ATTITUDES TOWARD LONG-TERM CARE AMID COVID-19

November 2020
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Key Findings

• Most adults continue to have positive attitudes towards assisted living facilities (82%) and nursing homes (61%).

• While attitudes towards long-term care facilities remain positive, the pandemic has had an impact on opinion, particularly related to nursing homes. Four in ten (45%) say the pandemic has had a negative impact on their opinion of nursing homes and one-third (33%) said it has had a negative impact on their opinion of assisted living facilities.

• Three-quarters of adults age 40+ believe the outbreaks in long-term care facilities were a moderate (34%) or major (40%) problem; yet most 40+ adults are satisfied with the way their community handled the outbreaks.

• While the pandemic has affected respondents’ impressions of long-term care facilities, it has not led a majority to begin planning for one’s own future or that of their family members.

• Despite a lack of planning, most 40+ adults continue to prefer care at home for both themselves and their family members with the majority wanting a combination of paid and unpaid help. Yet most have not begun to think about long-term care options for themselves and may not likely do so until a crisis emerges.

• Misperceptions about Medicare may play a role in the lack of planning for long-term care. Previous AARP Research showed that roughly half of 40+ adults (47%) incorrectly believe Medicare covers long-term care services.* Adults 40+ are more likely to have planned for end-of-life issues vs. how they may live independently when they are older.

Data collected in April 2020 in the SSRS weekly omnibus
COVID-19 Negatively Affected Impressions of Nursing Homes

While most 40+ adults continue to have a positive opinion towards nursing homes, more than four in ten adults say the pandemic has had a negative impact on their impression of them. Attitudes towards assisted living facilities remain much more positive.

Opinion towards Nursing Homes & Assisted Living

Q2/3 – Would you say your opinion of nursing homes/assisted living is?

Nursing homes: 61% Positive, 38% Negative
Assisted living facilities: 82% Positive, 18% Negative

COVID-19 Impact on Opinion

Q6/7 – What type of impact, if any, has the COVID-19 pandemic had on your opinion of nursing homes/assisted living facilities?

Nursing home: 45% Negative Impact, 35% No impact, 18% Positive impact
Assisted living facilities: 33% Negative Impact, 46% No impact, 20% Positive impact

One-third of adults (36%) incorrectly believe nursing homes and assisted living facilities are the same thing.
Most Felt COVID-19 Outbreaks In Nursing Homes Were a Problem, Yet They Were Satisfied with Community’s Response

Three-quarters of adults felt the outbreaks in long-term care facilities were a major or moderate problem. But two-thirds were satisfied with their community’s handling of keeping the facilities safe. Adults age 65+ were more likely to see the outbreaks as a major problem and were least satisfied with their community’s handling of it.

Q4. How much of a problem, if at all, do you think the COVID-19 outbreaks in nursing homes, assisted living, and other long-term care facilities in your state have been?

- Major problem: 40%
- Moderate problem: 34%
- Minor problem: 18%
- Not a problem: 5%

52% of adults age 65+ felt it was a major problem.

Q5. How satisfied are you of your community’s handling of keeping nursing homes and assisted living facilities safe during COVID-19 pandemic?

- Not satisfied: 68%
- Satisfied: 28%
A Health Crisis Is Most Likely to Spur Long-term Care Planning

The most common period in which planning would occur is after a health crisis. The pandemic has not had a significant impact on planning for most adults but more say it has led them to think about long-term care for older family members vs. their own future.

Time in Which Adults Will Plan

- After a health crisis: 62%
- When reach certain age: 45% (Median age = 70)
- Retirement: 40%
- After a financial crisis: 37%
- When becoming empty nester: 28%
- At no time: 19%

COVID-19 Impact on Thoughts about Long-term Care

- Self
  - More often: 15%
  - Same: 55%
  - Less often: 28%

- Older family member
  - More often: 20%
  - Same: 51%
  - Less often: 25%

Q19 - People may think about long-term care at various points in this life for a variety of reasons. Would you begin to think seriously about long-term care...

Q8/9 – In what ways has the COVID-19 pandemic impacted your thoughts about long-term care for yourself in the future/older family members. Would you say you are thinking about long-term care...
Misperception about Medicare May Also Be a factor In Lack of Planning

Most 40+ adults have planned for death but fewer have planned for life. The majority of adults have planned for end-of-life issues such as living will wishes or funeral costs but most have not prepared for help they may need to live independently. Roughly half of 40+ adults believe they can rely on Medicare to cover long-term care services.

