

Understanding the Impact of Coronavirus on Older Adults

SURVEY BY

NORC at the University of Chicago

...

SUPPORTED BY

*The John A. Hartford Foundation and
The SCAN Foundation*

Understanding the Impact of the Coronavirus Pandemic on the Health and Life of Older Adults

- The John A. Hartford Foundation and The SCAN Foundation commissioned NORC to survey older adults about their experiences during the coronavirus pandemic.
- The survey was fielded using NORC's AmeriSpeak® panel to a nationally representative sample of 1,039 adults age 70 and older.
- The survey was fielded from April 10-15, 2020. Full questions, detailed methods, and topline results are available [here](#).

Key Findings

- More than half of all adults in the United States age 70 and older have experienced a disruption in their medical care during the first month of social distancing (55%) due to COVID-19.
- Amidst fears about managing their chronic conditions, people age 70 and older are using telehealth.
- Older adults are prepared to self-isolate for a period of many months if it means they will stay healthy. Many, however, are already starting to experience feelings of loneliness related to social distancing measures.
- Older adults view their healthcare professionals and non-elected public health officials as the most trustworthy sources of information, followed distantly by elected state officials.

Sample Demographics

The survey sample was a nationally representative group of adults age 70 and older weighted to accurately reflect those of the greater population.

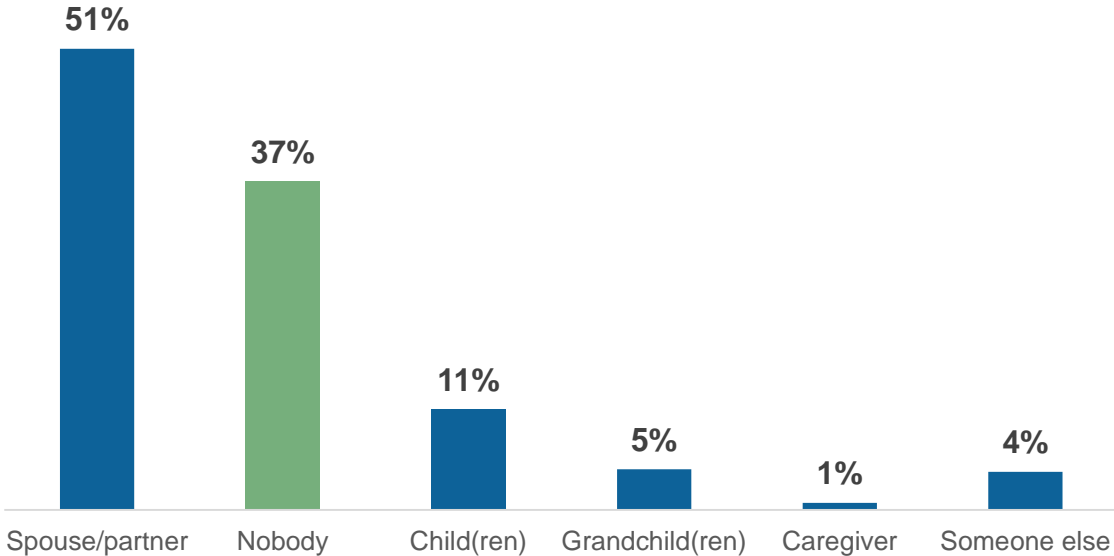
Age		Gender		Education	
70-74	61%	Male	56%	HS Grad or Less	44%
75+	39%	Female	44%	Trade/Tech. School	24%
				BA/Post Grad	19%

Race/Ethnicity		Region		Party ID	
White, non-Hispanic	77%	Northeast	19%	Democrat	42%
Black, non-Hispanic	9%	Midwest	31%	Republican	46%
Hispanic	8%	South	37%	Independent	12%
2+, non-Hispanic	4%	West	23%		
Asian, non-Hispanic	1%				
Other, non-Hispanic	1%				

Living Arrangements and Caregiving Needs

More than One in Three Older Adults Live Alone; Half Live with Their Spouse/Partner

Thinking about the Primary Place You Live, Who Normally Lives with You (Even if Only Part-Time)?

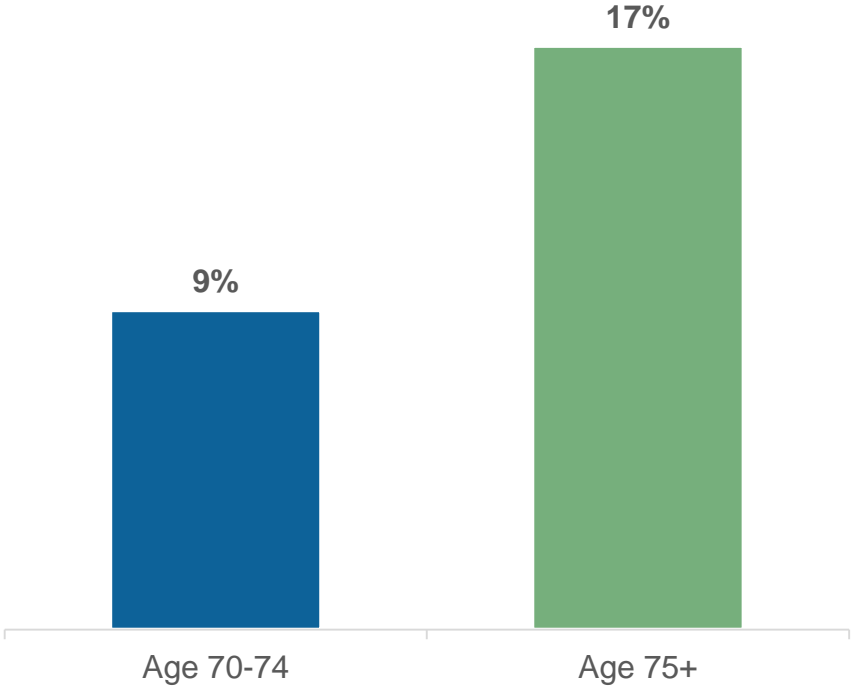


There is a large population of older adults who are weathering the pandemic alone.

