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CHCI White Paper

DEVELOPING THE NEXT GENERATION OF LATINO LEADERS®

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Beyond the Housing Crisis: Affordable Housing as a Platform to Address Issues Affecting Our Growing Senior Population

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Introduction

As our general population continues to grow rapidly and is now living longer, challenges and opportunities will arise for us as a nation to address the affordable housing crisis facing thousands of seniors. According to the Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Community Living (ACL), in 2014 there were over 46 million Americans 65 years of age and over. In 2020, 16 percent of the nation's population will be age 65 and over and that share will increase to comprise 19 percent of the total U.S. population by 2030. Growth projections indicate that as each day goes by an estimated 10,000 more Americans reach age 65[1].

This paper seeks to synthesize national data gathered from an array of research focused on the 65+ population to provide a comprehensive snapshot of what the current economic, health and housing conditions are for the elderly.[4] Data in this report highlights how this problem is more acute for ethnic minority groups, particularly the Latino senior community. Latino seniors have higher life expectancies despite high disability rates, earn less from their social security retirement, and disproportionately reside in rental housing as compared to their non-Hispanic White counterparts. As a result, it is imperative that we prepare to address these challenges by having a strategic plan that will have a comprehensive set of policy prescriptions guiding several agencies, as well as private entities, in a multidimensional approach to housing as a vehicle to address income and health vulnerabilities that seniors face.

An Overview on the Challenges of Advanced Age

Growth in the Elderly Population and Demographic Changes

The 65+ population increased by 24.7 percent between the 2003–2013 year span, reaching 44.7 million in 2013. Overall, Americans ages 65 and older are projected to make up 21.7 percent of the total population by 2040, an expected 120 percent increase doubling in growth from 40 million to 88 million, making them a fifth of the American population[2]. When accounting for race, Latinos will comprise four percent of the total population by 2050, making them the most populous ethnic group over the age of 65[3]. In contrast, non-Hispanic White 65+ population will be 11.79 percent of the total population, African-American 2.26 percent, Asian 1.69 percent and Native American. 15 percent by 2050[4].

Growth trends in our nation's elderly population are dramatically changing in racial make-up reflecting changes that have been underway since 1965. For example, in 2000, the non-Hispanic White elderly population made up 84 percent of those over the age of 65, and is expected to drop to 58 percent by 2050[5]. In 2003, minorities made up 17.5 percent of the 65+ population but rose to 21.2 percent by 2013. According to a report by the ACL, as of 2013 African-Americans represented 8.6 percent of the 65+ age group, while Latinos made up 7.5 percent, Asian or Pacific Islander 3.9 percent, Native American 0.5 percent, and people who were of two or more races 0.7 percent[6]. Collectively, the ethnic minority subgroup is projected to increase and amount to 28.5 percent of the 65+ population by 2030 and 39.1 percent by 2050[7].

Population growth trends reveal that the elderly population is growing at faster rates for Latinos than other race categories. U.S. Census growth projections estimate that the elderly Latino population will grow by 249 percent (17 million) from 2020 to the year 2050, whereas the non-Hispanic White will grow by 24.2 percent. During the aforementioned period, the 65+ African-American population will have grown totaling 9.9 million (103 percent change), Asian

Latinos and Asians share this same housing arrangement and it becomes more apparent as people age further. Over thirty percent of Latinos and Asians in the 80+ age group live with a relative[19].

7.4 million (208.7 percent change), Native-American 645 thousand (91.2 percent change), while those who are of two or two or more races non-Hispanic will total slightly over one million (157.2 percent change)[8]. Nonetheless, projections for the elderly still indicate that the non-Hispanic White senior population will represent more than half well into 2060, while the Latino share of the senior population jumps from 11 percent to 22 percent[9].

