older adults are particularly impacted by climate change

Older adults are impacted by the changing environment, including the impacts of climate change on their health.

Access to indoor spaces to escape extreme weather and air pollution is protective.



TPH uses data to understand and monitor the health of the aging population

TPH protects those at greatest risk by monitoring and assessing population health status and delivering appropriate interventions to increase health equity.

There are gaps in data about urban First Nations, Inuit and Métis people due to systemic barriers.



TPH collaborates to promote age-friendly environments

Creating healthy social, natural and built environments to promote health through collaborations, such as:

- Sidewalks in good repair
- Reduced speed limits
- Accessible and affordable transportation
- Access to green space
- Spaces that facilitate social interaction



TPH partners to enhance healthy aging through research

Collaborating on research and disseminating research evidence, such as:

- To improve physical and community mobility, nutrition and social participation in older adults.
- To monitor food affordability through annual Nutritious Food Basket Survey.



TPH works across sectors to enhance healthy aging

Connecting and convening multiple sectors:

- Protecting older adults where they live through food safety, vaccination, and outbreak management.
- Reducing heat-related illnesses through the Heat Relief Strategy.



Recommendations

- Collaborate with community partners and relevant City divisions/agencies, including continuing active participation on the Toronto Seniors Strategy, to identify and implement policies and other interventions to enhance the social, natural and built environments that promote and protect the health of older adults in Toronto.
- Further partnership with First Nations, Inuit and Métis (FNIM) communities, organizations and service providers to understand the impacts of colonization, unmet care needs, service access barriers and inequities faced by aging FNIM communities.



Thank you