Note: Respondents could select more than one response, except for “nobody.”

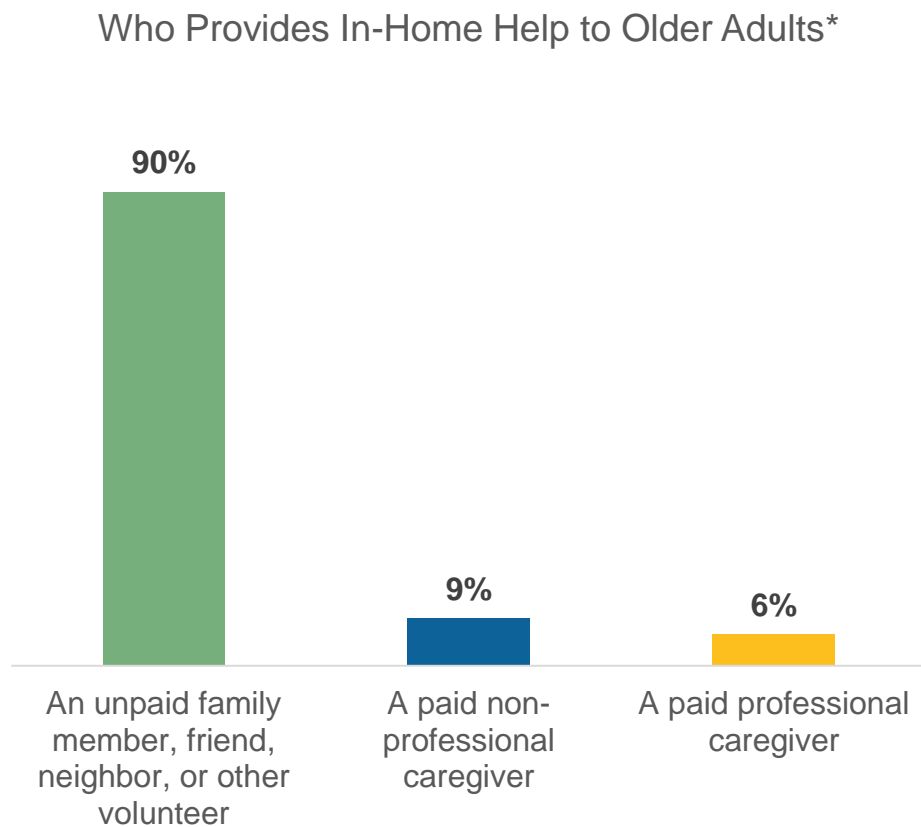
Adults 75 and Older Are Almost Twice as Likely to Receive In-Home Care than Those Age 70-74

Older Adults Who Said They Normally Get Help with Daily Activities



17% of adults 75 and older said they normally get help with activities of daily living such as preparing food, managing medications, or shopping.

Nine in 10 Adults Who Receive In-Home Support Get this Help from an Unpaid Caregiver

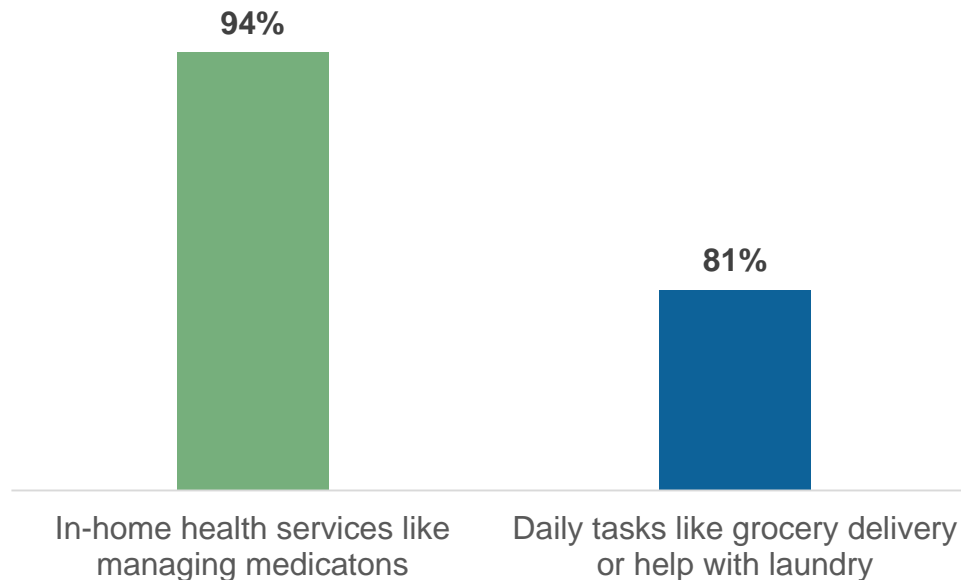


Unpaid caregivers, often family members, represent an overwhelming majority of those who support older adults' in-home care needs.

*Question was asked of those who identified that they receive help with daily activities (N=145). Respondents could select more than one response.

Despite COVID-19, Most Older Adults Are Continuing to Receive Support from Caregivers

Older Adults Who Say They Have Not Experienced an Interruption in Caregiver Support for...



94% have not experienced an interruption to in-home health-related services.

81% of older adults report that they have not experienced an interruption in support of daily activities.

