



West Health Institute/ NORC National Survey on Aging in America

Aging in America Conference
March 22, 2017

Major national survey on aging released today

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Issue Brief

NEW INSIGHTS INTO AMERICA'S VIEWS ON AGING SUCCESSFULLY: WHO WILL HELP AN AGING AMERICA STAY INDEPENDENT AND HEALTHY?



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The growth of the population age 65 and older is one of the most significant trends in the history of the United States. Baby boomers—those born between 1946 and 1964—are turning 65 at a rate of 10,000 a day.¹ This generation, which numbered nearly 75 million in 2015, continues to make its mark on culture, healthcare, social services, caregiving and the economy. And now as they head into their senior years, this group is redefining what it means to age and is putting new pressures on a system of healthcare and social support services that isn't fully meeting their needs as they grow older. They are not alone. Future generations of seniors are also concerned about their aging experience and whether their future will be better, the same or worse than their parents and grandparents.

Five Things You Should Know about support systems for aging from the West Health Institute/NORC Survey on Aging in America.

- 1 More than 7 in 10 Americans age 30 and older say it's important that seniors have access to health care services, dental care, healthy food, affordable housing and transportation, but fewer than half say their communities are doing a good job in these areas.
- 2 About one-third of adults in their 30s, 40s and 50s do not think government programs are meeting the needs of seniors, compared to 26 percent of people in their 60s and 14 percent of people 70 or older.
- 3 People age 70 and older are significantly more likely than any other age group to have a positive view of the healthcare system.
- 4 Over half of Americans age 30 and older say they have a very or somewhat strong relationship with their primary healthcare provider, and the likelihood of a strong relationship is greater as people grow older.
- 5 While most Americans say it's very important for seniors to have access to dental care, only 29 percent think their local communities are doing a good job meeting oral health needs.


¹ New Research Center, Dec. 31, 2015, "Baby Boomers Approach 65, Shakeup"
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Issue Brief

PERCEPTIONS OF AGING DURING EACH DECADE OF LIFE AFTER 30



© 2016 iStock/Getty Images

The aging of America will impact almost every aspect of American life. It will change how and where we live, put additional pressures on healthcare, social services and caregivers, create new dynamics between young and old and challenge biases and personal views of aging itself.

The senior population is growing at one of the fastest rates in American history. Every day 10,000 baby boomers turn 65, and the U.S. Census Bureau predicts that by 2050, the number of people age 65 and older will nearly double. At last count in 2014, there were 46.2 million seniors in the United States.

How prepared are we as individuals and a country to meet the challenges facing older adults in America? Short answer: not well prepared.

According to the West Health Institute/NORC Survey on Aging in America—the most comprehensive national survey to gauge the hopes, fears, attitudes and perceptions of aging throughout each decade of life for adults 30 and older—70 percent of Americans say the country is not well prepared to address the needs of its fast growing senior population. In addition, 59 percent say the country is heading in the wrong direction when it comes to providing healthcare and social service support to seniors. The numbers are slightly less pessimistic for people age 70 or older, as only 58 percent of this group say we're not prepared and only 40 percent think we're not going in the right direction.

The survey also finds that people are worried about what may happen to them personally as they age, with different

Four Things You Should Know about perceptions of aging from the West Health Institute/NORC Survey on Aging in America.

- 1 Losing one's memory, not having financial security and developing health issues are top concerns about aging whether you're 30 or 60, followed by losing independence and having to move into a nursing home. Maintaining independence is a core need across the decades.
- 2 Seventy percent of Americans feel the country is not prepared for the rapid growth of its senior population.
- 3 Fifty-nine percent say the country is heading in the wrong direction when it comes to meeting the healthcare and social service needs of seniors.
- 4 More than half of Americans over 30 report being mostly or somewhat optimistic about aging, an optimism that tends to increase with age (46 percent of people age 30 to 39 are optimistic compared with 65 percent of people 70 and older).

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It's a critical time for successful aging in America

- About 10,000 baby boomers turning 65 a day
- By 2030, seniors expected to be about 20% of U.S. population
- Today's healthcare system is not scaled or structured for seniors
- New thinking and new senior-specific models of care are needed





West Health's mission is to enable seniors to successfully age in place, with access to high-quality, affordable health and support services that preserve and protect their dignity, quality of life and independence.



