

Baby boomers aging to be self-reliant

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Baby boomers are retiring healthy, financially secure and with a desire to travel. According to Université de Montréal demographer Jacques Légaré, baby boomers will remain among the most self-reliant generations to reach their golden years.

"They've been independent their entire lives. They won't stop being self-reliant when they get old and sick," says Légaré, noting he's ready to back his hypothesis as he's done at various national and international conferences.

Baby boomers were born between 1946 and 1966. In Quebec, they are credited with overcoming religious and sexual barriers. They built the modern infrastructure we know today and set up most social institutions. They have very few children, and according to Légaré, they don't plan on counting on their progeny to look after them in their golden years.

"They are usually well educated and have great financial means," says Légaré. "They benefited from generous pensions and have contributed to RRSPs for decades. They plan on taking advantage of that and they will."

Traditionally, when someone gets sick their spouse will care for them. If the spouse can't do so, or if the person lives alone, they will turn to their family or rely on friends. Boomers, however, could rethink this hierarchy. What will the boomer reliance system look like? Légaré believes boomers could live together in plush houses where they share the cost and services of a private nurse or independently. This cohort is

referred to as the Silver Economy in the United States.

Légaré also believes aging [baby boomers](#) will radically change our health-care system. "We won't put as much money in specialized medicine seeing as demand will mostly be for primary care."

Massive investments in cancer treatments or artificial hearts, says Légaré, aren't justified. "If a 72-year-old dies of cancer, it's a shame but it's not tragic," he says. "We all have to die of something. Faced with an aging population, we will have to make such choices."

"Life expectancy in Canada is 80-years-old. This reflects on the quality of life our country offers. We will have to stop investing in costly treatments that extend life, oftentimes, to inhumane conditions."

Provided by University of Montreal

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