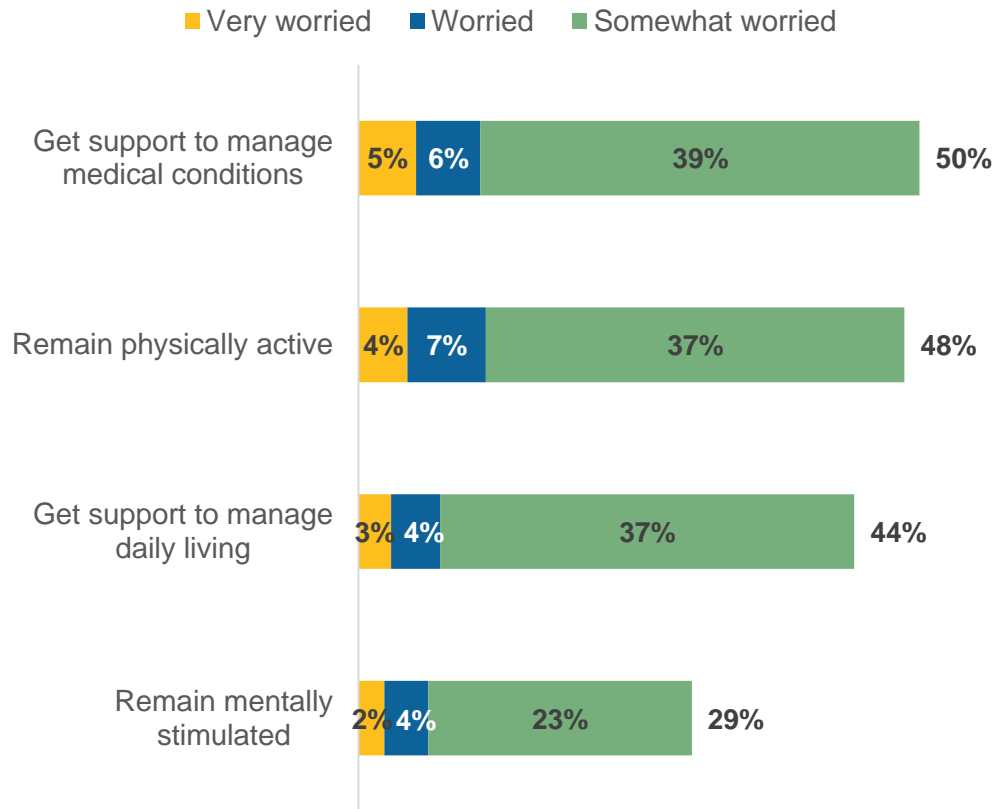
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Accessing Medical Care and Support

Older Adults Are Worried Coronavirus Will Make It Difficult to Get Health-Related Support

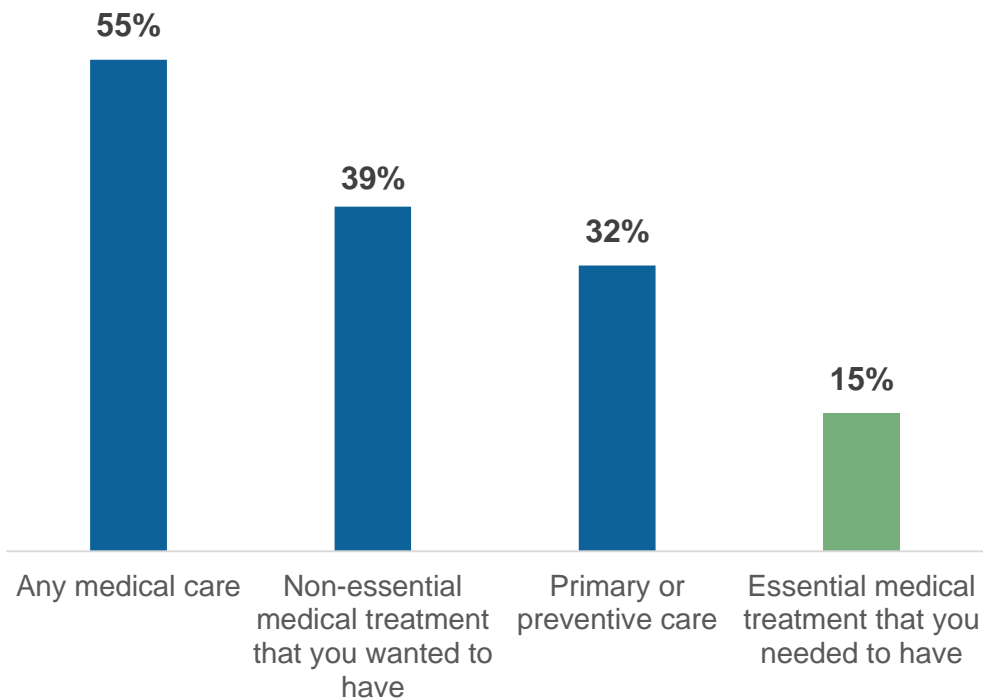
How Worried Are You that the Coronavirus Pandemic Will Make It Difficult to...?



During the coronavirus pandemic, older adults are most worried about getting support to manage medical conditions and remaining physically active.

A Majority of Older Adults Have Experienced a Disruption in Medical Care

Have You Had Any of the Following Changes to Your Medical Care as a Result of the Coronavirus Pandemic?

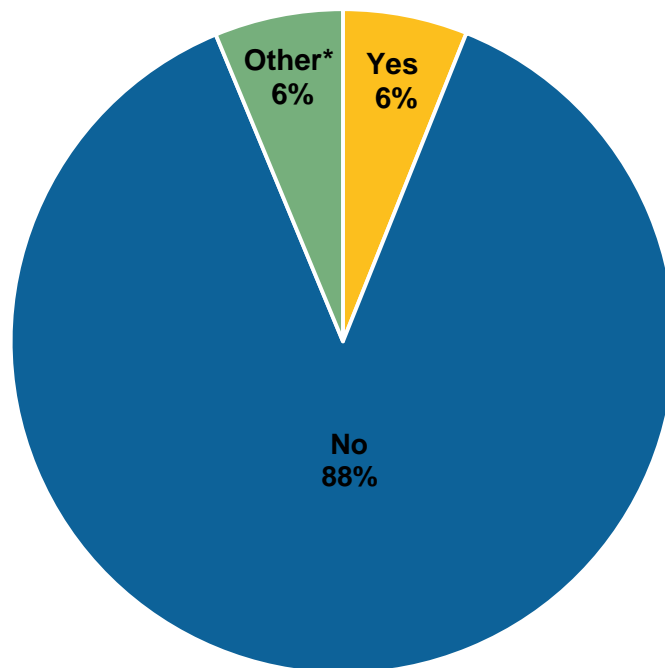


55% of older adults have experienced a disruption of some kind in their medical care during the COVID-19 pandemic.

