VITAL VOICES

Issues That Impact Virginia Adults Age 45 and Older, December 2021
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INTRODUCTION

There are currently about 117 million Americans who are 50 and older; this number will grow to 157 million by 2050. The 50 and older population is and will continue to be an essential contributor to American society. Understanding the needs and opinions of older Americans is critical to ensuring they live longer and healthier lives.

Vital Voices is a new and exciting program of research undertaken by AARP. Through this research program, we are launching a new initiative that will deliver critical, current, and state-specific data to 53 states on a rolling three-year schedule between 2019 and 2021. We are making this data available to the public to assist with the development of programs, products, and policies for older adults. This data will allow those in leadership positions to:

• Predict the need for a specific program or interest in a particular issue.
• Enhance program and product innovation and development.
• Track issues and attitudes over time to assess shifts in public opinion.
• Take action on critical advocacy issues.

Never before has AARP launched a research program of this size and with this much promise. We give it to you, hoping that it will significantly impact the work you do.
Survey Results for Virginia-Health Questions

Issues That Impact Virginia Adults Age 45 and Older
Virginia residents age 45+ think many healthcare issues are important, with staying mentally sharp topping the list.

Important Healthcare Issues

- Staying mentally sharp: 93%
- Staying physically healthy: 92%
- Having adequate health insurance coverage: 91%
- Having Medicare benefits available to you in the future: 83%
- Paying for health care expenses: 81%
- Paying for prescription drugs: 73%

II. For the following list of issues, please indicate how important each is to you personally. (Percent ‘extremely important’ or ‘very important’) (n=379)
Over one-quarter (30%) of Virginia residents age 45+ are currently providing unpaid help to an adult relative or friend.
Almost half (47%) of Virginia residents age 45+ who are not currently unpaid caregivers have provided this type of care in the past.
Virginia caregivers age 45+ face many difficulties, with half (53%) feeling stressed emotionally due to their caregiving responsibilities.

**Caregiving Difficulties**

- Feel stressed emotionally due to your caregiving responsibilities: 53%
- Find it difficult to exercise regularly: 49%
- Find it difficult to get enough rest: 48%
- Find it difficult to take care of your household responsibilities: 47%
- Experience problems with your health: 46%
- Feel stressed in trying to balance your job and family: 42%
- Find it difficult to maintain a healthy diet: 39%
- Feel strained financially due to your caregiving responsibilities: 35%
- Find it difficult to get enough rest: 17%

**CARE13.** As a caregiver, do you ever [ITEM]? (Percent ‘yes’) (n=112)
HEALTH

About half (49%) of Virginia residents age 45+ reported that their health is excellent or very good.

Overall Health Status

- 49% Excellent/very good
- 31% Good
- 20% Fair/poor

ISO8. How is your overall health at this point in time? (n=379)
Three-quarters (77%) of Virginia residents age 45+ take at least one prescription medication on a regular basis.

**Number of Prescription Medications Taken Regularly**

- None: 22%
- 1: 15%
- 2 to 3: 25%
- 4 to 5: 19%
- 6 or more: 18%

**PER2.** Approximately how many different prescription medications do you take on a regular basis such as daily, weekly, or monthly? (n=379) Chart does not equal one-hundred percent due to removal of small cells; see annotation for all categories.
Seventeen percent (17%) of Virginia residents age 45+ spend $100 or more out-of-pocket each month for prescription drugs.

**Spending on Prescription Drugs**

- Nothing/ $0: 28%
- More than $0 but less than $10 per month: 11%
- $10 to less than $50 per month: 25%
- $50 to less than $100 per month: 17%
- $100 to less than $200 per month: 8%
- $200 to less than $500 per month: 6%
- $500 to less than $1,000 per month: 2%
- More than $1,000 per month: 1%

**PER3.** In the past 12 months, approximately how much have you spent out of your own pocket for prescription drugs? (n=379) Chart does not equal one-hundred percent due to removal of small cells; see annotation for all categories.
Virginia residents age 45+ have faced a variety of difficult decisions when buying prescription medications.

**Actions Taken in the Past 12 Months**

- Decided not to fill a prescription because of the cost of the drug: 20%
- Delayed getting a prescription filled because of the cost: 20%
- Taken less medicine than prescribed to make it last longer: 18%
- Cut back on such items as food, fuel, or electricity to afford prescription drugs: 15%
- Decided not to fill a prescription to use the money for a living expense: 13%

**PER9.** Many people face difficult decisions when buying prescription medications. In the past 12 months, have you [ITEM]? (Percent 'yes') (n=234)
As of December 2021, a majority (83%) of Virginia residents age 45+ have already gotten the COVID-19 vaccine (or plan to get it).

