

Senior Lifestyles: A Survey of Medicare Beneficiaries on Health & Wellness

June 2023

Introduction

eHealth's Senior Lifestyles report provides insights into the physical and mental health and wellness of today's Medicare beneficiaries. It's a mixed picture, with room for both encouragement and concern.

Our findings show that most Medicare beneficiaries are leading active social lives, getting exercise, and seeing their doctors regularly.

However, in an era of high inflation and acrimonious politics, and with the lingering impact of the COVID pandemic still apparent, increasing numbers of Medicare beneficiaries report experiencing anxiety and disengagement.

This report is based on a voluntary survey of beneficiaries currently enrolled in Medicare insurance plans purchased through eHealth. The survey was conducted in June of 2023 and over 3,500 responses were collected.

For more than 25 years eHealth has helped Americans find and enroll in the quality health coverage they need at a price they can afford. We care deeply about the populations we serve, and we hope the insights provided here will shed valuable light on their experience.

Highlights - *Today's Medicare beneficiaries are:*

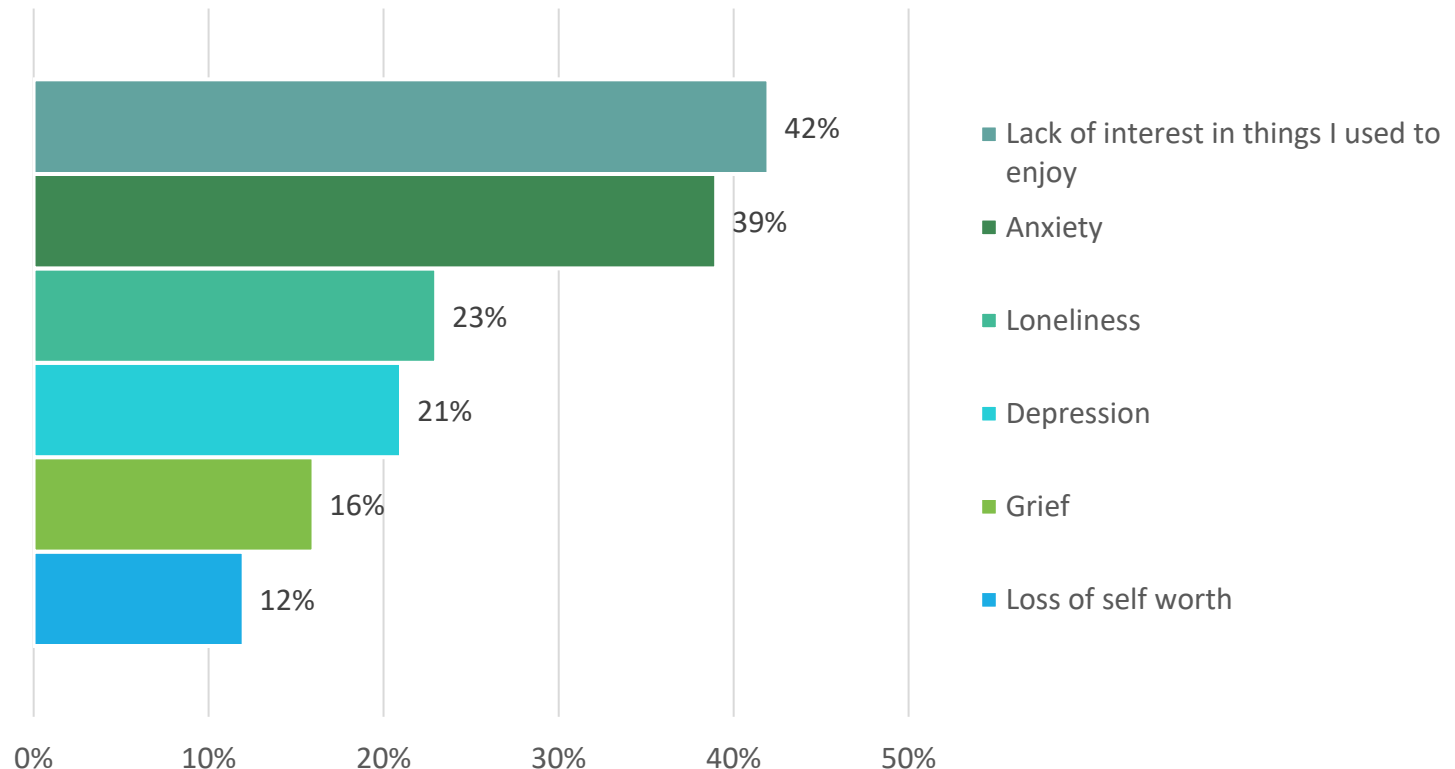
- **Ring alarm bells on mental health:** 42% of seniors are experiencing a loss of interest in things they used to enjoy, while 39% suffer from anxiety. These represent significant increases over March of 2022, when those figures were 21%, 24%, respectively. The most commonly cited factors behind these feelings in 2022 were financial stress and politics or current events.
- **Still feeling the impact of COVID:** 59% are less likely to go on a cruise today than they were before the pandemic; 36% are less likely to attend a concert and 32% are less likely to fly. However, that's an improvement over August of 2022, when those figures were 73%, 56% and 52%, respectively.
- **Prioritizing family over friends for a high quality of life:** A close relationship with family was most commonly cited (by 22%) as the #1 factor for a high quality of life; only 6% said having good friends was most important.
- **Still getting out and being social:** A majority go out to dinner (62%), visit with family (62%) or visit with friends (55%) at least once per month.
- **Physically active:** Nearly half (49%) get 4 or more hours of exercise per week; walking is by far the most popular form of exercise, enjoyed by 79% of respondents.
- **Digital engaged:** 48% say they spend 3 or more hours online per day; only 2% don't go online at all.
- **Not getting enough sleep:** Nearly three quarters (72%) say they get 7 or fewer hours of sleep per night; the National Institutes of Health recommends 7-9 hours per night for older adults.
- **Seeing the doctor regularly:** Most receive medical care a few times per year, with 19% seeing the doctor at least once per month; only 5% fail to see the doctor at least once per year.