One in three delayed primary care or preventive services, and an alarming 15% delayed or cancelled an essential medical treatment.

Despite Disruptions, Few Older Adults Say Their Medical Conditions Have Worsened Because They Were Unable to See a Doctor

Have Your Medical Conditions Gotten Worse Because You Could Not See Your Doctor During the Pandemic?

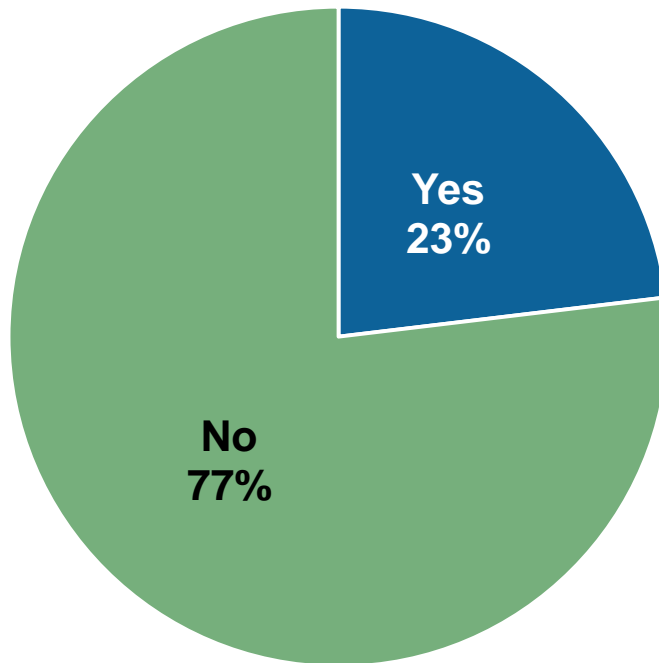


Though most older adults do not believe their medical conditions have worsened due to missed medical visits, disruptions in healthcare could have longer-term effects.

*Other includes those who responded "don't know", skipped, or refused the question.

Providers Are Interacting and Treating Patients in New Ways as a Result of COVID-19

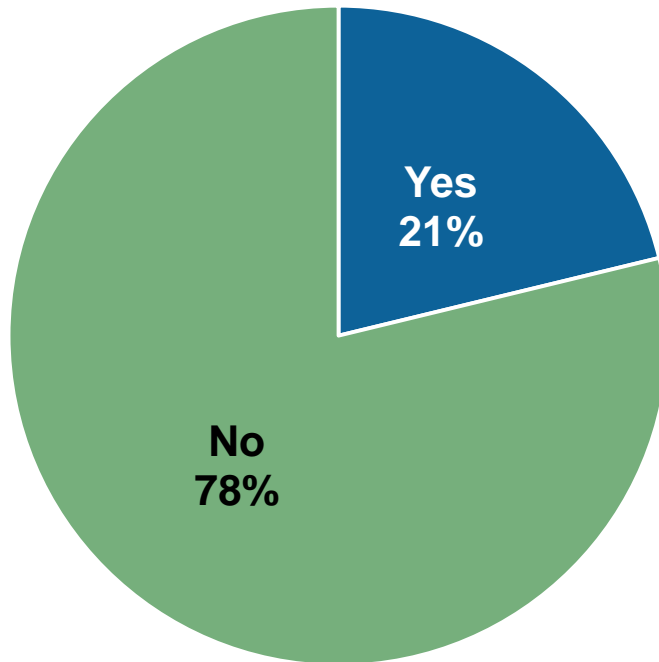
Outside of a Regular Appointment, Have Your Healthcare Providers Reached Out to You to Check on Your Well-Being Since the Start of the Pandemic?



Close to one in four older adults report that their healthcare providers or their staff have reached out to them since the start of the pandemic to check on their well-being outside of a regularly scheduled appointment.

One in Five Older Adults Have Had a Telehealth Visit Since the Start of the Pandemic

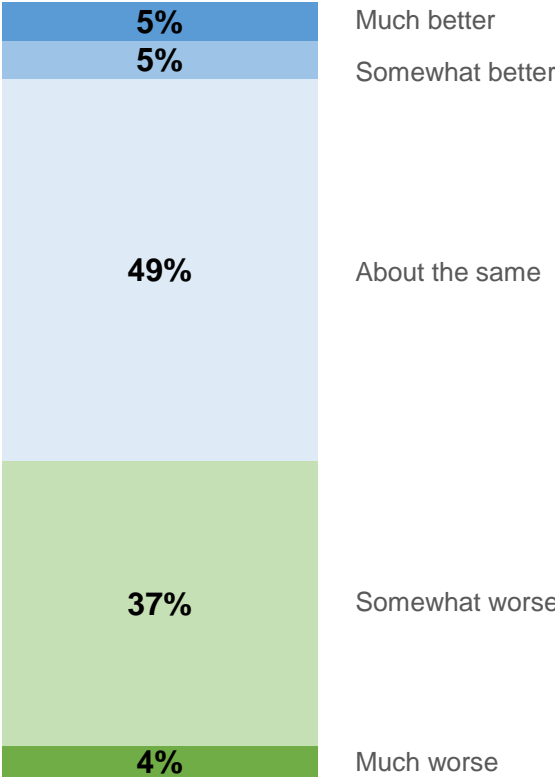
Have You Had a Medical Appointment Over-the-Phone or by Video Chat, that Would Have Normally Been In-Person, as a Result of the Coronavirus Pandemic?



21% of older adults report having a medical appointment by phone or video chat that would have normally been in-person.

