

2006

## **Newaygo County AdvantAge Initiative: 2005 Survey Results**

Community Research Institute-Johnson Center

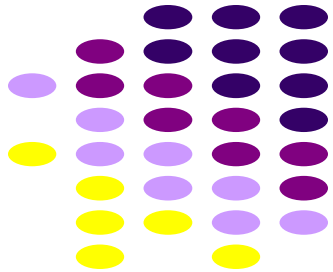
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# Newaygo County AdvantAge Initiative: 2005 Survey Results

A project of the Fremont Area Elderly Needs Fund  
and the Fremont Area Community Foundation

**Community Research Institute<sup>®</sup>**

*Supporting Community Improvement Through Research and Data Sharing*



DOROTHY A. JOHNSON CENTER FOR PHILANTHROPY AND NONPROFIT LEADERSHIP



# About the Community Research Institute

The Community Research Institute (CRI) provides innovative applied research to West Michigan communities – helping them to assess needs, forecast trends for effective problem solving, and measure the impact of programs and services.

CRI gathers, analyzes, interprets and shares national and local data through partnerships with nonprofit and neighborhood groups, and assists local and regional nonprofit leaders with decision making, grant writing, and program evaluation. This is research that makes a difference through a distinctly valuable blend of university rigor and community relevance.

Questions about the AdvantAge Initiative Survey may be directed to Korrie Ottenwess at 331-7585 or [ottenwko@gvsu.edu](mailto:ottenwko@gvsu.edu)



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# Executive Summary

Currently in the US, 34 million people are 65 years or older. That figure is projected to double by 2030 as baby boomers become senior citizens. This ‘aging of America’ promises to affect all areas of society. Communities need to engage in thoughtful planning about the future needs of older adults now in order to be prepared for the future.

These facts prompted the Fremont Area Elderly Needs Fund, in conjunction with the Fremont Area Community Foundation, to undertake an initiative to better understand what it is like to be an older adult in Newaygo County. To jump-start the group’s efforts, a survey of the county’s older adults was commissioned.

The survey consisted of telephone interviews with 255 adults, age 65 and older. Interview questions probed factors widely believed to be most essential to older adults leading healthy, independent, and productive lives. Consequently, the survey’s results provide an important snapshot of how people age in Newaygo County.

Results of the survey bring both good news and bad news. For many of the factors that contribute to successful aging, older adults in Newaygo County appear to be doing at least as well as – and often better than – their counterparts across the nation. That’s important context to keep in mind.

But the survey also made clear that there are still many older adults in Newaygo County who are quite vulnerable to the challenges of aging. Those living in poverty and in poor health appear to be the most at risk. Too often these people struggle to find the help they need. Without help, they won’t be able to continue to live in homes they’ve had for many years and they are increasingly isolated – a recipe for physical and mental deterioration.

Among the survey’s key findings:

- A portion of Newaygo County’s aging population is at risk when it comes to being able to afford basics such as housing, food, and medicine. In fact, 50% of Newaygo County’s older adults indicated that the amount of money they have does not take care of their basic necessities ‘very well’. One out of three older adults who want to remain in their home are not confident that they will be able to afford to do so for as long as they would like. Seven percent indicated that in the past year they had problems paying for prescription medications and roughly 200 older adults in Newaygo County (3%) reported that they had skipped a meal or reduced the size of a meal because there was not enough money for food.
- Most seniors in Newaygo County believe that programs that address senior nutrition, transportation, and assistance with care are available in their community. Awareness about the local availability of other types of programs (such as respite) is lower. This may reflect a more limited interest in or need for certain types of services. What is more surprising is the fact that many Newaygo County seniors exhibit fairly limited knowledge about where to obtain information about the many programs that serve the needs of senior citizens. In fact, one out of every five older adults said that they don’t know whom to contact for program information.
- Most older adults in Newaygo County say they are healthy, but 15% have health concerns (ADL or IADL limitations) that interfere with their daily activities. Given the vulnerabilities of those with activity limitations, it is important to have systems in place to provide

assistance to those who need it. Of the roughly 1000 older adults who struggle with the basic activities of daily living – such as taking a bath or shower, dressing, eating, getting in and out of a bed or chair, using or getting to the toilet, and getting around inside the home – almost half (40%) don't receive all of the assistance they feel they need.

- In Newaygo County, most older adults remain relatively engaged in their communities. They work for pay, volunteer, and socialize at levels roughly equal to or better than those of seniors nationwide. Still, a number of responses indicate that social isolation is a significant problem for a portion of Newaygo County's elders. For example, over 23% would like to be more socially active, nearly one-third did not socialize with friends or neighbors in the past week, more than one in five say they have no close friends in neighborhood, and more than one in ten say they did not engage in any social, religious, or cultural activities in the past week.



# Introduction

The AdvantAge Initiative is a community-building effort focused on creating vibrant and elder-friendly communities that are prepared to meet the needs and nurture the aspirations of older adults.

At the heart of the AdvantAge Initiative is a comprehensive survey of community-residing older adults. Consumer-derived information is integral to this project because it:

- Challenges organizational and individual assumptions
- Enables stakeholders to hear a range of community voices
- Engages citizens in a dialogue about aging issues and builds support for action plans

The AdvantAge Initiative survey provides a "data snapshot" of how well seniors are currently faring in their community. Community organizations within Newaygo County can use the survey results to help build broader awareness about aging, inform service and other planning efforts, and spur needed community-wide action in the not-for-profit, public, and private sectors.

The AdvantAge Initiative survey focuses on four key areas, or domains, where communities can make a difference in the lives of older people:

- Domain 1 - Basic needs for housing and security
- Domain 2 - Maintenance of physical and mental health
- Domain 3 - Independence for the frail, disabled, and homebound
- Domain 4 - Opportunities for social and civic engagement

Through the AdvantAge Initiative, Newaygo County can become a better places to live, not only for older adults, but for people of all ages.

## Using This Report: A Brief Primer

In using this document, it's important to understand some crucial concepts and definitions. The first and most important concept is that this report is intended to be a starting point for an interactive, community-driven process.

### Working with the Data

Whenever one works with data, the following concepts typically apply:

Sometimes it's important to think about raw numbers as well as percentages. For example, if something affects a large percentage of a sparsely populated area and a smaller percentage of a densely populated area, where should you direct your attention?

Look for patterns. For example, do people age 75 or older consistently struggle more than those between 65 and 75?

Look for single data points that seem surprising. Why do more men than women participate in regular physical activity?

Consider whether one piece of information might be causing another. Do people with physical limitations and economic constraints also feel more isolated?

## Margin of Error

Another important concept is under representation. Simply put, some groups do not appear in the survey results in the same proportion as the census tells us they appear in the general population. A process called weighting is supposed to address this problem, but when the sample size is small, it can't fully do so. This creates a substantial margin of error.

What exactly is margin of error? Well, in any survey small numbers of people must represent much larger numbers of the general population, or of particular demographic groups. The smaller the numbers in the actual survey, the larger the margin of error, thus increasing the possibility that the results could be misleading.

For example, a 15 percent margin of error means the results could swing 15 percent in either direction. In other words, if the results indicate that 25% of one demographic group does not get an annual physical exam, with a 15 percent margin of error there's a reasonable chance that the actual number who don't get an annual physical could be anywhere between 10% and 40%.

Because we believe understanding some of the disparities that seem to exist is important for your communities work, at various points we've included results that have a substantial margin of error. In each instance, we've identified those margins, but it's important to recognize that where the margin of error is large, whenever possible other sources of information should be used to confirm the results herein.

The bottom line is that there are potential flaws in this snapshot. Anyone using this report should take those flaws into consideration.

## Definitions and Acronyms

Finally, throughout this report the charts might contain terms and abbreviations that may be unfamiliar to some readers. Among those terms:

1. 200 percent of poverty – Researchers and policymakers often use the term “200 percent of poverty” as a breakpoint in describing income levels. The poverty threshold used is set by the U.S. Census Bureau each year. For 2005, that threshold – for a single person, age 65 and older, living alone – is an annual income of \$9,570. Two hundred percent of poverty – or twice the poverty threshold – is \$19,140 per year.
2. DK/RF – Indicates those who said they “Don't Know” or who “Refused” to answer in response to a survey question.





# Methodology

The 2005 Newaygo County Advantage Initiative Survey, a random digital dial telephone survey of a countywide representative sample of non-institutionalized adults age 65 and older, was conducted between July 13 – July 27, 2005. The survey consisted of 35-minute telephone interviews. Survey results were analyzed by staff of the Community Research Institute.

The survey questionnaire was translated into Spanish and the interviewers were available to conduct interviews in that language when requested by the respondent.

Demographic estimates were secured from CLARITAS for each of the eleven (11) Census Tract defined regions within Newaygo County; these included Age, Gender, Race, and Education. Then, utilizing a sample balancing program, the completed interviews were weighted such that the demographic distribution of the sample matched the estimates secured from CLARITAS.

The margin of error for the overall sample is +/- 6.02%. Subgroup responses will have a larger margin of error, depending on the size of the group.

## Respondent Profile

	Number of Respondents N = 255	Percent of Respondents
<b>Age</b>		
65-74	146	57.3%
75+	109	42.7%
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	113	44.3%
Female	142	55.7%
<b>Education</b>		
High School or Less	173	67.8%
More than High School	82	32.2%
<b>Poverty Status</b>		
Less than 200% of Poverty	91	35.7%
200% of Poverty or Above	81	31.8%
Don't Know/Refused	83	32.5%
<b>Race</b>		
White Non-Hispanic	245	96.1%
All Others	10	3.9%
<b>Zip Code</b>		
49412	72	28%
49327	34	13%
49337	72	28%
49349	35	14%
Other Zip Codes	42	17%



# Domain 1: Addresses Basic Needs

## Dimension 1

### Affordable Housing is Available to Community Residents

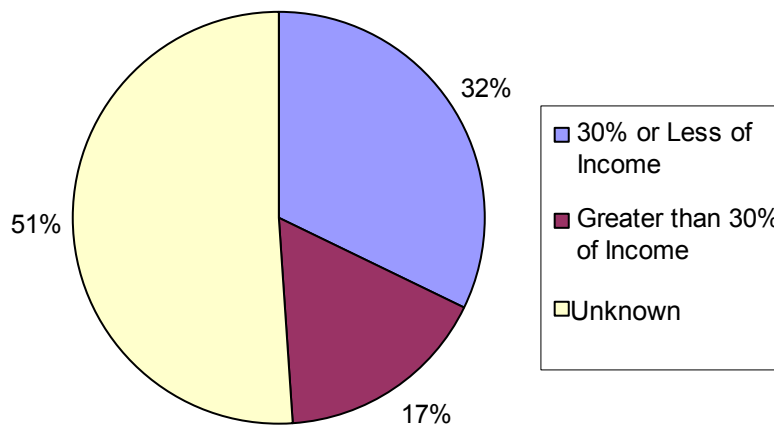
As the largest expense of most households, housing costs are an important issue to older adults. This is especially true of seniors whose fixed incomes do not allow them to pay for the in-home care they need or the repairs their homes require. This is also true of seniors whose wealth is not liquid but is instead tied up in the equity of their homes (Hull, 2002). An elder-friendly community provides a range of appropriate and affordable housing options for older people, particularly those with limited means.

#### Indicator 1) Percentage of people age 65+ who spend greater than 30% of their income on housing

When housing expenditures comprise a relatively high proportion of total expenditures, less money is available for health care, savings, and other vital goods and services. According to the US Department of Housing and Urban Development, families who pay more than 30% of their income for housing related expenses are considered to be 'housing burdened'. These families often struggle to afford necessities such as food, clothing, transportation and medical care.

Data from the AdvantAge Initiative survey shows us that 17% of Newaygo's County's older adults are spending more than 30% of their income on housing expenses. However, that number may be low, as it was impossible to calculate housing related spending for half of those surveyed (due to the structure of this particular series of questions and the way people responded). Because of the limitations of this survey question, it is helpful to consider a comparable data set that was published in 2000 by the US Census Bureau. This data shows that 15% of those in Newaygo who own their residence and are over the age of 65 spend more than 30% of their income on housing related costs.

**Exhibit 1.1 – Housing Cost Burden  
Percentage of People Age 65+ Who Spend Greater than 30% of their Income  
on Housing<sup>1</sup>, Newaygo County 2005**



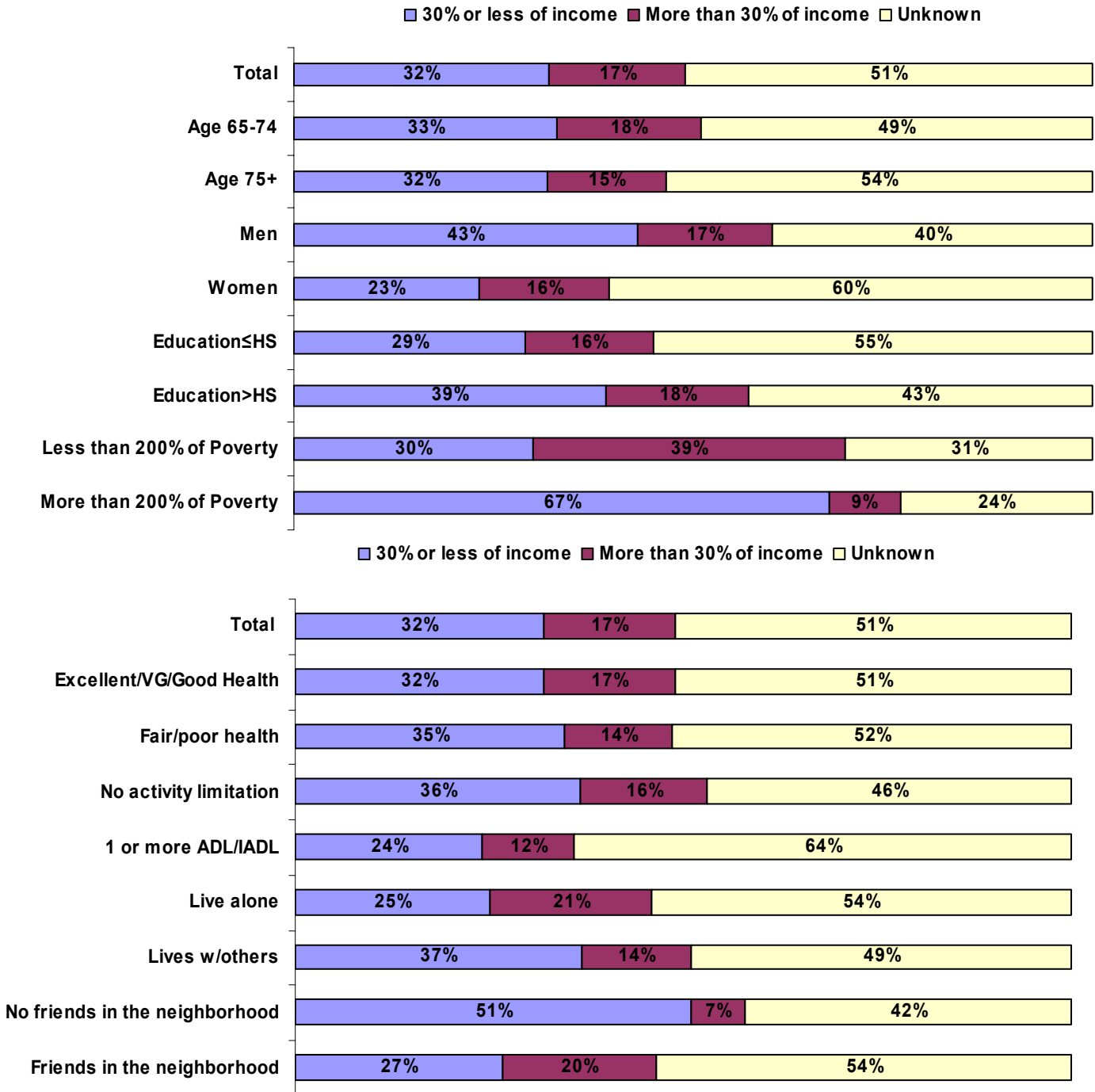
Unweighted N = 255 Weighted N = 6,598

(Note: To figure out how many people in Newaygo County are represented by the percentages in the pie chart, multiply by the 'Weighted N.' For example: 51% multiplied by 6,598 = 3360 people)

<sup>1</sup> Annual housing expenditure was calculated based on outlays for rent or mortgage, real estate taxes, association/condo fees, and utilities as a percentage of income. People for whom sufficient information was not available were classified in the category expenditure unknown.

Some subpopulations were more likely to report suffering from housing burden. For example, older adults with incomes that are below poverty level are more than twice as likely to be housing burdened as those with incomes that are greater than 200% of poverty.

**Exhibit 1.2 – Housing Cost Burden by Selected Demographic Characteristics**  
**Percentage of People Age 65+ Who Spend More Than 30 Percent of their Income**  
**on Housing<sup>1</sup>, by Demographics**  
**Newaygo County 2005**

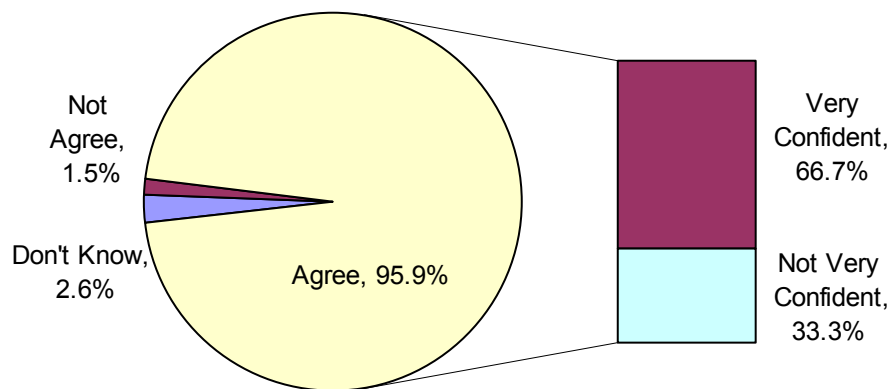


Margin of Error ranges from ±9 to ±17 depending on sample size

**Indicator 2) Percentage of people age 65+ who want to remain in their current residence and are confident they will be able to afford to do so**

Nearly all (96%) of Newaygo County residents over age 65 wish to remain in their home for as long as possible (Exhibit 2.1). Literature suggests that this reflects the desire on the part of many to remain close to friends, neighbors, family and/or church (Commission on Affordable Housing and Health, 2002). Despite their desires, one third of Newaygo County seniors who want to remain in their home are not confident that they will be able to continue to live there for as long as they would like.

**Exhibit 2.1 - Percentage of People Age 65+ Who Want to Remain in their Current Residence and are Confident They will be Able to Do So<sup>2</sup> Newaygo County 2005**

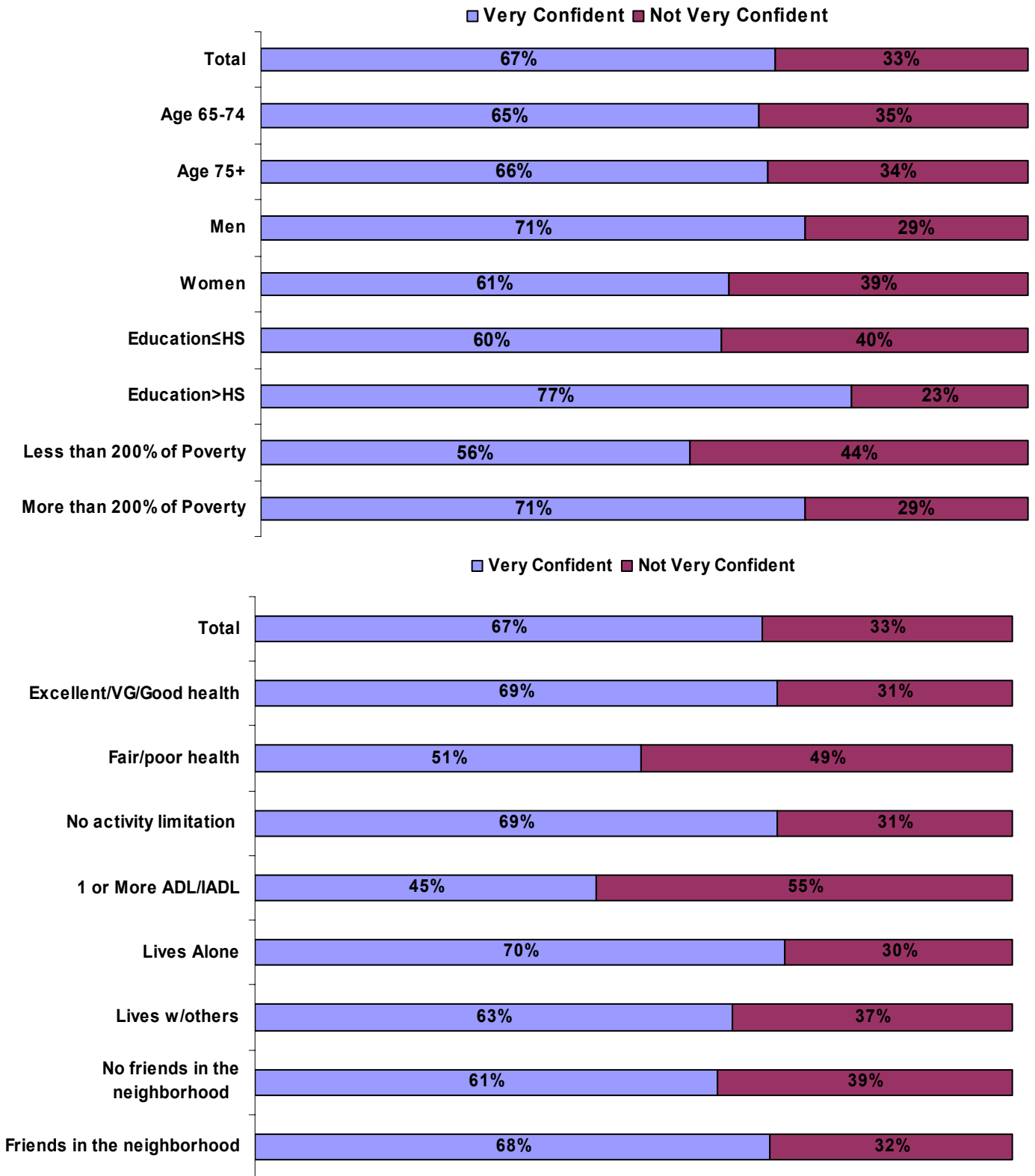


Unweighted N = 255 Weighted N = 6,598

When it comes to confidence about one's ability to remain in their home for as long as they would like, men are more confident than women, those with good health are more confident than those with poor health, and those who live with someone or have friends in the neighborhood are more confident than those who do not.

<sup>2</sup> We asked respondents whether they agree or disagree with the following statement: "What I'd really like to do is stay in my current residence for as long as possible." For people who answered "agree" we calculated the percentage of adults, age 65+ who were confident/not confident that they will be able to afford to live in their current residence for as long as they would like. Agree includes those who said "Strongly agree" or "Somewhat agree". Not confident that they can remain in their current residence includes those who said "Somewhat confident", "not too confident", "Not confident at all", "Don't know", or "Refused". Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding and/or missing information.

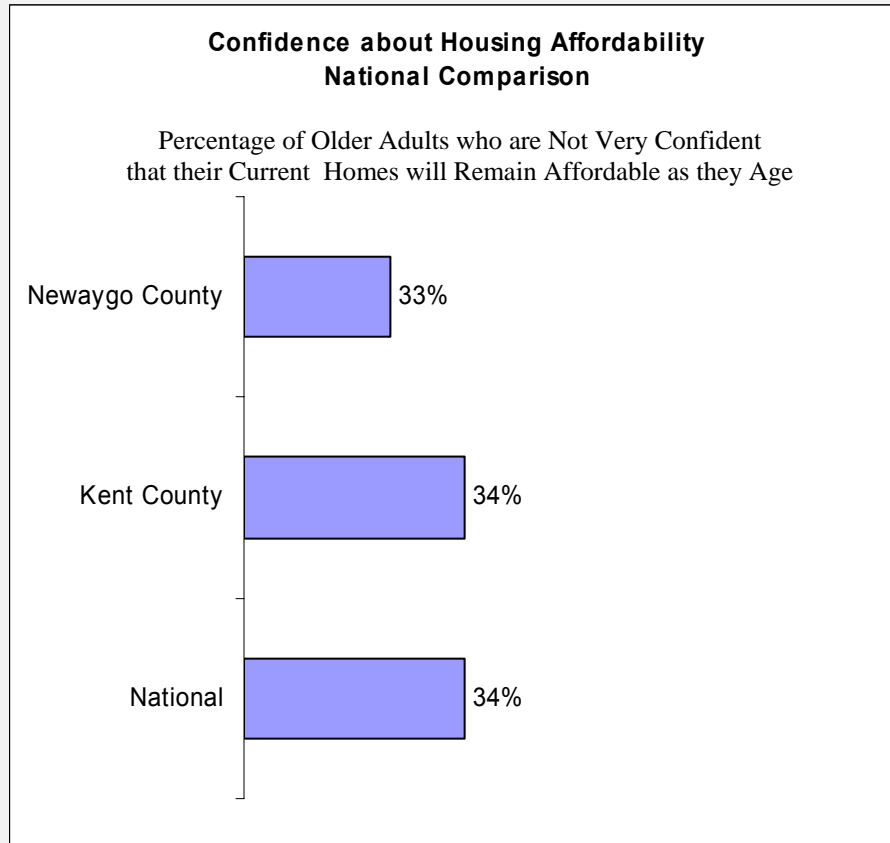
**Exhibit 2.2 - Percentage of People Age 65+ Who Want to Remain In Their Current Residence and are Confident They Will Be Able To Do So<sup>2</sup>, By Demographics**



Margin of Error ranges from ±9 to ±17 depending on sample size

## How Does Newaygo County Compare?

Older adults in Newaygo County are slightly more confident about the affordability of their housing than their peers in Kent County and at the national level.