Mental Health and Wellness

eHealth found a significant spike in self-reported anxiety, depression and other symptoms

- 42% of respondents aged 65+ report a loss of interest, compared to 21% in an eHealth survey from March of 2022*.
- 39% report anxiety, compared to 24% in 2022.
- 23% report loneliness and 21% report depression; in 2022 these were reported by 19% in each case.
- 16% report grief and 12% report loss of self-worth, compared to 10% and 8% in 2022.

“Are you currently experiencing any of the following?”



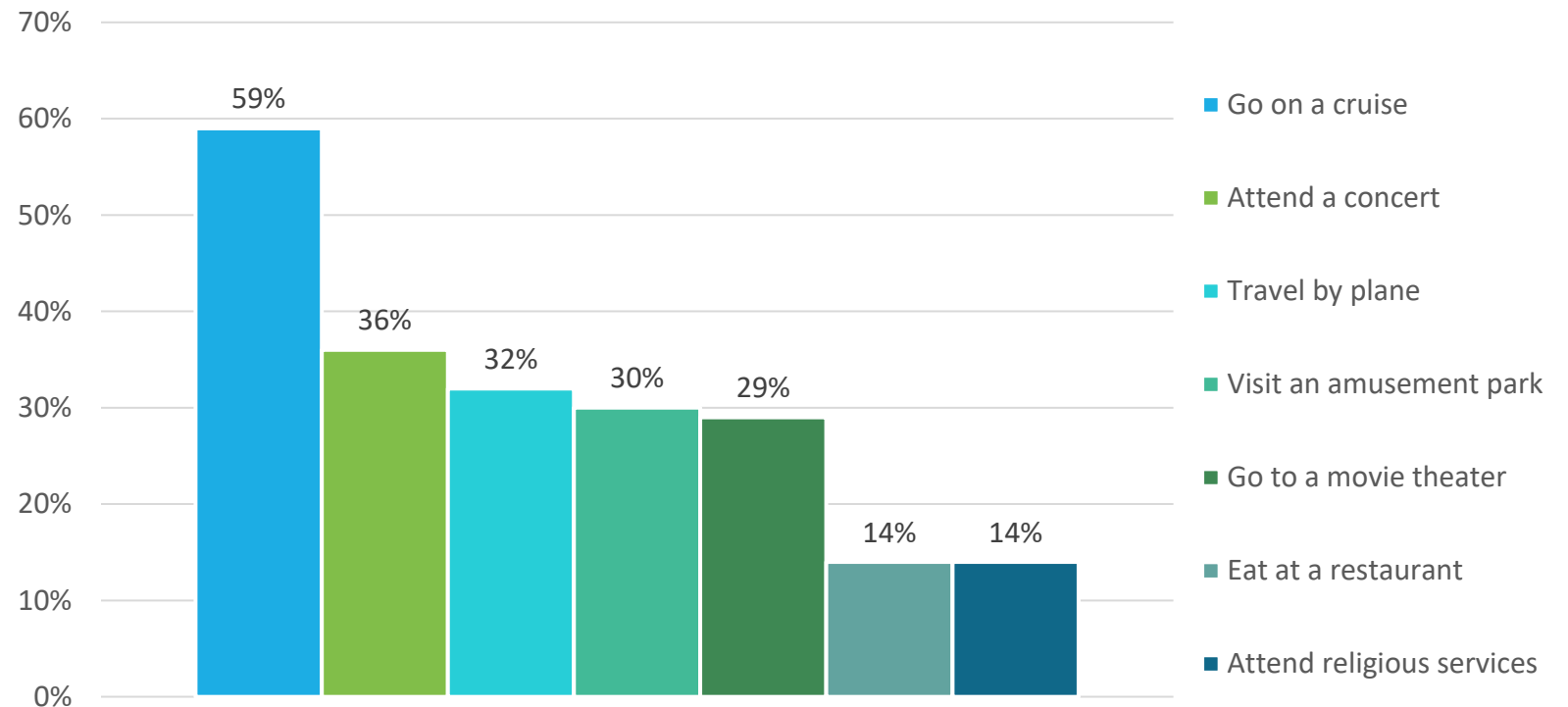
*See eHealth's March 2022 report [Seniors Speak Out on Mental Health](#).

The Lingering Impact of COVID

Fears over COVID continue to impact Medicare beneficiary lifestyles, but less than last year

- 59% are less likely to go on a cruise today than before COVID, compared to 73% who felt that way in August of 2022*.
- 36% are less likely to attend a concert, compared to 56% in August of 2022.
- 32% are less likely to travel by plane, compared to 52% in August of 2022.
- 30% are less likely to visit an amusement park, compared to 39% in August of 2022.

“Which of the following are you less likely to engage in today compared to before the COVID pandemic?”