Many Say Their Experience with Telehealth Was About the Same as In-Person

Experience of Those Who Have Had a Telehealth Visit Compared to In-Person Visit*

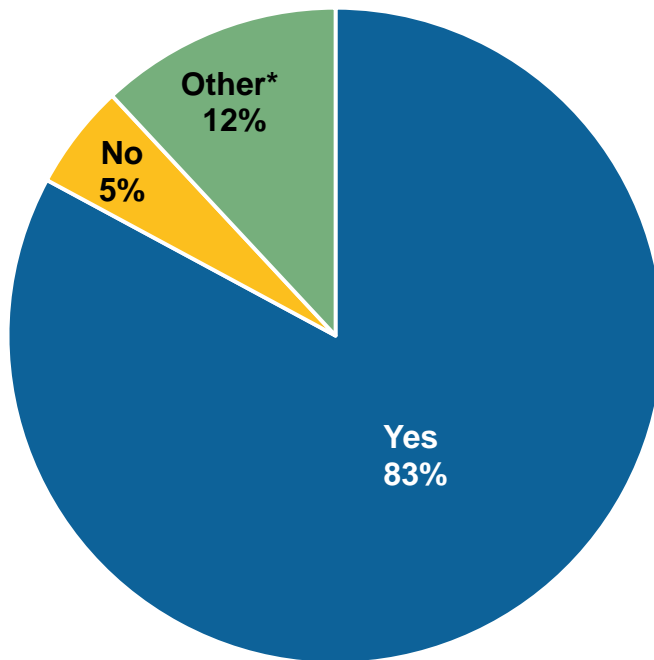


*Of those who have had a telehealth visit, **almost six in 10 (59%) said that the experience was about the same as or better than an in-person visit.***

*Question was asked of those who have had a telehealth visit since the start of the coronavirus pandemic (N=223).

Older Adults Are Prepared to Self-Isolate for Several Months If Necessary

If Required, Will You Self-Isolate for Several Months to Remain Healthy/Safe?

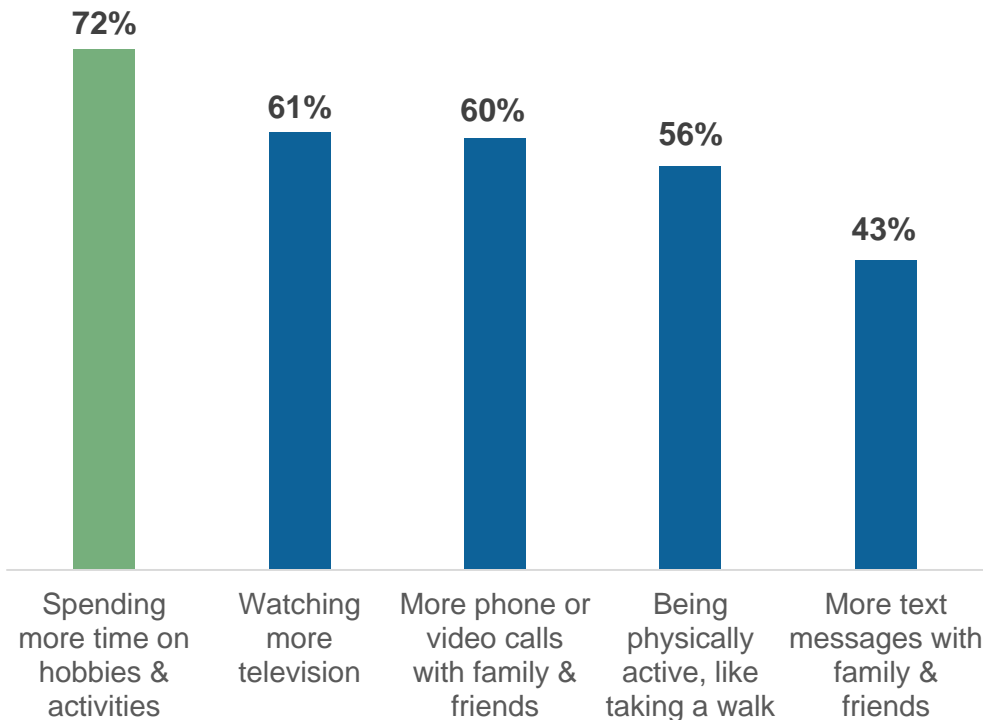


Four out of five older adults report they will self-isolate, if necessary, to stay safe/healthy—even if that means not seeing family members or friends from outside their household.

*Other includes those who responded “don’t know”, skipped, or refused the question.

Older Adults Are Taking Steps to Decrease Isolation During the Pandemic

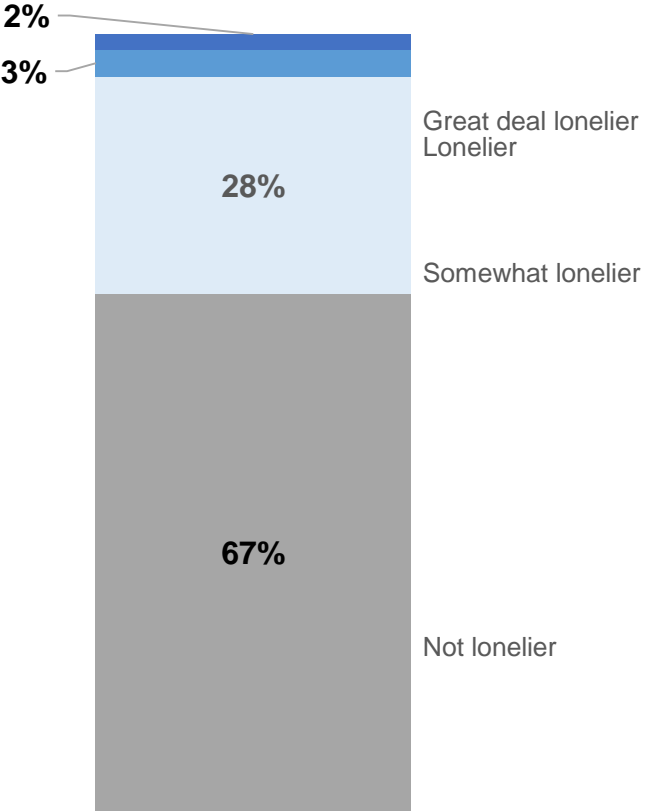
What Steps Are You Taking to Decrease Isolation During the Coronavirus Pandemic?