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National survey of people across the decades to explore what matters most as they age

The West Health Institute/NORC Survey on Aging in America

Nationally representative survey of more than 3,000 adults selected from NORC's AmeriSpeak Panel to gauge the hopes, fears and attitudes of aging across five age groups



30- 39



40- 49



50- 59



60- 69



70+

Informs programs, policies and models of care to support today's seniors and seniors of tomorrow

50-item survey designed to gain insights into the following areas

- 1 Personal priorities now and in the future
- 2 State of seniors in America today
- 3 Personal experiences with seniors and aging
- 4 Healthcare experiences

Survey administered via:



web



phone

Conducted September 19 to October 21, 2016 | Response rate ~46%, margin of error 2.2%

Survey Results

Worries about aging loom large for Americans over 30 – for the country and for themselves

70%

think the country is “a little or not at all prepared” to address the needs of its fast-growing senior population



59%

believe that when it comes to providing healthcare, social services and supports for seniors, the country is headed in the wrong direction

Aging is personal: Losing one's memory, health problems and not having financial security top list

Biggest Worries Facing Americans 30 and older



Financial security is a top worry for 30-50;
Losing memory and poor health equally
important across the decades

What matters most: common ground for top priorities among age groups include health and independence

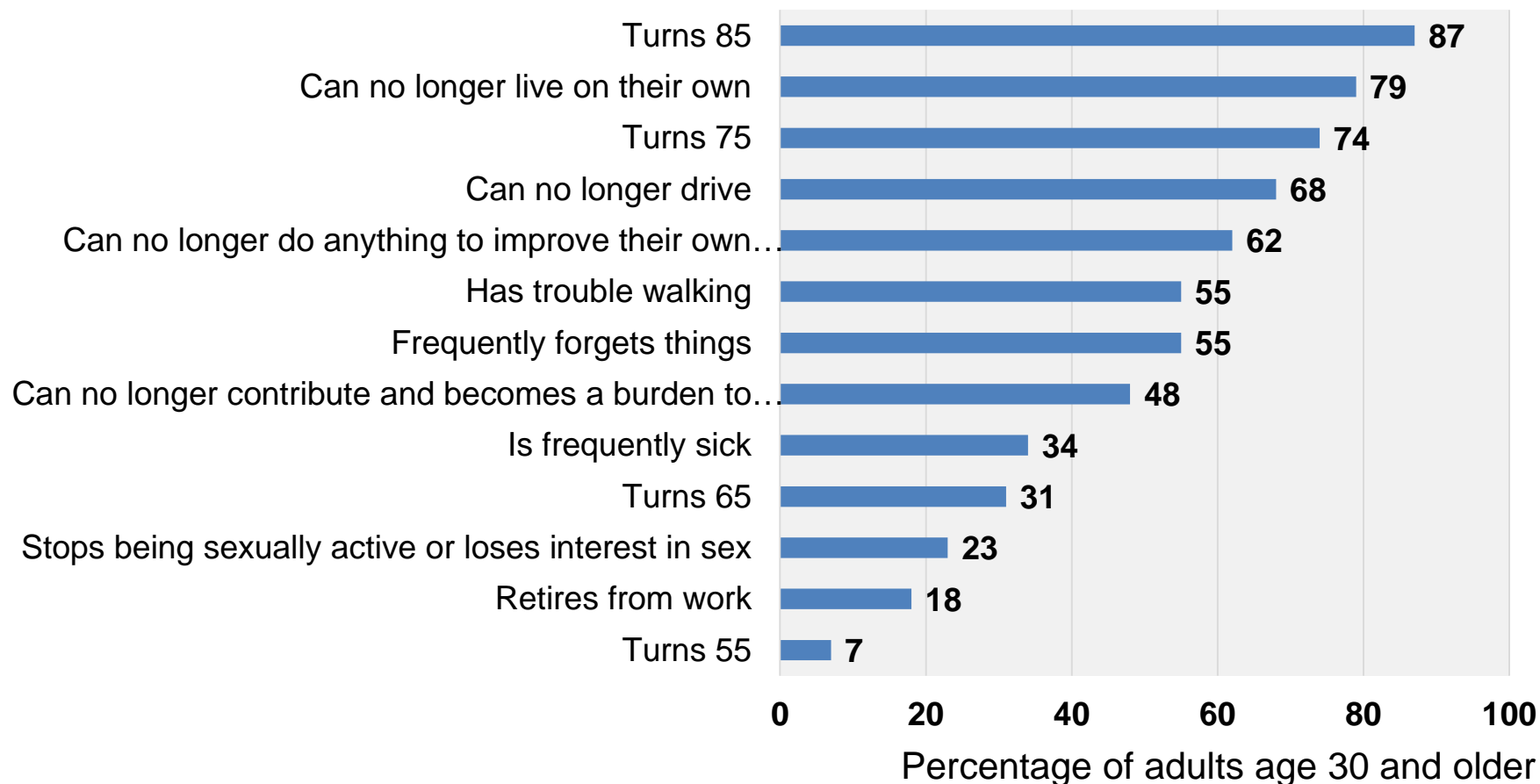
Americans' priorities differ little across age groups in terms of what percent say each is very or extremely important, but there are shifts in the rankings across the decades.