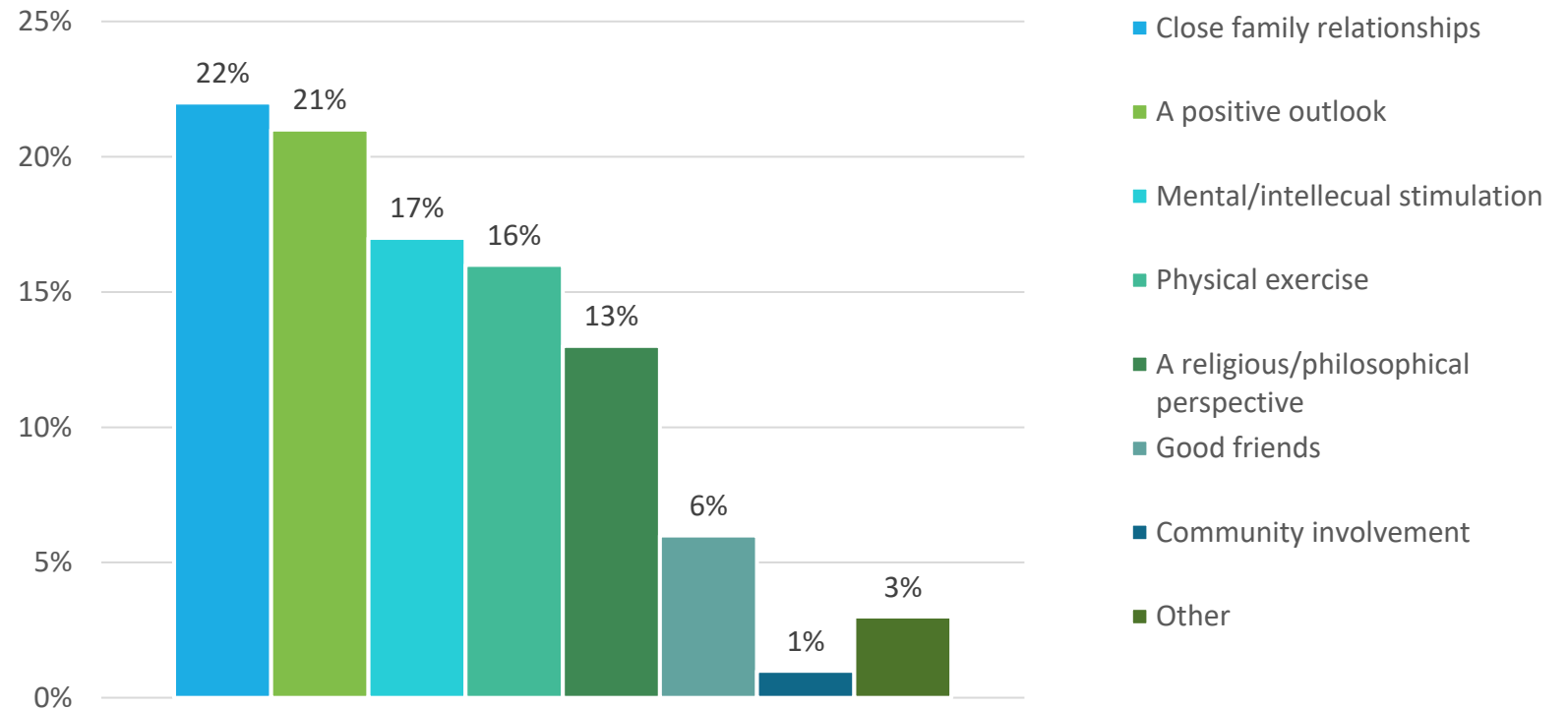
*See eHealth's August 2022 report [Seniors Speak Out on COVID](#).

Key Factors Determining Quality of Life

Family relationships and a positive outlook are most commonly cited factors

- 22% say close family relationships are the single most important factor for quality of life.
- 21% cite a positive outlook.
- 17% cite mental/intellectual stimulation.
- 16% cite physical exercise.
- 13% cite a religious or philosophical perspective.
- 6% cite good friends, and 1% cite community involvement.

“What do you consider the single most important factor in a high quality of life?”