Older adults report trying a variety of activities to decrease isolation during the coronavirus pandemic, with more than seven in 10 older adults spending more time on hobbies.

A Month into the Pandemic, One in Three Older Adults Is Lonelier than Before

Have You Experienced More Feelings of Loneliness Since the Coronavirus Pandemic Began?

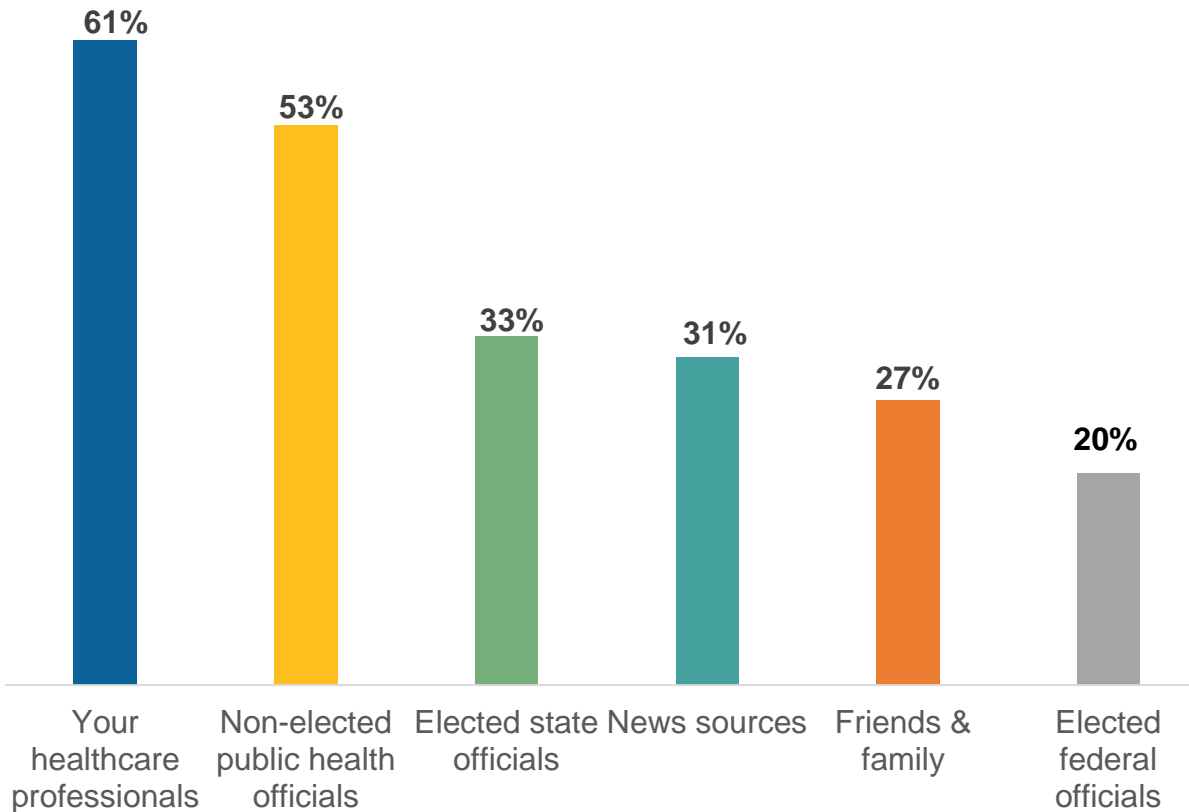


As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, it will be critical to the health of older adults to reduce loneliness and isolation.

Information Sources and Perceptions of Older Adults

Older Adults Have the Most Trust in Their Healthcare Providers as Sources of Information

Info Sources that Older Adults Trust*
(Sum of trust completely and trust a lot)



Older adults have the most trust in their healthcare professionals and non-elected public health officials.

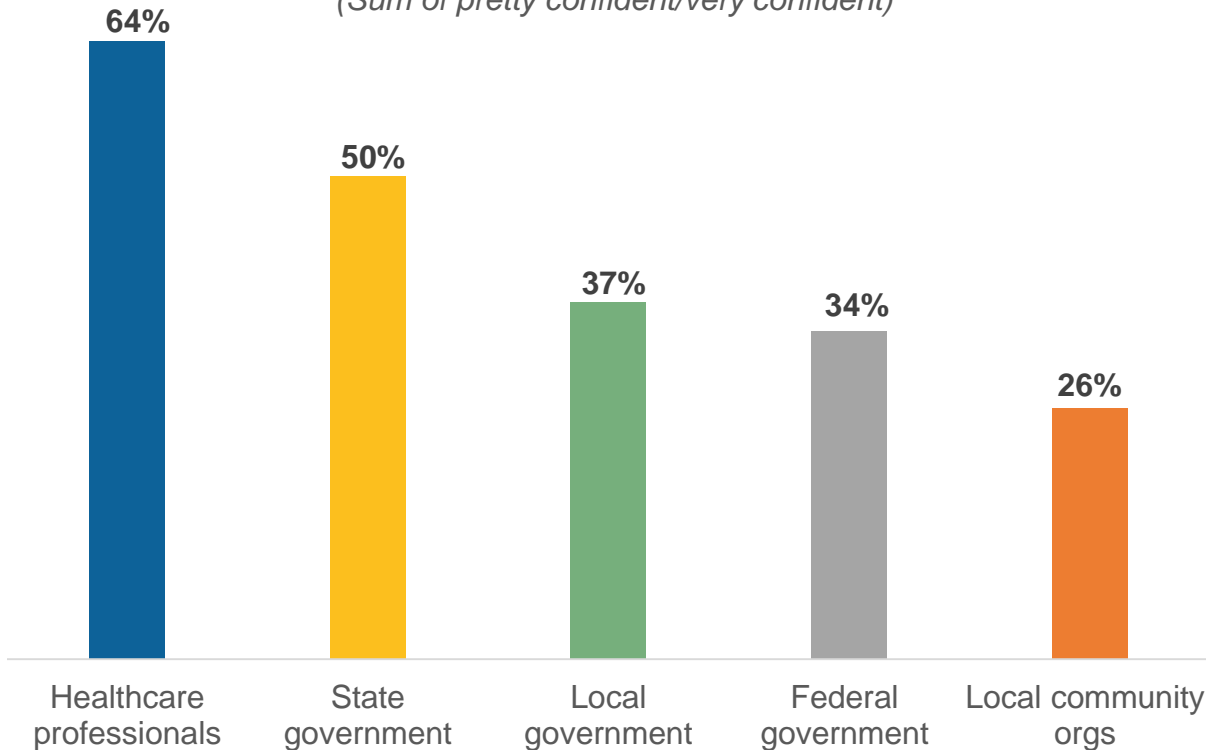
Among elected officials, older adults trust information from state officials more than from federal officials.