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## Dimension 2

### Housing is Modified to Accommodate Mobility and Safety

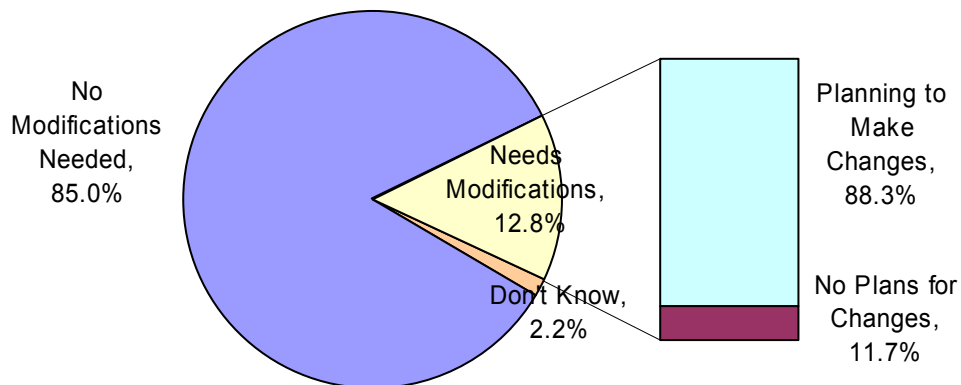
Safe and accessible housing is critical to good health and function at any age. However, the relationship between housing and health becomes more apparent when one is faced with the frailties associated with old age. Research by the National Centers for Disease Control and Prevention shows that home modifications and repairs may prevent 30% to 50% of all home accidents among seniors, including falls (Administration on Aging, 2003).

An elder-friendly community enables older adults to age-in-place if they want to by helping them modify their homes to accommodate their changing needs.

#### Indicator 3) Percentage of householders age 65+ in housing units with home modification needs

When surveyed, 85% of older adults in Newaygo County indicated that they did not feel repairs or modifications were necessary for them to continue living in their home. Two percent did not know if repairs were needed; and 13% felt that repairs were needed. Of the 13% who felt repairs were necessary, 88% planned to have the repairs completed and 12% had no plans for repairs.

**Exhibit 3.1 - Percentage of Householders Age 65+ in Housing Units with Home Modification Needs<sup>3</sup>**  
**Newaygo County 2005**



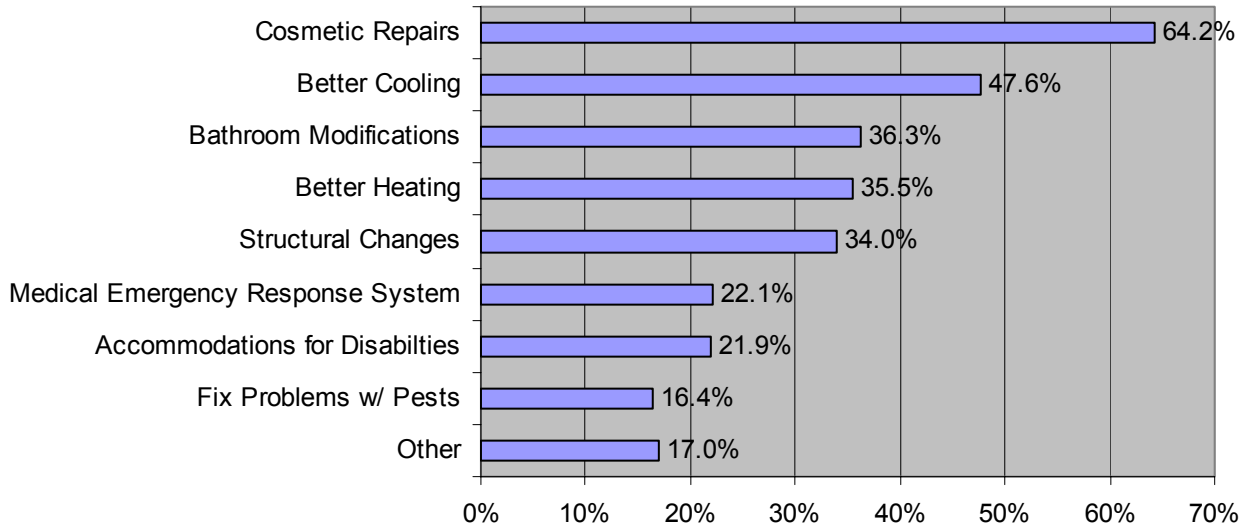
Unweighted N = 255 Weighted N = 6,598

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<sup>3</sup> People were asked whether their current residence needs any significant repairs, modifications, or changes to improve their ability to live there over the next five years. People who said their homes need modification were asked if they plan to make the change over the next five years. Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding and/or missing information.

When asked to specify what modifications were needed, the most commonly identified modifications were cosmetic in nature. Examples include the painting of walls or the refinishing of floors. In addition, over a third of Newaygo County respondents who need modifications indicated the need for structural repairs, bathroom modifications, and/or climate control.

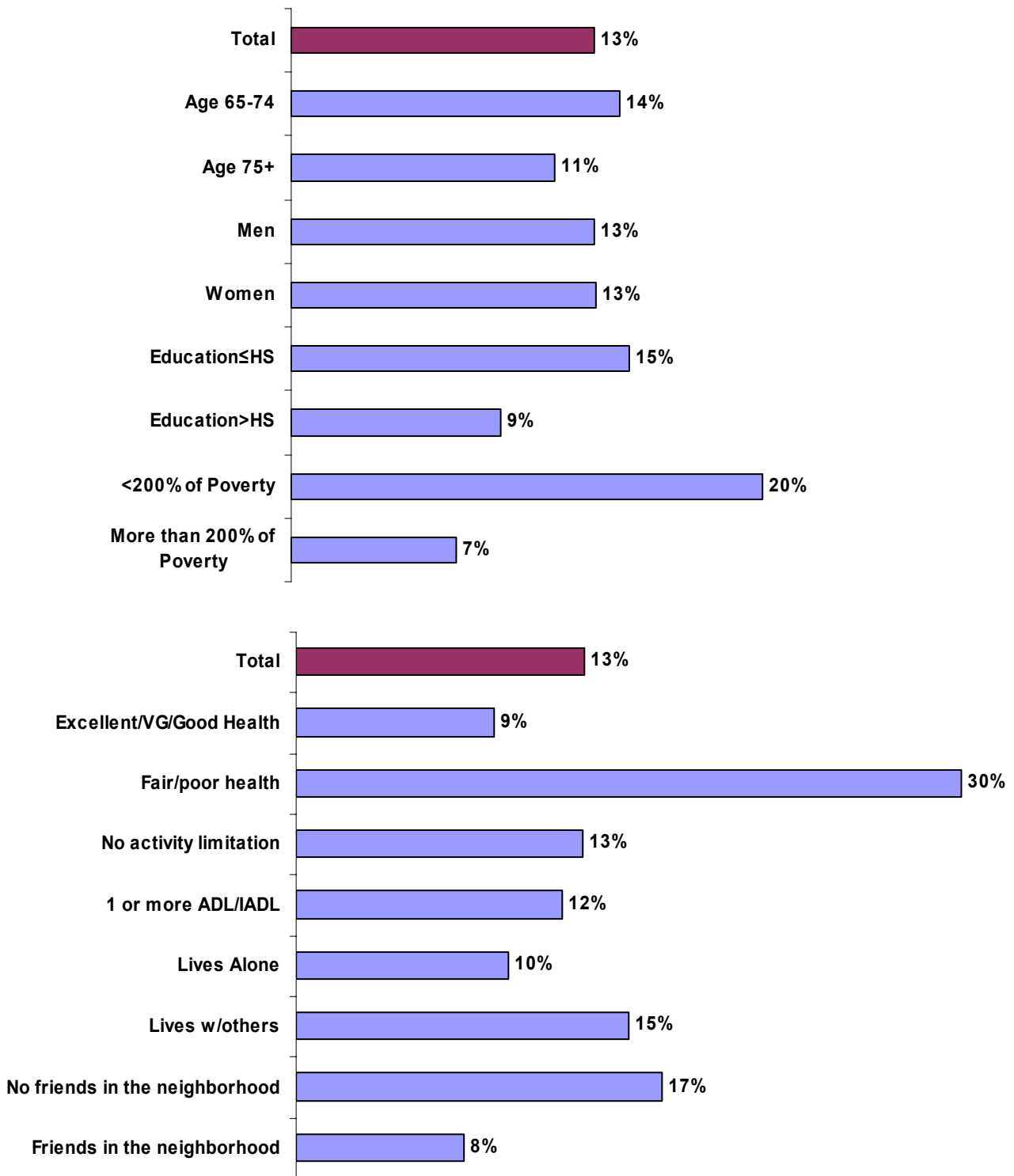
**Exhibit 3.2 - Type of Modifications Needed  
Newaygo County 2005**



Results show that those in poor health are three times more likely to need home modifications than those who rate their health as 'excellent', 'very good' or 'good'. This is especially worrisome as those who are in poor health are the least likely to be able to complete repairs themselves and are the most likely to suffer from a housing related injury, such as a fall.



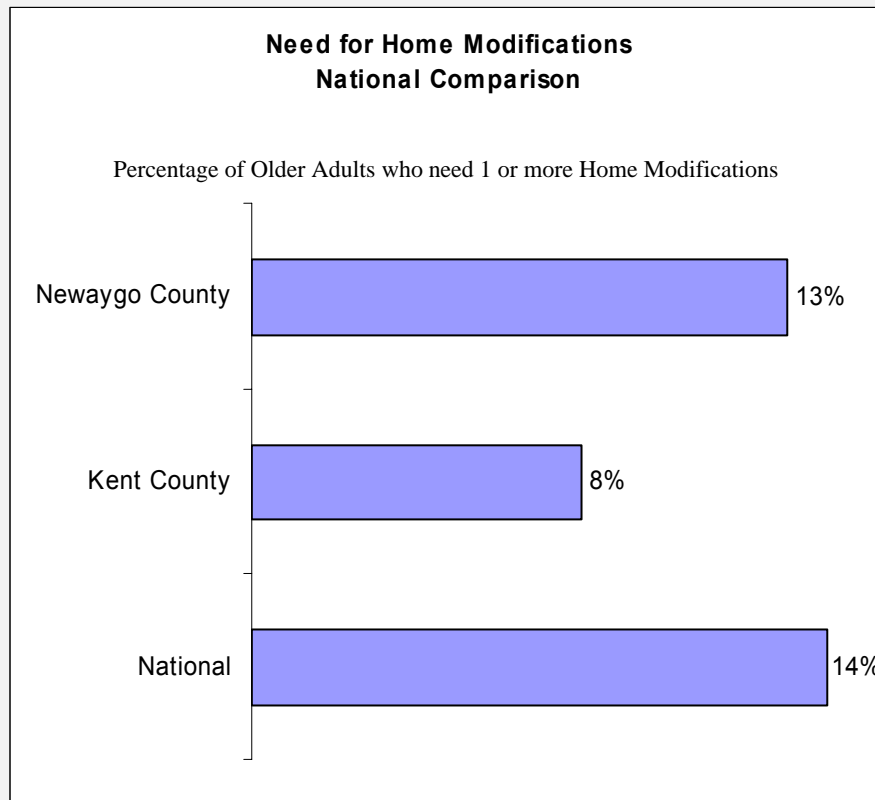
**Exhibit 3.3 - Percentage of Householders Age 65+ in Housing Units with Home Modification Needs<sup>3</sup>, By Demographics  
Newaygo County 2005**



Margin of Error ranges from ±9 to ±17 depending on sample size

### How Does Newaygo County Compare?

Although a greater percentage of older adults in Newaygo County need repairs than their peers in Kent County, the percent of older adults who need repairs in Newaygo County (13%) is lower than the national level (14%).



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## Dimension 3

### The Neighborhood is Livable and Safe

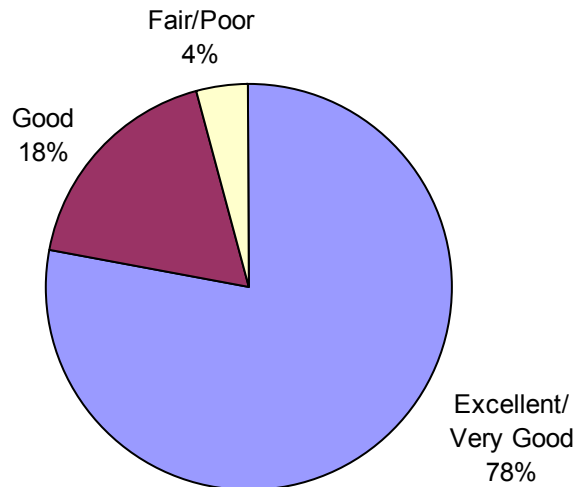
According to a report published by the FBI, “The results of victimization have lasting and unhappy consequences for an older person who may be limited physically, emotionally, and financially. The elderly may not recover with the same agility as when they were younger. A broken hip as the result of a mugging, a frightening encounter with a criminal bent on harm, or the loss of savings to a con artist may diminish an older person's quality of life and make some elderly live the last of their years in fear and distress (Jordan, 2002).”

#### Indicator 4) Percentage of people age 65+ who feel safe/unsafe in their neighborhoods

Although national crime statistics show that younger people are more likely to experience a violent crime, safety is frequently a concern of seniors because they tend to feel more vulnerable. In fact, for many seniors, the fear of crime may alter their lifestyles. Even if this fear is not well founded or is based on anticipation of a potential situation, it proves no less debilitating or stressful (Jordan, 2002).

Roughly one out of five older adults in Newaygo County indicated that they have some degree of concern when it comes to safety in their neighborhood.

**Exhibit 4.1 - Percentage of People Age 65+ who Feel Safe/Unsafe in their Neighborhood<sup>4</sup>, Newaygo County 2005**



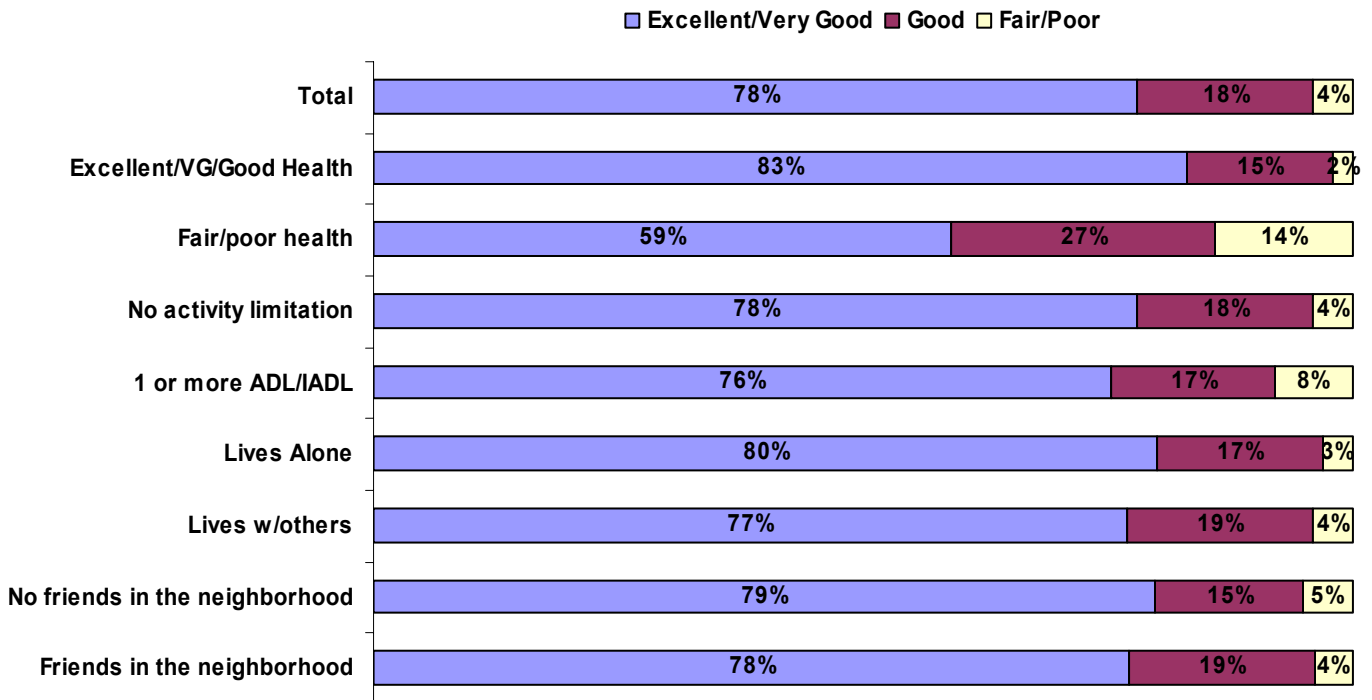
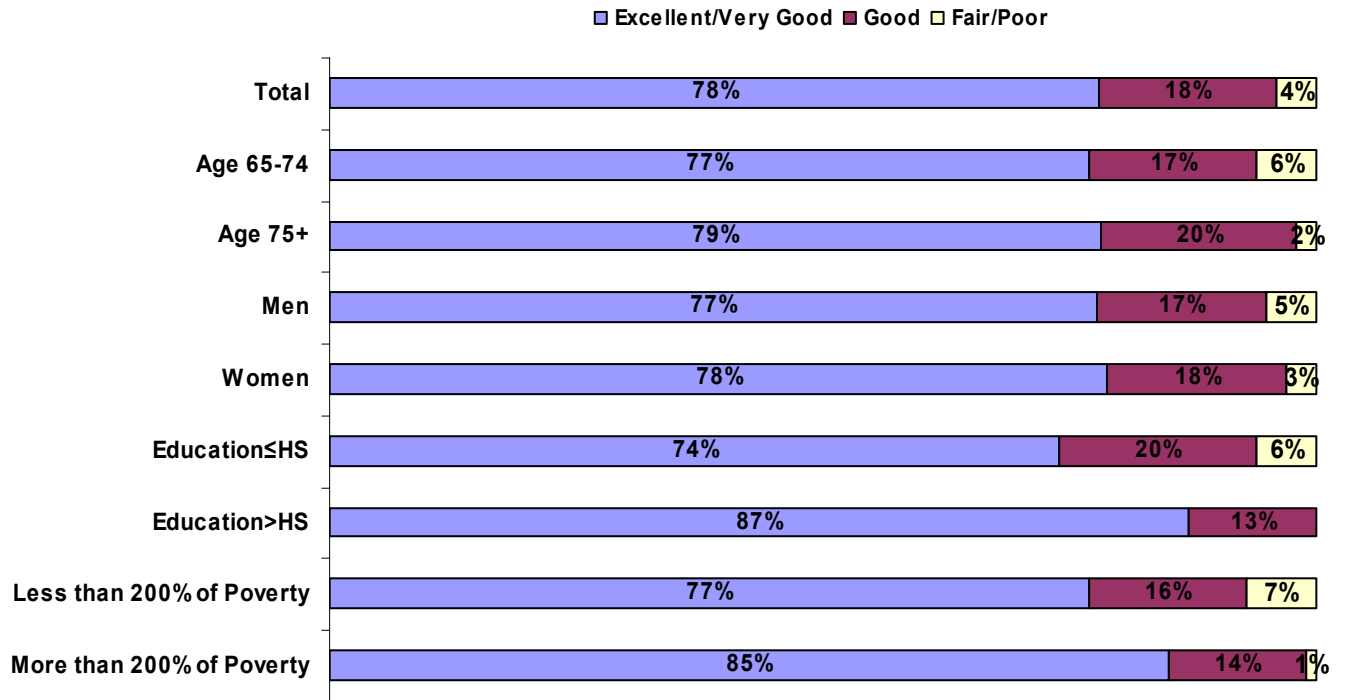
Unweighted N = 255 Weighted N = 6,598

A large disparity is seen between those with good health and those with fair or poor health. Respondents with fair or poor health were seven times more likely to be concerned about their safety as those with good health.

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<sup>4</sup> People were asked whether safety in their neighborhood is excellent, very good, good, fair, or poor.

**Exhibit 4.2 - Percentage of People Age 65+ Who Feel Safe/Unsafe in their Neighborhood<sup>4</sup>, By Demographics  
Newaygo County 2005**



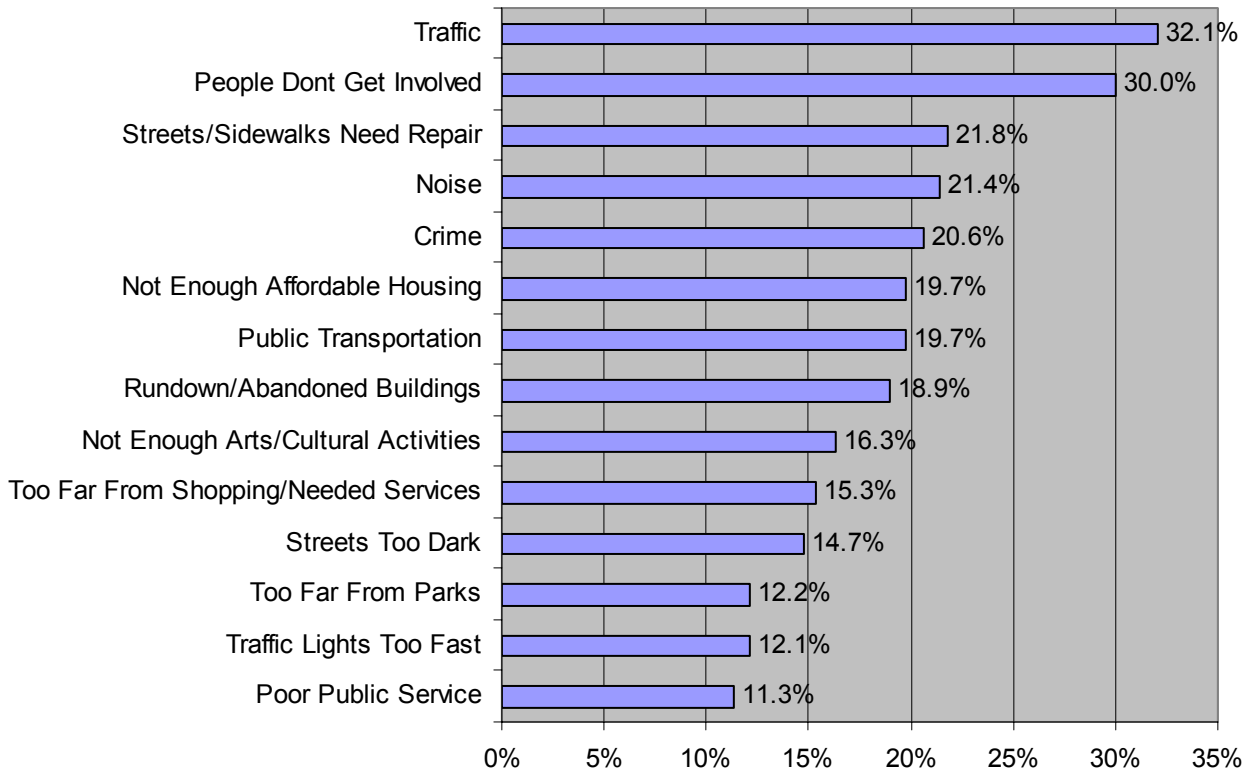
Margin of Error ranges from ±9 to ±17 depending on sample size

## Indicator 5) Percentage of people age 65+ who report few/multiple problems in their neighborhood

Studies have shown that those who feel they live in a neighborhood with many problems are at risk for psychological stress, including anxiety and depression. In fact, some studies have found neighborhood problems to be associated with self-reported poor health and loss of function in older adults. These studies suggest that social support may help reduce the health risks of living in an environment with multiple problems (Policy Link, 2004).

Nineteen percent of Newaygo County residents felt like there were five or more problems in their neighborhood. The most frequently cited neighborhood problems were traffic and lack of participation. Nearly a third of Newaygo County's older adults felt as though these two things were a problem. Additionally, more than 1 out of 5 older adults felt like crime, noise levels, and/or road conditions were a problem.