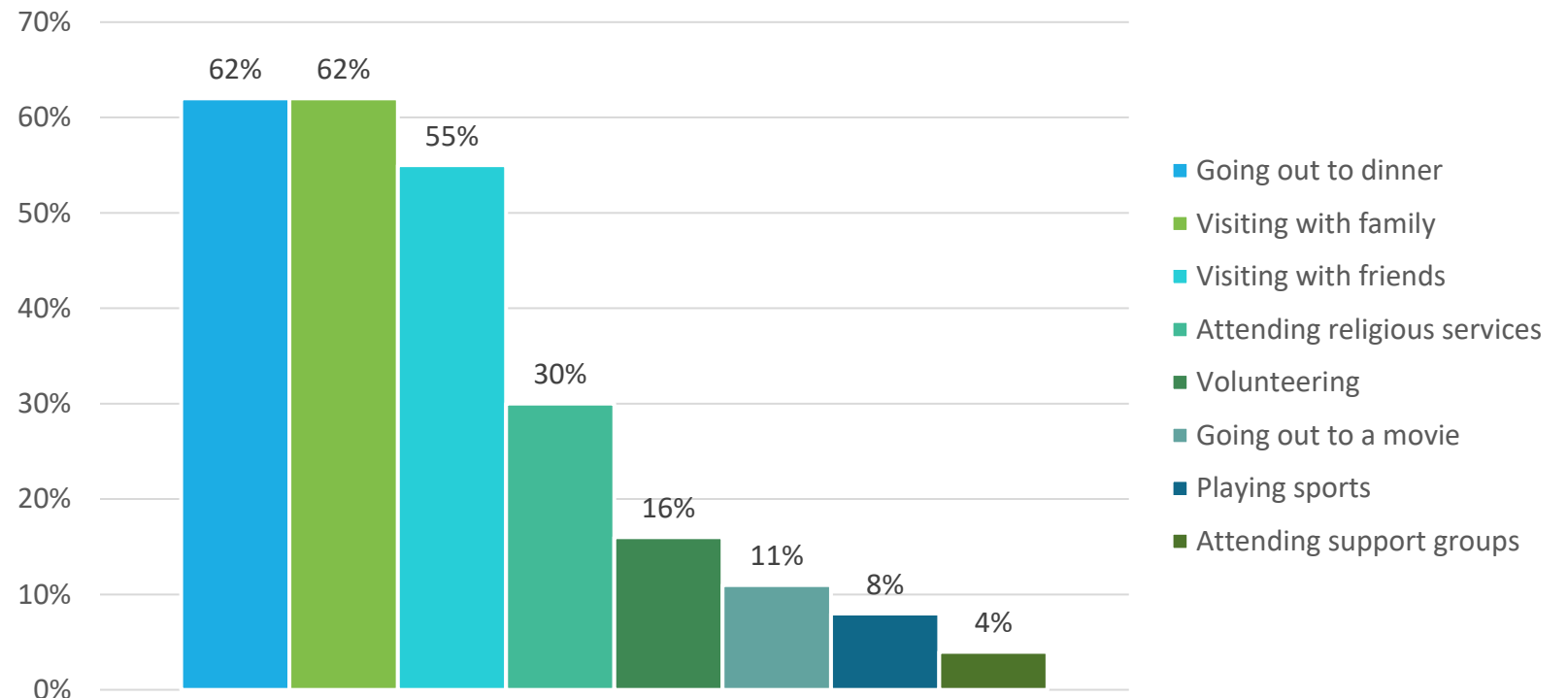


Regular Activities

A majority go out to dinner and visit family or friends at least once per month

- 62% say they go out to dinner at least once per month.
- The same figure (62%) visit with family at least once per month.
- 55% visit friends at least once per month.
- 30% attend religious services at least once per month.
- 16% volunteer at least once per month.
- 11% go out to a movie at least once per month.
- 8% play sports at least once per month.
- 4% attend support groups at least once per month.

Activities Medicare beneficiaries engage in at least once per month

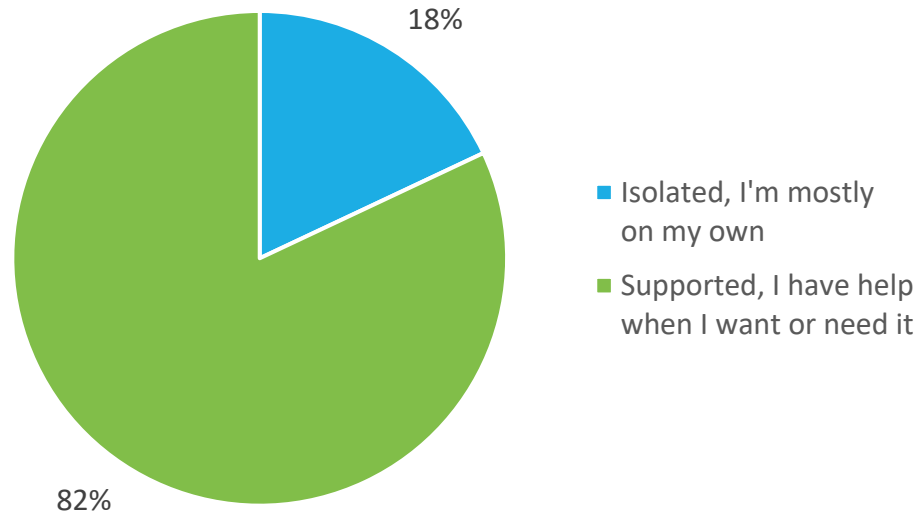


Social Support and Isolation

About two in 10 Medicare beneficiaries report feeling socially isolated

- 18% say they feel isolated and without a support system.
- 82% feel supported, with a network of friends or family they can rely on when needed.

“Think about your network of friends, family, and others. Which of the following best describes how you feel?”



Single and low-income Medicare beneficiaries are most likely to feel isolated

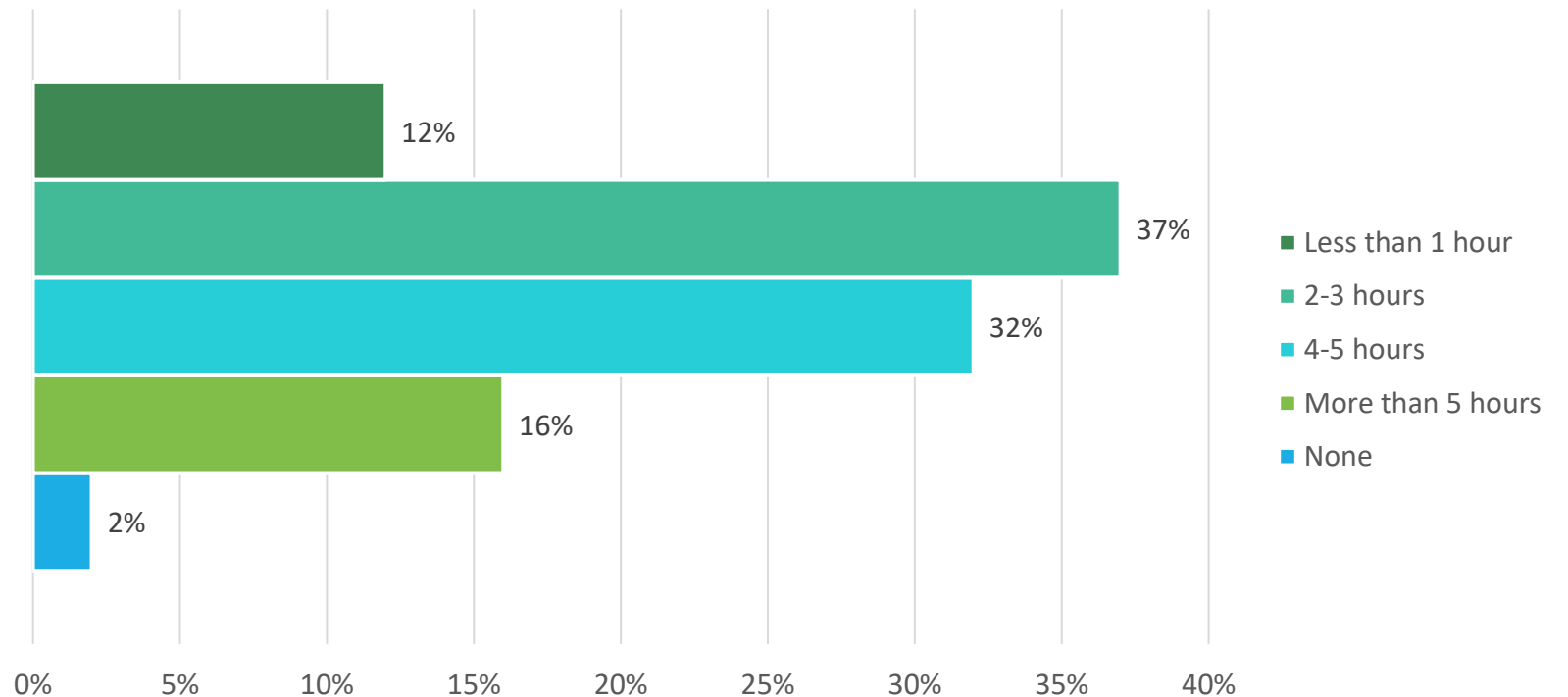
- 29% of single Medicare beneficiaries report feeling isolated, compared to 12% of married beneficiaries.
- 29% of those with an income below \$25,000 per year report feeling isolated, compared to only 9% of those with an income of more than \$100,000.