As you may know, Medicare provides health insurance to individuals age 65 and older and younger persons with long-term disabilities. As far as you know, does Medicare cover long-term care services such as nursing home care or care in the home from a home health aide? Data collected in April 2020 in SSRS weekly omnibus; Base: 40+ adults; n=1,430

*Now I'm going to read you a list of things some people might do to prepare for their future though many people do not do any of these. Please tell me which of the following you have done. Data collected in April 2020 in SSRS weekly omnibus; Base: 40+ adults; n=1,430

- Talked with family about your desire to be kept alive on support machines: 60%
- Set aside money for a funeral: 56%
- Written a will: 52%
- Designated a Power of Attorney: 48%
- Planned with family about wishes for care: 47%
- Set aside money for care: 40%
- Researched community-based services: 28%
- Researched in-home care options: 26%
- Purchased long-term care insurance: 22%

Does Medicare cover long-Term Care Services?

- Yes: 37%
- No: 47%
- Not sure: 15%
Most Adults Haven’t Looked for Information...But They Desire It

No more than one-third of 40+ adults have looked for information on long-term care for themselves (18%) or older family members (32%). More have looked for information for their family members vs. planning for their own future. Yet a majority say information on long-term care options and payment sources would be helpful.

Percent Who Searched for Long-term Care Information

- Searched for self: 18%
- Searched for family: 32%

Preferred Type of Information

- Home care providers: 62%
- Types of home care available: 62%
- Legal and financial information: 61%
- Paying for home care services: 59%
- Types of long-term care options: 59%
- Paying for long-term care: 56%
- Private long-term care insurance: 51%

50% of caregivers have searched for information for family members.

Q17/18 – Have you ever searched for information on long-term care for yourself/your aging family members?

Q16 – Would the following types of information be helpful to you in planning for long-term care?
Most 40+ Adults Want Care At Home & Even More So After COVID-19

A plurality of 40+ adults prefer a combination of family and paid help at home for both their older family members and themselves in the future. About one-fifth want family to provide all the care at home. About three in ten say the pandemic has made them less likely to choose facility-based care.

Nearly three in ten 40+ adults say they are less likely to choose facility-based care for themselves (28%) and their older family members (28%) as a result of the pandemic.

Q10/11 – How has the COVID-19 pandemic impacted your preference for the type of care you might need for yourself/aging family members? Would you say you are more likely to choose facility-based care, less likely, or has it had no impact on your choice?

Q12/13 – Which care option would you prefer for your family members who might need long-term care services in the future (for yourself if you need long-term care services in the future)?
And Most Believe They Will Get Care In the Setting They Want

The majority of adults believe both they and their family members will be able to receive care in the setting they prefer. More feel it is very likely they will receive their preferred care setting vs. their family members. Among those who do not feel it is likely, the most common reasons are not wanting to burden family and the inability to afford the care they want.

**Likelihood of Receiving Care in the Preferred Setting**

- **Very likely**
  - Older family members: 39%
  - Self: 48%
- **Somewhat likely**
  - Older family members: 43%
  - Self: 40%
- **Not likely**
  - Older family members: 17%
  - Self: 12%

**Reasons Preferred Setting Not Likely (for self)**

- Do not want to be a burden on family: 50%
- Cannot afford the type of help I want: 45%
- Do not have family nearby: 26%
- My home is not equipped for the long-term: 26%
- No services in my community: 15%

Q14/15 – How likely is it that you (older family members) will be able to receive care in the setting you/they prefer?

Q15A – Why do you think it is not very likely you will be able to receive care in the setting you prefer? Base: Those adults who say it is not very likely they will receive care they prefer; n = 348.
Implications
Implications

These findings demonstrate the importance of educating the public on the importance of planning for help they may need in the future and not waiting for a health crisis to occur.

It also presents an excellent opportunity to share information about the different types of long-term care services as information and resources are desired.

Most continue to prefer that long-term care be provided in the home for both themselves and their older family members employing a combination of paid help and family assistance.
Methodology

- **Objectives**: To explore attitudes towards long-term care amid the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Methodology**: Telephone survey using random digit dialing (RDD) for both landlines and cell phones.
- **Qualifications**: Age 40 and older.
- **Sample**: SSRS of Glen Mills, PA weekly omnibus, n= 696
- **Weighting**: The data is weighted by age, race, sex, region, education and marital status to reflect national population estimates for adults age 40+.
- **Confidence Interval**: Total sample: ± 4.5 %
### A Demographic Overview

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<td>Not a caregiver</td>
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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.