**Exhibit 5.1 - Prevalence of Perceived Neighborhood Problems<sup>5</sup>  
Newaygo County 2005**



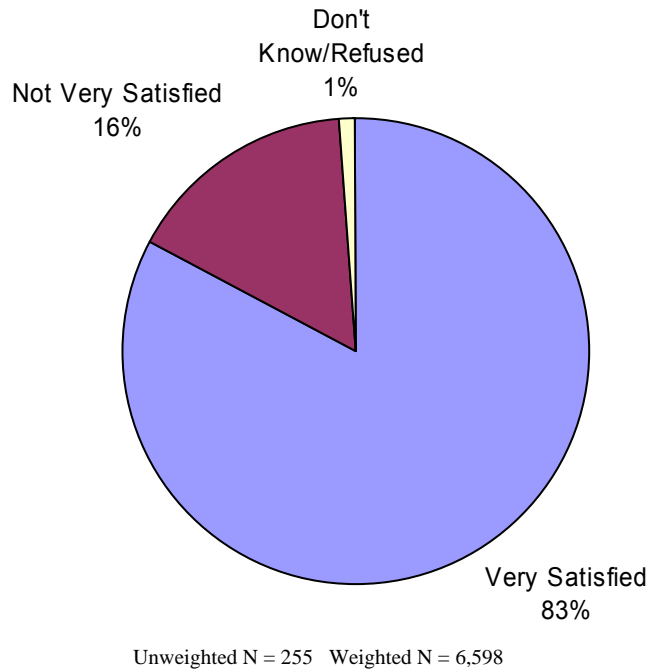
Unweighted N = 255 Weighted N = 6,598

<sup>5</sup> People were read a list of fourteen neighborhood problems and were asked to indicate whether each item posed a big problem, small problem or no problem in their neighborhood.

**Indicator 6) Percentage of people age 65+ who are satisfied with their neighborhood as a place to live**

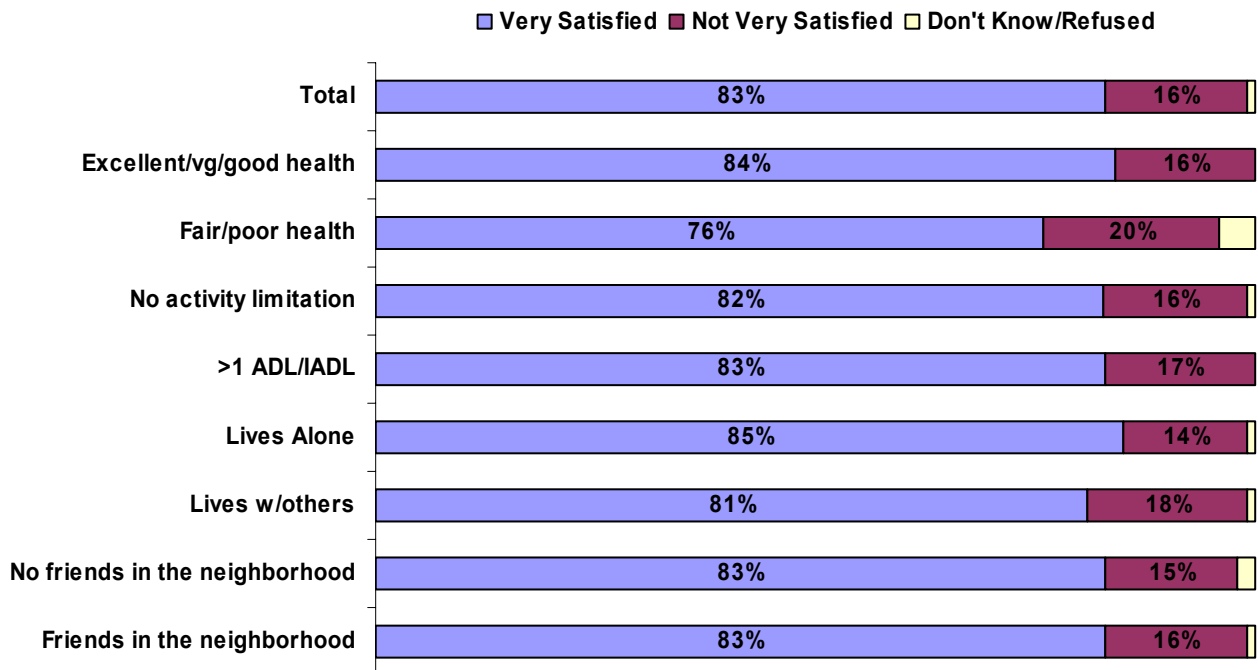
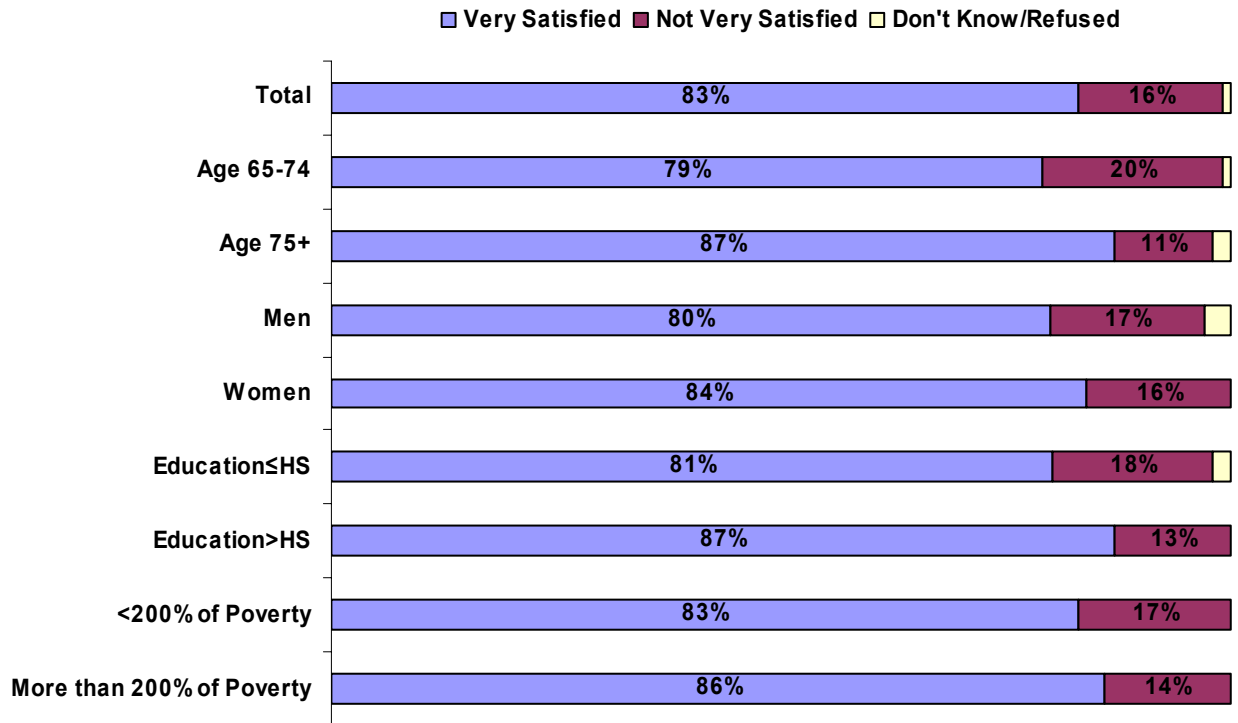
Advantage Initiative results indicate that 83% of older residents think that the neighborhood where they live is “excellent” or “very good”. This data is of particular importance to community leaders, urban planners, home builders and residents seeking to preserve and strengthen their communities.

**Exhibit 6.1 - Percentage of People Age 65+ Who Are Satisfied with their Neighborhood as a Place to Live<sup>6</sup>  
Newaygo County 2005**



<sup>6</sup> People were asked how satisfied they are with their neighborhood as a place to live. The category 'not very satisfied' includes those who said they were 'somewhat satisfied', 'somewhat dissatisfied' or 'very disappointed' with their neighborhood.

**Exhibit 6.2 – Percentage of People Age 65+ who are Satisfied with their Neighborhood as a Place to Live, by Demographics<sup>6</sup>**

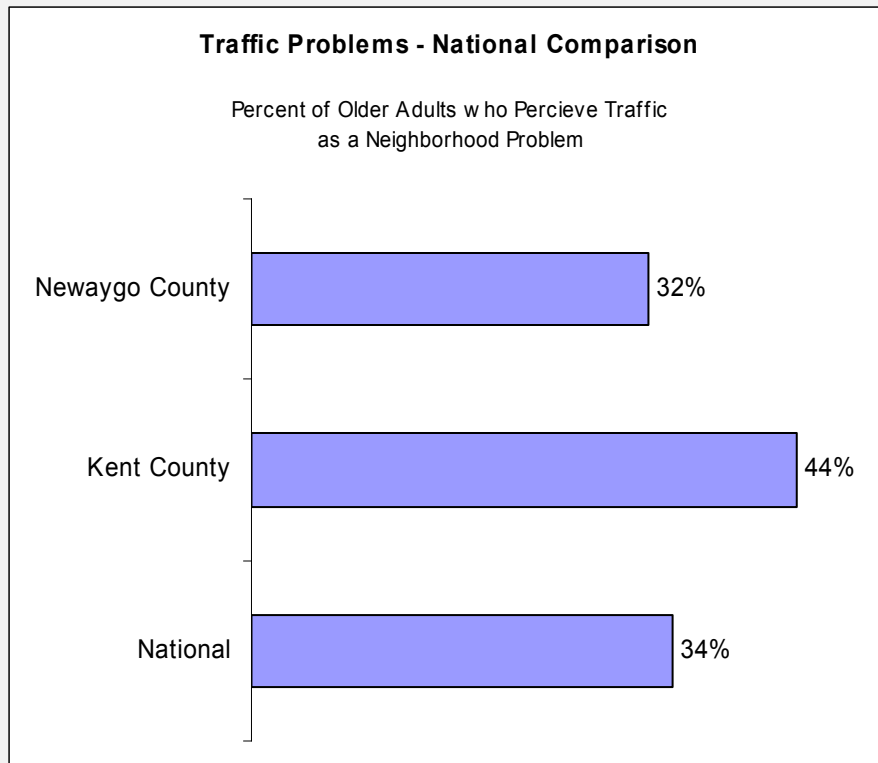


Margin of Error ranges from ±9 to ±17 depending on sample size

## How Does Newaygo County Compare?

Traffic has the potential to create a variety of problems. Problems range from nuisances such as loud trucks driving down the street to safety hazards such as busy neighborhoods without sidewalks or crosswalks. For older adults, sharp curves, high speed limits, and a lack of sidewalks can cause worry enough to keep people from leaving home.

Although Newaygo County respondents cited traffic more frequently than any other neighborhood problem, the amount of residents who felt as though traffic was a problem in Newaygo County is lower than the amount in Kent County and in the nation.





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## Dimension 4

### People Have Enough to Eat

Despite the existence of federal and local programs, the U.S. Department of Agriculture estimates that some 1.4 million households with elderly members experience “food insecurity.” This term pertains to persons who have limited or uncertain access to safe, nutritionally adequate food.

“As individuals age, they can face a number of barriers when trying to maintain a nutritious diet. Life changes such as loss of a spouse or a diminished sense of taste and smell can reduce an individual’s appetite. They may also deal with increased frailty, making it difficult to prepare meals, or medical conditions that may necessitate special dietary restrictions. A lack of income can compound these problems by making nutritious foods hard to afford (Kassner, 2003).”

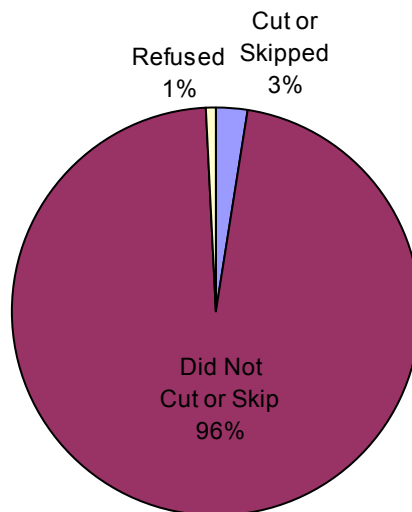
An elder friendly community offers a range of support choices that ensure elders remain healthy for as long as possible.

#### Indicator 7) Percentage of people age 65+ who report cutting the size of or skipping meals due to lack of money

Adequate nutrition is particularly important for the health of older adults because of their increased vulnerability to disease. In fact, reducing portions or eliminating meals due to monetary hardships creates a domino effect that starts with hunger and leads to malnutrition and other adverse health conditions.

In the past 12 months, roughly 200 older adults in Newaygo County (3%) reported that they had skipped a meal or reduced the size of a meal because there was not enough money for food.

**Exhibit 7.1 - Percentage of People Age 65+ Who Report Cutting the Size of or Skipping Meals Due to Lack of Money<sup>7</sup>  
Newaygo County 2005**



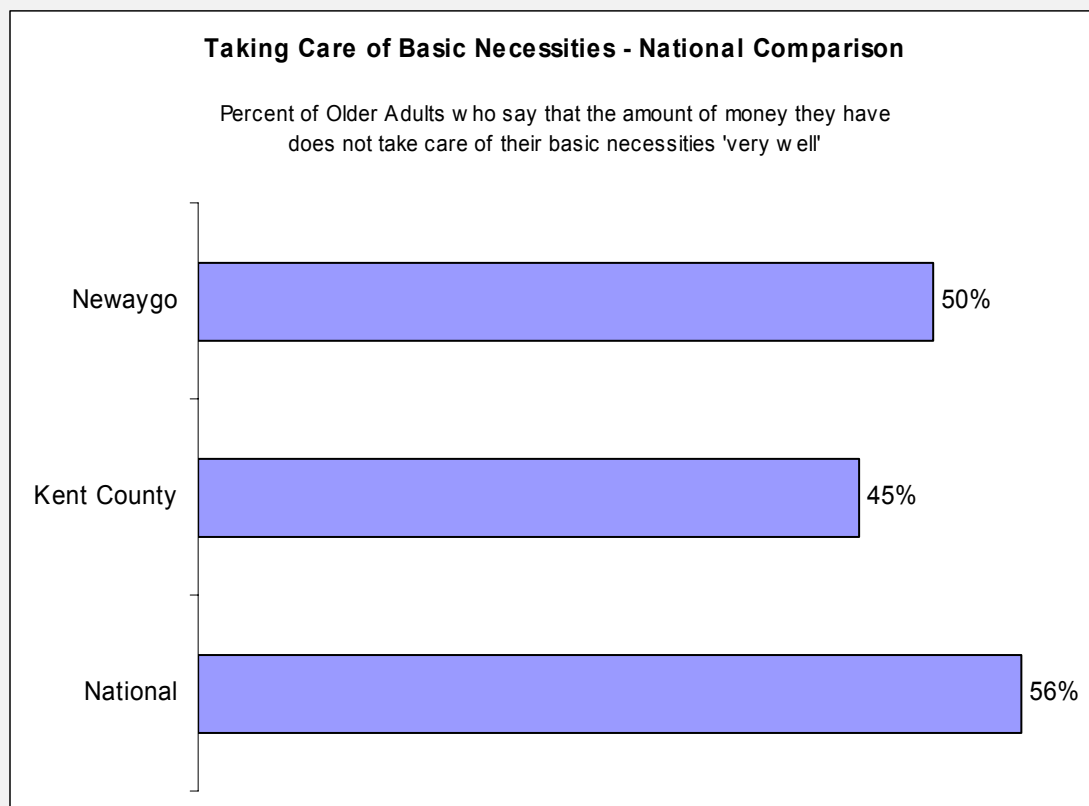
Unweighted N = 255 Weighted N = 6,595

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<sup>7</sup> People were asked if in the past 12 months they or another adult in their household cut the size of or skipped meals because there wasn't enough money or food. Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding and/or missing information.

## How Does Newaygo County Compare?

What is necessary to maintain a minimally comfortable standard of living changes as one ages. With less control over the influx of income, many seniors face uncertainty from month to month about whether or not they will be able to meet their most basic needs. Fifty percent of Newaygo County's older adults indicated that the amount of money they have does not take care of their basic necessities 'very well'. This compares with 45% of Kent County seniors and 56% nationally.



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## Dimension 5

### Assistance Services are Available and Residents Know How to Access Them

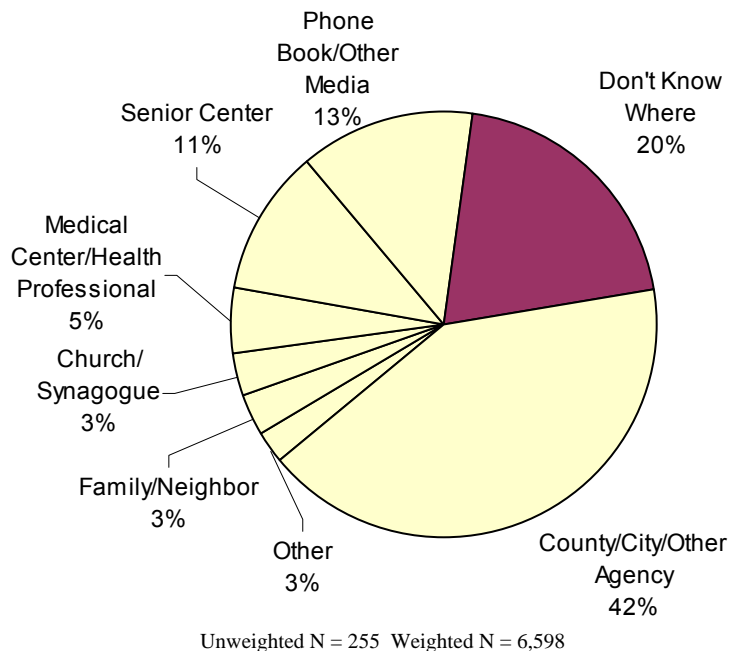
As people age, they face declining health which can threaten their ability to live independently. Older adults who live alone, lack family support, are unable to drive, or are confined due to a disability are at risk for becoming isolated from needed services and from the enjoyment of social interactions that are vital to their well-being. An elder friendly community enables older adults to age in place if they want to by linking them to supportive services to accommodate their changing needs.

#### Indicator 8) Percentage of people age 65+ who do not know whom to call if they need information about services in their community

Connecting an older adult with a daily nutritious meal or a home health care aide who can provide personal care assistance a couple of hours a day can be the difference between an older adult's ability to age in place and the costly and often disruptive option of moving to a long term care facility. (Mokler and Brackenhoff, 2000).

Unfortunately, one out of five older adults in Newaygo County could not name a single place from which they could get information about supportive services. Those who could name a source were most likely to say that they would turn to public or non-profit social service agencies (42%) or the phone book (13%) for information.

**Exhibit 8.1 - Percentage of People Age 65+ Who Do Not Know Who To Call if They Need Information About Services in Their Community<sup>8</sup>  
Newaygo County 2005**



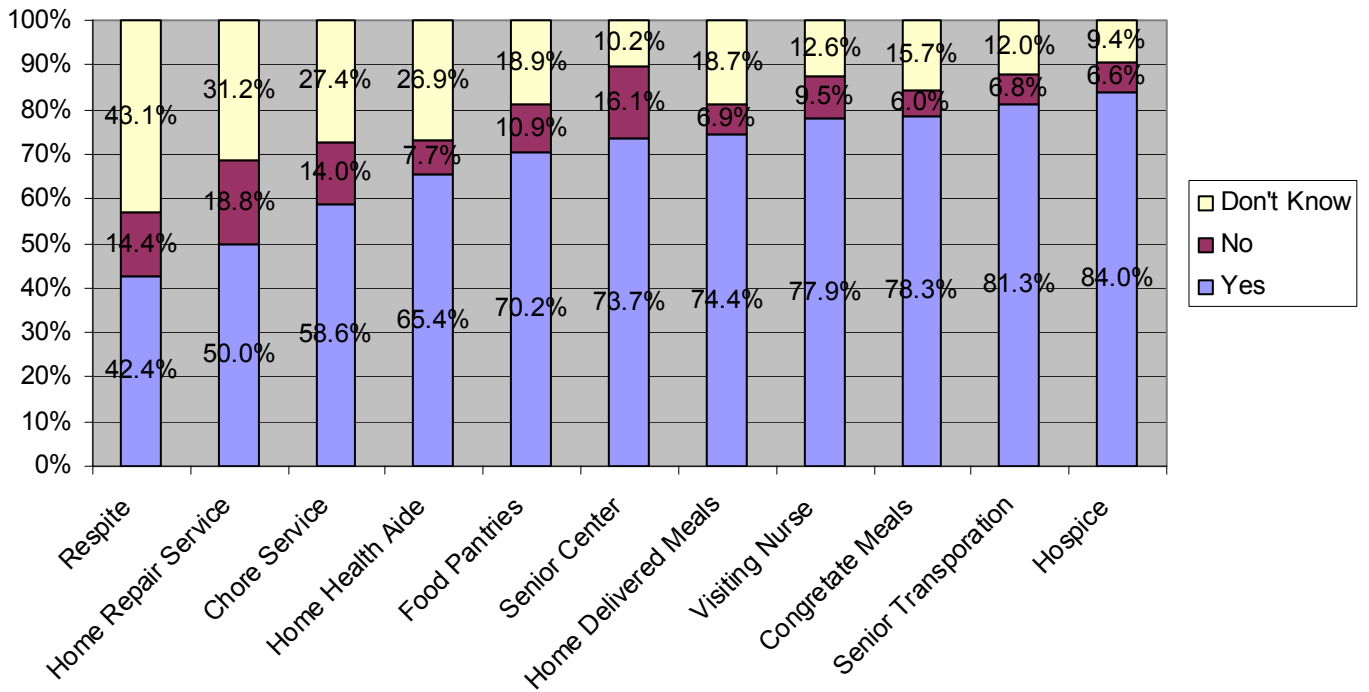
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<sup>8</sup> People were asked to indicate the best resource, such as a person or an organization in their city, town, or county, to get information on various services. Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding and/or missing information.

**Indicator 9) Percentage of people age 65+ who are aware/unaware of selected services in their community.**

In general, older adults in Newaygo County seem to be aware of the multiple services available to help them meet their needs: hospice (84%), senior transportation (81%), congregate meals (78%), visiting RN (78%), meals on wheels (74%), senior centers (74%), food pantry (70%), home health aides (65%), and homemaker services (59%). The services they are least familiar with include home repair (50%) and respite services (42%).

**Exhibit 9.1 - Percentage of People Age 65+ Who are Aware/Unaware of Selected Services in their Community<sup>9</sup>  
Newaygo County 2005**

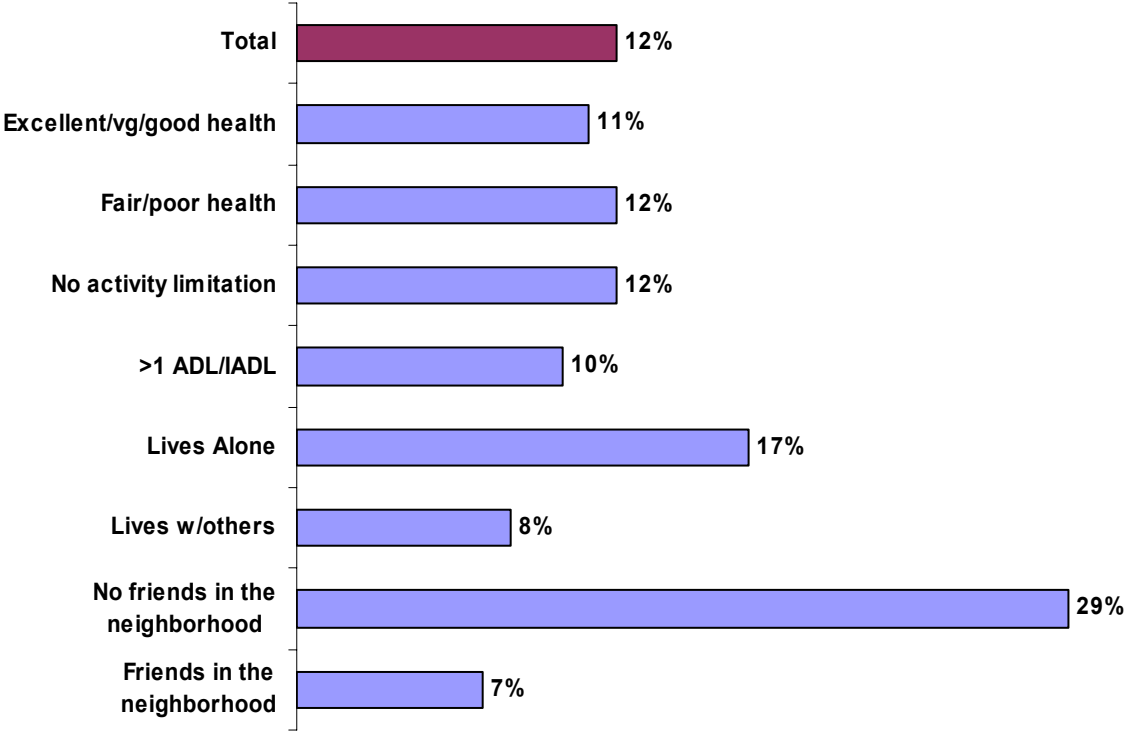
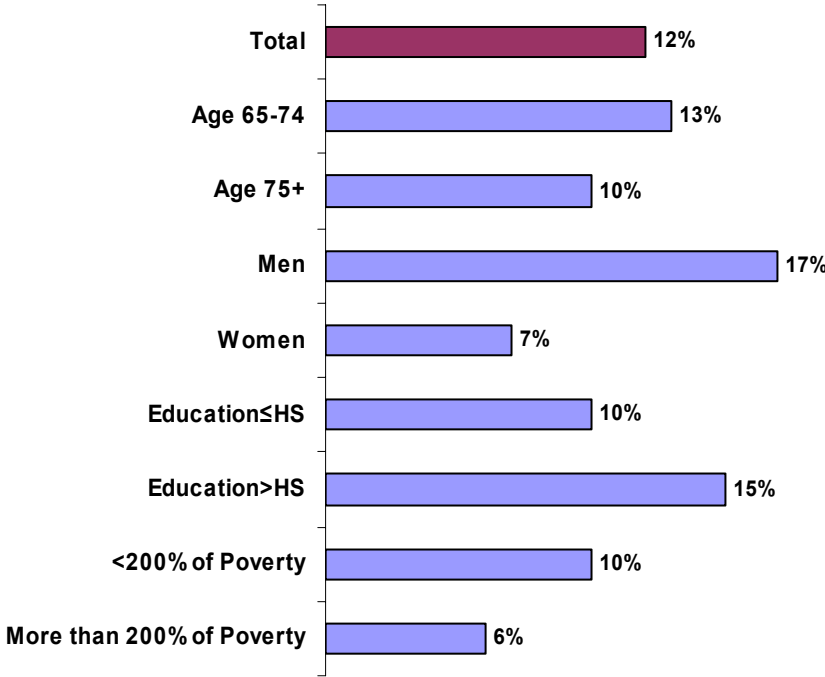


Unweighted N = 255 Weighted N = 6,598

Many of the elders who are least aware of services in Newaygo County are those who tend to be hardest to reach: low income and less educated elders, those without friends in their neighborhood, and those who live alone.