Life Expectancy and Its Adverse Impact

While life expectancies have increased, there persists a marked variation among racial groups. The average American can expect to live up to 79 years, an increase from the life expectancy in 1950 at 68 years of age[10]. The Social Security Administration (SSA) predicts that as of 2016, men who will turn 65 years of age are expected to live until 84, while women on the other hand live until 86. Life expectancy growth will create a larger pool of seniors allowing the 85 and over age group to exceed numbers well over 14 million by the year 2040, a 143 percent increase from 2013[11].

Life expectancy plays a significant role in contributing to the demographic change of the elderly, and by virtue, will further affect groups with scare resources in later adulthood. SSA reports that Latino life expectancy stretches more than the general population. Latino males are expected to live until 85 and Latina females until 89[12]. A shocking difference exists when looking at the African-American and Native-American populations who, in general, have a life expectancy of 65[13]. Racial groups with shorter life expectancies and low economic resources demonstrate a need to retire early but cannot because of SSA eligibility rules. Conversely, those with longer life expectancies will have to struggle with limited economic resources that dwindle as they age.

Implications for Female Seniors

Growth in our elderly population means that we will likely see a growth in seniors living alone as women outlive their spouses. Elderly women will be most affected by life longevity leaving them susceptible to lower financial and caregiving support. In 2014, the senior renter population 65+ who lived alone was estimated to be over four million (3.5%), while twice as many lived in single owner occupied households (6.8%)[14]. In their respective age groups, 39 percent of non-Hispanic White and African-American women lived alone, a figure that echoes across other races[15].

Cultural Differences in Housing Arrangements for the Elderly

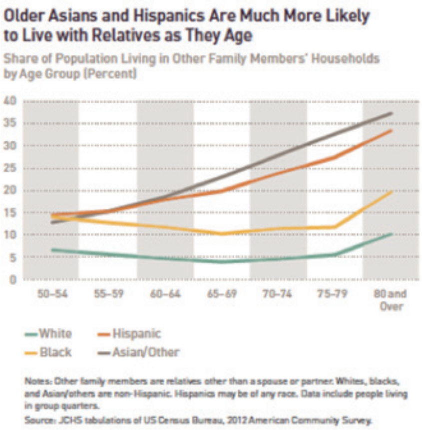
Housing arrangements however, are quite different when we look into cultural differences. For example, in Latino households, elderly family members commonly live in a multifamily housing arrangement. (See Figure One). Latinos and Asians share this same housing arrangement and it becomes more apparent as people age further. Over thirty percent of Latinos and Asians in the 80+ age group will live with a relative[16]. For Latinos, 69 percent of elderly men had a spousal co-housing arrangement, 14 percent lived alone, 12 percent lived with other relatives, and only five percent lived with non-relatives[17]. Elderly Latinas had even lower percentages: 39 percent lived with a spouse, 26 percent lived alone, 33 percent lived with other relatives, and a two percent lived with non-relatives[18]. In part, this situation is attributed to the mainstream practices of assisted living facilities that fail to incorporate cultural values into their service delivery. For example, most Latino elderly report feeling most comfortable speaking with someone in his or her native language and/or from the same home country. Other factors, such as not having the financial resources to afford nursing home options, also prevent families or those living alone from seeking those housing arrangements. As a result, caregiving places a huge financial burden for low-income families who are struggling with limited income. Integrating policies that recognize these cultural dynamics therefore play a critical role in the successful planning for the future of our elderly. The caregiver role, often times assumed by a family member, will be critical in providing supportive services. Implementing policies, such as recent proposals to provide tax incentives for caregivers, can be an important step in enhancing the approach we take in elderly care.

Growing Rent Costs Outpace Income Levels

The income security of our elderly is persistently becoming a growing problem as rising housing prices continue to outpace the cost of living adjustments for seniors provided by social security, especially those who live on a fixed income. On average, seniors are spending more than 35 percent of their income on housing, leaving little of their budget for healthcare and other vital necessities. The retiring "Baby Boomer" population, will be challenged by the economic pressures of rising rent prices amidst competition for a limited stock of affordable housing. Projections show that at this growth pattern alarming rates of homeless seniors will rise by 33 percent through 2010–2020 and will increase 100 percent by the year 2050.[19]

In contrast, the ethnic minority elderly disproportionally occupied rental housing compared to their non-Hispanic White counterpart. In the 65+ age group, Latinos had twice the amount of renters at 9.5 percent than the 4.7 that were homeowners[33].