Time Spent Online

Nearly half spend three or more hours online every day

- 12% of Medicare beneficiaries say they spend less than one hour online per day.
- 37% spent 1 to 2 hours online per day.
- 32% spend 3 to 4 hours online per day.
- 16% spend five hour or more online per day.
- 2% don't spend any time online.

“About how much time do you spend online (using a computer, tablet, or smart phone) per day?”

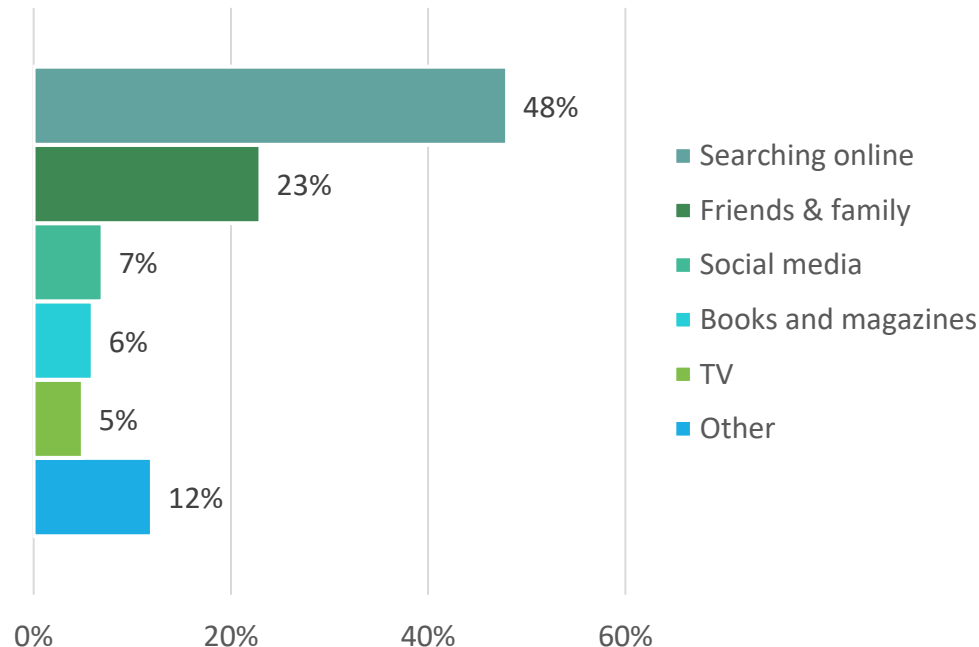


Resources for Health & Wellness

Most Medicare beneficiaries search online or turn to family & friends to learn about health and wellness

- 48% say they get health and wellness information by searching online.
- 23% turn to family or friends.
- 7% turn to social media.
- 6% turn to books or magazines.
- 5% get their health and wellness information from television.
- 12% get their health and wellness information from other sources.

“Where are you most likely to get information about health and wellness?”