COVID-19 Vaccination Status (as of December 2021)

- **Yes (already got)**: 81%
- **Yes (plan to)**: 12%
- **No**: 5%
- **Don't know/ refused**: 5%
Survey Results for Virginia-Wealth Questions

Issues That Impact Virginia Adults Age 45 and Older
Virginia residents age 45+ find many economic issues important, particularly those related to retirement and Social Security benefits.

### Important Economic Issues

- **Having enough income or savings to retire**: 90%
- **Having adequate Social Security benefits**: 84%
- **Protecting yourself against consumer fraud**: 80%
- **Protecting yourself against unfair financial practices**: 79%
- **Having online security**: 71%
- **Being able to stop working for pay at the age you want**: 71%
- **Protection from age discrimination**: 61%
- **Having good employment opportunities in your community**: 58%
- **Maintaining relevant job skills and experience**: 48%

11. For the following list of issues, please indicate how important each is to you personally. (Percent ‘extremely important’ or ‘very important’) (n=varies)
Nearly half (47%) of Virginia residents age 45+ are extremely or very concerned about having enough income or savings to retire.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Retirement Concerns</th>
<th>Concerned (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Having enough income or savings to retire</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having enough income to live independently to not need a loved one to provide caregiving</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being able to retire when you are ready to do so</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensuring the solvency and security of your retirement plans</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You may have to reduce your standard of living in retirement</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having to postpone retirement</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having to go back to work after you retire</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RET1. How concerned are you about the following? (Percent ‘extremely concerned’ or ‘very concerned’) (n=varies)
Virginia residents age 45+ have many concerns about fraud, including having their identity stolen (54%) and having hackers access their identifying information (53%).

Concern About Scams and Fraud

- Having your identity stolen by someone who uses your name and other identifying information to open new credit accounts: 54%
- Having hackers get access to your identifying information from companies that you have done business with: 53%
- Losing money due to unfair or fraudulent financial practices: 41%
- Becoming the target or victim of an internet scam or fraud: 39%
- Becoming the target or victim of a phone scam or fraud over the phone: 34%

FRA4_1. How concerned are you, personally about each of the following? (Percent ‘extremely concerned’ or ‘very concerned’) (n=379)
Nearly two in ten (19%) Virginia residents age 45+ have been the victim of a scam or fraud in the past year (or know a loved one who has).

**FRAUD**

**Victim of a Scam or Fraud in the Past 12 Months**

- Yes, I have been a victim: 13%
- Yes, a loved one has been a victim: 9%
- No: 79%
- Don't know: 2%

**FRA19.** In the last 12 months, have you or a loved one been a victim of a scam or fraud? (n=379)
Virginia residents age 45+ have been affected by a variety of economic issues in the past 12 months.

**Economic Issues**

- Found it more difficult to pay for essential items: 27%
- Made changes to your home so you could live there longer: 26%
- Found it more difficult to pay for utilities: 24%
- Postponed plans to retire: 21%
- Postponed paying some bills: 20%
- Stopped putting money into a 401(k), IRA, or other retirement account: 19%
- Found it more difficult to pay your credit cards: 18%
- Found it more difficult to pay your mortgage or rent: 15%
- Prematurely withdrew funds from your investments: 11%
- Started a new job: 10%
- Found it more difficult to pay for education expenses: 9%
- Lost your job: 8%
- Moved to a smaller house or apartment: 4%
- Bought a new house: 2%

ECON2. In the past 12 months, that is since November 2020 until now, have you [ITEM]? (Percent ‘yes’) (n=varies)
Survey Results for Virginia-Self Questions

Issues That Impact Virginia Adults Age 45 and Older
Caring for a loved one is extremely or very important to a majority (84%) of Virginia residents age 45+.

Important Independent Living Issues

- Caring for a loved one: 84%
- Getting to the places you need to go independently: 78%
- Staying in your own home as you get older: 77%
- Having access to transportation if you are unable to drive: 74%
- Having high quality long-term care in your community: 72%
- Living in a community that meets your needs as you get older: 66%
- Staying in your own community as you get older: 58%
- Being connected with others in your community and having opportunities to socialize as you age: 53%

I1. For the following list of issues, please indicate how important each is to you personally. (Percent ‘extremely important’ or ‘very important’) (n=379)
Virginia residents age 45+ have many routine behaviors for mental sharpness, including engaging in mentally stimulating activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Routine Behaviors for Mental Sharpness</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Engage in mentally stimulating activities</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eat nutritious and well-balanced meals</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manage stress effectively</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exercise</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get enough restful sleep</td>
<td>65%</td>
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**FP19.** People do different things for mental sharpness. As part of your regular routine, do you [ITEM]? (Percent ‘yes’) (n=379)
MENTAL SHARPNESS

Nine percent (9%) of Virginia residents age 45+ feel that they have more problems with memory than others their age.