Figure 1



Source: Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University 2014

The amount of low-income households entering the rental market is continues to grow. Household income for very low-income renters saw a drastic 9.9 percent drop between 2001 and 2014[20]. The rental market in 2014 saw a 44 percent increase in households burdened by housing costs. Seniors who are housing cost burdened are those who utilize 30–35 percent of their monthly income towards housing. (See Figure 2) Those who fell in this economic trap—11.4 million households—paid more than half of their income. In the same year, 72 percent of renters utilized more than half of their income, as did 84 percent of those who earned less than $15,000 a year[21]. This statistic is alarming when we begin to connect the average social security income of $15, 528 a year (in 2014) to the likelihood of a senior being cost-burdened by rent prices.

During the 2001–2014 period, those who paid 30 percent or more of their income grew by 6.5 million from 2001, while those paying more than 50 percent grew by 3.9 million, both setting new records[22]. This trend perpetuates the affordability crisis for those who are looking to rent in areas where the market is saturated. The need for affordable housing is growing as more people are joining the pool of low-income renters that face unbalanced income to housing price ratios.

More Seniors Are Falling Into the Housing Burden Trap

The greatest expenditure among seniors that reduces their monthly income is housing. Seniors who fall in the cost-burden predicament often have to make very detrimental decisions within their budget. For example, a typical senior burdened by housing costs will utilize about 13 percent of his/her income on healthcare, virtually forcing him/her to make decision between nutrition and other vital necessities[23].

This trend is creating fierce demand for affordable housing as more people fall into the housing cost-burden trap. The percentage of seniors who are renting has grown significantly over the last decade and so has the share of their income covering rent. In 2001, approximately 50 percent of individuals in the 65+ age group who rented were considered to be cost-burdened and by 2014, that pool of renters grew to be 55 percent[24]. Recent U.S. Census figures for 2014, reveal that 30 percent of people 65+ are severely cost-burdened (those utilizing 50 percent of their income for housing)[25]. The severity of burden also tends to escalate as people go further in the life cycle and have less money saved to spend on an array of health issues. In fact, 33 percent of renters who were 75 years of age and older were estimated to fall into a severely cost-burdened category[26]. This trend is expected to continue into the future according to JCHS projections, which estimate the number of people age 75+ to grow from 6.9 million in 2015, to 13.4 million in 2035.

Renting Is a Growing Trend Amongst Seniors

A focus on rental housing is appropriate for this group although studies show most seniors with the financial means to do so will transition into assisted living facilities once they are past 75 years of age[27]. At this point in their lives, elderly individuals will face health conditions that require more time intensive care that relatives cannot afford to provide. Nonetheless, roughly 96 percent of our senior population resides in either a home or rental housing[28]. Renting is the most feasible option for seniors living in poverty. As incomes decrease with age and expenses increase as health conditions worsen, more and more seniors will be seeking rentals with disability features and supportive services[29]. Rentals with accessibility features will be appealing for homeowners with disabilities who cannot afford to retrofit their homes and thus will add to the growing rate of those transitioning from homeownership to renting. In fact, it is estimates show that within the next ten years, the number of those who are 75 and over and rent will grow from 250,000 to a little over one million by 2025[30].

Harvard's Joint Center for Housing Studies analyzed the rental market during a ten-year period (2005–2015) using U.S. Census data to analyze demographic changes and income trends of renters, as well as the rental stock and its physical conditions. The JCHS report shows that during the aforementioned period, nine million more families and individuals joined the rental housing market—a figure that rose

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from the 43 million in 2005. This growth was more apparent for the elderly and the very low-income populations. As of 2015, the number of renters in the 60–69 age group doubled from over two million to four million, making it the age group with the highest growth. By adding those 50 years of age and above, a four million increase in renters is added, growing from five million to nine million. The report also notes that a two million increase is added from young professionals in the 30–39 age group, significantly growing from eight million to ten million[31].