Younger beneficiaries rely much more on the internet than older beneficiaries

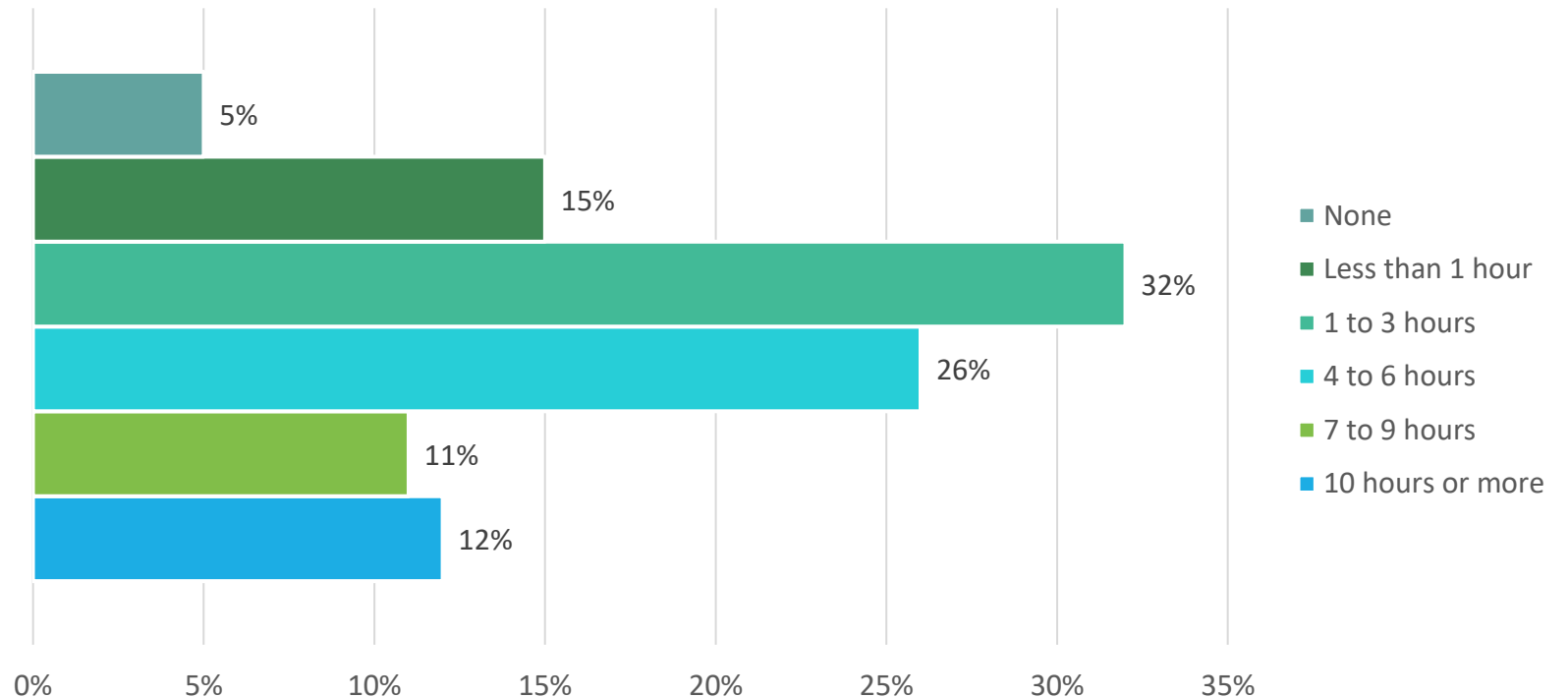
- Medicare beneficiaries aged 65 to 70 are much more likely to get information online than from family and friends (53% vs 21%).
- By comparison, beneficiaries aged 80+ are equally likely to get health information online or from family and friends (31% vs 32%).

Physical Exercise

About half (49%) of Medicare beneficiaries get four or more hours of exercise per week

- 5% say they get no regular exercise.
- 15% get less than one hour of exercise per week.
- 32% get 1 to 3 hours per week.
- 26% get 4 to 6 hours per week.
- 11% get 7 to 9 hours per week.
- 12% get 10 or more hours of exercise per week.

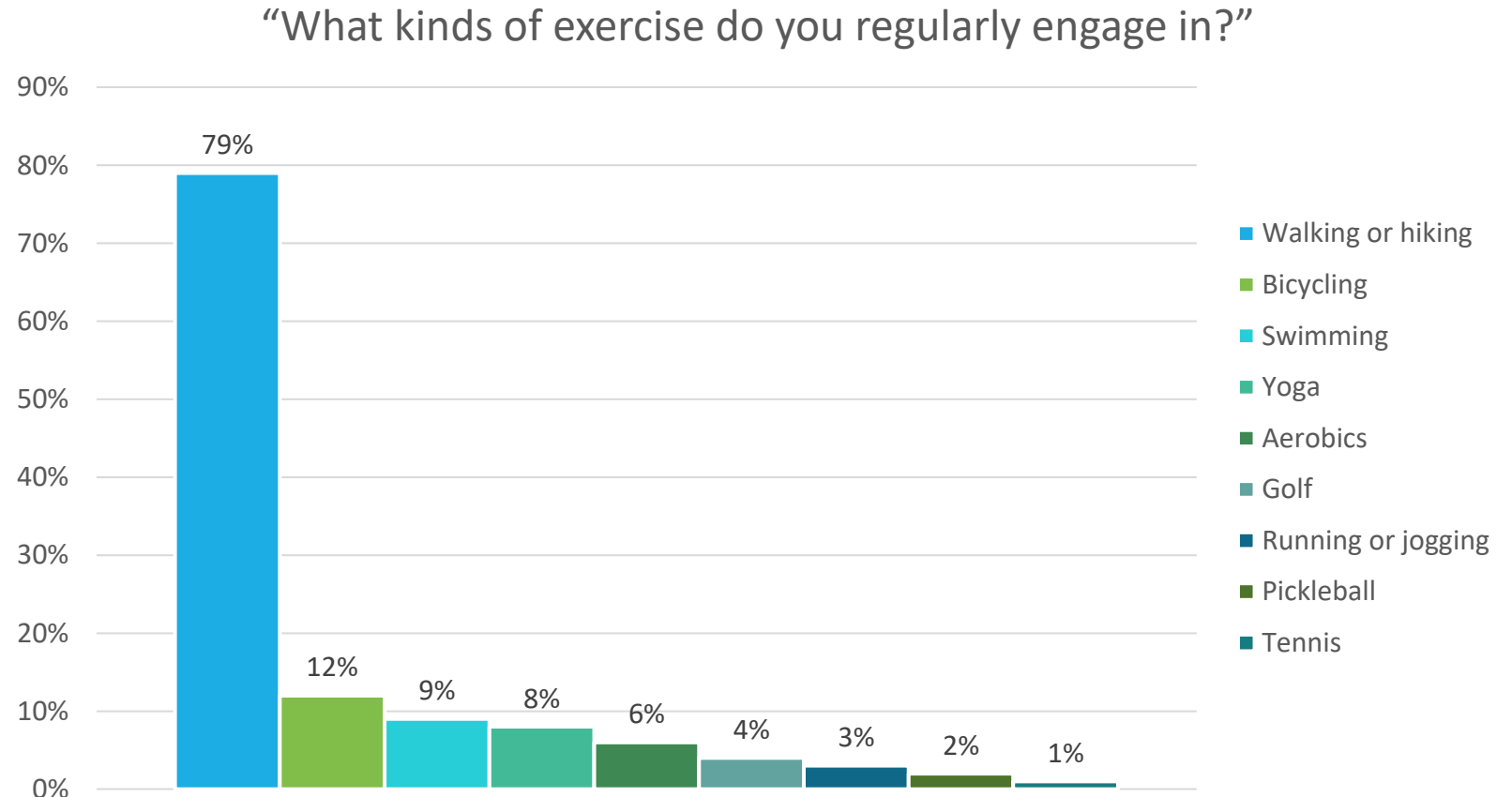
“About how much physical exercise do you get on a weekly basis?”