	Top Priority	Second	Third	Fourth	Fifth
30s	Health (91)	Respect (87)	Financial security (86)	Independence (86)	Close relationships (85)
40s	Health (91)	Financial security (88)	Independence (87)	Close relationships (85)	Respect (84)
50s	Health (94)	Independence (90)	Respect (87)	Financial security (86)	Close relationships (85)
60s	Health (94)	Independence (90)	Close relationships (88)	Financial security (86)	Respect (85)
70 and older	Health (96)	Close relationships (92)	Independence (90)	Financial security (87)	Respect (84)



First, think about your life now and what matters most to you. How important to you personally is ...?

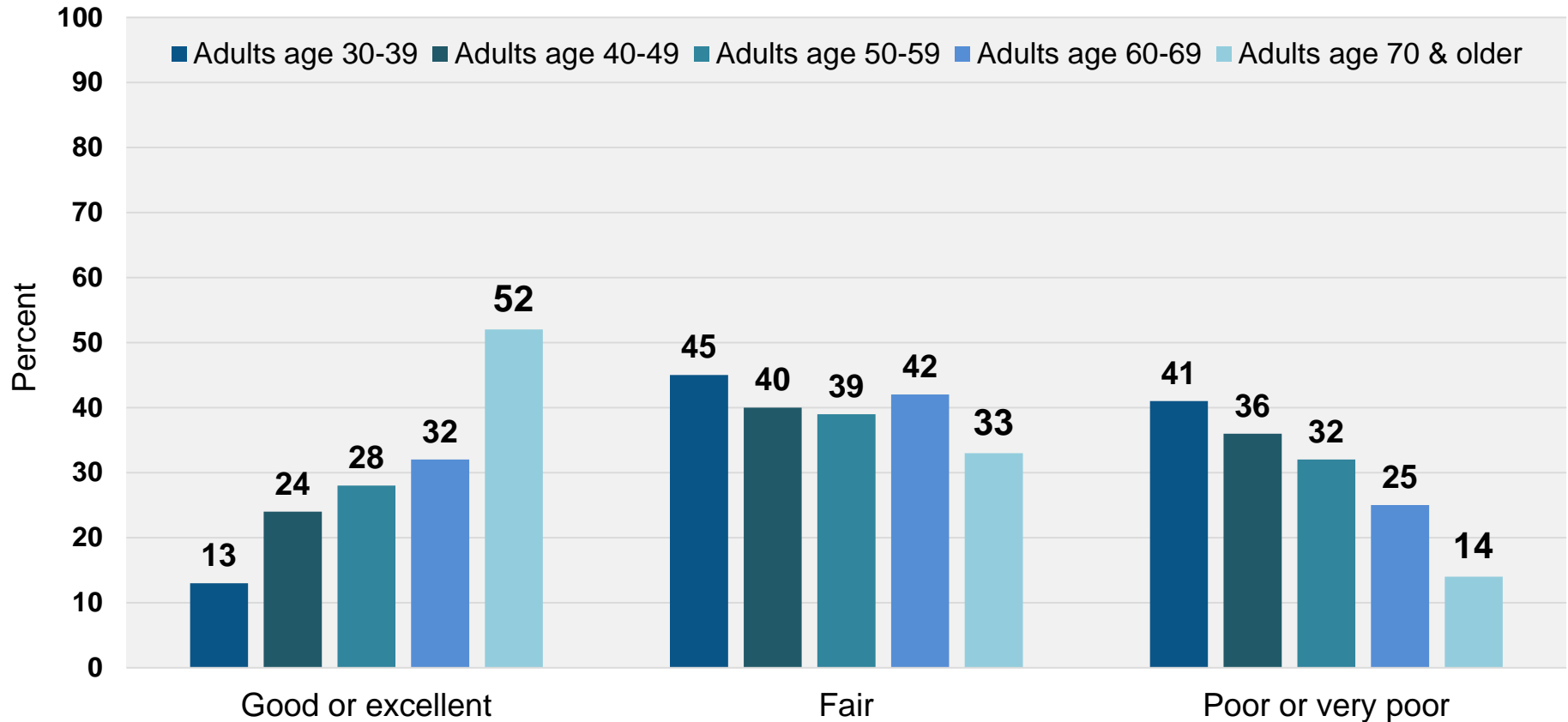
More Americans believe signs of old age are factors related to losing to independence