Disproportionate Demand for Rentals Grows For Latino Elderly

Additionally, when accounting for race, homeownership and rental housing data show key differences in housing arrangements for the ethnic elderly population. In 2010, 85 percent of non-Hispanic Whites 65 and over were homeowners, the highest share of any group[32]. In contrast, the ethnic elderly disproportionally occupied rental housing compared to their non-Hispanic White counterpart. In the 65+ age group, Latinos had twice the amount of renters at 9.5 percent than the 4.7 that were homeowners[33]. African-American elderly had similar figures—only 7.3 percent owned homes as opposed to the 15 percent who rented[34]. These percentages tell us that elderly minorities are twice as likely to rent within their age group. The growing demand for rental housing will continue to be the housing trajectory for minorities, more so for Latinos. The JCHS report points out that Latinos contributed the most to the renter growth between 2005–2015, accounting for 29 percent of the growth. Projections show that in the next ten years the Latino population, regardless of age, will account for 40 percent of the rental demand[35]. Furthermore, this trend is also evident when not accounting for age. According to the US Census 2013–2015 Current Population Surveys, African-American and Latino households each held a 20 percent share of renters, while their homeownership share was 8–9 percent of homeowners[36].

Seniors Rely Heavily on Social Security Benefits as Their Source of Income

The baby boomer population began to enter retirement in 2012, as the oldest in the cohort turned 66 and eligible for a social security retirement pension. The youngest individuals in the cohort will be determined to be eligible under SSA rules at 67 in 2031. Social security retirement functions as the main source of income for most seniors over the age of 65. The SSA estimates that nine out ten individuals 65+ (42.1 million) receive social security retirement. Out of those who receive the benefits, 36 percent relied on the retirement pension to make 90 percent of their income, and nearly a quarter relied on it exclusively. Elderly persons who are unmarried also rely heavily on social security. Nearly 47 percent out of those who are unmarried depend on social security to make 90 percent of their income; out of those who are married, 22 percent rely on social security for 90 percent of their income[37].

Social security plays an extremely important role in helping our seniors avoid homelessness. According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, 44.4 percent of seniors (15.3 million) would have lived in poverty in 2012 without social security benefits[38]. High reliance on social security benefits proves to be alarming and should raise concern when we take into consideration how much seniors are receiving as their source of income. As of January 2016, the average social security retirement payment was $1,341 a month; ,while the maximum monthly benefit was only $2,787.80[39].

Social Security Pensions and the "Hispanic Paradox"

Despite having longer life expectancies, Latinos have high disability rates that worsen as they move further in the life cycle[40]. Latinos nonetheless, continue to over represent shares in the labor–intensive workforce. Few have little or no access to health and disability insurance either because their employer does not provide the option or because of the informal nature of their work. Social security disability insurance thus is very important for Latinos workers that have the opportunity to engage in social security deductions. According to a 2013 SSA report, disability insurance provided 75 percent of income for more than half of Latinos receiving social security benefits[41]. The likelihood of a successful disability claim to be processed makes the aforementioned figure very alarming and attests to the severity of the issue. According to SSA, on average only 45 percent of disabled-worker applicants were successful from 2001-2010 after having gone through appeals, and only 28 percent were awarded at the initial claim period for the general senior population[42]. For a majority of Latino elderly, factors such as language barriers and lack of proper representation in the social security claims process delays, and most often, leads to ineligibility.