Physical Exercise (cont.)

Walking is by far the most commonly enjoyed form of exercise among Medicare beneficiaries

- 79% report walking or hiking on a regular basis.
- 12% engage in bicycling and 9% in swimming.
- 8% engage in yoga and 6% in aerobics.
- 4% golf and 3% run or jog.
- 2% play pickleball and 1% play tennis.

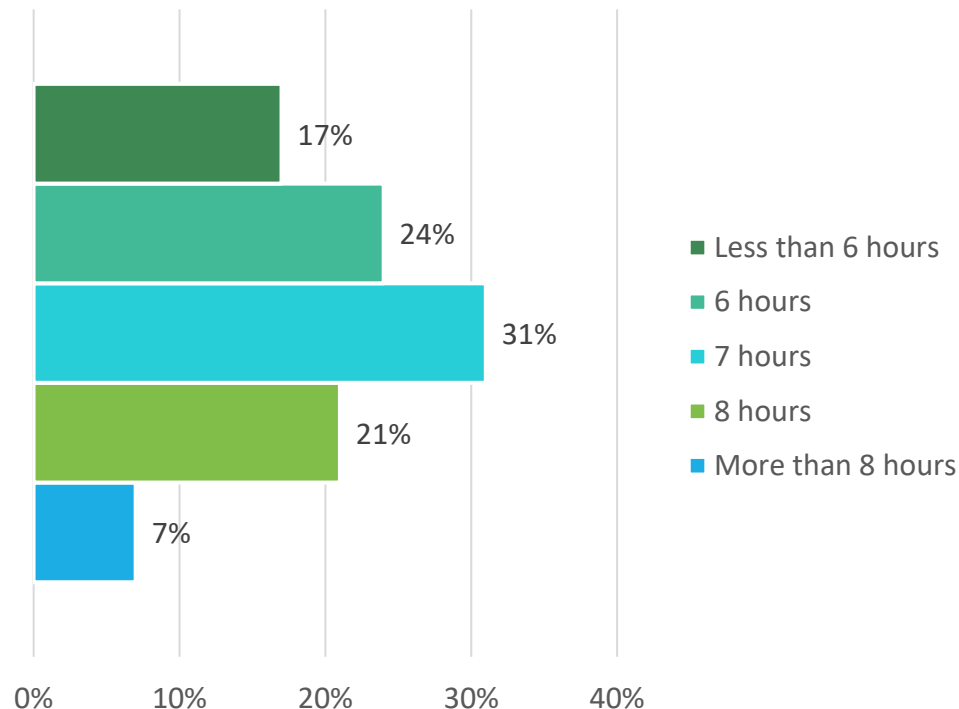


A Good Night's Sleep

Many Medicare beneficiaries don't get as much sleep as they need*

- 17% say they sleep less than 6 hours per night.
- 24% get 6 hours of sleep per night.
- 31% get 7 hours of sleep per night.
- 21% get 8 hours of sleep per night.
- 7% get more than 8 hours of sleep per night.

“About how many hours of sleep do you typically get per night?”



Higher income Medicare beneficiaries are more likely to get a good night's sleep

- Just under half (49%) of respondents with an annual income below \$25,000 report getting at least 7 hours of sleep per night.
- By comparison, about three quarters (74%) of those with an annual income over \$100,000 get at least 7 hours of sleep per night.

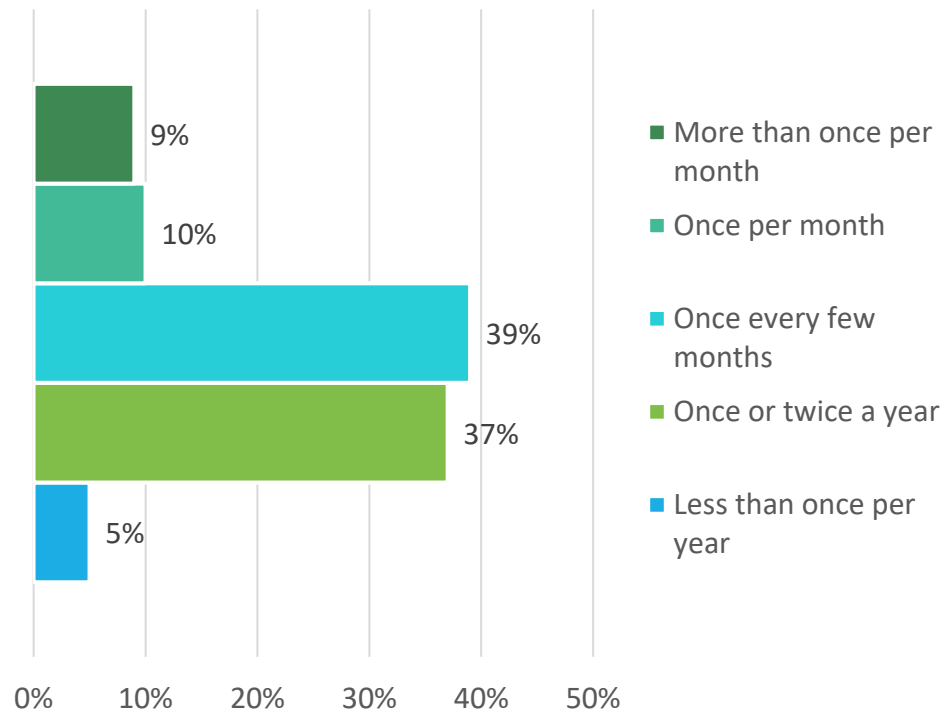
*The [National Institutes of Health](#) recommends 7-9 hours of sleep for older adults.

