

ARE YOU
READY FOR **BOOMER NATION?****? Did you know...**

Baby Boomers are the generation of people in the U.S. born between 1946 and 1963.



There are an estimated 77.3 million Baby Boomers – 10 million more than any other generation.



Every day, 8,640 Baby Boomers turn 65.



2.5 Million Baby Boomers are working in healthcare today.



37.3% of the U.S. nurse workforce is 50 years or older, up from 19.6% in 1980.



25% of Baby Boomers have no retirement savings.

Let's discuss.

When more than 40 healthcare and design professionals mostly over the age of 50 get together to talk about designing healthcare facilities for Baby Boomers, they are really talking about designing for themselves.

Led by Sara Marberry and Gary Vance, the Roundtable Discussion, “Are You Ready for Boomer Nation?” at the 2014 Healthcare Design conference in San Diego focused on three main questions.

1. What characteristics of the Boomer Generation affect how they interact and experience the physical environment?

Participants responded that Boomers have always questioned the norm and feel empowered to do so. They don't want to retire and fear losing their mobility.

Boomers are more active than previous generations, are concerned about wellness, and are serious about having fun. They play harder. The group felt that Boomers are also:

- Control freaks, picky, and impatient
- Frustrated with the younger generation's work ethic
- Polarized politically
- Afraid of losing their money
- Both early and late adopters of new technology

2. What design improvements or features would you suggest for any building type so it is more responsive to the Boomer Generation?

Designing for choice was the main theme here. Participants suggested spaces for personal contact and sharing. Universal design was also mentioned, along with flexible home and school environments.

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The group also agreed that there is a strong need for alternative residential building types for active, older people at different income levels. Other features:

- Culturally-appropriate signage
- Automatic doors at building entrances

3. What design improvements or features would you suggest for healthcare facilities so they are more responsive to the Boomer Generation?

There was a good deal of discussion around access to care, in regards to location, transportation, and technology. Many roundtable participants felt that the trend of Boomers moving back to cities will have significant impact on the types of facilities that will be built – focusing on more urban design solutions and multi-use “destination” buildings.

The group agreed that while geriatric specific services are a good idea (Geriatric EDs, for example), the term “geriatric” may be off-putting to Boomers, who don’t see themselves as old. Design can support people of all ages and abilities.

While, these aren’t design improvements or features, some other factors influencing healthcare facility design the group discussed included:

- Desire/ability to age in place
- Ability to get healthcare in non-traditional settings, such as CVS or Walmart
- Holistic approach to care modeled by Accountable Care Organizations

Marberry and Vance hope to expand upon this discussion at next years Healthcare Design Conference in Washington D.C., as well as through their blogs and LinkedIn groups.



Suggested Readings

“When I’m 64: How Boomers Will Change Healthcare”

American Hospital Association and First Consulting Group, 2007

<http://www.aha.org/research/policy/2007.shtml>

“The Boomer Challenge”

Hospitals & Health Networks, 2014

<http://www.hhnmag.com/special-reports/Baby-Boomers-Health-Care-Impact.dhtml>

“United States of Aging”

National Council on Aging, 2014

<http://www.ncoa.org/improve-health/community-education/united-states-of-aging/2014/usa-survey-results-2014.html>

“Being Mortal”

Atul Gawande, 2014

<http://atulgawande.com/book/being-mortal/>

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