<sup>9</sup> Respondents were asked whether these eleven services are available in their area. Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding and/or missing information.

**Exhibit 9.2 - Percentage of People Age 65+ who Are Unaware of Most Services (6 out of 11) in their Community<sup>9</sup>, By Demographics  
Newaygo County 2005**

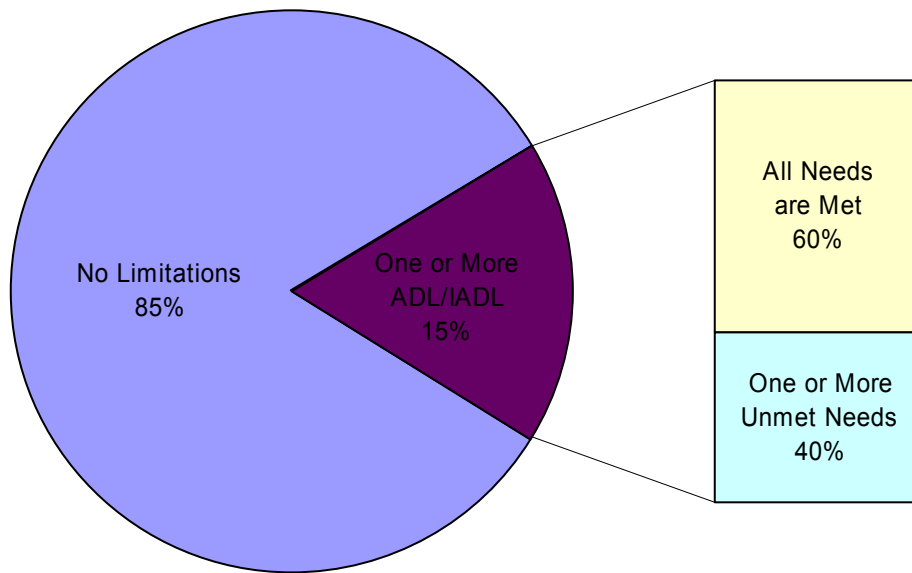


Margin of Error ranges from ±9 to ±17 depending on sample size

**Indicator 10) Percentage of people age 65+ with adequate assistance in ADL and/or IADL activities**

Nearly all (97%) of Newaygo County seniors reported having someone they could contact at any time of the day or night if an emergency situation arose. However, a large portion of Newaygo County’s older adults are not getting the help they need on a day to day basis. Fifteen percent, about 1,000 of Newaygo’s older adults, reported that they have one or more ADL or IADL limitation. Of those seniors with ADL/IADL limitations, 40% are not getting the assistance they need.

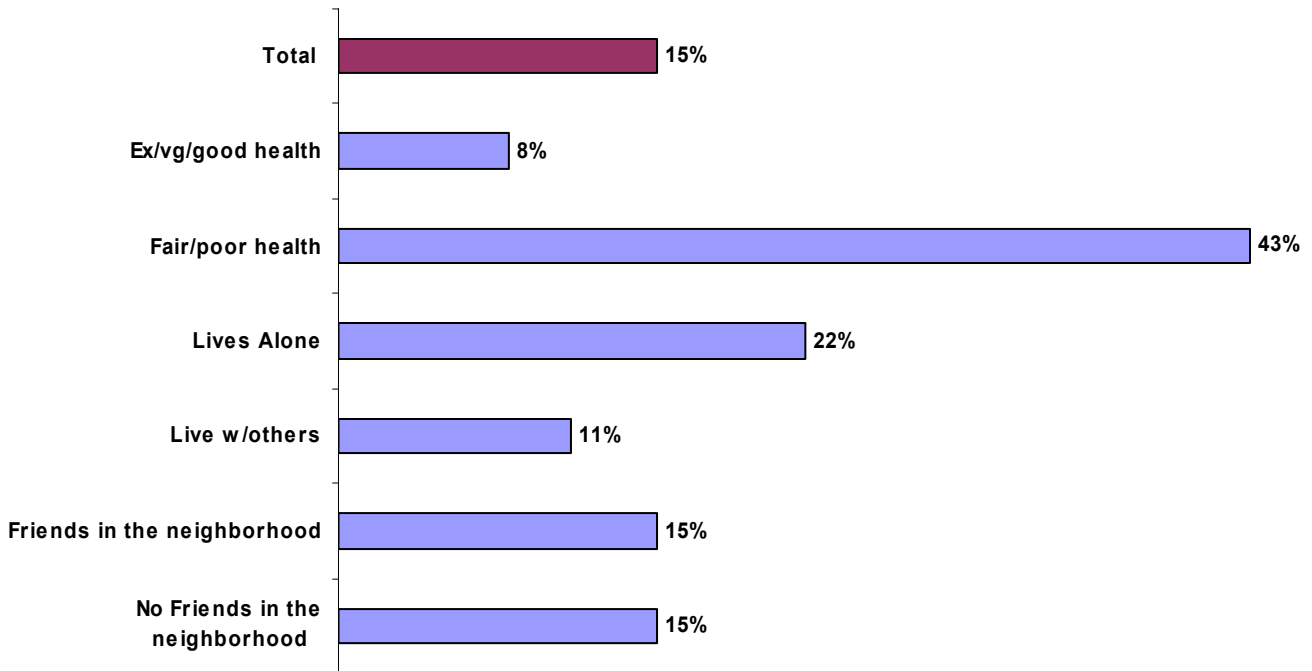
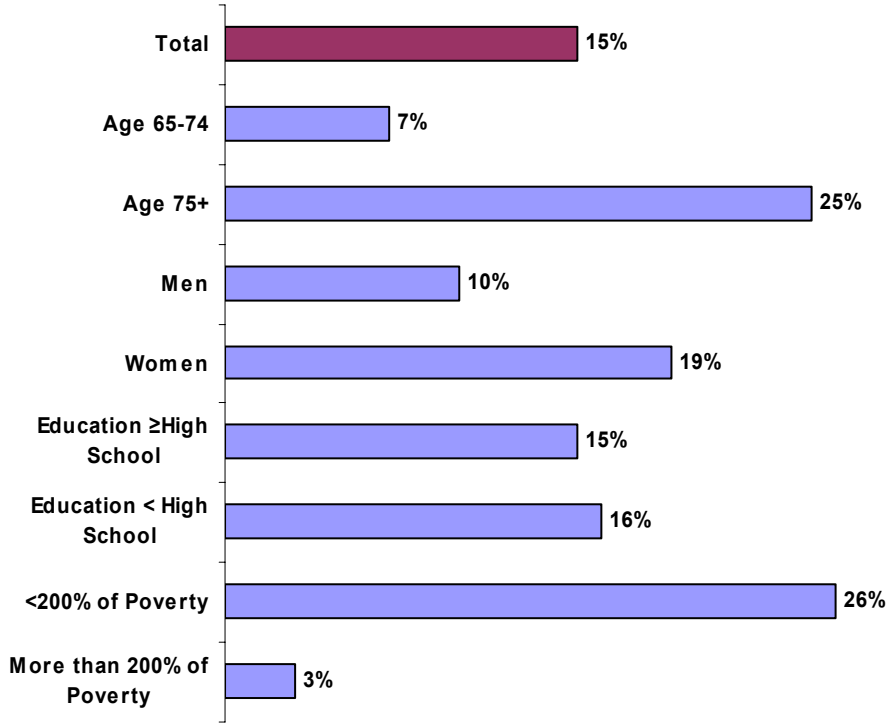
**Exhibit 10.1 - Percentage of People Age 65+ with Adequate Assistance in ADL and/or IADL Activities<sup>10</sup>  
Newaygo County 2005**



Unweighted N = 255 Weighted N = 6,598

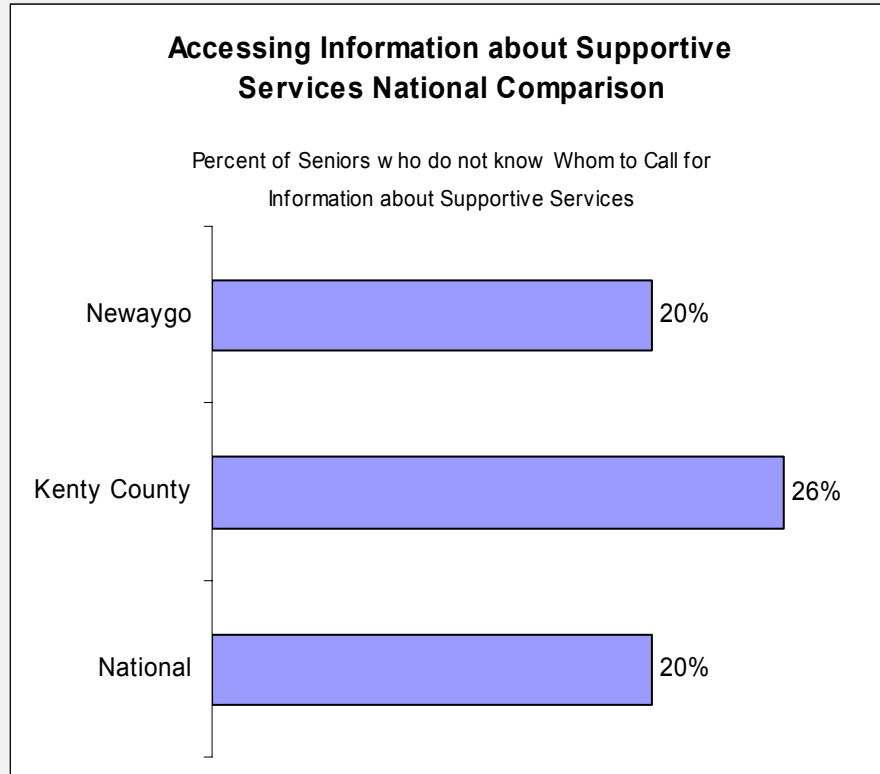
<sup>10</sup> People were asked whether they need assistance with the following activities: ADLs – taking a bath or shower, dressing, eating, getting in/out of bed/chair, using/getting to a toilet, getting around inside the home; and IADLs – going outside the home, doing light housework, preparing meals, driving a car/using public transportation, taking the right amount of prescribed medication, keeping track of money and bills. People who answered “yes” were asked whether they get enough assistance with these activities. Unmet need was defined as not getting help or not getting enough help for one or more ADL and/or IADL for which assistance is needed.

**Exhibit 10.2 - Percentage of People Age 65+ with One ore More  
ADL and/or IADL Limitation<sup>10</sup>, by Demographics  
Newaygo County 2005**



Margin of Error ranges from ±9 to ±17 depending on sample size

How Does Newaygo County Compare?







# Domain 2: Optimizes Health & Well-being

## Dimension 6

### Community Promotes and Provides Access to Necessary & Preventative Health Services

Today, America’s older adults can expect to live significantly longer lives than those who have come before them. Increased longevity is due, in part, to a declining number of deaths from heart disease and stroke. Despite living longer, there are a growing number of elderly people who report functional and activity limitations or experience dementia. In many cases, these added years of life are neither healthy nor active ones. According to the Center for Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, lifestyle changes and an increased emphasis on preventative health services could reverse the trends of increasing chronic disease, disability, and death.

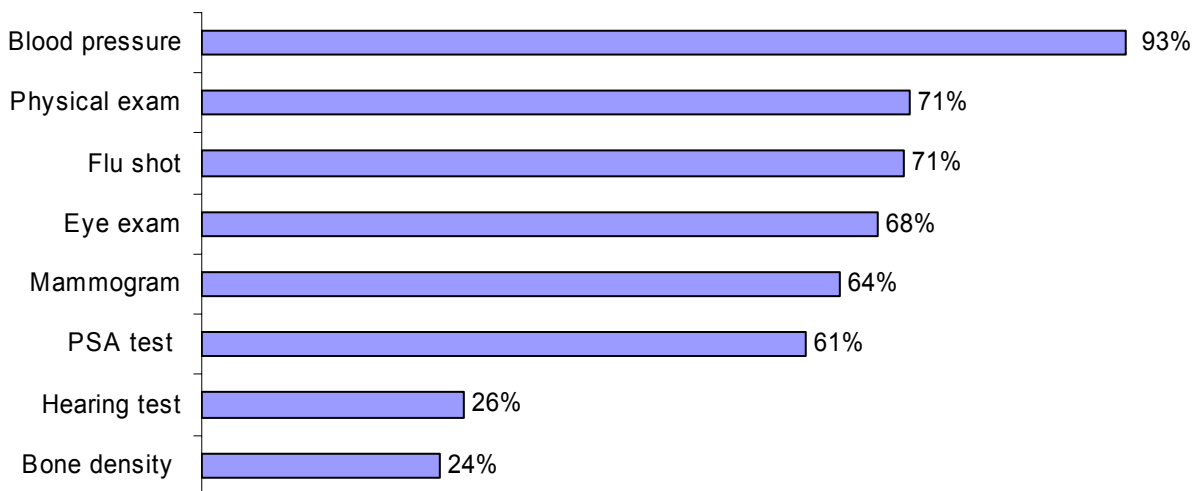
An elder-friendly community reaches out to older residents to raise their awareness about the benefits of preventive medical care.

#### Indicator 11) Rates of Screening and Vaccination for Various Conditions among People 65+

Immunizing against disease and early detection of health problems are key strategies for maintaining health, function and well-being as people age. A community that makes preventative health services easily accessible to seniors could increase the quality of many lives.

Survey results show that nearly all Newaygo County elders have had a blood pressure check in the last year. However, a surprisingly large proportion have not had many of the Medicare-covered preventative health services such as bone density screenings (76%), mammograms<sup>1</sup> (36%), and PSA tests for prostate cancer<sup>1</sup> (39%).

**Exhibit 11.1 - Rates of Screening and Vaccinations for Various Conditions among People Age 65 and Older<sup>11</sup> Newaygo County 2005**

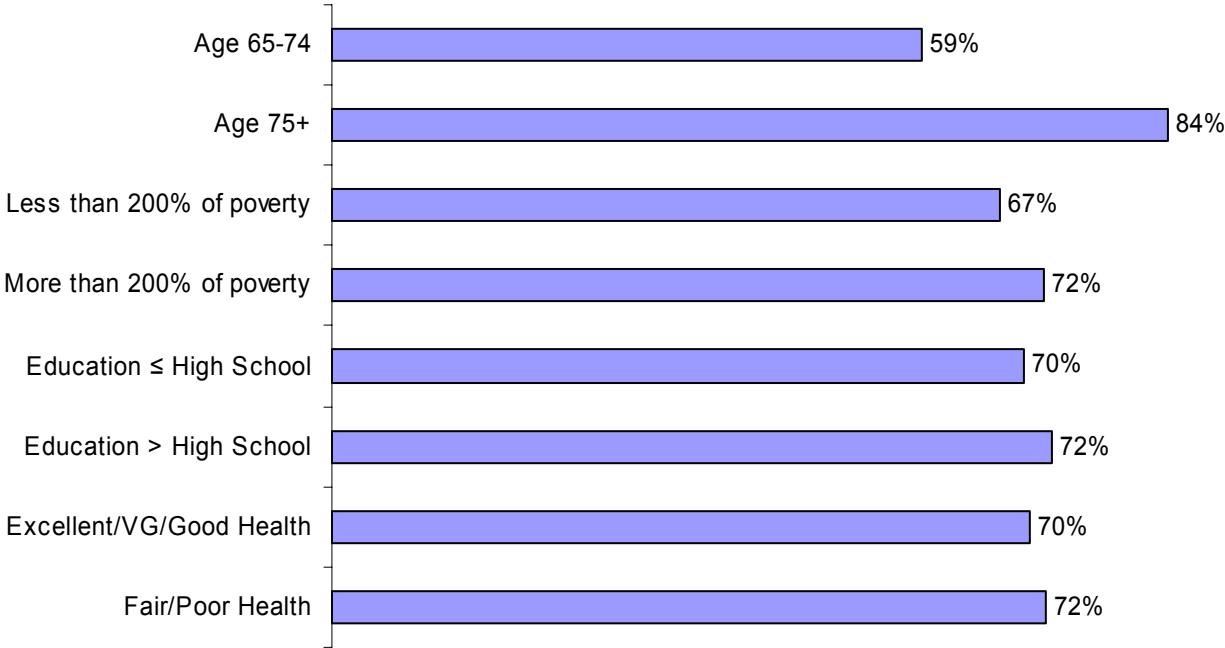


Unweighted N = 255 Weighted N = 6,598

<sup>11</sup> People were asked whether they had any of the preventative measures or tests above in the past 12 months. \*\*PSA (Prostate Cancer Screening) test was only asked of men. \*\*\*Mammogram was only asked of women.

Despite public awareness campaigns, full Medicare coverage for the flu vaccine, and more than 35,000 U.S. deaths from flu each year, 29% of Newaygo County elders – more than 1,900 older adults – did not get a flu shot in the past year. Those over the age of 75 are much more likely to obtain a flu shot than those between the ages of 65-74.

**Exhibit 11.2 - Percentage of People Aged 65+ who had a Flu Vaccination in the Past Year, by Demographics Newaygo County 2005**



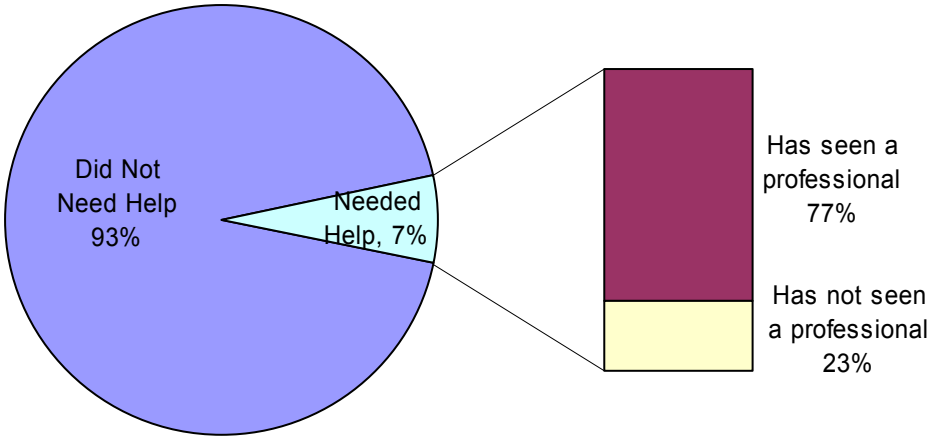
Margin of Error ranges from ±9 to ±17 depending on sample size

**Indicator 12) Percentage of people age 65+ who thought they needed the help of a health care professional because they felt depressed or anxious and have not seen one**

Depression in older adults is an important indicator of general well-being; in fact, higher levels of depression are associated with higher rates of physical illness, greater functional disability, and higher health care costs (Federal Interagency Forum on Aging-Related Statistics, 2000).

Nearly 450 Newaygo County elders report needing the help of a health care professional because of depression or anxiety. More than one out of five of them have not received the help they need.

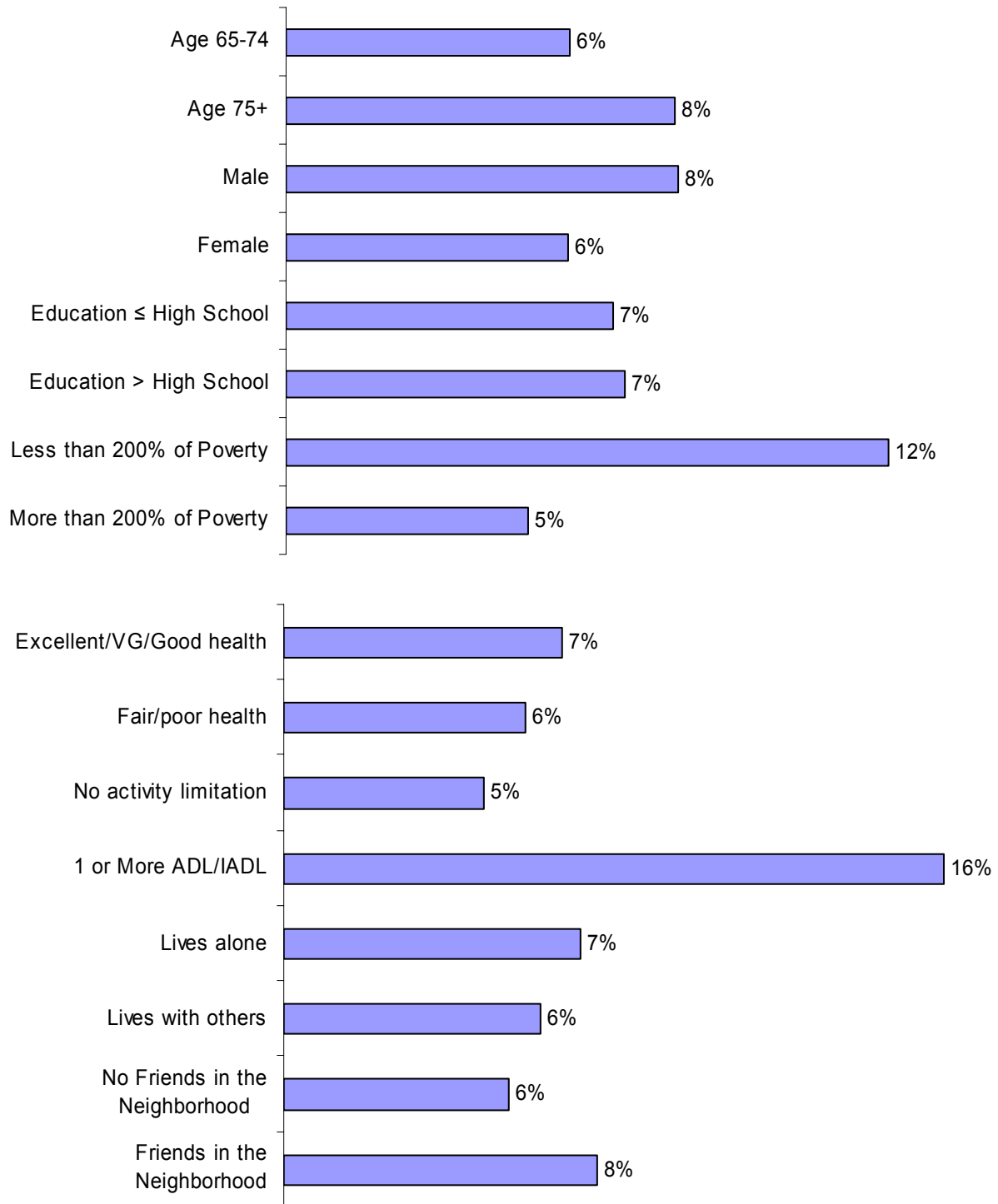
**Exhibit 12.1 - Percentage of People Age 65+ who thought they needed the Help of a Health Care Professional because they felt Depressed or Anxious and have Not Seen One (for those symptoms)<sup>12</sup>  
Newaygo County 2005**



Unweighted N = 255    Weighted N = 6,598

<sup>12</sup> People were asked whether in the past year, there was a time when they thought they needed the help of a health professional or counselor because they felt depressed or anxious. People who answered “yes” were asked whether they obtained the professional help or counseling they needed. Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding or missing information. It should be noted that this question was asked in a manner consistent with the Center For Disease Control’s Behavioral Risk Factor Survey.