For each of the following, please tell me whether or not it is a sign that a person has reached old age.

Views of current healthcare system are poor, but older adults are less negative

Older Americans are more likely to say the healthcare system in the United States is good or excellent.

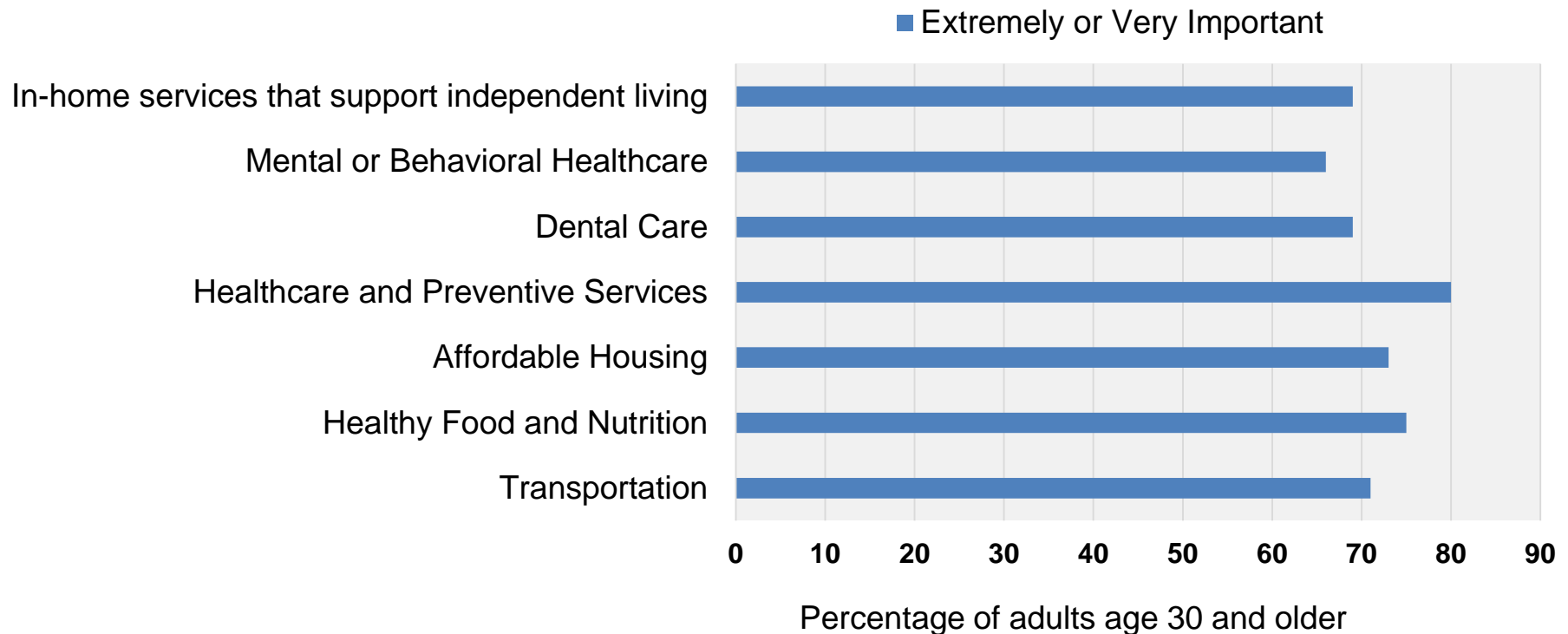


How would you rate the healthcare system in America today?

