

The United States of Aging Survey **National Findings**

In its second year, The United States of Aging Survey, conducted by the National Council on Aging (NCOA), UnitedHealthcare and USA TODAY, explores what underlies American seniors' perspectives on aging, and how the country can better prepare for a booming senior population.

The 2013 survey comprised 4,000 telephone interviews, including nationally representative samples of Americans ages 60 and older and adults ages 18-59. To explore different perspectives on aging preparedness, the 2013 survey oversampled key audiences, including:

- Low-income seniors (ages 60 and older with a household income of less than \$15,000);
- Older seniors (ages 80 and older);
- Seniors with three or more chronic health conditions (ages 60 and older);
- Seniors from five designated markets including Birmingham, Ala., Indianapolis, Los Angeles, Orlando, Fla. and San Antonio.

General Outlook

In 2013, seniors have maintained a positive outlook on their future and the aging process.

- Fifty-seven percent of seniors state that overall, the past year of their life has been “normal,” versus 42 percent of those surveyed in 2012.
- More than half (51 percent) of seniors expect their quality of life to stay about the same during the next five to 10 years, while 21 percent expect it to get much or somewhat better, versus 30 percent of those surveyed in 2012.

Health Preparedness

Few seniors express concern about the status of their health today. At the same time, many are not investing in activities that are important to helping them manage their health for the long term.

- Although 6 in 10 seniors describe their health in the past year as “normal,” 65 percent of seniors report having at least two chronic health conditions.
- More than half (51 percent) of seniors have not set any specific goals to manage their health in the past 12 months.
- Less than 1 in 5 seniors has received guidance in the past year to develop an action plan for managing their health and nearly 7 in 10 seniors with one or more chronic health conditions were not encouraged by their health care provider to attend community programs to help with their health.
- Sixty percent of seniors expect their health to stay the same over the next five to 10 years, compared with 53 percent of adults ages 18-59.
- A majority (84 percent) say it is not very or not at all difficult to perform regular activities independently.

The opportunities for health improvement are even greater among low-income seniors and those with chronic health conditions.

- Low-income seniors, in particular, report challenges in managing their health. Seventy-five percent of low-income seniors with one or more chronic health conditions face at least one



- barrier, such as lack of energy or money, compared with 53 percent of seniors nationally.
- Twenty-six percent of seniors with three or more chronic health conditions report that they never exercise for 30 minutes or more, compared with 18 percent of seniors nationally.

Financial Security

Although most seniors are comfortable with their current financial situation, a majority of seniors express concern about their long-term financial security.

- More than half (53 percent) of seniors are very or somewhat concerned about whether their savings and income will be sufficient to last the rest of their life, compared with 44 percent of older seniors, 61 percent of low-income seniors and 56 percent of seniors with three or more chronic health conditions.
- Forty-one percent of working seniors indicate Social Security will be their primary source of retirement income, compared with 23 percent of adults ages 18-59.
- A majority (66 percent) of seniors believe it to be very or somewhat easy to pay monthly living expenses, compared with 52 percent of adults ages 18-59.

Community Support

While the majority of seniors agree that the community they live in is responsive to the needs of seniors, many lack confidence that their community is prepared to meet the needs of a growing senior population.

- Nearly three-fourths (71 percent) of seniors say their community is responsive to the needs of seniors, versus 61 percent of adults ages 18-59.
- Nearly 1 in 2 (49 percent) seniors believe their community is doing enough to prepare for the future needs of the growing senior population, compared with 45 percent of adults ages 18-59.

Wired Seniors

Seniors today are comfortable using technology and cite its importance in helping them stay connected to family, friends and the wider world. However, a lack of understanding and cost remain barriers to more wide-spread adoption.

- Nearly the same amount of seniors and adults ages 18-59 say it is very or somewhat important for seniors to use technology (83 percent and 88 percent, respectively).
- However, 34 percent of seniors cite “I don’t understand how to use it” as a barrier preventing them from using more technology.
- While a majority (81 percent) of low-income seniors say technology is very or somewhat important in helping them stay in touch with family and friends, nearly half (47 percent) say cost prevents their use of technology, compared with 21 percent of older seniors and 35 percent of seniors with three or more chronic health conditions.

To access the survey findings, visit www.ncoa.org/UnitedStatesofAging. Join the conversation on Twitter at #USofAging.

About The United States of Aging Survey

The United States of Aging Survey is an annual survey conducted by the National Council on Aging, UnitedHealthcare and USA TODAY. For the 2013 survey, Penn Schoen Berland completed 4,000 telephone interviews from April 3, 2013, to May 4, 2013, including nationally representative samples of Americans ages 60 and older and adults ages 18-59. The margin of error for the national samples is +/-3.1 percent and between 3.7 percent and 5 percent for oversampled



subpopulations. Data from general population samples, the regional oversampled audiences and the oversampled audience of seniors ages 80 and older are weighted to U.S. Census Bureau demographic statistics in terms of age, gender, income, marital status and race.

About the National Council On Aging

The National Council on Aging is a nonprofit service and advocacy organization headquartered in Washington, D.C. NCOA is a national voice for millions of older adults – especially those who are vulnerable and disadvantaged – and the community organizations that serve them. It brings together nonprofit organizations, businesses, and government to develop creative solutions that improve the lives of all older adults. NCOA works with thousands of organizations across the country to help seniors find jobs and benefits, improve their health, live independently, and remain active in their communities. For more information, please visit: www.ncoa.org | www.facebook.com/NCOAging | www.twitter.com/NCOAging.

About UnitedHealthcare

UnitedHealthcare is dedicated to helping people nationwide live healthier lives by simplifying the health care experience, meeting consumer health and wellness needs, and sustaining trusted relationships with care providers. The company offers the full spectrum of health benefit programs for individuals, employers and Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries, and contracts directly with 780,000 physicians and care professionals and 5,900 hospitals and other care facilities nationwide. UnitedHealthcare serves more than 40 million people in health benefits and is one of the businesses of UnitedHealth Group (NYSE: UNH), a diversified Fortune 50 health and well-being company.