**Exhibit 12.2 - Number of People Age 65+ Who Thought they needed the Help of a Health Professional or Counselor due to Depression or Anxiety, by Demographics<sup>12</sup>  
Newaygo County 2005**



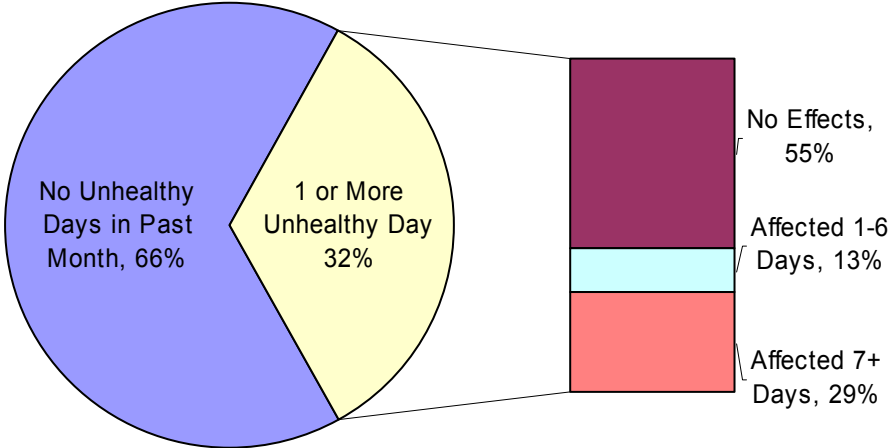
Margin of Error ranges from ±9 to ±17 depending on sample size

**Indicator 13) Percentage of people age 65+ whose physical or mental health interfered with their activities in the past month**

Functioning in later years may be diminished if illness, chronic disease, or injury limits physical and/or mental abilities. Changes in disability rates have important implications for work and retirement policies, long-term care needs, and the social well-being of the older population. By monitoring and understanding these trends, policymakers are better able to make informed decisions surrounding these issues (Federal Interagency Forum on Aging-Related Statistics, 2000).

Approximately 900 older adults living in Newaygo County reported that their health had interfered with their activities in the past month.

**Exhibit 13.1 - Percentage of People Age 65+ whose Physical or Mental Health Interfered with their Activities in the Past Month<sup>13</sup>  
Newaygo County 2005**



Unweighted N = 255    Weighted N = 6,598

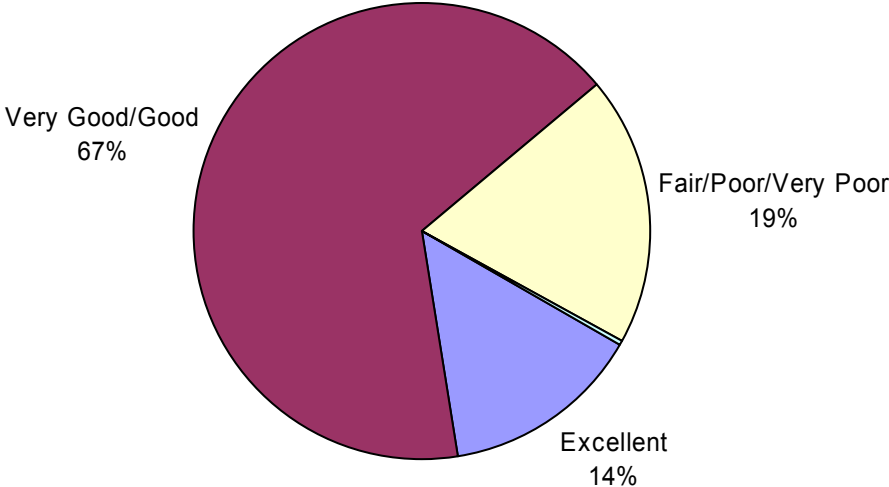
<sup>13</sup> The number of “unhealthy days” is based on a summary index from the following two questions: 1. “Now, thinking about your physical health, which includes physical illness and injury, for how many days during the past 30 days was your physical health not good?” and 2. “Now, thinking about your mental health, which includes stress, depression, and problems with emotions, for how many days during the past 30 days was your mental health not good?” People who had one or more “unhealthy” days were asked “During the past 30 days, for how many days did poor physical or mental health keep you from doing your usual activities, such as self care, work, or recreation?” Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding and/or missing information.

**Indicator 14) Percentage of people who report being in good to excellent health**

A self-rated health status is frequently captured on surveys. Researchers have found that self-reports of “good” to “excellent” health correlate with a lower risk of mortality.

Eighty-one percent of Newaygo County senior citizens rated their health as excellent, very good or good. Nineteen percent, about 1,300 older adults, rated their health as fair, poor or very poor.

**Exhibit 14.1 - Percentage of People who Report Being in Good to Excellent Health<sup>14</sup>  
Newaygo County 2005**

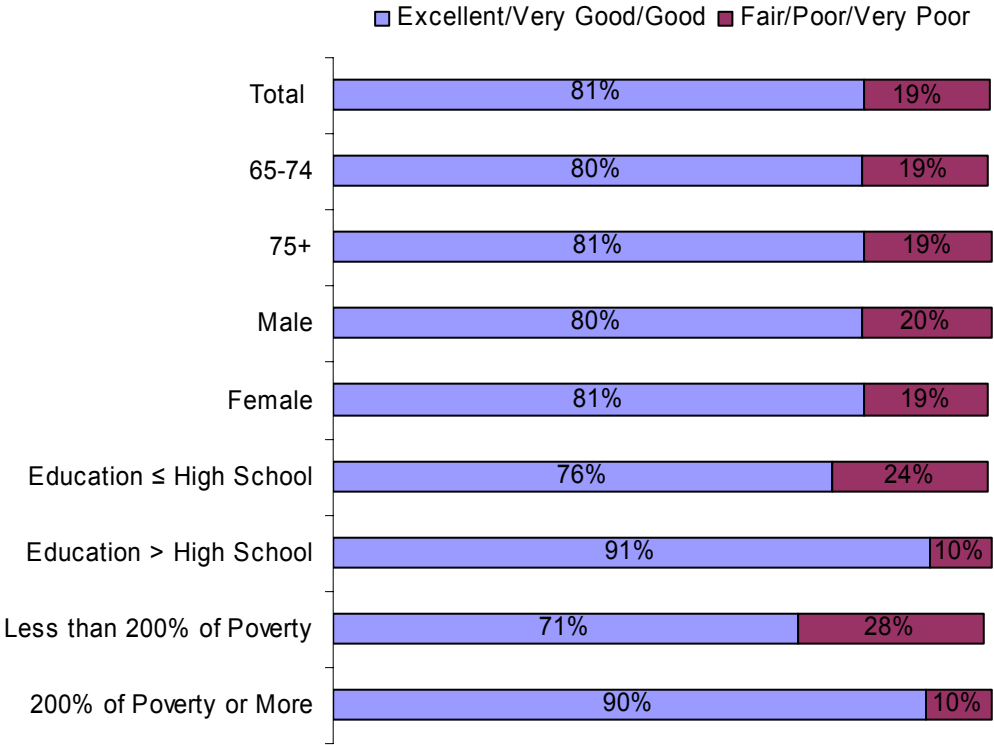


Unweighted N = 255    Weighted N = 6,598

Survey results suggest a strong relationship between income and health. Those living in poverty were more likely to indicate their health was fair or poor. One possible explanation is that individuals with lower incomes have less access to preventative medicine, health insurance, and general medical care for their ailments.

<sup>14</sup> People were asked: “Would you say that, in general, your health is Excellent, Very good, Good, Fair, Poor or Very Poor?”

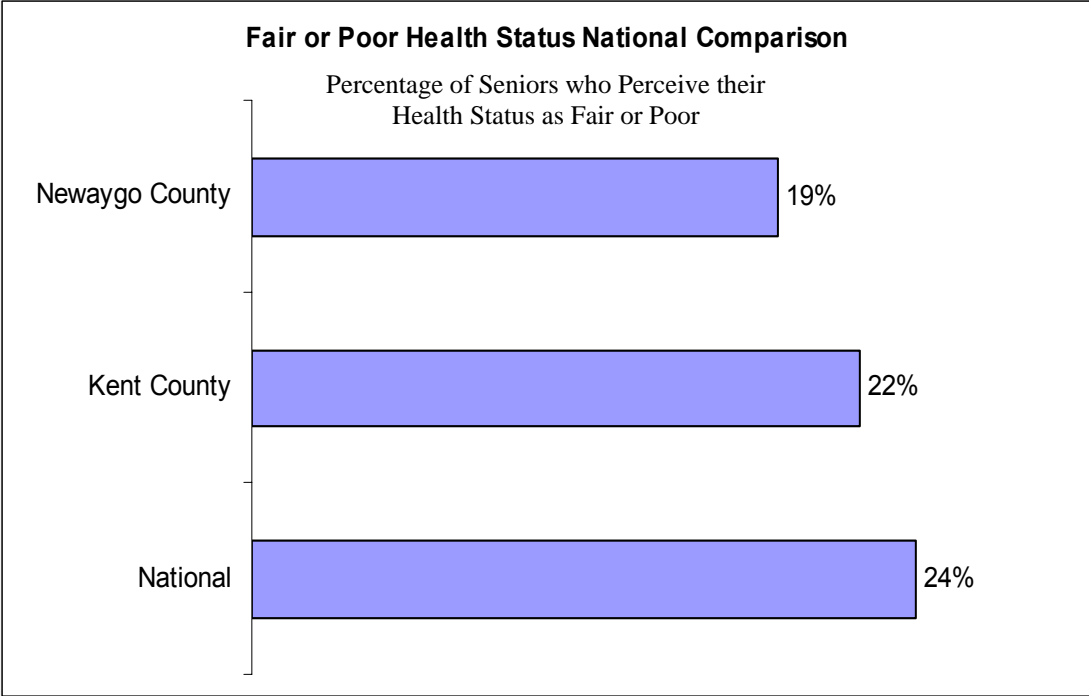
**Exhibit 14.2 - Percentage of People who Report Being in Good to Excellent Health<sup>14</sup>,  
by Demographics  
Newaygo County 2005**



Margin of Error ranges from ±9 to ±17 depending on sample size

How Does Newaygo County Compare?

Nationally, 24% of older adults say their health is fair or poor. A smaller portion of Newaygo County senior citizens (19%) said their health was fair or poor.





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## Dimension 7

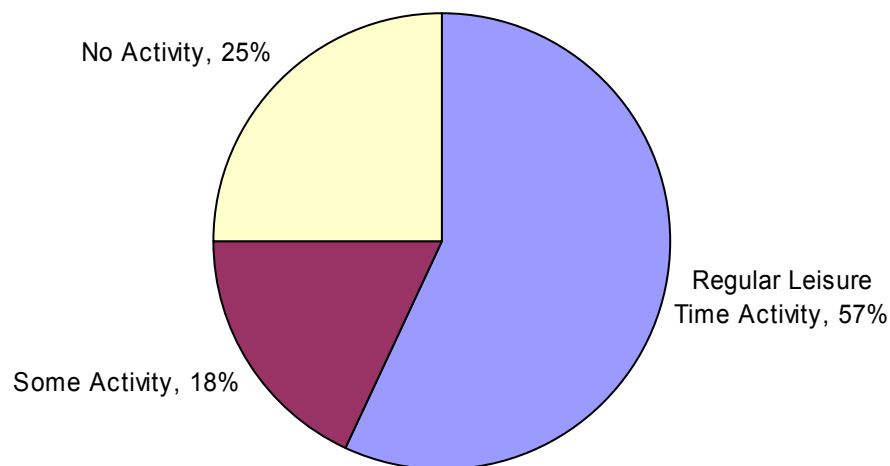
### Opportunities for Physical Activity are Available and Used

According to the National Center for Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, remaining active is one of the most important steps an older adult can take to maintain physical and mental health. Staying active can help reduce the risk of obesity, high blood pressure, diabetes, osteoporosis, stroke, depression, colon cancer, and premature death. Additional benefits of cardiovascular and strength training for seniors include: helping seniors maintain the ability to live independently, reducing the risk of falling and fracturing bones, reducing symptoms of anxiety and depression, and fostering improved mood and feeling of well-being. In addition, exercise helps maintain healthy bones, muscles and joints.

#### Indicator 15) Percentage of people age 65+ who participate in regular physical exercise

As we saw earlier, the vast majority of older Newaygo County residents (81%) describe their health as excellent, very good, or good. This is significantly better than the national average (76%). This could be attributed in part to the high level of physical activity among local elders – 57% reported that they engage in regular exercise and another 18% engage in ‘some activity.’ Research has shown that even among frail and very old adults, mobility and functioning can be improved through physical activity (Federal Interagency Forum on Aging-Related Statistics, 2000).

**Exhibit 15.1 - Percentage of People Age 65+ who Participate in Regular Physical Exercise<sup>15</sup>  
Newaygo County 2005**



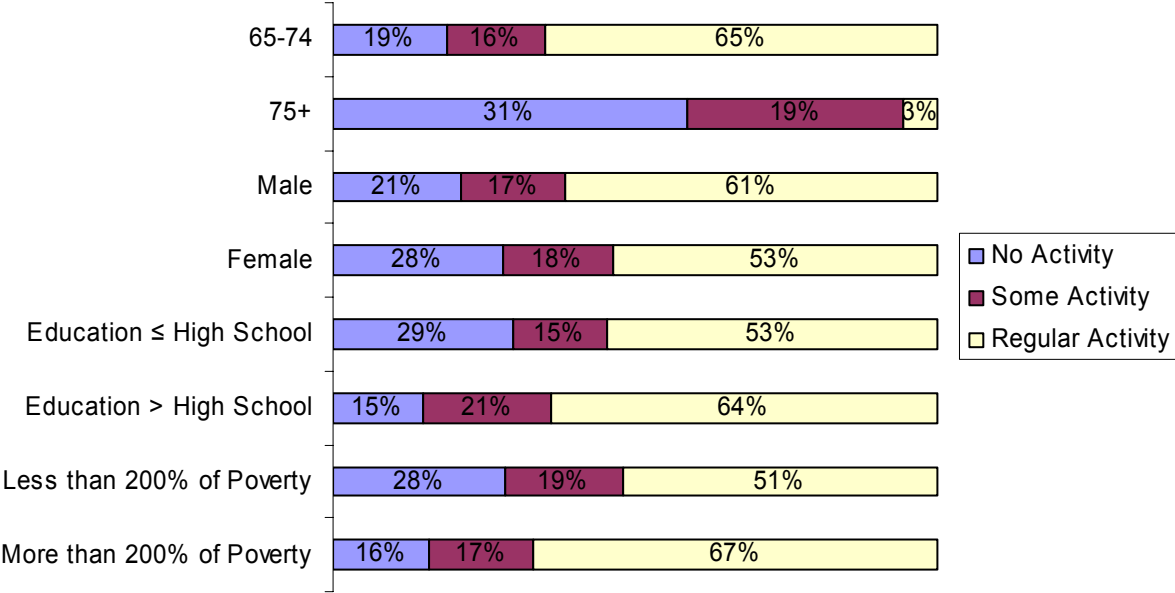
Unweighted N = 255 Weighted N = 6,598

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<sup>15</sup> “Regular leisure time activity” is defined as 1) light or moderate activity that causes light sweating or a light to moderate increase in breathing or heart rate and occurs five or more times per week for at least 30 minutes each time, and/or 2) vigorous activity that causes heavy sweating or large increases in breathing or heart rate and occurs three or more times per week for at least 20 minutes each time. People who engage in combinations of the two types of physical activities described above are included in the category “some activity.” Those who are unable to or do not engage in physical activity are included in the category “no activity.”

Participation in regular activity decreases with age. Four out of 5 older adults between the ages of 65-74 indicated that they participated in at least some activity. This number drops to around 1 out of 5 for older adults who are 75 or older.

**Exhibit 15.2 - Percentage of People Age 65+ who Participate in Regular Physical Exercise<sup>15</sup>, by Demographics Newaygo County 2005**

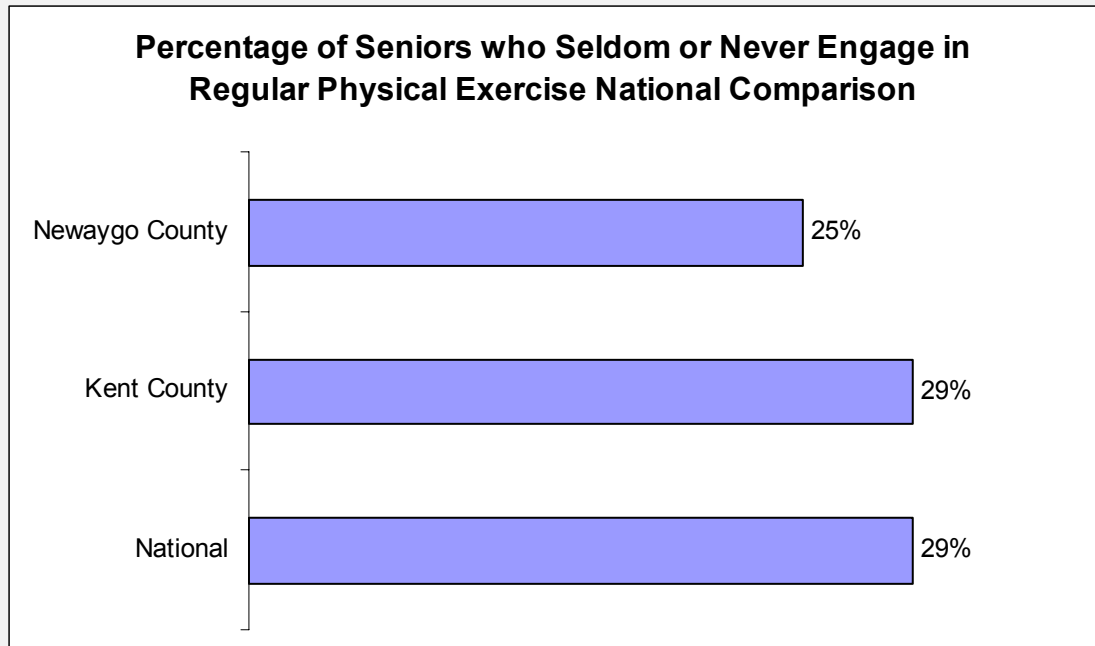


Margin of Error ranges from ±9 to ±17 depending on sample size

### How Does Newaygo County Compare?

Twenty-five percent of Newaygo County senior citizens said that they seldom or never exercise. This is better than what older adults in neighboring Kent County and in the nation said.

Percentage of Seniors who Seldom or Never Engage in Regular Physical Exercise  
National Comparison



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## Dimension 8

### Obstacles to Use of Necessary Medical Care are Minimized

For most people, health is the one make or break factor in leading a full, productive, and independent life. Yet according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, at least 80% of older Americans live with at least one chronic condition, and half have at least two (US Census Bureau, 2002). These conditions (e.g. diabetes, congestive heart failure, arthritis, hypertension, asthma) can cause years of pain, disability, and loss of function and independence. Good chronic disease management, combined with preventative medicine and access to acute care services, creates real opportunities for improvements in the quality of life of older adults.

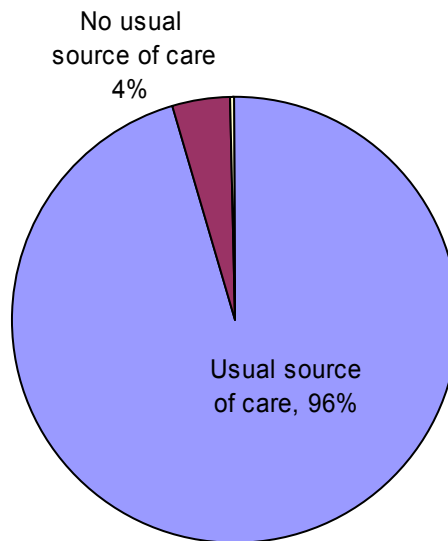
An elder-friendly community facilitates access to medical care for all older adults.

#### Indicator 16) Percentage of people age 65+ with a usual source of care

According to National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), the majority of elderly persons utilize a private doctor for their regular care. NCHS's studies have revealed that the most common reason for having no usual source of care is the feeling that a doctor is not needed. Other reasons cited by NCHS include lack of availability or knowledge of options, inconvenience of care, lack of insurance, and mistrust of doctors.

In Newaygo County, 96% of senior citizens utilize a regular source of care for their medical needs.

**Exhibit 16.1 – Percentage of People Age 65+ with a Usual Source of Care<sup>16</sup>  
Newaygo County 2005**



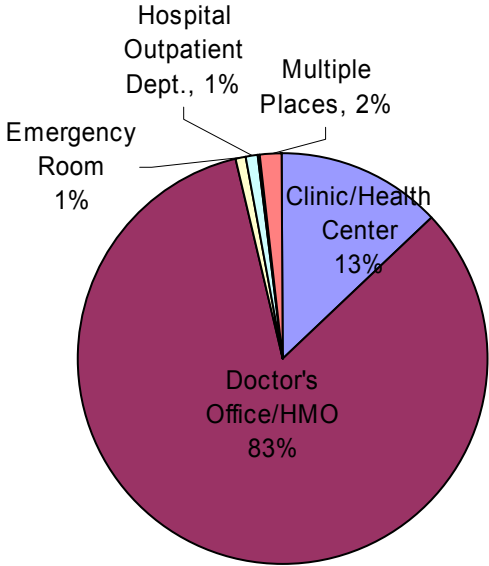
Unweighted N = 255 Weighted N = 6,598

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<sup>16</sup> People were asked whether there is a place that they usually go when they are sick or need advice about their health.

The older adults who indicated that they have a usual source of care were asked to specify the place where they usually received care. The majority of Newaygo County's seniors (83%) indicated that they utilize a primary care physician for their medical needs. Approximately 100 of Newaygo County's older adults are utilizing a hospital emergency or outpatient department as their source for usual care.

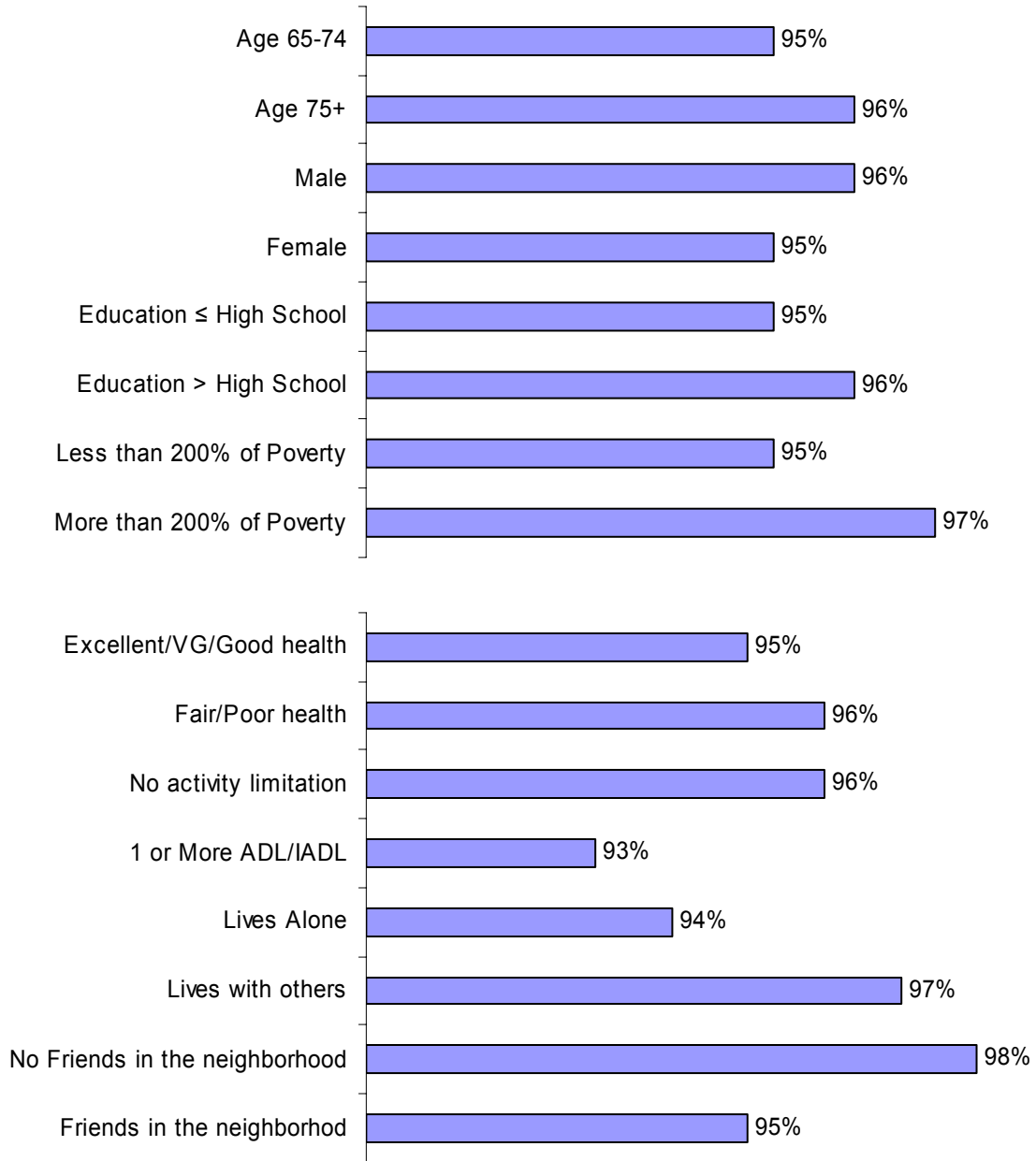
**Exhibit 16.2 - Source of Care Most Regularly Used<sup>17</sup>  
Newaygo County 2005**



While most senior citizens in Newaygo County have a usual source of care, some disparities exist between various sub-populations. For example, those with one or more activity limitation and those who live alone are less likely to have a usual source of care than their counterparts.

