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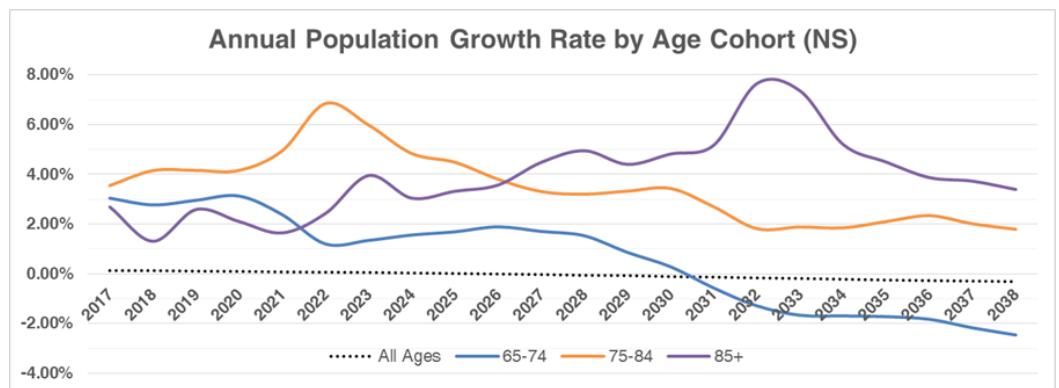
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Subject: Senior's Housing—Time to Act

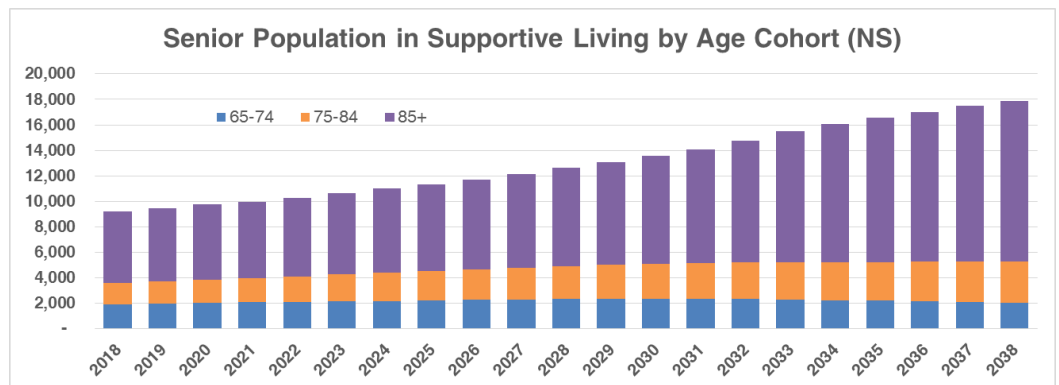
Comments: This month the CBC has been running an investigative series examining Nova Scotia's troubling shortage of doctors. Thanks (for the most part) to a growing wave of retirements, Health Authority recruiters are faced with the challenge of whittling down a family doctor waiting list which, in little more than a year, has grown to exceed 40,000 souls. Of course, there is little that could have been done to avoid such a calamity. Only fringe experts in demographic analysis such as ourselves are able to forecast that doctors get older every year, or tally up the disproportionately large cohort about to reach retirement age.

In the hopes that an early warning might stave off similar inaction, we turn our attention to the next demographic-induced healthcare crunch; assisted living. The first baby boomers reached age 65 in 2011 and the last will mark this milestone in 2030. While overall population change in the province will be stagnant, senior age cohorts are going to experience significant annual growth:



Source: Derived from Statistics Canada Projected Population

Nearly 80% of demand for healthcare related housing comes from these age groups according to the 2016 Census, especially those in the eldest range. Seniors' residences, nursing homes, and mixed facilities house roughly 5% of the total senior population, but 25% of those aged 85+. Taking these 2016 proportions as constant, and applying Statistics Canada's M1 Medium Growth Projection, we can expect demand for supported living facilities to increase significantly over the next two decades, averaging 4.7% per year, to roughly double its current level by 2038:



Source: Derived from Statistics Canada Projected Population, Census of Population 2016

In order to keep up, we will have to add spaces for about 430 people every year. This is certainly achievable, especially considering the involvement of the private sector in this industry. However, public sector support and regulation is still an important factor in the equation. Whether the issue will be dealt with proactively, or only after reaching a crisis-point, remains to be seen, though current events inspire little confidence.