FP20. Do you think that you have more problems with memory than others your age? (n=379)
MENTAL SHARPNESS

Two-thirds (70%) of Virginia residents age 45+ feel that they have excellent or very good brain health and mental sharpness.

- Excellent/ very good: 70%
- Good: 22%
- Fair/ poor: 8%
Virginia residents age 45+ feel isolated in a variety of ways, including lacking companionship and feeling left out.

### Frequency of Feelings of Isolation

- **Lacking companionship**: 13%
- **Feeling isolated from others**: 11%
- **Feeling left out**: 10%

**ISO2.** How often do you feel the following? (Percent ‘very often’ or ‘often’) (n=379)
Virginia residents age 45+ would be interested in attending events or workshops on a variety of topics, including learning and staying mentally sharp (53%).

### Topics of Interest

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Interest (%)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning and staying mentally sharp</td>
<td>53%</td>
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<tr>
<td>What’s going on in your local community, such as news or initiatives</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issue or policy areas, such as Social Security, Medicare, or prescription drugs</td>
<td>43%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health or wellness, such as diet and exercise</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology, such as understanding or using technology</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal finances, such as money management, saving, or investing</td>
<td>36%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parenting, family, children, or grandchildren</td>
<td>26%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Employment trends, job opportunities, or career growth</td>
<td>20%</td>
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ISO51. Different people have different passions in life, or topics that interest them. How about you? Would you be interested in attending events or workshops on the following? (Percent 'yes') (n=379)
In November 2021, AARP engaged ANR Market Research Consultants to conduct a quantitative research study among Virginia residents age 45 and older. Topics included healthcare, the economy, financial issues, independent living, long-term care, caregiving, and retirement issues.

395 Interviews
Virginia Adults Age 45+
Fielded in November-December 2021

ANR completed a total of 395 interviews (132 via landline telephone, 203 via cell phone, and 60 online). Respondents were screened to meet the following criteria:

- Age 45+
- Resident of Virginia

Survey length averaged 21.5 minutes by telephone and 19.0 minutes online.
**Sampling Procedure**

Landline, cell phone, and online sampling were used for this research, with the telephone sample drawn randomly from a list of Virginia residents age 18 and older, purchased from Aristotle, and online sample provided by Fulcrum. A total of 57,339 records were utilized. The list of 6,596,033 Virginia residents age 18 and older was randomly divided into 6,597 replicates of 1,000 records for telephone dialing. Initially, 20 replicates were released for calling, with additional replicates being opened as necessary. In all, 51 replicates representing a total of 50,801 records were dialed to complete the telephone portion of this study.

The sample of 395 respondents age 45 and older yields a maximum statistical error of ±4.9% at the 95% level of confidence. (This means that in 95 out of 100 samples of this size, the results obtained in the sample would be within ±4.9 percentage points of the results obtained had everyone in the population been interviewed.)

**Interview Methodology**

The survey was launched on November 29, 2021 and closed on December 6, 2021.

Telephone interviewing was active between 5:30 p.m. and 9:00 p.m., with some additional calling done between 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. If necessary, up to 8 call attempts per telephone number were made to reach an eligible respondent. All numbers were called at multiple times of the day as well as days of the week to maximize each resident’s opportunity for inclusion in the study.

Percentages of some questions may exceed 100% due to rounding or the use of multiple response question formats.

All data have been weighted by age, gender, and race/ethnicity according to 2019 U.S. Census Bureau Current Population Survey (CPS) statistics.
ABOUT AARP

AARP is the nation’s largest nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to empowering Americans 50 and older to choose how they live as they age. With nearly 38 million members and offices in every state, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, AARP works to strengthen communities and advocate for what matters most to families with a focus on health security, financial stability and personal fulfillment. AARP also works for individuals in the marketplace by sparking new solutions and allowing carefully chosen, high-quality products and services to carry the AARP name. As a trusted source for news and information, AARP produces the nation’s largest circulation publications, AARP The Magazine and AARP Bulletin. To learn more, visit www.aarp.org or follow @AARP and @AARPadvocates on social media.
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This research was designed and executed by AARP Research.