

This bulletin is a quick inventory of recent social research information. Its purpose is to promptly disseminate the most current external and internal research relevant to social policy.

A Comprehensive Assessment of Health Care Utilization Among Homeless Adults Under a System of Universal Health Insurance, by Stephen W. Hwang, Catharine Chambers, Shirley Chiu, Marko Katic, Alex Kiss, Donald A. Redelmeier and Wendy Levinson, Centre for Research on Inner City Health, December 2013.

Homelessness is a serious problem in North America. High rates of unemployment and mortgage foreclosures resulting from the recent global economic downturn have further perpetuated this crisis. Approximately 650,000 people will experience homelessness each night in the United States, of whom more than one third are people in families.

- More than 1.6 million Americans spend at least 1 night in an emergency shelter or transitional housing each year
- In Toronto, Ontario, more than 4000 individuals experience homelessness on any given night, and approximately 27,000 people use emergency shelters each year
- Compared with the general population, homeless people have higher rates of chronic and acute health conditions and are at increased risk for all-cause mortality
- Despite their increased need for health services, homeless people are a marginalized population who frequently encounter barriers to accessing primary or preventive health care

For link to the article:

<http://ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/pdf/10.2105/AJPH.2013.301369>

Labour Force Survey, November 2013, Statistics Canada, December 6, 2013.

Employment continued on a slight upward trend for the third consecutive month, edging up 22,000 in November. The unemployment rate held steady at 6.9% for the third month in a row. So far this year, employment growth has averaged 13,400 per month, compared with an average of 25,400 over the same period in 2012.

- Provincially, employment rose in Alberta and declined in Newfoundland and Labrador, while it was little changed in the other provinces
- In November, there were more people working in business, building and other support services; manufacturing; and information, culture and recreation
- Overall, employment increases in the private sector were partially offset by declines in the public sector
- More people aged 25 and over were employed in November, while youth employment declined

For link to the survey:

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/131206/dq131206a-eng.pdf>

Economic Implications of Recent Changes to the Temporary Foreign Worker Program by Christopher Worswick, Institute for Research on Public Policy, October 17, 2013.

In light of Canadians' historically strong support for immigration, it seems natural to think that this same openness should be extended to temporary foreign workers (TFWs). This, combined with the difficulties many firms can have finding suitable employees at the going wage rate, means that bringing in temporary foreign workers has the potential to be a win-win situation, benefiting the TFWs and the Canadian economy.

- The policy changes to the Temporary Foreign Worker Program the federal government announced in mid-2013 make sense economically
- There are ongoing concerns that temporary foreign workers may take jobs from young Canadians entering the labour market and lower-skilled Canadians
- An annual cap on the number of temporary workers entering Canada should be implemented while additional reforms are considered

For link to the study:

<http://www.irpp.org/assets/research/diversity-immigration-and-integration/temporary-foreign-workers/Worswick-no4.pdf>

How a Guaranteed Annual Income Could Put Food Banks out of Business by J.C. Herbert Emery, A Valerie C. Fleischb And Lynn McIntyre, Department of Economics and The School of Public Policy, December 2013.

The federal Conservative government recently began phasing in a plan to raise the age of eligibility for Old Age Security from 65 to 67. But a more sensible move for improving the effectiveness of Canada's social safety-net system may be to actually lower the age below 65 and rely strictly on an income test instead, regardless of age. The government could go a lot further toward the reduction of poverty in Canada by building on the success of its income supports for seniors, and making them available to poor Canadians of all ages.

- Canada can boast of having one of the lowest rates for poverty among seniors in the world, largely due to its guaranteed income programs for those 65 years and older
- A guaranteed income provides a kind of "disaster insurance" that can protect someone in a crisis situation from going without necessities such as food or even shelter
- Statistics show that the rate of Canadians experiencing "food insecurity" — that is, lack of access to food because of financial constraints — is half that among Canadians aged 65 to 69 years than it is among those aged 60 to 64
- Self-reported rates of physical and mental health improve markedly as well after low income Canadians move from low-wage, insecure employment to a guaranteed income at the age of 65

For link to the report:

<http://policyschool.ucalgary.ca/sites/default/files/research/emery-foodbankfinal.pdf>

Impact of the Great Recession on Retirement Trends in Industrialized Countries by Gary Burtless and Barry P. Bosworth, The Brookings Institution, November 5, 2013.

The Great Recession had a large impact on unemployment rates and growth in wealthy industrial countries. When the recession began most rich countries were experiencing an increase in labour force participation rates after age 60. This paper examines whether the downturn slowed or reversed the trend toward higher old-age participation rates.

- Wealthy countries saw a decline in old-age labour force exit compared with exit rates that were common before the mid-1990s
- The recession had a large impact on unemployment rates and job availability in the United States and many other industrial countries
- The drop in household wealth after 2007 may have induced some older workers to postpone retirement and encouraged others to return to the labour force
- This paper examines whether the Great Recession and the weak recovery that followed have slowed or reversed the trend toward higher old-age participation and employment rates

For link to the paper:

<http://www.brookings.edu/~media/research/files/papers/2013/12/16-impact-great-recession-retirement-trends-bosworth-burtless/16-impact-great-recession-retirement-trends-bosworth-burtless.pdf>

Social Policy, Analysis and Research Information Resources:

Wellbeing Toronto: www.toronto.ca/wellbeing

Demographics & other resources: www.toronto.ca/demographics