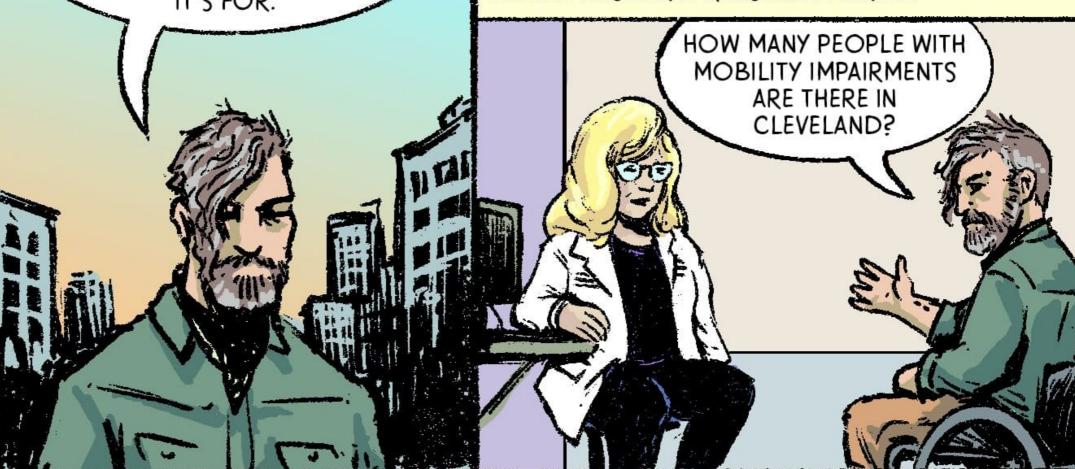




DENISE FORSTER-PAULSEN IS MY LONG TIME NURSE PRACTITIONER AT METROHEALTH. SHE'S BEEN WORKING WITH PEOPLE WHO HAVE SPINAL CORD INJURIES FOR OVER 30 YEARS. I FIGURED SHE COULD ANSWER A QUESTION FOR ME:



I DON'T THINK I DON'T ANYBODY KNOWS, KNOW. IT CHANGES SO QUICKLY.

THERE'S NO PERFECT WAY TO DEFINE -IN NUMBERS-THE PEOPLE IN OUR COMMUNITY WHO USE ACCESSIBLE HOUSING.

GOING BACK TO 1830. BUT IT WASN'T UNTIL 2008 THAT

WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

A PERSON THE U.S. CENSUS HAS HAD QUESTIONS ON DISABILITY WHO HAS SERIOUS DIFFICULTY WALKING OR CLIMBING STAIRS.

IT ADDED A QUESTION ON ITS ANNUAL SURVEYS ABOUT WHAT IT CALLS "AMBULATORY DIFFICULTY." CENSUS

THERE'S PEOPLE LIKE ME WHO USE A WHEELCHAIR AFTER AN INJURY. IT COULD BE A PERMANENT SPINAL CORD INJURY FROM A CAR CRASH OR A GUNSHOT.

BUT I'VE KNOWN OR SEEN PEOPLE WHO ARE BORN WITH CONDITIONS LIKE SPINA BIFIDA, AND GROW UP USING A WHEELCHAIR.

SOMETIMES AN ILLNESS WILL TAKE AWAY MOBILITY OVER TIME OR SUDDENLY. SENIORS OFTEN USE CANES, WALKERS OR WHEELCHAIRS AS THEY AGE.



IN 2021 THAT WAS ABOUT 10.3 PERCENT OF CLEVELANDERS OR BETWEEN **33,000** AND **37,000** PEOPLE. (THIS COUNTS PEOPLE WHO ARE 5 AND OLDER AND WHO DON'T LIVE FULL TIME IN A PLACE LIKE A NURSING FACILITY.)

IT'S ROUGHLY THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE IT WOULD TAKE TO FILL UP PROGRESSIVE FIELD (IF IT HAD A LOT MORE ACCESSIBLE SEATING!)

EITHER WAY, IT'S NOT AN INSIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF CLEVELANDERS. THESE COULD BE YOUR FRIENDS OR RELATIVES OR NEIGHBORS. BUT MAYBE YOU DON'T SEE PEOPLE IN WHEELCHAIRS EVERYWHERE YOU GO.



MORE ON THAT NEXT TIME!