*Response options below 20% are not shown; somewhat, a bit, not at all response options are not shown.

Older Adults Are More Confident in State Government Officials than Federal Officials

How Confident Are You that These Groups Are Taking the Necessary Steps to Keep People Like You Safe During the Pandemic?*

(Sum of pretty confident/very confident)

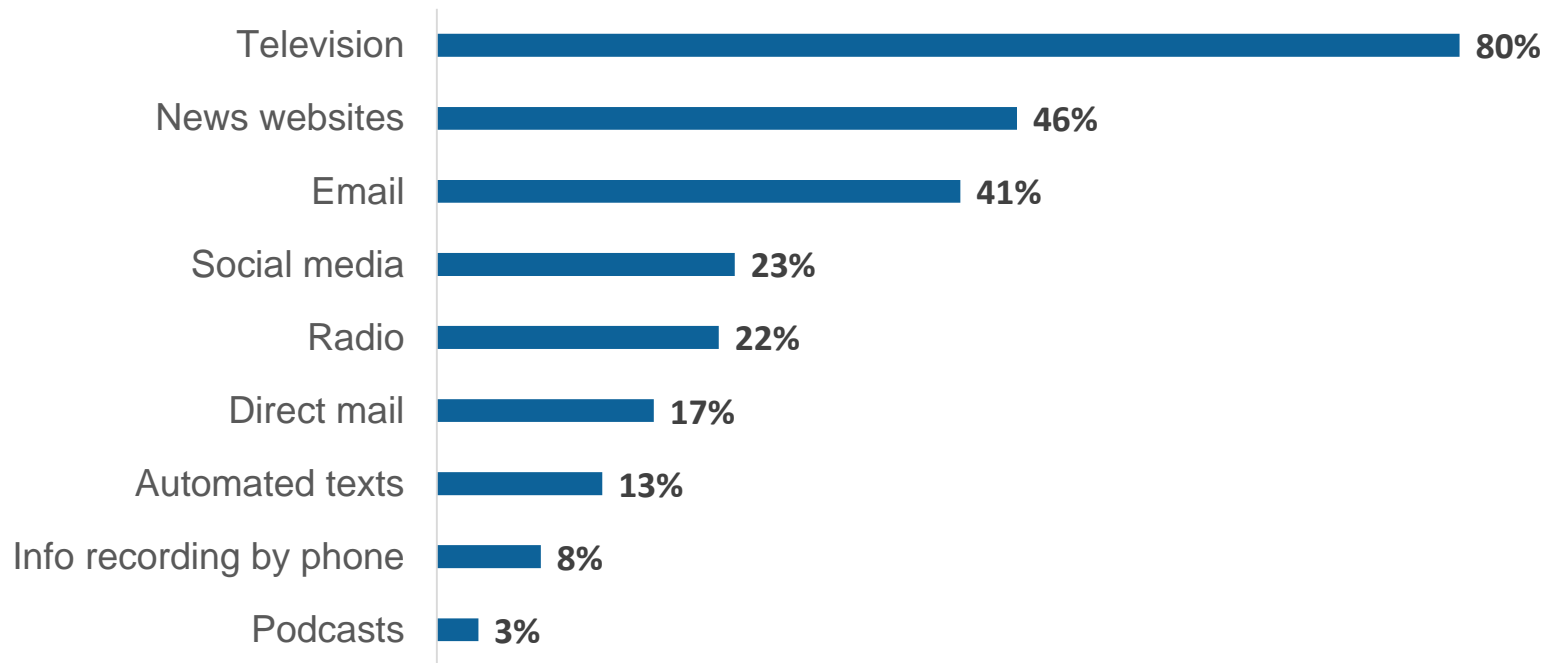


Older adults are most confident that healthcare professionals and state governments are taking the necessary steps to keep people like them safe during the pandemic.