Latino Elderly Are Among the Poorest In Their Age Group

Income data shows disproportionally higher rates of poverty for the elderly minority subgroups. An SSA survey found that 19.8 percent of elders below the fed-

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eral poverty line were Hispanic, double the amount of their non-Hispanic White counterparts who made up 8.4 percent of those in poverty[45]. More than a third of the income for the elderly came from SSA benefits across all race groups last year, however the reliance on social security for Latinos and African-Americans is significantly higher. In 2013, 37 percent of married Latinos had virtually no income and relied on social security to comprise 90 percent of their income. Social security was especially crucial for 62 percent of unmarried Latinos who also relied on it to make 90 percent of their income. Social Security benefits for Latinos 65+ on average was $14,148 and less for Latinas who received $10,931[44]. This same reliance echoed for the African-American 65+ population receiving social security. For the 22 percent of African-Americans who were married, and 55 percent that were unmarried, social security was 90 percent of their income[45]. Income for African-American elderly women also was less than their male counterpart. African-American men 65+ received $14,800 while women received $12,540[46].

Data from the Administration on Community Living's report released in 2014 also reveal income inequality amongst race categories. In 2013, the median income for men 65+ was $29,327 and $16,301 for women. An increase in those below the poverty line is much greater under alternative poverty measures, such as the Supplemental Poverty Measure (SPM), which accounts for more liabilities such as taxes and medical expenses along with geographical differences. In 2013 under federal poverty measures, 33 percent of people 65+ were below the poverty line. In contrast, the SPM threshold identified 45 percent of those in the same age group to have incomes twice below its poverty guidelines. The SPM data reveals that Latinos have the largest share of people in the poverty threshold for the 65+ age group, tripling the amount of Whites—20 percent and seven percent respectively[47].

Affordable Housing Development Efforts Fall Short

Affordable housing development continues to be an effort that slowly tries to keep pace with the growth of low-income households. Federal, State and Local housing agencies face challenges when attempting to balance appropriations for the different target populations and are adapting as demographics grow. A decline in much needed funding for senior development leaves more low-income seniors without assistance and perpetuating the housing cost burden trap. According to HUD's 2015 report on Worst Case Housing Needs, 1.5 million seniors were considered to meet the "worst case" scenario, which has not declined from the 2011 estimate[48]. Consequently, the growth of households that are cost burdened continues for elderly individuals whose income is demonstrating to decline as they age.

LIHTC

The Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC), program has spearheaded housing investments designed to produce housing for low-income families and individuals who cannot afford to pay market rate rent prices. In order to be eligible for LIHTC, financing developers must rent units to people whom earn at least 80% of the area median income and have at least rent 20% of its units in the development project below the market rate. Developers earn credit depending on the volume of units that fall below market rates and the income of the renters. LIHTC deals make up 90 percent of all affordable housing developments since its inception in 1986 by the Internal Revenue Service.

According to HUD's recent LIHTC database from 1995-2013, a total of 27,557 development projects were constructed during that period producing 2,100,496 housing units[49]. As for senior housing, the program financed a total of 8,983 development projects totaling 320,800 units. Out of the overall projects financed, only 32 percent were projects dedicated to senior housing with 66 percent of those dedicated to new construction. This amount shows that although a good percentage of LIHTC finance is devoted to senior housing, the supply is yet to catch up with the amount of senior housing development that is needed now and in the years to come.

LIHTC finance is much needed to slow down the growth of housing cost burdened seniors. The number of cost burdened individuals is rising as well as the levels of burden. Because the LIHTC program awards developers and its private partners for the amount of units that they rent according to income levels, it merits an increase from our government. Developers need help in making projects financially feasible so that they are able to lease more units for lower income levels. As the nation's most extensive and principal component in the affordable housing public private partnership, LIHTC will be needed to increase and expand those relationships to other sectors, such as the healthcare industry.

