



Weekly Checkup

Old Americans are Getting Younger

CONOR RYAN | OCTOBER 1, 2014

The aging American population is a widely recognized phenomenon that has serious implications for the national economy. The health care sector in particular has struggled historically with caring for complex chronic conditions and the long-term care needs of the elderly. With Medicare responsible for the bill, the federal budget will have to shoulder the growing financial burden. However, as baby boomers graduate into Medicare eligibility, an unexpected trend is actually leading to lower spending per beneficiary. The animated bar chart below demonstrates that, between 2008 and 2020, the large population of near-65 adults leads to a decreasing average age among those eligible for Medicare, leading to lower expected medical spending per person in the health insurance program for the elderly. For similar reasons, the average age of the under 65 population also falls. Unfortunately, this trend is only temporary, and the onward march of our collective aging continues.

