

Women Have I\$\$ues

by vcmorris - Thursday, March 26, 2009

<http://thethinpinkline.com/2009/03/26/women-have-iues/>

Women are more vulnerable financially as we age. Why? Because we have very unique money issues:

- lower earnings
- work patterns
- health status
- life expectancy
- marital status

We have **lower earnings** because we work in different and often less lucrative occupations and sectors. Two-thirds of us earn less than \$30,000 a year - a number that has been diminished even more by the ongoing downturn in the overall economy. U.S. Labor Secretary Hilda Solis says the recession is especially hard on women because we earn less money than men for the same work. Women earn from 78-cents to 52-cents for every dollar men receive. (Source: The Womens' Data Center, Institute for Women's Policy Research, <http://www.iwpr.org/femstats/wocdata.htm> - *Asian 78-cents, White 73-cents, African-American 63-cents, Native American almost 60-cents and Latinas 52-cents*). The average 25-year old woman with a college degree earns \$500,000 less in her lifetime than a man. While women are in the workforce in greater numbers, we are often part-time or work for an employer offering few or no benefits.

Women's **work patterns** are different. Women on average work 13 years less than men. During our time away - most often to care for children or frail parents or other family members - we're not increasing our earning power, not vesting in pensions and our lifetime earnings for Social Security income is lower. Most defined pension plans vest at 5 years. Women average 4.7 years in a job while men average 5.1 years. Half of working women have no pension.

Women spend more on out-of-pocket health care expenses than men. The system sees our **health status** differently. Men have more acute illnesses and die sooner but their medical needs are covered under insurance and Medicare. Women at midlife have more chronic illnesses, require specialists and leading edge medicine. Our illnesses frequently result in the need for long term care - and other needs often not covered by many insurances or Medicare.

We live longer than men - on average about 5 years longer but a woman's income at age 65 is half that of men. Women must factor in longer life expectancy as they plan for retirement and should work with a financial specialist to accurately figure out the rate at which they spend their retirement savings.

90% of women will live alone - by choice or circumstances - at some point in their life. 29% of single, older women are poor or near poor. Widowed and divorced women are three to four times more likely to be poor than women in couples. For many older women, Social Security is their *only* source of income in retirement.

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Women deserve economic security. In order to attain it, we must not allow ourselves to become the victims of this recession. *See* and *seize* the opportunity to become better stewards of our personal money.

Here's to your health and wealth.

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