HUD Section 202

HUD's Section 202 program works as a funding source that exclusively finances the development of senior affordable

Studies show that there are many cost benefits associated with the coordination of healthcare services with housing options for low-income seniors[57]. Overall, it helps elderly people achieve autonomy and interrupts the reliance on more managed care services.

housing. HUD's Section 202 program has managed to produce 400,000 units since 1959[50]. Development sponsors utilize capital advances from Section 202, which bear no interest and repayment so long as the housing remains available for very low-income elderly residents for at least 40 years. Funding can be utilized towards construction, rehabilitation, or the acquisition of a housing structure[51]. Additionally, funds from Section 202 also are crucial during the operation period. Sponsors of the development project can utilize funding to match the tenant's contribution towards rent and, most importantly, provide supportive services to seniors. However, industry experts mention that a key factor contributing to the decline in Section 202 finance use has been due to the difficulty in navigating varying revenue streams to work in compliance with LIHTC and other limited federal finance programs with eligibility criteria. In order to expand supportive services for new and existing senior housing developments, the Section 202 program will need to rise as a source of funding and work effectively in tandem with LIHTC. Appropriation for Section 202 have been pretty stagnant since 2008 despite estimates indicating that a total of 65,000 units will have their subsidy contract expire by 2023[52].

Accessibility Demands

Making housing affordable does not solve the overall housing issue for seniors. Seniors need adequate housing that is conducive to their physical demands. Rental housing that is affordable often is supplied in buildings that were not designed for people with disabilities. As seniors age further they require adequate housing that is conducive to their physical demands, such as ramps, arm bars, extended hallways and wheelchair friendly doorways. According to JCHS, less than one percent of our current rental stock has appropriate accessibility design features that accommodate seniors[53]. HUD estimates that under all four of its subsidy programs only 65 affordable units exist for every 100 individuals classified as extremely low-income, with 39 percent that are actually available. Even when available these units do not meet the accessibility requirements sufficient for elderly living; only 34 units out of 100 were found to be adequate for the extremely low-income[54].

Lack of Culturally Sensitive Models

State and federal funds to support affordable housing development have the ability to incentivize integrated services that are offered to tenants. These services however, do not accommodate the cultural values and lifestyles of ethnic minority groups. As a result, non-profit groups and local level agencies respond by leveraging their limited resources to provide services that address social determinants of health in various languages. Raising awareness about diabetes and heart disease, for example, can be integrated in the supportive service model as a way cater to the Latino elderly. Moreover, training the relatives and personal caretakers whom the elderly look to for support can also be an effort to be led by those administering supportive service programming at affordable housing developments.

Summary

Housing is and will continue to be a growing concern that will affect the elderly in the United States. The affordable housing market will be more competitive for the elderly amidst growing demand due to population growth. To address this challenge, our government will have to look into innovative ways to meet the demand of seniors looking to live independently in housing options designed to accommodate them. Well-coordinated efforts between all levels of government, in conjunction with the private sector, can spur growth for senior housing and ultimately facilitate aging in place for vulnerable populations.

Recommendations

(i) Synergize Federal Agency Efforts

Housing for the elderly demographic merits a comprehensive approach that draws in multiple stakeholders, each contributing solutions and the resources to do so. The Department of Housing and Urban Development will have to expand Section 202 to catalyze senior housing developments into the market. Social Security policies on the other hand, will have to find ways to incorporate more individuals into retirement and disability claims. Alongside the Department of Health and Human Services, SSA will also have to expand its role in assisting the supportive services and healthcare sector to enhance senior housing policies. Similarly the Internal Revenue Service as well as State agencies that manage LIHTC funds could increase private sector involvement in the development of senior housing by leveraging its tax credits to incentivize the supportive services and healthcare industries.

(ii) The White House Conference on Aging (WHCOA) should convene frequently

Although very successful in getting multiple agencies and stakeholders involved in national dialogue to address issues specific to the senior population, WHCOA only convenes every ten years. Our nation's leaders must engage in more frequent

Funding for Section 202 has gone down significantly causing longer waiting lists and backlog in development for low-income seniors in dire need of housing.

conversations in order to advance a comprehensive agenda as programs, technology and legislation changes. National dialogue on aging needs to happen more frequently and should be facilitated by the white house as a venue to attract important stakeholders. WHCOA can serve to communicate the effects of legislation across agencies and its impact on non-governmental partnering entities.