When it comes to successful aging, it is more than just medical care that is important

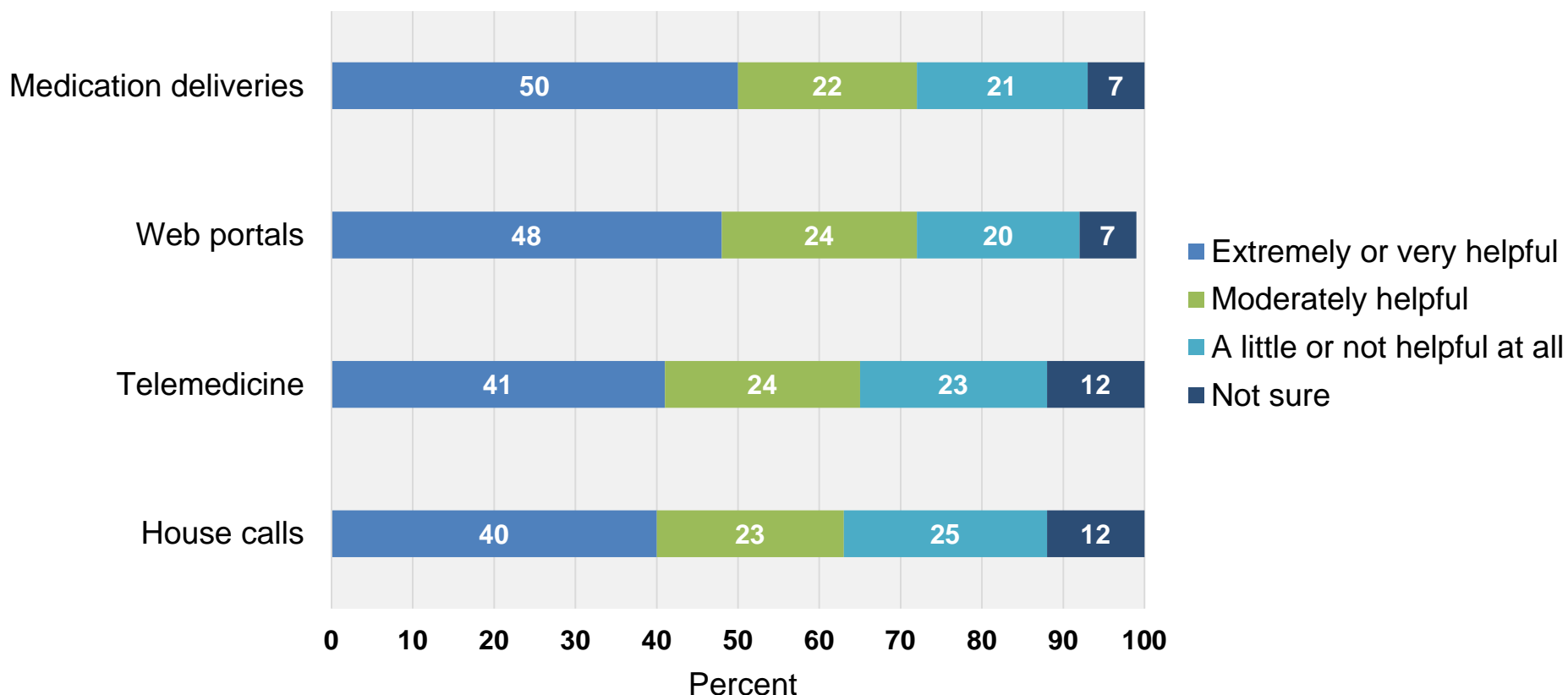
70%

say it's important that seniors have access to healthcare services, behavioral health, dental care, healthy food, affordable housing and transportation