Older Adults Prefer to Receive Information on Ways to Stay Safe via Television

Most Preferred

How Older Adults Prefer to Receive Information about Ways to Stay Safe



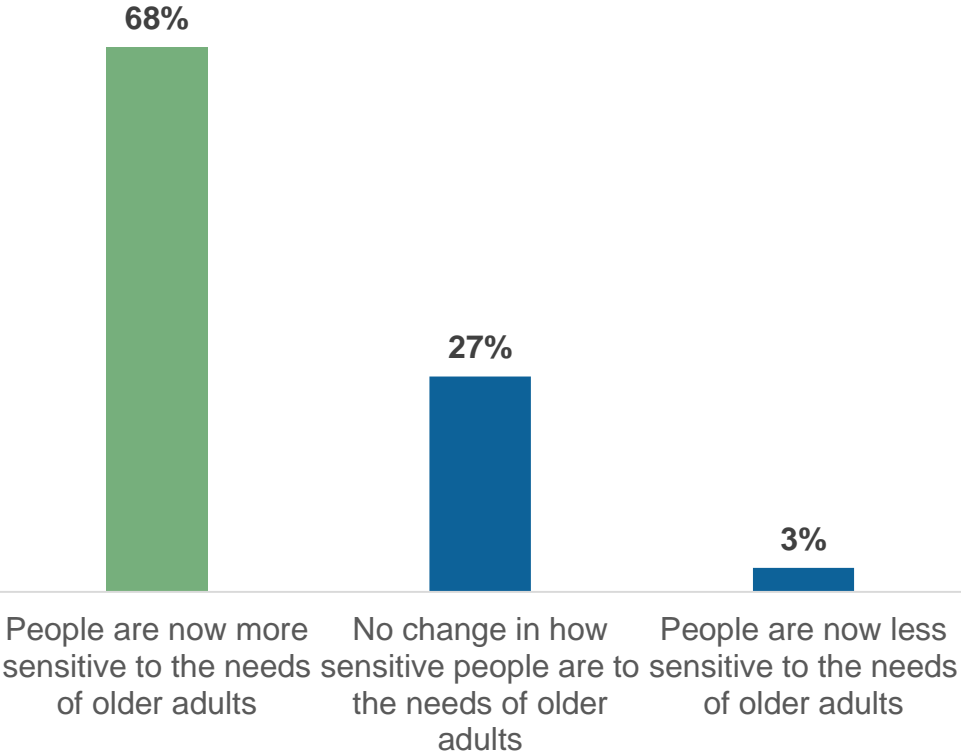
Least Preferred

Many Older Adults Are Interested in Learning about Ways to Stay Healthy, Prevent Social Isolation, Stay Active, and Stay Connected

What Kinds of Information Are Most Helpful During the Pandemic?	
Prevention: Steps you can take to reduce the chances of contracting coronavirus	86%
Government Actions: Steps the government is taking to slow the spread of coronavirus	71%
Symptoms: Symptoms of coronavirus	69%
Deaths: The number of coronavirus cases and deaths in your area	62%
Economy: The economic impact of coronavirus	53%
Staying Active: Ways to stay physically active during social isolation	45%
Staying Connected: Things to do to keep in touch with friends and family during coronavirus	41%
Managing Health: How to manage your health conditions	41%
Staying Engaged: Ways to stay mentally engaged during social isolation	40%
Community Support: Information about local organizations supporting older adults, such as getting food and other necessities during coronavirus	38%
Manage Care: How to manage your in-home care	21%

Older Adults Believe People Have Been Sensitive to Their Needs

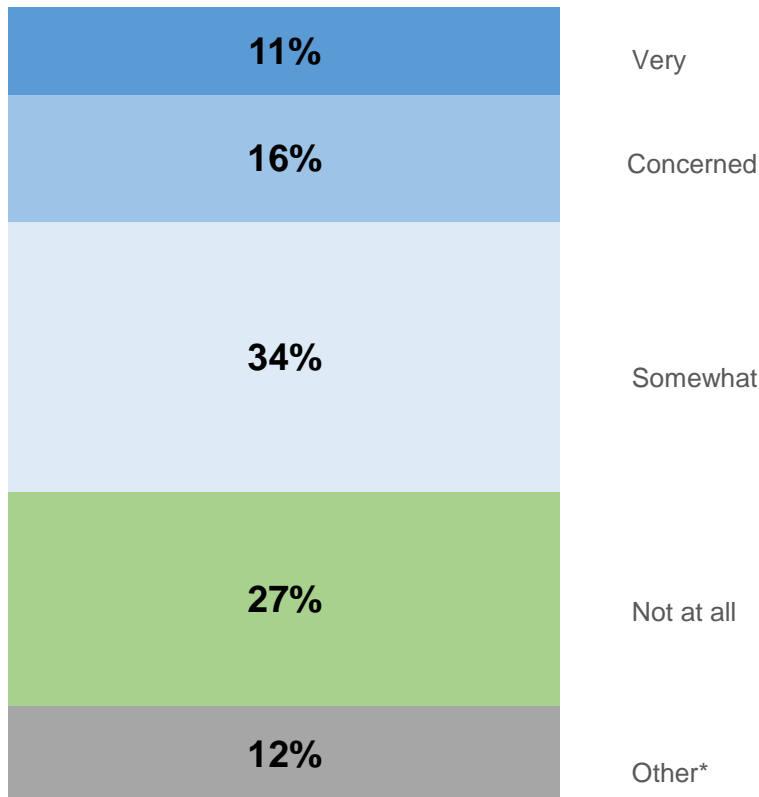
How Is Society Reacting to the Needs of Older Adults During the Coronavirus Pandemic?



More than two-thirds of older adults (68%) say that people are now more sensitive to the needs of older adults, in response to the pandemic.

Nevertheless, Most (61%) Are at Least Somewhat Concerned About Misconceptions or Stereotypes of Aging

How Concerned Are You that Misconceptions or Stereotypes About Older Adults Are Spreading as a Result of the Coronavirus Pandemic?



Only half of older adults (49%) say they feel valued by society during the coronavirus pandemic.

*Other includes those who responded “don’t know”, skipped, or refused the question.

Minorities Report Greater Impact from Coronavirus

- White respondents were less likely to have caregiving disruptions or concerns about coronavirus-related challenges.
 - Fewer white respondents have experienced an interruption in support with tasks of daily living.
 - White respondents are less likely to say they were very worried about getting help with managing **activities of daily living**.
 - Whites are also less worried about managing their **medical conditions** during the coronavirus pandemic.
- Black respondents* are more likely to live alone than whites.
- Black respondents* were less likely to report increased loneliness during the pandemic.

*Small sample size (unweighted N=64).

Learn More

Contact: Marcus Escobedo

Marcus.Escobedo@JohnAHartford.org (212) 324-7488

www.JohnAHartford.org

Contact: Mari Nicholson

MNicholson@TheSCANFoundation.org (562) 308-2804

www.TheSCANFoundation.org