<sup>17</sup> People were asked what kind of place they go to most often – a clinic, doctor's office, emergency room, or some other place.

**Exhibit 16.3 – Percentage of People Age 65+ with a Usual Source of Care<sup>16</sup>, by Demographics  
Newaygo County 2005**



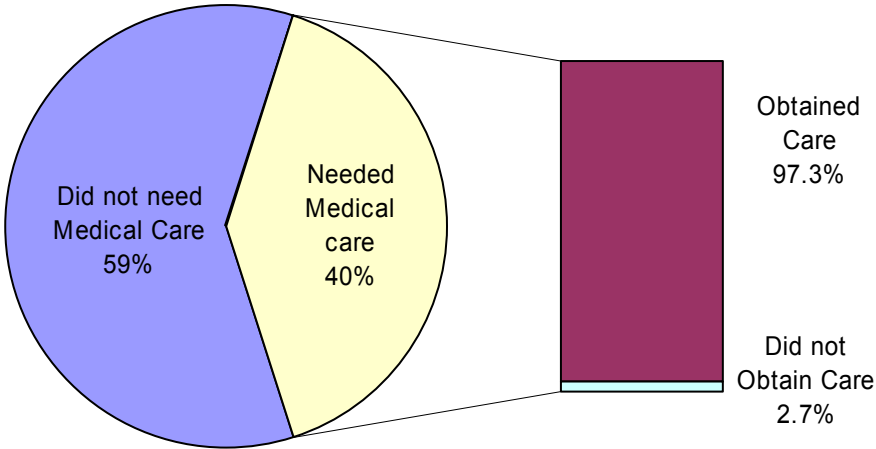
Margin of Error ranges from ±9 to ±17 depending on sample size

**Indicator 17) Percentage of people age 65+ who obtained needed medical care**

Getting the medical care one needs is essential to health maintenance, especially for older adults who often have weakened immune systems due to low activity levels. If one does not receive the medical care they need for a small issue it can create a cascade of issues leading to more complex situations at a much greater expense to the patient.

In 2005, 40% of Newaygo County seniors said that they thought they had needed medical care at some point in the past year. Of those needing medical care, 97.3% received care and 2.7% did not.

**Exhibit 17.1 - Percentage of People Age 65+ who Obtained Needed Medical Care <sup>18</sup>  
Newaygo County 2005**



Unweighted N = 255    Weighted N = 6,598

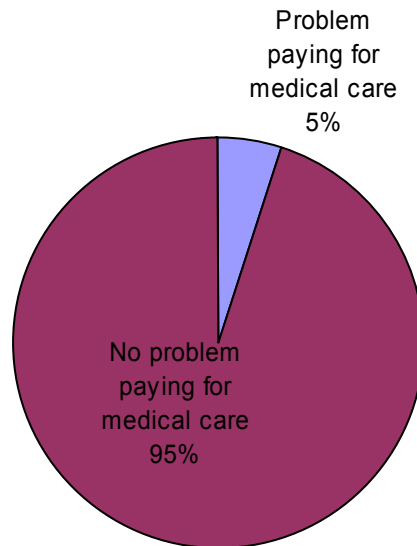
<sup>18</sup> People were asked whether in the past year there was a time when they thought they needed medical care because they felt sick. People who answered “yes” were asked whether they saw a medical professional when they felt sick.

## Indicator 18) Percentage of people age 65+ who had problems paying for medical care

American ideals have long upheld a belief that all individuals have a right to health care services when they need them. However, the cost of health care in this country is rising at an astronomic rate causing great difficulty for seniors and the chronically ill who must bear the brunt of rising costs and slashed benefits. Faced with this budget strain, some individuals will forego necessary treatment.

One of every 20 older adults in Newaygo County has experienced difficulty in the past year when it came to paying for medical care.

### Exhibit 18.1 - Percentage of People Age 65+ who had Problems Paying for Medical Care<sup>19</sup> Newaygo County 2005



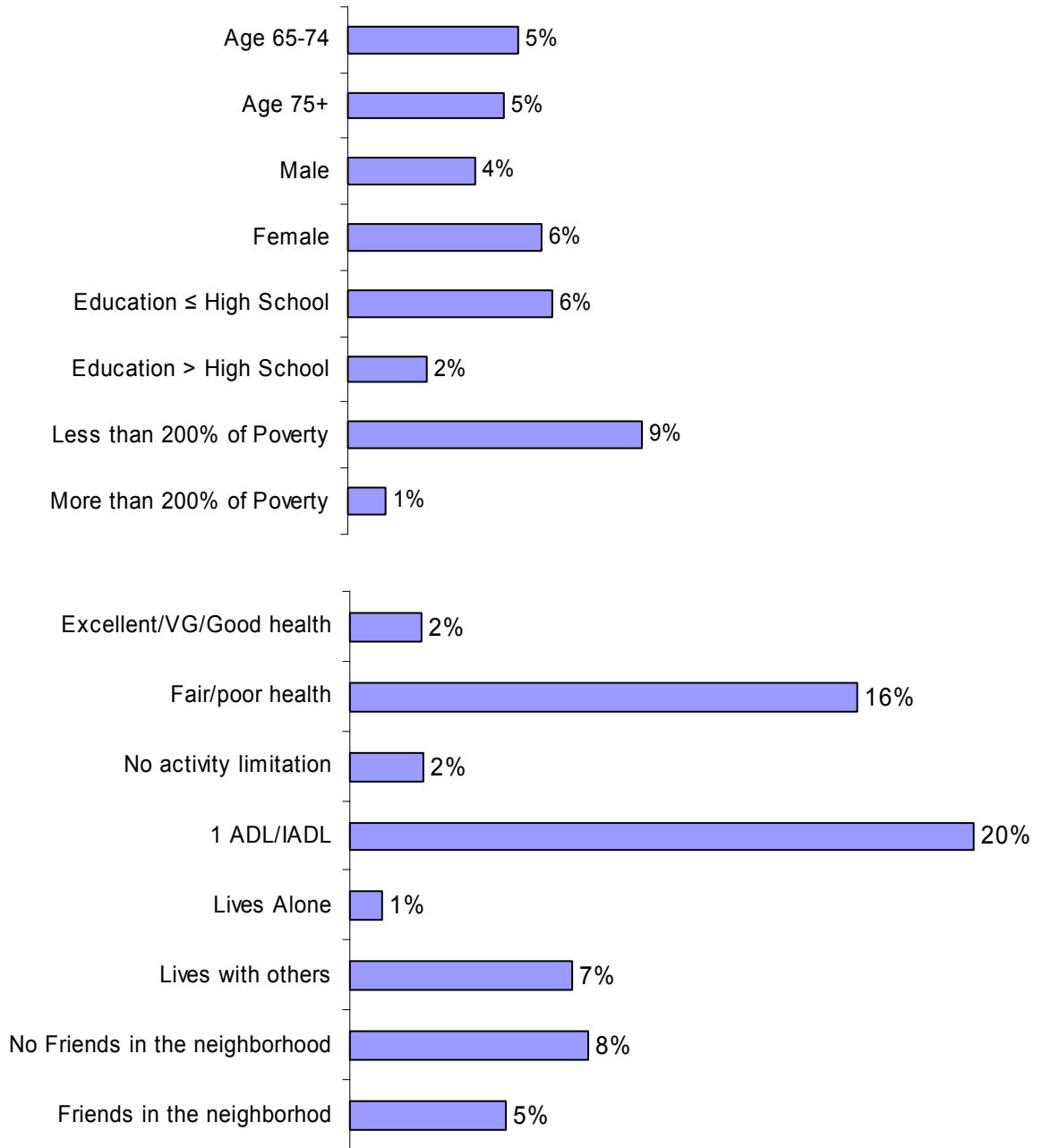
Unweighted N = 255    Weighted N = 6,598

As health deteriorates, individuals report increased difficulty paying for health care costs. Twenty percent of individuals with one or more activity limitations and 16% those in a fair or poor state of health had difficulty paying for services.

<sup>19</sup> People were asked whether there was a time in the past 12 months when they did not have enough money to follow up on tests or treatment recommended by a doctor. Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding and/or missing information.



**Exhibit 18.2 - Percentage of People Age 65+ who had Problems Paying for Medical Care<sup>19</sup>, by Demographics Newaygo County 2005**



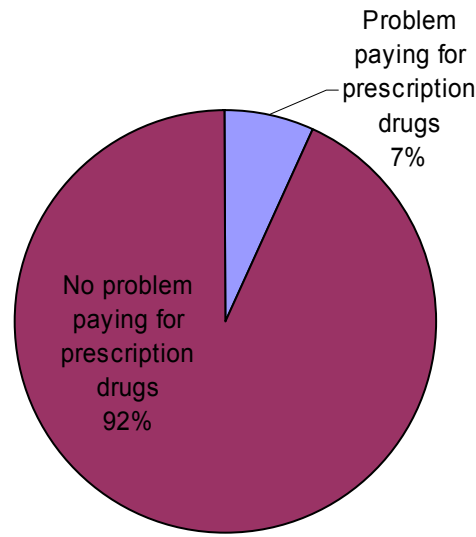
Margin of Error ranges from ±9 to ±17 depending on sample size

## Indicator 19) Percentage of people age 65+ who had problems paying for prescription drugs

People ages 65 and older consume more prescription and over-the-counter medicines than any other age group. So when prices for these medicines rise, older adults are the ones who feel the greatest impact. A report released by the AARP in 2005 showed that during a one year period the manufacturer prices of the prescription drugs most commonly used by seniors increased at almost double the rate of inflation. Moreover, these increases were part of a trend: The report found that the prices of prescription drugs has increased at a rate twice that of inflation for at least the past 3 years.

In Newaygo County, 7% of older adults indicated that at some point in the past year they had difficulty paying for prescription medicine.

**Exhibit 19.1 - Percentage of People Age 65+ who had Problems Paying for Prescription Drugs<sup>20</sup> Newaygo County 2005**



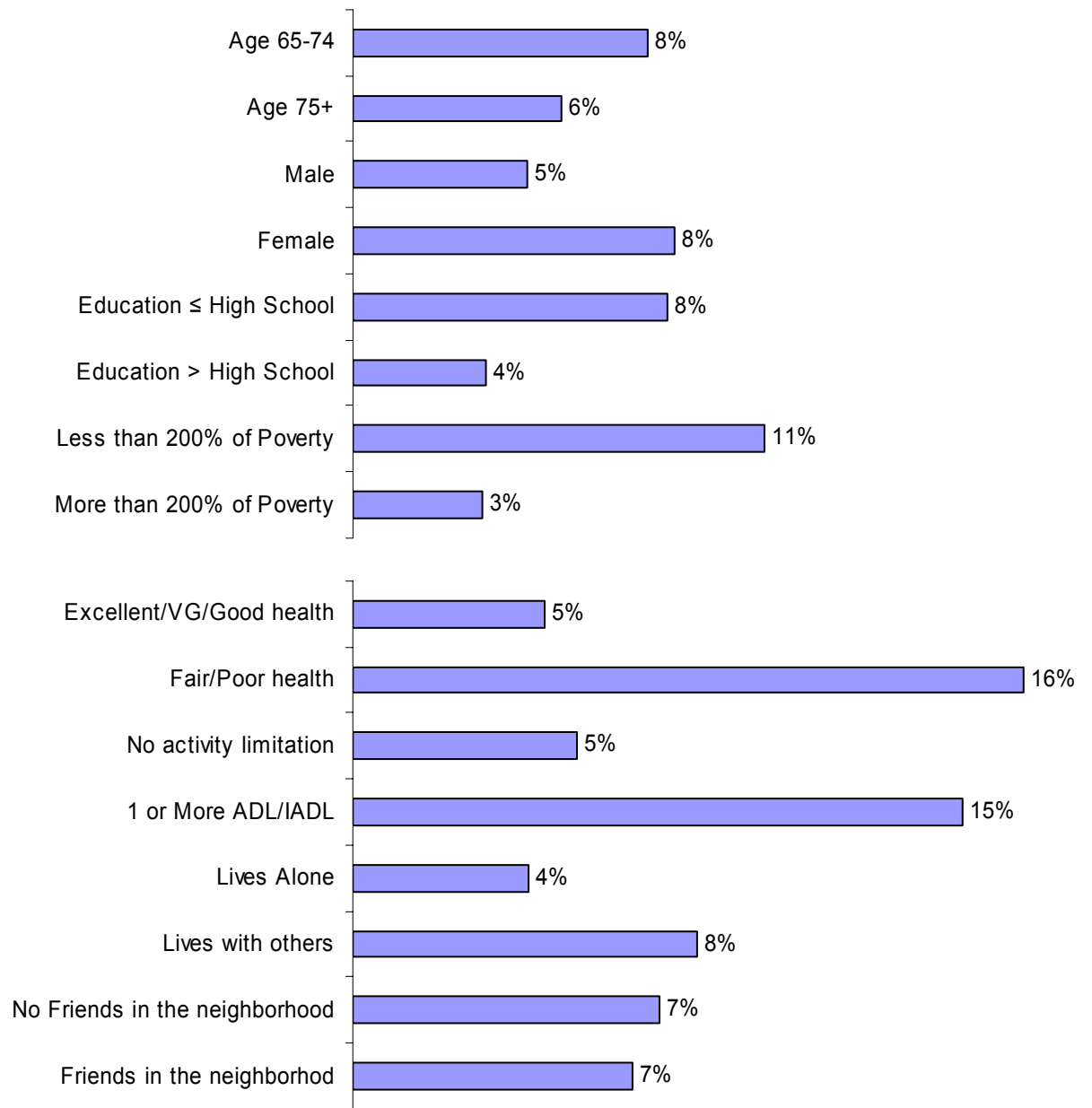
Unweighted N = 255 Weighted N = 6,598

Those most likely to be in need of medications, individuals with fair or poor health and individuals with activity limitations, were more likely to report that they had difficulty paying for prescriptions.

## Exhibit 19.2 - Percentage of People Age 65+

<sup>20</sup> People were asked whether there was a time in the past 12 months when they did not have enough money to fill a prescription for medicine.

**who had Problems Paying for Prescription Drugs<sup>20</sup>, by Demographics  
Newaygo County 2005**



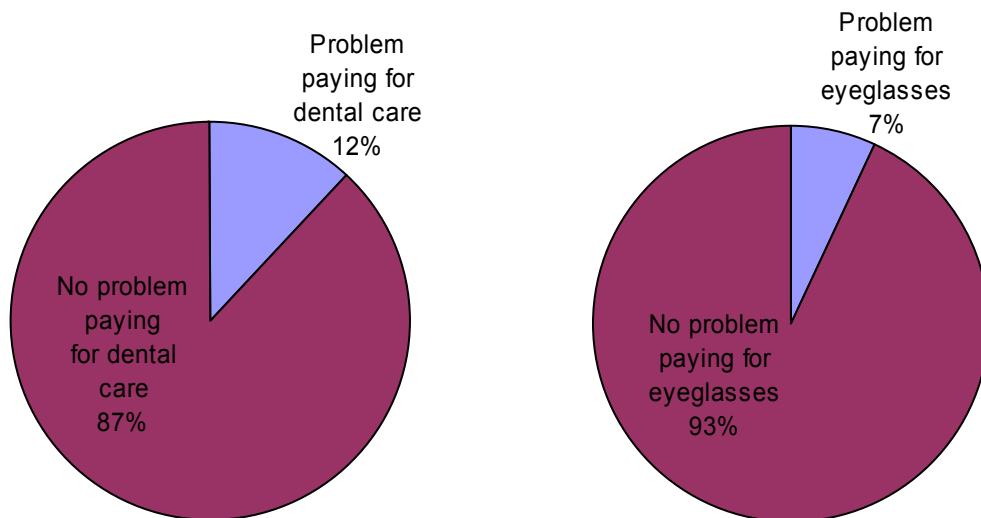
Margin of Error ranges from ±9 to ±17 depending on sample size

## Indicator 20) Percentage of people age 65+ who had problems paying for dental care

The vision and dental care needs of older adults are similar to the needs of all adults. However, the critical role that vision and oral health play in an older adults general well-being is too often overlooked. Oral health problems can cause pain and suffering, as well as difficulty in speaking, chewing, swallowing, and maintaining a nutritious diet (Center for Disease Control 1999). Likewise, vision impairments affect nearly all of life's daily activities.

In Newaygo County, 12% of older adults find meeting the costs associated with dental care to be difficult, and 7% of older adults have trouble paying for eyeglasses.

**Exhibit 20.1 - Percentage of People Age 65+ who had Problems Paying for Dental Care<sup>21</sup> or Eyeglasses<sup>22</sup> Newaygo County 2005**



Unweighted N = 255 Weighted N = 6,598

<sup>21</sup> People were asked whether in the past 12 months they did not have enough money to obtain dental care (including checkups).

<sup>22</sup> People were asked whether there was a time in the past 12 months when they did not have enough money to obtain eyeglasses.

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## Dimension 9

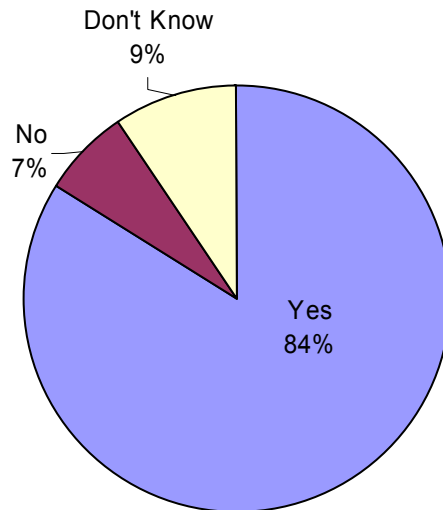
### Palliative Care Services are Available and Advertised

Palliative care is often associated with the hospice movement that began in the United States in the 1970s. Palliative medical care does not focus on the cure of disease, but instead focuses on the management of medical issues such as pain control. In addition, it seeks to address the patient's psychological, social and spiritual concerns. Barriers to accessing appropriate palliative care could include failure of the medical community to offer the option, policy and regulatory barriers, as well as patient's own resistance to focusing on end of life care (Jennings et al., 2003).

#### Indicator 21) Percentage of people age 65+ who know whether palliative care services are available

National Hospice Foundation reports that many people are not aware that there is an all inclusive hospice care benefit available to Americans through the Medicare program. In Newaygo County, 7% percent of older adults were unaware of the availability of such services, and 9% did not know for certain that such services were available to them.

**Exhibit 21.1 - Percentage of People Age 65+ who Know whether Palliative Care Services are Available<sup>23</sup>  
Newaygo County 2005**



Unweighted N = 255 Weighted N = 6,598

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<sup>23</sup> People were asked whether end of life or hospice care service is available in their area.



# Domain 3: Maximizes Independence

## Dimension 11

### Transportation is Accessible and Affordable

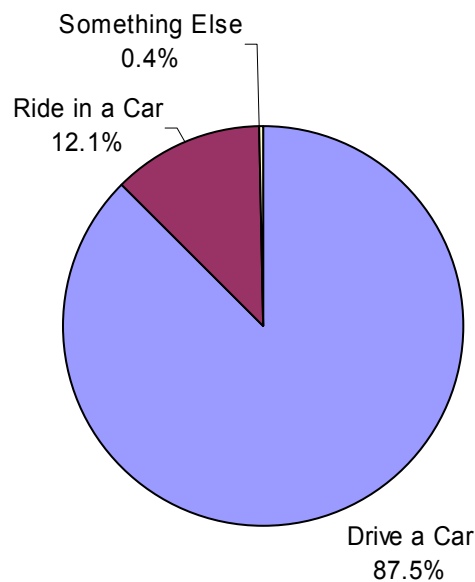
As communities begin to recognize that older adults want to stay in their homes for as long as possible, transportation is increasingly identified as one of the largest service needs of seniors. Transportation programs can make it possible for individuals who do not drive to make necessary day-to-day trips, such as medical appointments, business errands and shopping, and to make equally important trips to socialize and participate in activities.

#### Indicator 22) Percentage of People Age 65+ who have Access to Public Transportation

Six percent of older adults in Newaygo County (about 600 seniors) say they go out of their home less than once per week. These adults cited various reasons for not leaving their home more often, including the lack of transportation. An accessible public transportation system could increase the ability of older adults to make necessary trips and to maintain social connections.

Currently when Newaygo County's older adults leave their home, the majority (84.5%) do so by driving a car.

**Exhibit 22.1 - Means of Transportation Used Most Frequently<sup>24</sup>  
Newaygo County 2005**



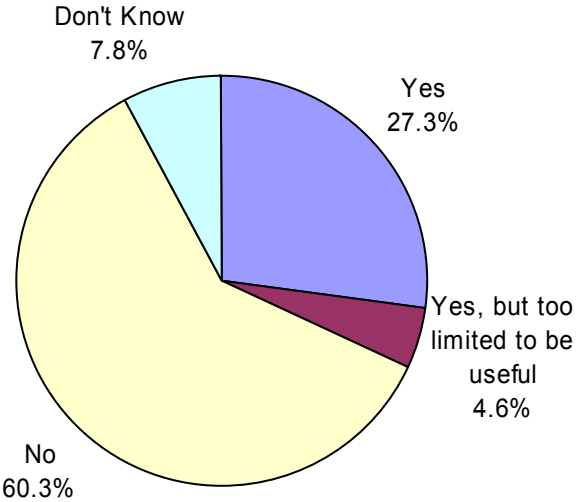
Unweighted N = 255 Weighted N = 6,598

<sup>24</sup> People were asked which means of transportation they use most frequently.

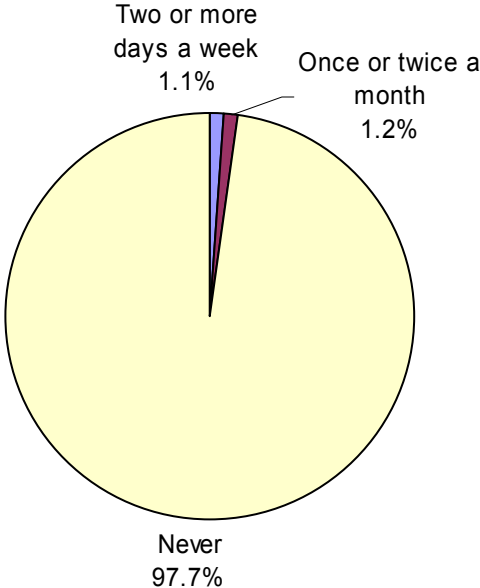
While many communities work hard to make public and paratransit available to seniors, availability does not necessarily assure that the transportation needs of seniors will be met. This is because many seniors who do not drive, frequently cannot walk to a bus stop, cannot get into a van, cannot get to a physician’s office without an escort, or cannot afford a taxi. (Beverly Foundation, 2002) In fact, 11% of older adults in Newaygo County (about 725 seniors), reported having a medical condition that makes travel difficult and 8% have reduced their travel because of a medical condition.

Less than 30% of elders in Newaygo County say public transportation is readily accessible in their community. Only 2% of older adults in Newaygo County have used public transportation in the past 2 months.

**Exhibit 22.2 - Access to Public Transportation in the Community Newaygo County 2005**

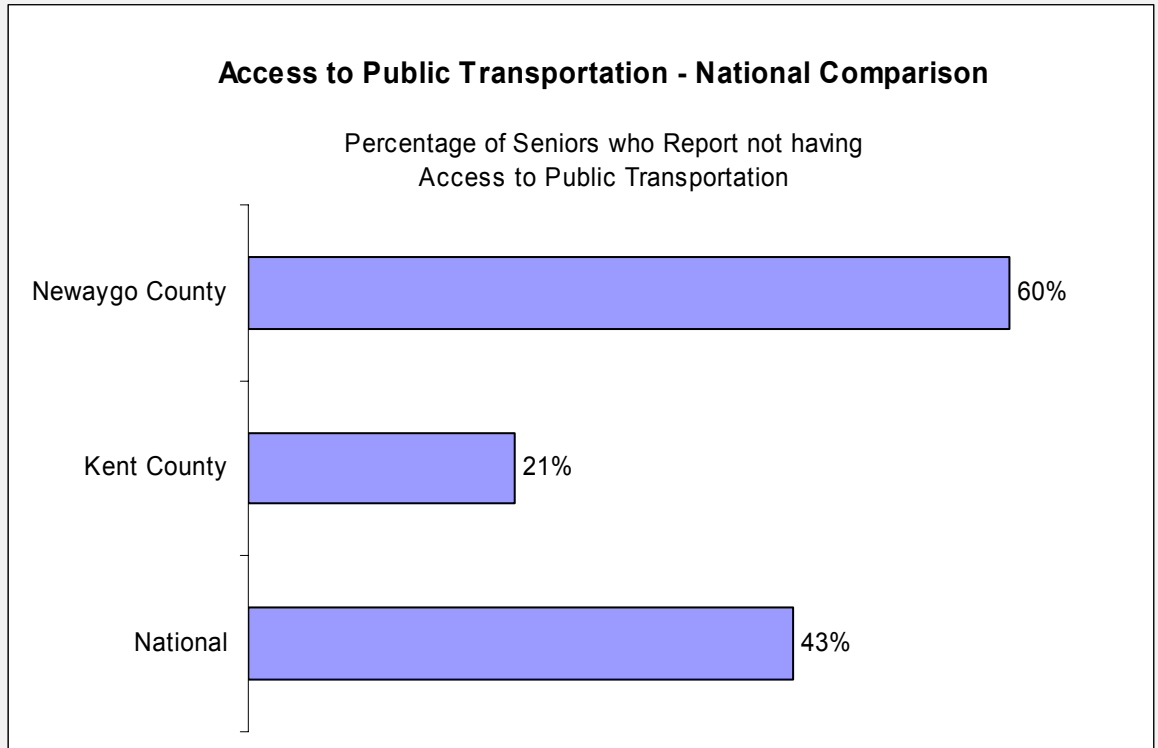


**Exhibit 22.3 - Frequency of Use of Public Transportation in the Past 2 Months Newaygo County 2005**



Unweighted N = 255 Weighted N = 6,598

How Does Newaygo County Compare?