Regular Medical Care

Most Medicare beneficiaries get regular medical care, but few see the doctor on a monthly basis

- 9% see their doctor or receive medical care more than once per month.
- 10% see the doctor once per month.
- 39% see the doctor once every few months.
- 37% see the doctor once or twice per year.
- 5% see the doctor less than once per year.

“About how often do you visit the doctor or receive medical care?”



Lower income beneficiaries are more likely to see the doctor on at least a monthly basis

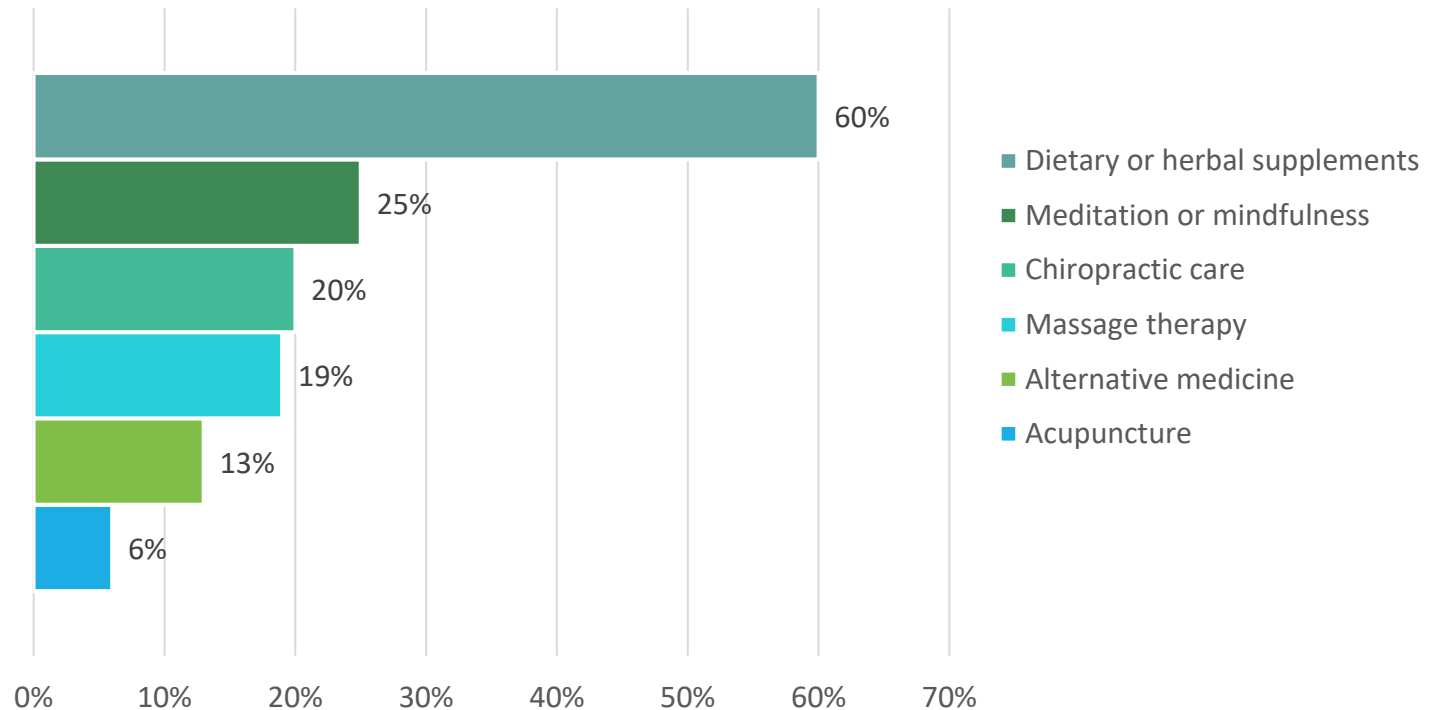
- 28% of those with an annual income below \$25,000 say they see the doctor or receive medical care at least once per month.
- By comparison, only 13% of those with an income over \$100,000 see the doctor or receive medical care at least once per month.

Non-Traditional Medicine

Significant numbers of Medicare beneficiaries use non-traditional health practices or treatments

- 60% use dietary or herbal supplements.
- 25% practice meditation or mindfulness.
- 20% receive chiropractic care.
- 19% receive massage therapy.
- 13% report using alternative medicine.
- 6% use acupuncture.

“What non-traditional health care or wellness practices have you received in the past year?”



Methodology Note

The findings presented in this report are based on a voluntary survey of Medicare beneficiaries who purchased Medicare health insurance plans (Medicare Advantage, Medicare Supplement, or Medicare Part D) through eHealth, with coverage currently in effect at the time of the survey. The survey was conducted through a third-party survey tool in June of 2023 and a total of 3,582 responses were collected. Throughout this report, percentages have been rounded to the nearest full percentage point and may add to slightly more or less than 100% due to rounding.

About eHealth

For over 25 years, eHealth, Inc. (Nasdaq: EHTH) has expertly guided American consumers with innovative technology and licensed advisor support to help them find health insurance and related options. Through its proprietary health insurance marketplace at eHealth.com, eHealth has connected more than eight million members with quality, affordable coverage. eHealth offers Medicare Advantage, Medicare Supplement, Medicare Part D, individual, family, small business, and ancillary plans from approximately 200 health insurance companies nationwide.