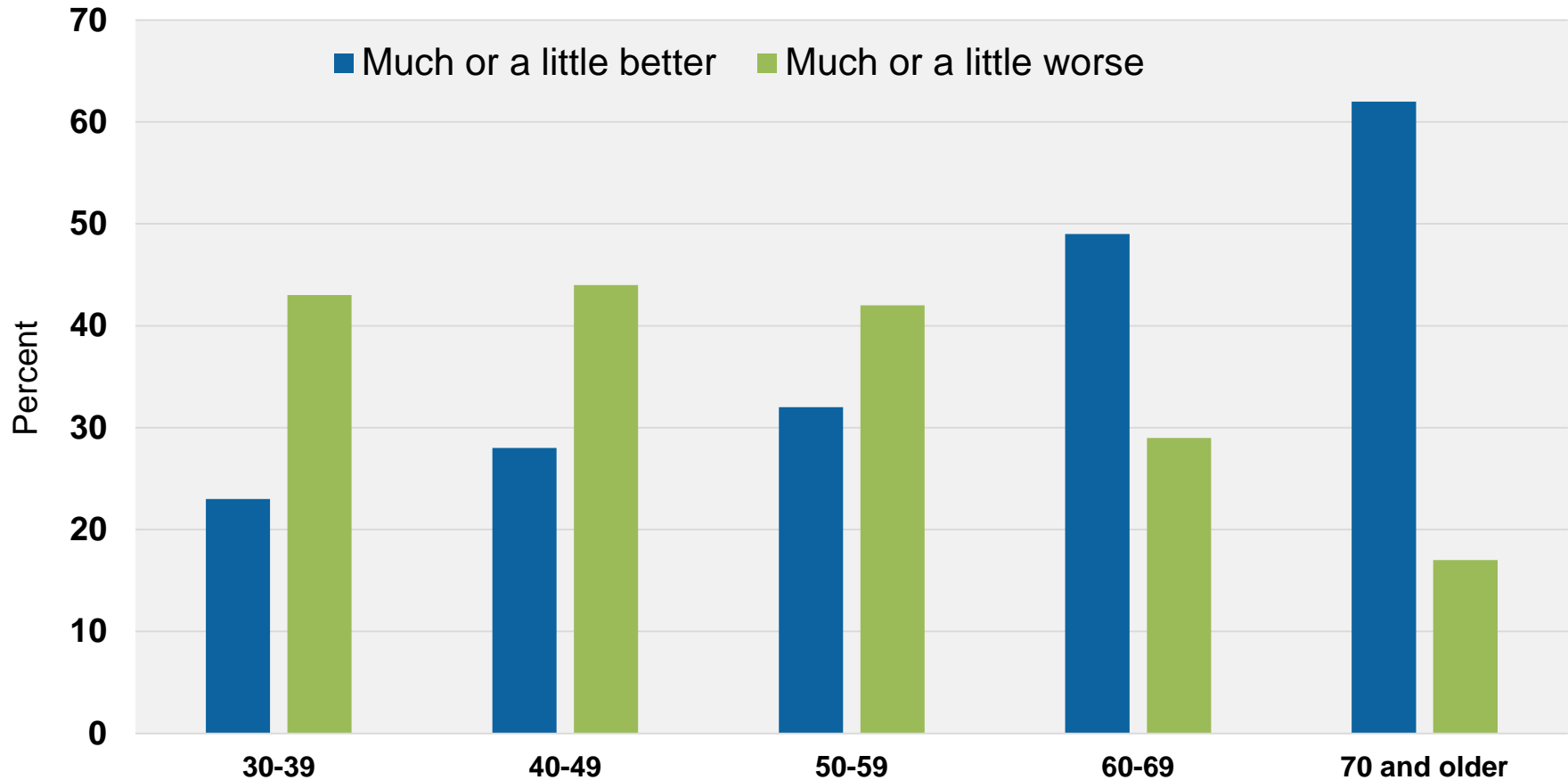
Survey showed a majority of Americans want access to in-home care

A majority of adults age 30 and older say access to in-home healthcare services would be helpful.



In addition to receiving healthcare at doctor's offices, clinics and hospitals, how helpful would having access to each of the following services be to you?

The older we get, the more optimistic we are about the aging experience



Do you think your generation's aging experience will be better or worse than the generation before you?

Summary of key findings from the WHI/NORC Survey on Aging in America

- 1 There is significant common ground and concern among age groups when it comes to aging in America.
- 2 People are concerned for the country as well as for their own personal aging experience.
- 3 There is great support for models of care that address the specific needs of seniors.

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