(iii) States should prioritize LIHTC deals for senior development
State tax credit allocation agencies administer LIHTC funds by reviewing applications from housing developers in a very competitive process. Developers earn application points by providing amenities, access to resources, and successfully stating its financial feasibility amongst other scoring criteria. Limited allocation of federal tax credits to the states drive up competition amongst developers who are seeking the tax credits to finance a significant portion of affordable housing development. These public-private partnerships attract private participation because in most deals eligibility criteria only call for a specific amount of units within a development project to be below the market rate. As a result, many housing developments are open to few low-income applicants and are not specifically tailored for an aging community. State tax credit allocation agencies should thus award more points to prioritize senior housing development and match the growing need for affordable housing. Additional points should be awarded to developers who tie in additional supportive services and healthcare partners into the project.

(iv) Setting in place a strategic plan
Incorporating the foundational steps HUD will take in its strategic plan will continue to lead the agency in efforts to rehabilitate and construct affordable housing development for seniors. A strategic plan allows the agency to leverage its set of resources, along with those from other agencies, to develop a more comprehensive approach that is tangible and can be communicated to key stakeholders. HUD can facilitate the synergy of stakeholders in both the private and public sector by having a long range plan with goals that all stakeholders can visualize.

(v) Congress should expand HUD's Section 202
Funding for Section 202 has gone down significantly causing longer waiting lists and backlog in development for low-income seniors in dire need of housing. Section 202 allocation allows developers to construct housing quarters with accessibility features, which in turn lead to higher retention rates and less people transitioning into assisted living facilities[55]. HUD is requesting $505 million for Section 202 in fiscal year 2017, which is an increase of $72.3 million from fiscal year 2016 for the program[56]. Congress should take into consideration the amount of research and best practices calling for affordable housing and approve HUD's request to increase Section 202 as a significant step in addressing a major issue for our senior population. Congress should also take into consideration that this request needs to fully fund Project Rental Assistance Contracts (PRAC), Senior Preservation Assistance Contracts (SPRAC), as well as renew Service Coordinator/Congregate Housing Services grants.

(vi) HUD should integrate culturally sensitive housing models under the "Supportive Services Demonstration for Elderly Households in HUD-Assisted Multifamily Housing" and measure their success
As part of this demonstration program HUD should collect data from field-tested practices that can speak to the strengths and weaknesses of integrating culturally sensitive housing models. Many researchers and practitioners have called for the integration of healthcare services in rental housing development based on practices that have proven to work. HUD's own best practices learned from this demonstration will allow the agency to quickly and efficiently adapt to the demographic changes in the senior population. Additionally, the data collected will help identify the challenges and opportunities in expanding into public-private partnerships. This crucial information could assist HUD in developing finance models across agencies and achieve effective partnerships.

(vii) State allocation agencies should recognize the benefits of integrating culturally sensitive healthcare services into affordable rental housing
Studies show that there are many cost benefits associated with the coordination of healthcare services with independent living housing options for low-income seniors[57]. Overall, it helps elderly people achieve autonomy and interrupts the reliance on more managed care services. Supportive services that adjust and are cognizant of cultural differences would allow for effective service delivery. A needs assessment by interviewing residents in a language they can understand would help eliminate barriers and utilize state and local funding to its best capacity. Service delivery and modes could integrate strategies to address specific health disparities prevalent in the ethnic elderly subgroups.

(viii) Adjust eligibility criteria to match the realities of seniors

Amongst the racial groups, Latinos show a greater disproportion of knowledge in terms of social security eligibility rules, yet also demonstrate high reliance on social security disability insurance.

Eligibility criteria that limits occupancy exclusively to seniors eliminates many who desperately are in need of affordable housing, yet need a caretaker and thus are not eligible. On the other hand, many seniors are caretakers for grandchildren in the absence of parents. These ethnic differences play a huge role in the exclusion of affordable housing participants who are in dire need. Instead eligibility criteria should be flexible as they present opportunities for cross agency participation. For example, social security survivor beneficiaries could be seen as participants in senior affordable housing projects as well. Additionally, integrating health care funds, such as waivers, could allow seniors with disabilities to help cover housing costs such as security deposits and initial utility bills[58]. HUD could assist grandparents who are caretakers by requesting LEGACY Act funds from congress.