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## Dimension 12

### The Community Service System Enables People to Live Comfortably and Safely at Home

According to the Administration on Aging, every public opinion survey of older adults indicates that the vast majority desire to remain in their own home as long as possible, as one's own home represents security and independence. Most housing is designed for young, active and mobile people. Homes suitable for younger adults are not necessarily easy and safe for older adults to carry out their daily activities in. This creates the need for assistance.

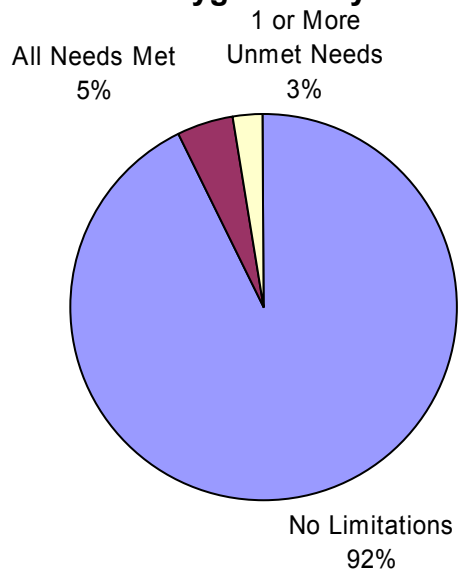
#### Indicator 23) Percentage of People Age 65+ with adequate assistance in Activities of Daily Living (ADL)

Many older adults experience problems with self-care activities (known as Activities of Daily Living or ADL). These self-care activities include: taking a bath or a shower, dressing, eating, getting in/out of bed/chair, using/getting to a toilet, and getting around inside the home.

The survey found that 8% of older adults in Newaygo County (about 500 people) need some form of assistance with at least one aspect of self-care (ADL). Two percent need help with two or more ADLs, the minimum necessary for receiving benefits under long-term care insurance and some other programs.

Currently in Newaygo County, approximately one out of three seniors with assistance needs are not getting the help they need.

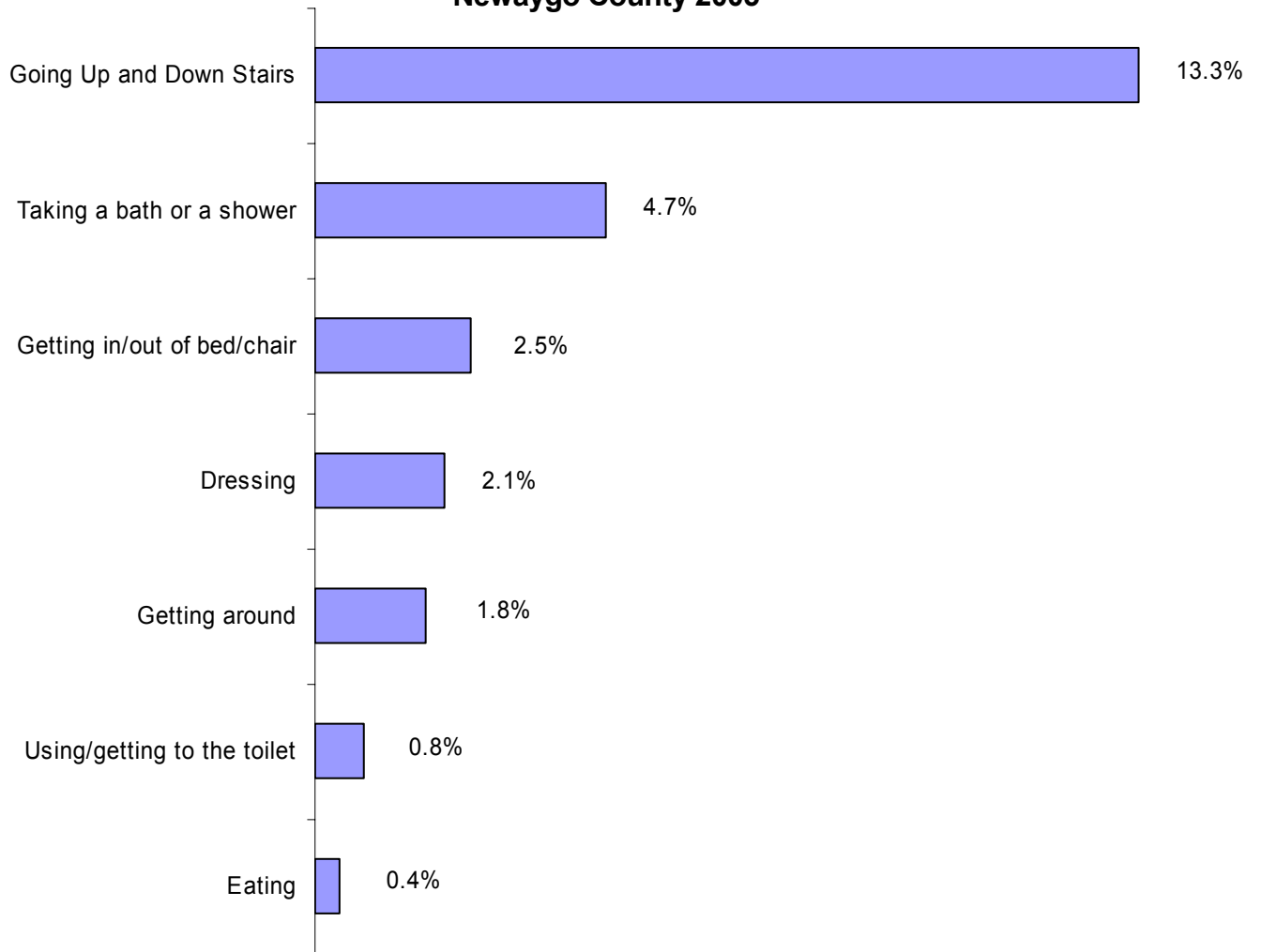
**Exhibit 23.1 - Percentage of People Age 65+ with Adequate Assistance in Activities of Daily Living<sup>25</sup>  
Newaygo County 2005**



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<sup>25</sup> People were asked whether they need assistance with the following activities (ADLs): taking a bath or a shower, dressing, eating, getting in/out of bed/chair, using/getting to a toilet, getting around inside the home. Those who answered "yes" were asked whether they get enough assistance with these activities. Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding and/or missing information.

**Exhibit 23.2 - Percentage of People Age 65+ who need Assistance  
with each Activity of Daily Living<sup>26</sup>  
Newaygo County 2005**



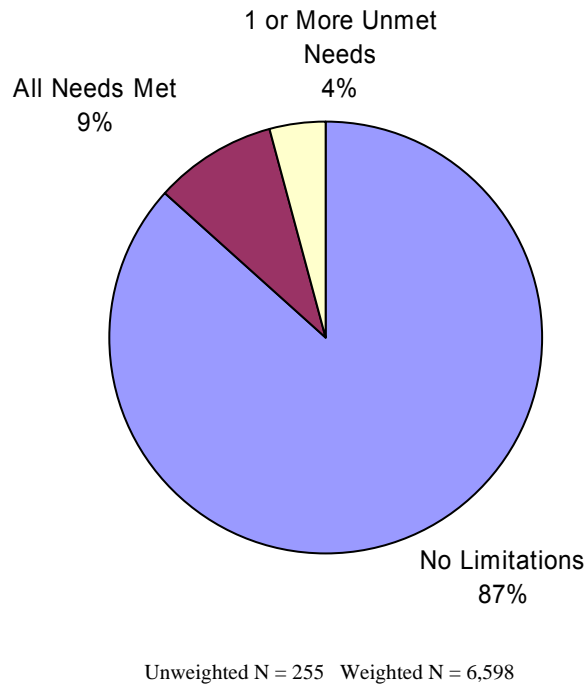
<sup>26</sup> People were asked whether they have a problem or need help with each of the above activities.

## Indicator 24) Percentage of People Age 65+ with Adequate Assistance in Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADL)

In addition to struggling with self care activities, many older adults struggle with related personal and household tasks (also known as Instrumental Activities of Daily Living or IADLs). These activities include: doing light housework, preparing meals, getting where they need to go, taking the right amount of prescribed medication, and keeping track of money and bills.

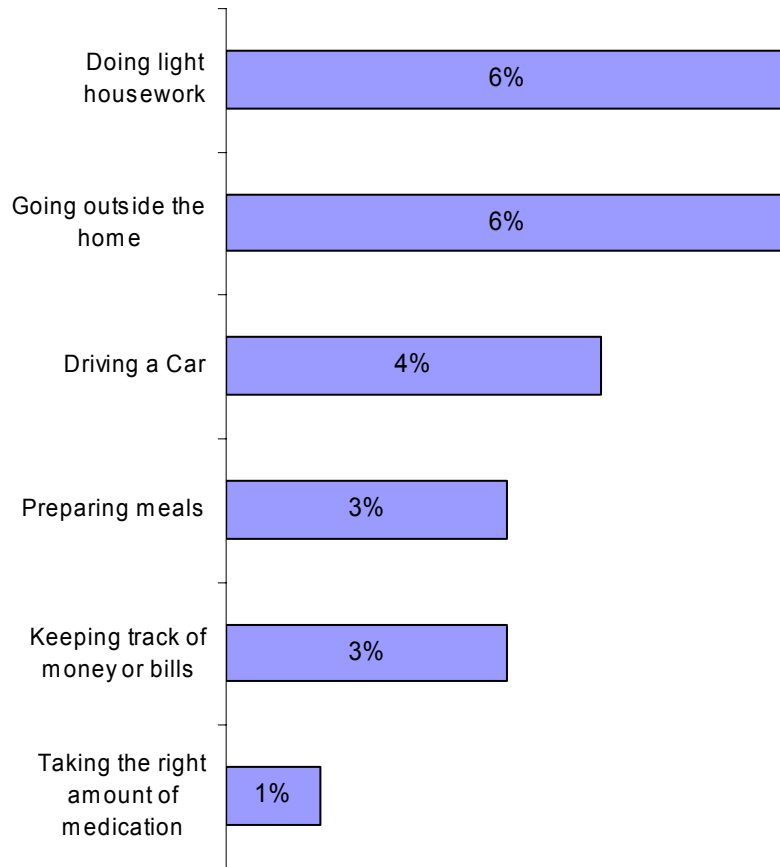
Thirteen percent of Newaygo County respondents reported that they need help with 1 or more IADL limitations. One third of these people reported that they are not getting the help they need. Respondents indicated that housework and traveling were the activities most likely to require assistance.

**Exhibit 24.1 - Percentage of People Age 65+ with Adequate Assistance in Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADL)<sup>27</sup>  
Newaygo County 2005**



<sup>27</sup> People were asked whether they need assistance with the following activities (IADLs): going outside the home, doing light housework, preparing meals, driving a car/using public transportation, taking the right amount of prescribed medication, keeping track of money and bills. Those who answered “yes” were asked whether they get enough assistance with these activities. Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding and/or missing information.

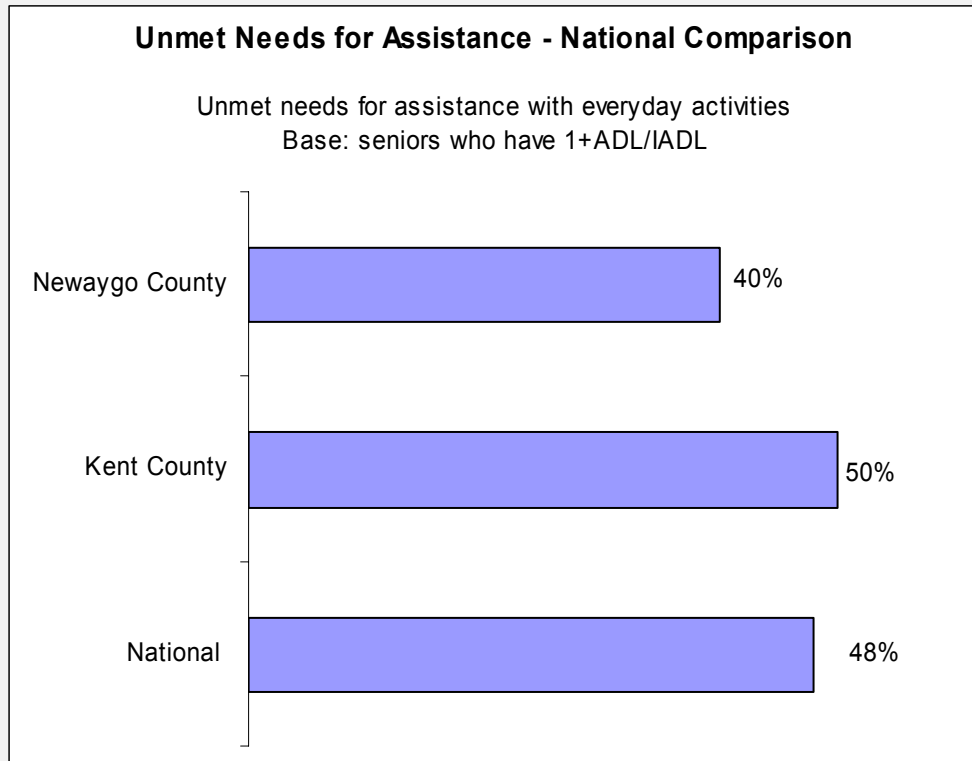
**Exhibit 24.2 - Percentage of People Age 65+ who Need Assistance with each Instrumental Activity of Daily Living<sup>28</sup>  
Newaygo County 2005**



Unweighted N = 255    Weighted N = 6,598

<sup>28</sup> People were asked whether they have a problem or need help with each of the above activities.

## How Does Newaygo County Compare?



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## Dimension 13

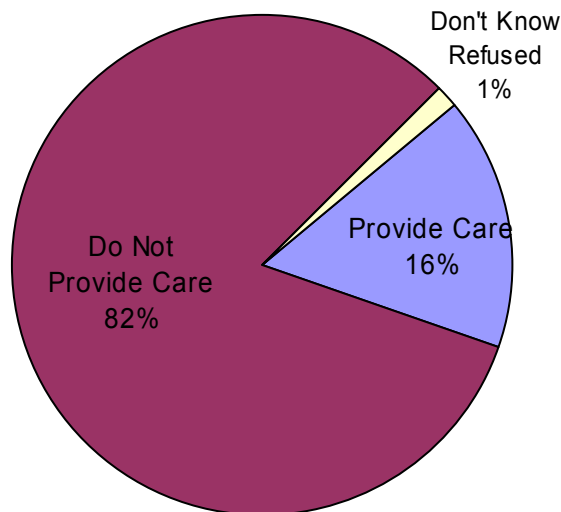
### Caregivers are Mobilized to Complement the Formal Service System

The term ‘caregiver’ refers to anyone who provides assistance to someone else who is in some degree incapacitated and needs help. ‘Informal caregiver’ and ‘family caregiver’ are terms that refer to unpaid individuals such as family members, friends and neighbors who provide care. These individuals can be primary or secondary caregivers, full time or part time, and can live with the person being cared for or live separately. ‘Formal caregivers’ are skilled volunteers or paid care providers associated with a service system. The majority of older persons receive assistance from spouses, adult children, and family members. Most of this care is informal and unpaid, although there is an increasing number of older adults who are relying on a combination of informal and formal long-term care. The increasing aging population is expected to amplify the demands for long term care. This increased demand raises an important question about who will provide care (Federal Interagency Forum on Aging-Related Statistics, 2000).

#### Indicator 25) Percentage of People Age 65+ who Provide Help to the Frail or Disabled

Given the health vulnerabilities of older adults, it’s not surprising that many need assistance with the most basic activities of daily living. In Newaygo County, 16% of older adults provide care for other elderly persons. This essential care helps disabled elders to avoid or delay institutionalization.

**Exhibit 25.1 - Percentage of People Age 65+ who Provide Help to the Frail or Disabled<sup>29</sup>  
Newaygo County 2005**



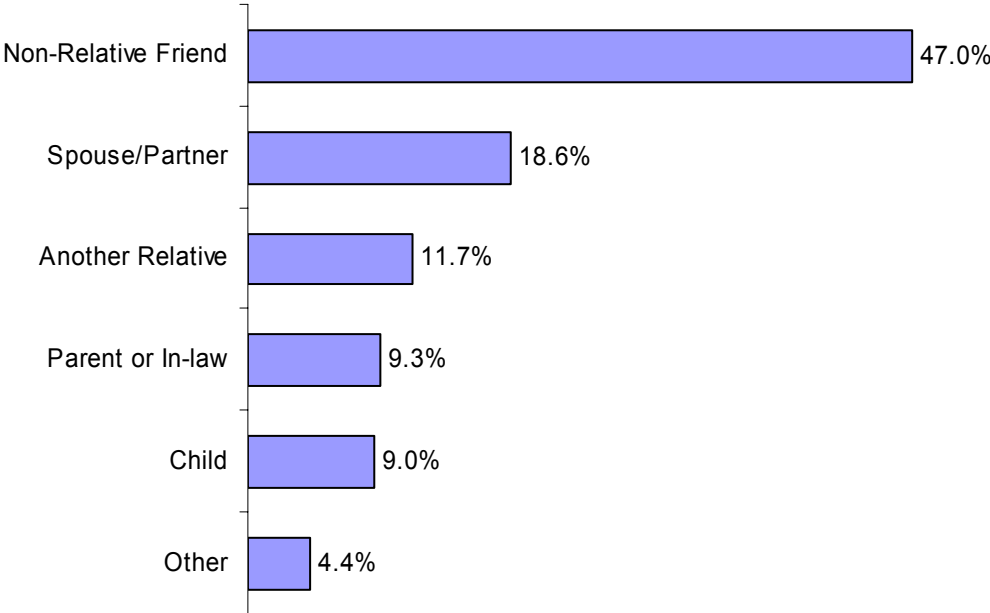
Unweighted N = 255 Weighted N = 6,598

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<sup>29</sup> People were asked whether they provide help or care, or arrange for help or care, for a relative or friend who is unable to do some things for him/herself due to illness or injury. Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding and/or missing information.

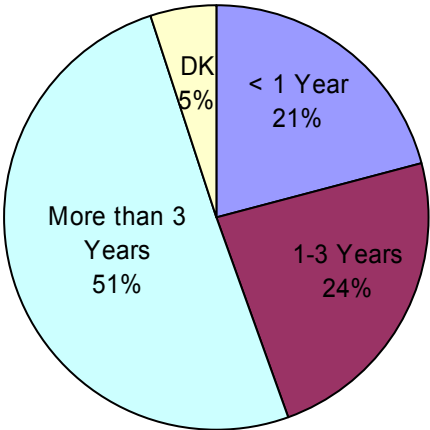
Forty-seven percent of those who provide assistance help someone other than a relative. Nineteen percent provide care for their spouse.

**Exhibit 25.2 - Relationship between Caregivers Age 65+ and Care Recipients<sup>30</sup>  
Newaygo County 2005**

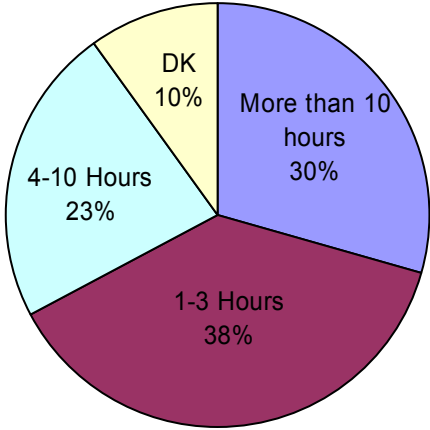


Three out of 4 older adults who provide care, have done so for at least a year. The amount of time per week dedicated to providing assistance varied greatly.

**Exhibit 25.3 – Number of Years People Age 65+ Provided Help to the Frail or Disabled among those who provide help  
Newaygo County 2005**



**Exhibit 25.4 - Number of Hours per Week Spent on Caregiving among People Age 65+ who Provide Help to the Frail or Disabled  
Newaygo County 2005**



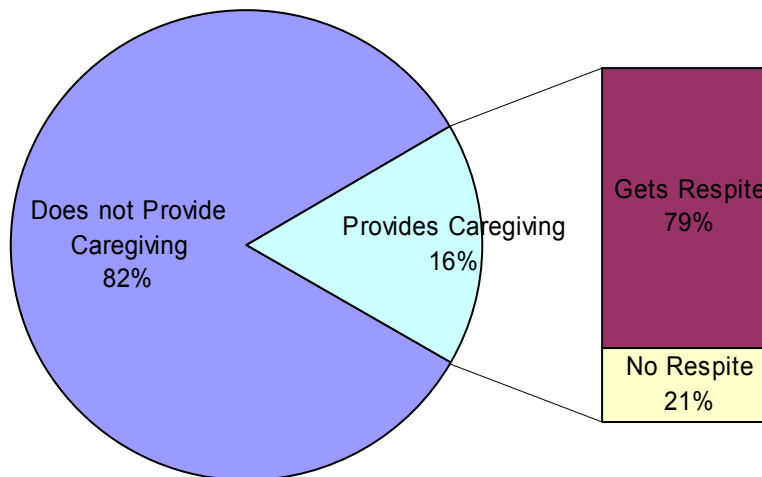
<sup>30</sup> People who said they provide care were asked “what is this person’s relationship to you?”

## Indicator 26) Percentage of People Age 65+ who get Respite/Relief from their Caregiving Activity

National research has shown that caregiving can inflict enormous stress, especially for seniors who already have their own chronic health concerns. According to the National Family Caregivers Association, “Family caregivers who provide care 36 or more hours weekly are more likely than non-caregivers to experience symptoms of depression or anxiety. For spouses the rate is six times higher.” This makes respite from caregiving activities very important.

In Newaygo County, approximately 1 out of every 5 older adults who provide care to other older adults do not get any relief from their caregiving responsibilities.

**Exhibit 26.1 - Percentage of People Age 65+ who get Respite/Relief from their Caregiving Activities<sup>31</sup>  
Newaygo County 2005**



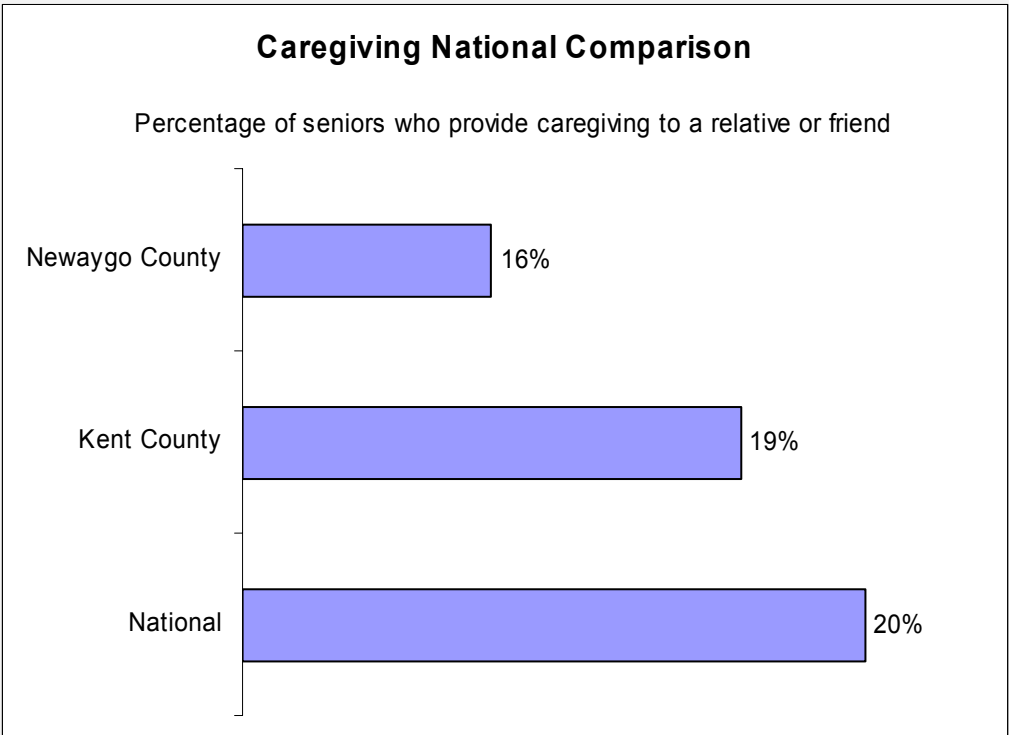
Unweighted N = 255    Weighted N = 6,598

How Does Newaygo County Compare?

