

# NEW SURVEY REVEALS DEEP CONCERN, QUESTIONS ABOUT LONG-TERM CARE PLANNING

*Comprehensive study explores many key long-term care issues; few report being prepared for personal or financial burden*

**CHICAGO, May 25, 2017** — Two-thirds of Americans age 40 and older feel that neither they nor the country are prepared for the long-term health care needs that accompany the rapidly growing older adult population, according to a new survey from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research. A lack of preparedness is one of many concerns detailed in the survey about the long-term care challenges facing aging Americans—a segment of the population that is projected to more than double to about 98 million adults age 65 or older by 2060.

“The challenge of long-term care is one of the most significant personal and financial issues facing aging Americans, yet is it widely misunderstood and many Americans are unprepared as a result,” said Trevor Tompson, director of The AP-NORC Center. “A lifetime of savings can be wiped out because of the costs of long-term care. Our survey reveals strong support for several policy options to help Americans and their caregivers afford the care they need.”

The survey’s key findings include:

- More than half of respondents believe Medicare should be responsible for the costs of long-term care, and an equal number say they will rely quite a bit or completely on Medicare support. (Medicare, however, does not cover many long-term care expenses, including the costs of nursing homes or home health care aides.)
- In terms of policy, three-quarters favor tax breaks to encourage saving for long-term care and tax breaks to cover the cost of long-term care insurance.
- Planning for long-term care needs is lagging badly, with 67 percent saying they have done only a little or no planning for personal needs.
- There is support for paid family leave programs and other policies to help caregivers, regardless of political affiliation.

At the local level, less than half of older Americans say their community is doing a good job of meeting older adults’ needs for nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and home health care



aides to provide long-term care. Many are lukewarm, saying their community is doing neither a good nor poor job of meeting these needs.

A majority of older adults say they would like the federal government to devote a lot or a great deal of effort this year to helping people with the costs of ongoing living assistance.

The survey about long-term care has been done annually since 2013 by The AP-NORC Center, with principal funding from The SCAN Foundation. Collectively the surveys reveal widely-held misperceptions about the extent of long-term care Americans are likely to need and about the costs of such care.

The 2017 survey tracks items from previous years while also exploring new topics, including perceptions of the role of home health aides in providing care, support for policy proposals to help caregivers, and the role of the federal government in helping with costs.

### **About the survey**

Data were collected using AmeriSpeak®, NORC's probability-based panel designed to be representative of the U.S. household population. Interviews were conducted between March 2 and March 29, 2017, with adults age 40 and older representing the 50 states and the District of Columbia. A total of 1,341 people completed the survey—1,106 via the web and 235 via telephone. The sample also included an oversample of Hispanic adults—310 Hispanics age 40 and older. The overall margin of sampling error is +/- 4.0 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level, including the design effect. For the oversample of Hispanics, the margin of sampling error at the 95 percent confidence level is +/- 6.2 percentage points.

Complete survey findings are available at [www.longtermcarepoll.org](http://www.longtermcarepoll.org).

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