(ix) Increase public knowledge on Social Security eligibility in diverse languages

Amongst the racial groups, Latinos show a greater disproportion of knowledge in terms of social security eligibility rules, yet also demonstrate high reliance on social security disability insurance[59]. As such, the administration should extend its Spanish communications campaign to target outlets known to the Latino elderly community on how to engage in social security deduction and how credits are earned. Language barriers make navigating an already incredibly complex retirement system much more difficult for the Latino elderly. Thousands of Latinos looking to retire cannot do so because of they do not meet eligibility criteria. SSA field offices often find it difficult to explain complex retirement concepts to seniors with low literacy rates and/or those with physical and mental disabilities. For example, many applicants are denied from retirement claims because they do not have the quarterly credits to retire, lack proper representation during disability adjudication, or simply are unaware of benefits such as survivors and/or widow's benefits. These problems will exacerbate further as migration from traditional forms of application procedures to online processing begin to occur.

(x) Create a pathway for Latinos to retirement, creditworthiness, and ultimately a path to citizenship for the undocumented

The informal labor market provides little opportunity for the predominately Latino undocumented workforce to make legal tax contributions. There are fewer options amongst the undocumented, if any, to participate in wage reporting. Instead many resort to illegitimate social security numbers that do not have a matching name and will not have established a record of social security contributions. According to SSA reports, in 2015 alone $17 billion dollars were contributed to the Social Security Trust Fund from people ineligible to claim earnings[60]. Strengthening programs like the Individual Tax Identification Number (ITIN) allows those ineligible for a social security number to report wages and file income taxes. ITIN's provide a twofold solution: they allow workers to report wages and contribute to the SSA and general tax base, while creating an earnings record that will be crucial when SSA retirement age comes about—however, contingent upon aquiring legal status. In other words, even though an ITIN holder is not eligible for SSA, once that person becomes eligible for a SSN (e.g., through attaining legal status), the earnings reported with an ITIN may be counted towards the amount he or she is eligible to receive. Additionally, the ITIN allows workers to establish a track record of wage reporting along with other citizenry contributions that will allow officials to make more informed decisions during the naturalization process. Conversely, an opportunity to legally report one's wages would allow workers to establish a record of credit worthiness that many Latinos need in order to access other essential financial resources.

Endnotes

1 Infinia Group, LLC. "Infinia on Aging, Part 5: The Hispanic Paradox ." Article. Infinia Group, LLC., 2012.

2 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. A Profile of Older Americans: 2014. Prod. Administration on Community Living. Washington D.C., 2014.

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6 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. A Profile of Older Americans: 2014. Prod. Administration on Community Living. Washington D.C., 2014.

7Ibid

8 U.S. Census. 2008 National Population Projections. NP2008_D1: Projected Population by Single Year of Age, Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin for the United States: July 1, 2000 to July 1, 2050.

Figure 2

BOX 1: DEFINITIONS

- **AREA MEDIAN INCOME (AMI):** The median family income in the metropolitan or nonmetropolitan area
- **DEEPLY LOW INCOME (DLI):** Households with income at or below 15% of AMI
- **EXTREMELY LOW INCOME (ELI):** Households with income at or below 30% of AMI
- **VERY LOW INCOME (VLI):** Households with income between 30% and 50% of AMI
- **LOW INCOME (LI):** Households with income between 50% and 80% of AMI
- **NOT LOW INCOME:** Households with income above 80% of AMI
- **COST BURDEN:** Spending more than 30% of household income on housing costs
- **SEVERE COST BURDEN:** Spending more than 50% of household income on housing costs

Source: National Low-Income Housing Coalition. Volume 5, Issue 1. March 2015

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