<sup>31</sup> People were asked whether they provide help or care, or arrange for help or care, for a relative or friend who is unable to do some things for him/herself due to illness or disability. People who answered “yes” were asked whether they get relief from their caregiving responsibilities. Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding and/or missing information.



Fewer older adults are engaged in informal care activities in Newaygo County than in Kent County and at the national level.





# Domain 4: Promotes Social & Civic Engagement

## Dimension 14

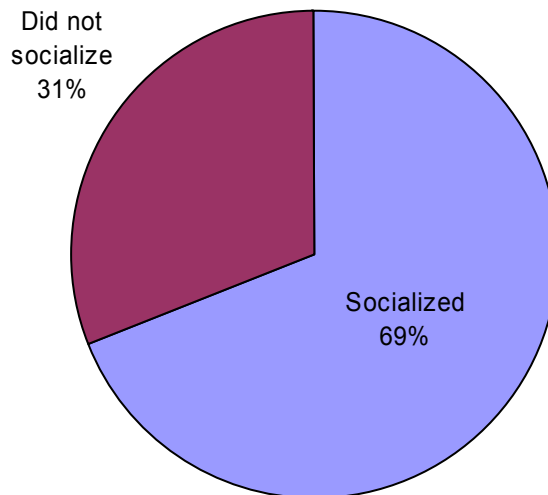
### Residents Maintain Connections with Friends and Neighbors

Social activity takes on new importance as adults age. Those who continue to interact with others tend to be healthier, both physically and mentally, than those who become socially isolated. Interactions with friends and family can provide emotional and practical support that enable older persons to remain in the community, and reduces the likelihood that they will need formal healthcare services (Federal Interagency Forum on Aging-Related Statistics, 2000).

#### Indicator 27) Percentage of People Age 65+ who Socialized with Friends or Neighbors in the Past Week

Nearly 70% of Newaygo County seniors reported that they socialized with friends or neighbors in the previous week. Those who reported that they had good or excellent health were nearly twice as likely to have socialized than those who are less healthy.

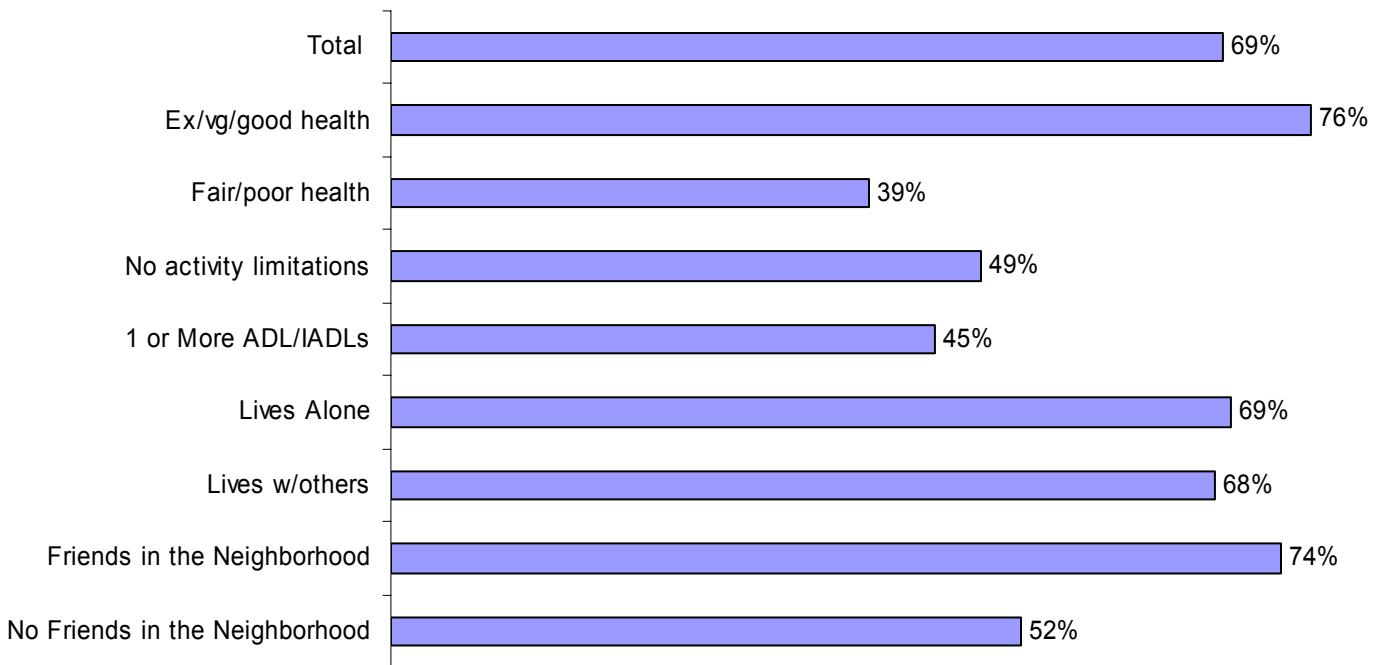
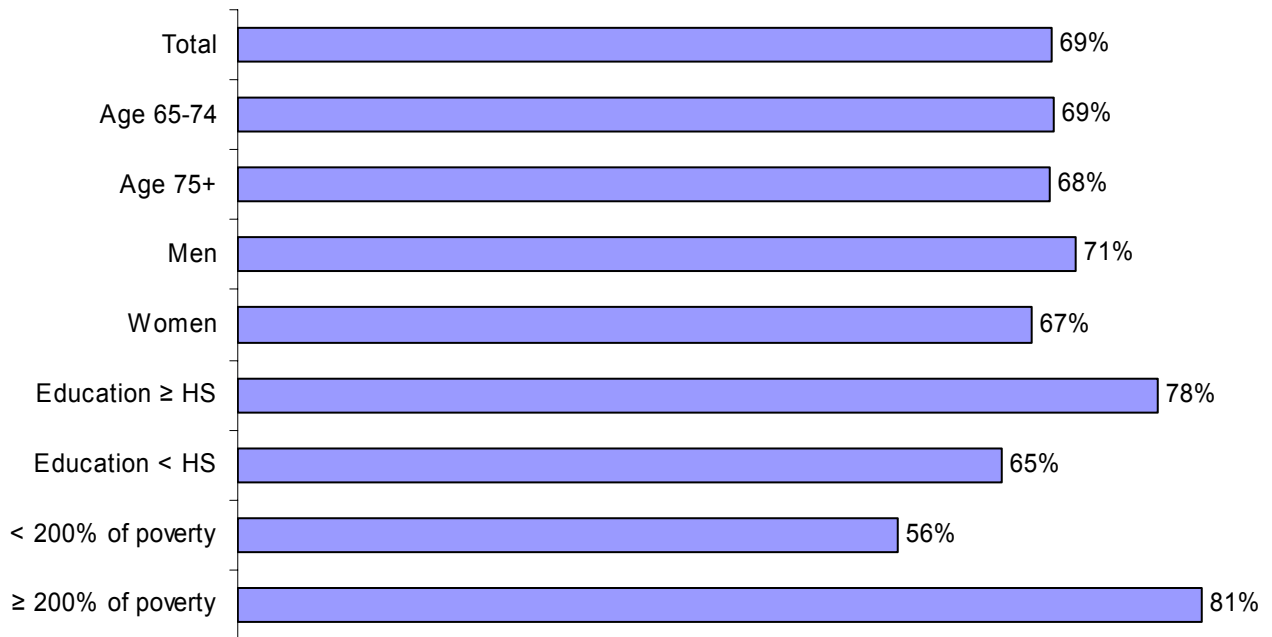
**Exhibit 27.1 – Percentage of People Age 65+ who Socialized with Friends or Neighbors in the Past Week<sup>32</sup>  
Newaygo County 2005**



Unweighted N = 255    Weighted N = 6,598

<sup>32</sup> People were asked whether they got together with friends or neighbors during the past week. Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding and/or missing information.

**Exhibit 27.2 – Percentage of People Age 65+ who Socialized with Friends or Neighbors in the Past Week<sup>32</sup>, by Demographics  
Newaygo County 2005**



Margin of Error ranges from ± 9% - 17% depending on sample size

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## Dimension 15

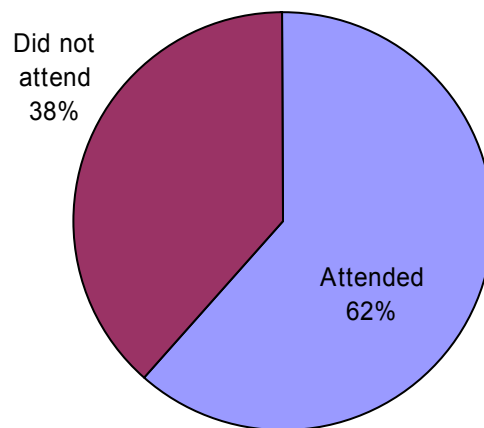
### Civic, Cultural, Religious, and Recreational Activities include Older Adults

Participation builds community by generating trust and connections among its members. Social interactions can benefit individuals, especially seniors, by decreasing social isolation, increasing support networks, and by providing enriching and satisfying experiences.

#### Indicator 28) Percentage of People Age 65+ who Attended Church, Temple or Other in the Past Week

When surveyed, 62% of older adults in Newaygo County indicated that in the previous week they had attended a church, temple, or other place of worship. Thirty-eight percent had not been involved in such congregations.

**Exhibit 28.1 - Percentage of People Age 65+ who Attended Church, Temple, or Other in the Past Week<sup>33</sup>  
Newaygo County 2005**



Unweighted N = 255    Weighted N = 6,598

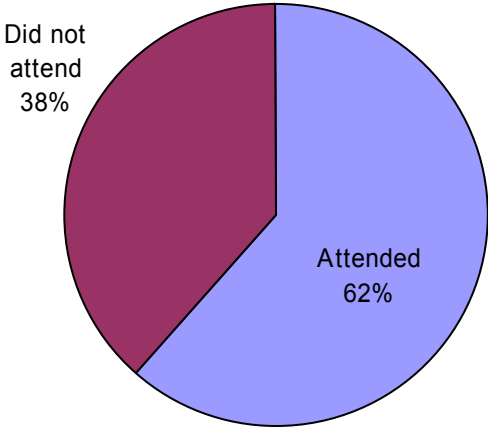
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<sup>33</sup> People were asked if they went to church, temple, or another place of worship for service or other activities during the week. Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding and/or missing information.

**Indicator 29) Percentage of People Age 65+ who Attended Movies, Sports Events, Clubs, or Group Events in the Past Week**

Nearly two out of three Newaygo County residents reported that in the past week they had attended a movie, sporting event, club or group event.

**Exhibit 29.1 - Percentage of People Age 65+ who Attended Movies, Sports Events, Clubs or Group Events in the Past Week<sup>34</sup>  
Newaygo County 2005**



Unweighted N = 255    Weighted N = 6,598

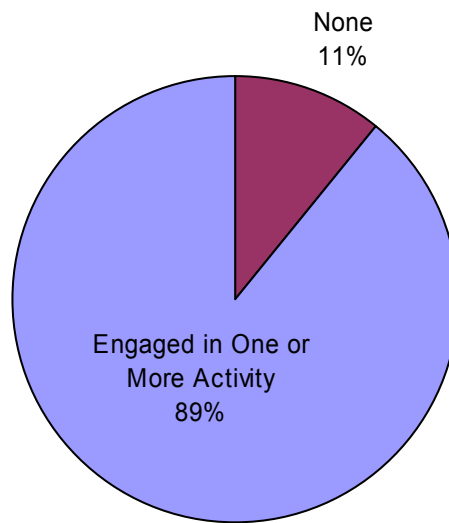
<sup>34</sup> People were asked if they went to a movie, play, concert, restaurant, sporting event, club meeting, card game, or other social activity during the past week. Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding and/or missing information.

**Indicator 30) Percentage of People Age 65+ who Engaged in at least one Social, Religious, or Cultural Activity in the Last Week**

Isolation and loneliness is a problem for a small portion of Newaygo County residents. Eleven percent of Newaygo County residents reported that they had not participated in any social, cultural or religious activities in the previous week. Additionally, of those surveyed:

- more than one in ten (12%) would like to be more socially active
- nearly one in five (17%) say they have no close friends in neighborhood
- one third do not leave their home every day

**Exhibit 30.1 - Percentage of People Age 65+ who Engaged in at least one Social, Religious, or Cultural Activity in the Past Week<sup>35</sup>  
Newaygo County 2005**

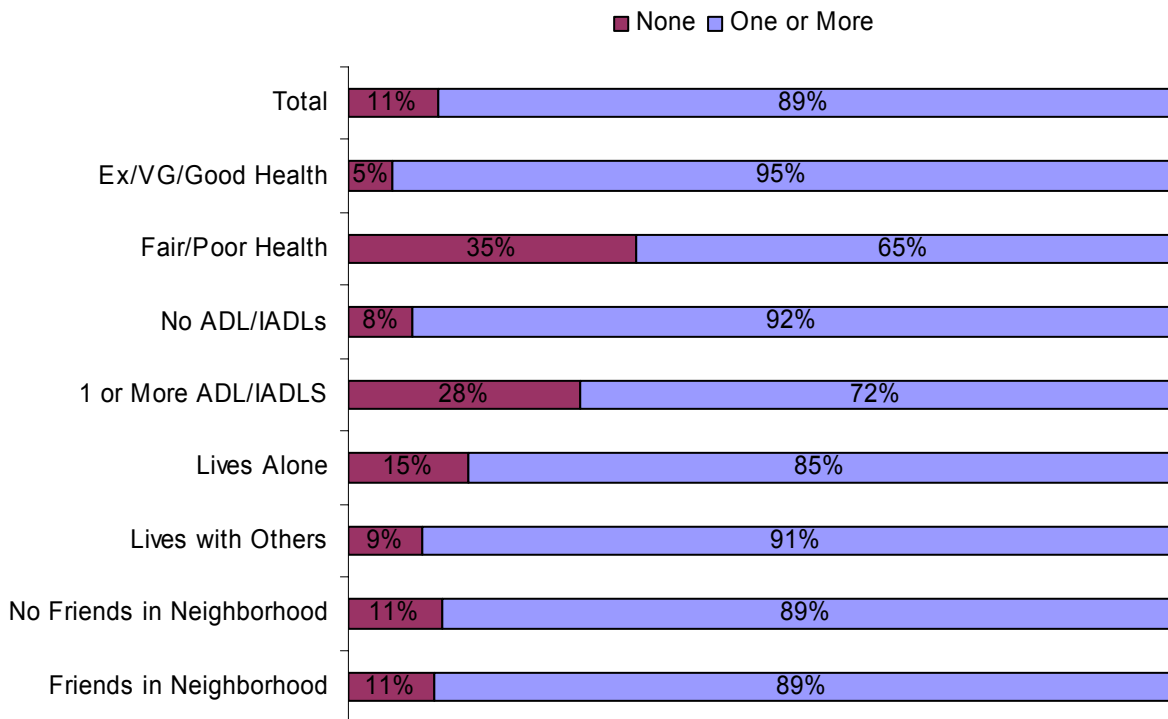
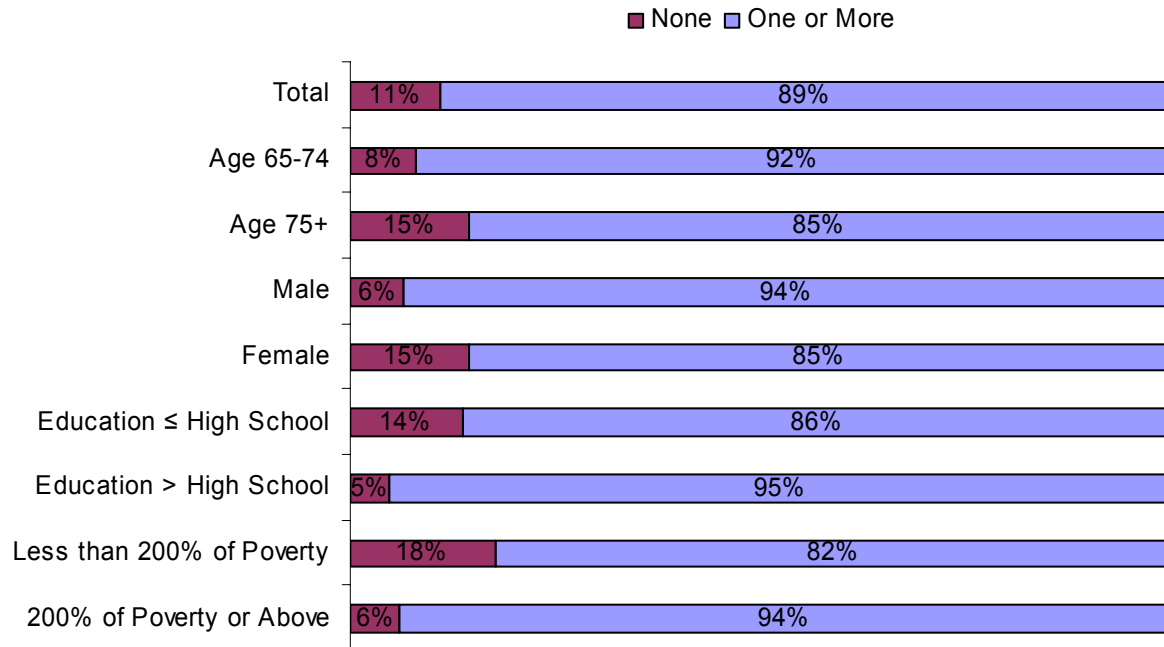


Unweighted N = 255 Weighted N = 6,598

Health and income appear to be closely related to participation in social activities. Respondents in fair or poor health were five times less likely to have taken part in activities in the previous week than those who rated their health higher. Respondents whose household incomes was 200% above poverty or higher were three times more likely to have participated than those with lower incomes.

<sup>35</sup> People were asked if they went to church, temple, or another place of worship for services or other activities during the past week.

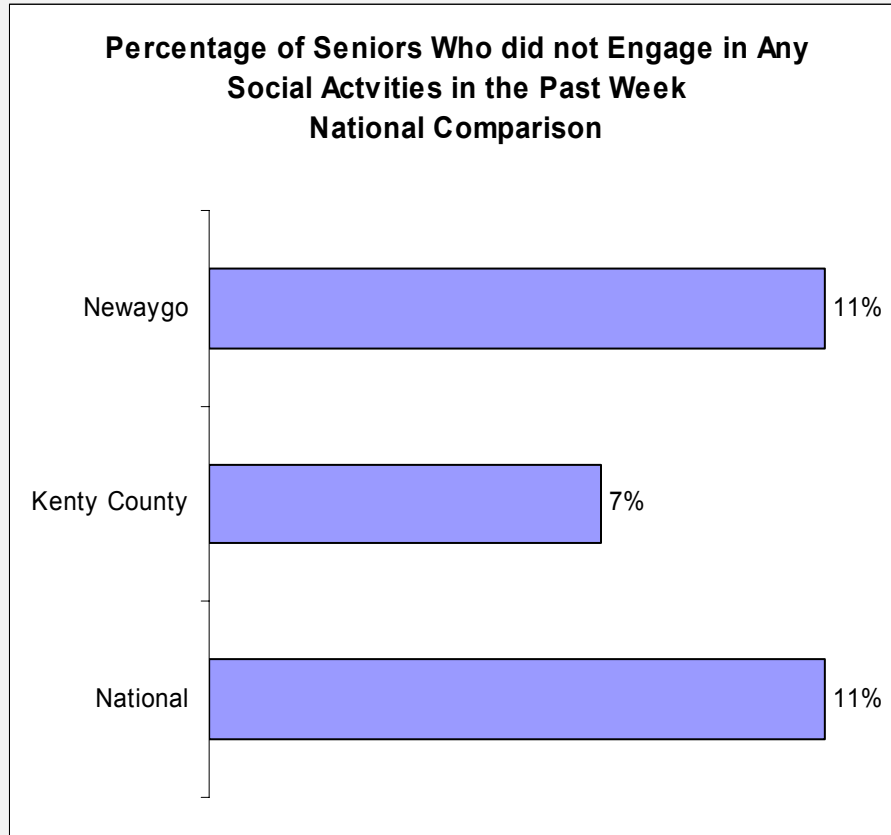
**Exhibit 30.1 - Percentage of People Age 65+ who Engaged in at least one Social, Religious, or Cultural Activity in the Past Week<sup>35</sup>, by Demographics  
Newaygo County 2005**



Margin of Error ranges from ± 9% - 17% depending on sample size

## How Does Newaygo County Compare?

Although nearly nine out of 10 older adults participated in at least one social activity in the week prior to the AdvantAge survey, Newaygo County's older adults are less active than their peers in Kent County. However, their activity levels remain consistent with the national average.





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## Dimension 16

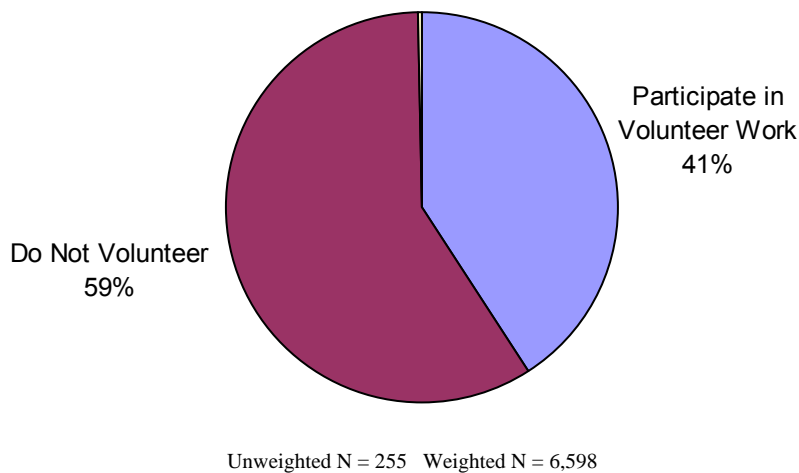
### Opportunities for Volunteer Work are Readily Available

Volunteering increases older adults' sense of well-being and self-image while helping them maintain a sense of usefulness and productivity. Older adults involved in volunteer work are reported to do so for three main reasons: (1) to increase their sense of purpose by making a difference and helping others, (2) as a way to become more involved in a personal interest and achieve growth in that area, and (3) to create structure in their day by remaining productive. According to a 2002 survey conducted by Civic Ventures, a nonprofit organization, seniors who volunteered were more likely to have a happy, healthy outlook on life and gain personal satisfaction (Hart, 2002).

#### Indicator 31) Percentage of People Age 65+ who Participate in Volunteer Work

Newaygo County elders are more likely than those in other communities to volunteer. While 41% of older adults in Newaygo County volunteer, nationally only 36% do so.

**Exhibit 31.1 – Percentage of People Age 65+ who Participate in Volunteer Work<sup>36</sup>**  
**Newaygo County 2005**



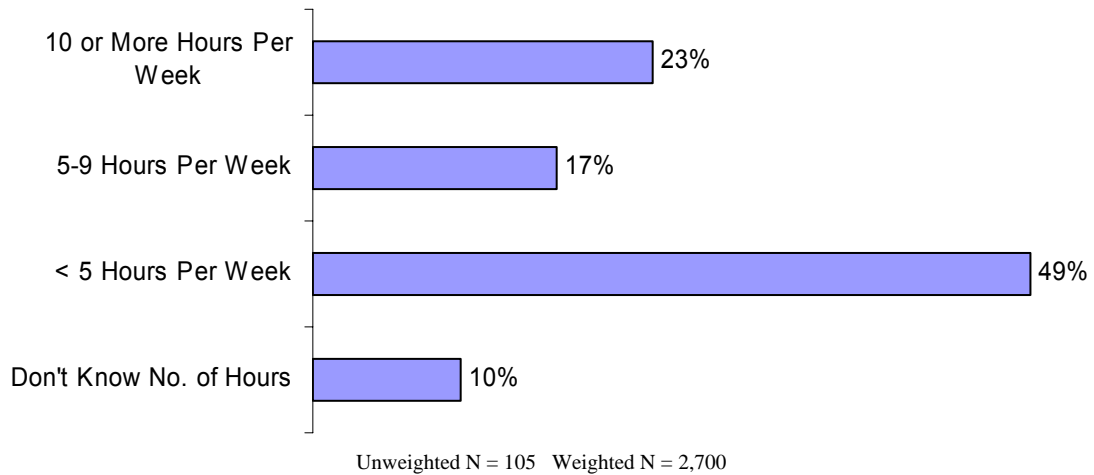
Older volunteers in Newaygo County devote substantial amount of time each week to their cause. Among those who volunteer:

- 40% spend five or more hours per week in volunteer activities
- 49% contribute less than five hours per week
- 10% weren't sure how many hours a week they volunteer

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<sup>36</sup> People were asked if they do volunteer work and if so what type of volunteer work they do. Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding or missing information.

**Exhibit 31.2 - Number of Hours People Age 65+ Spend Volunteering,  
Among those who Volunteer  
Newaygo County 2005**

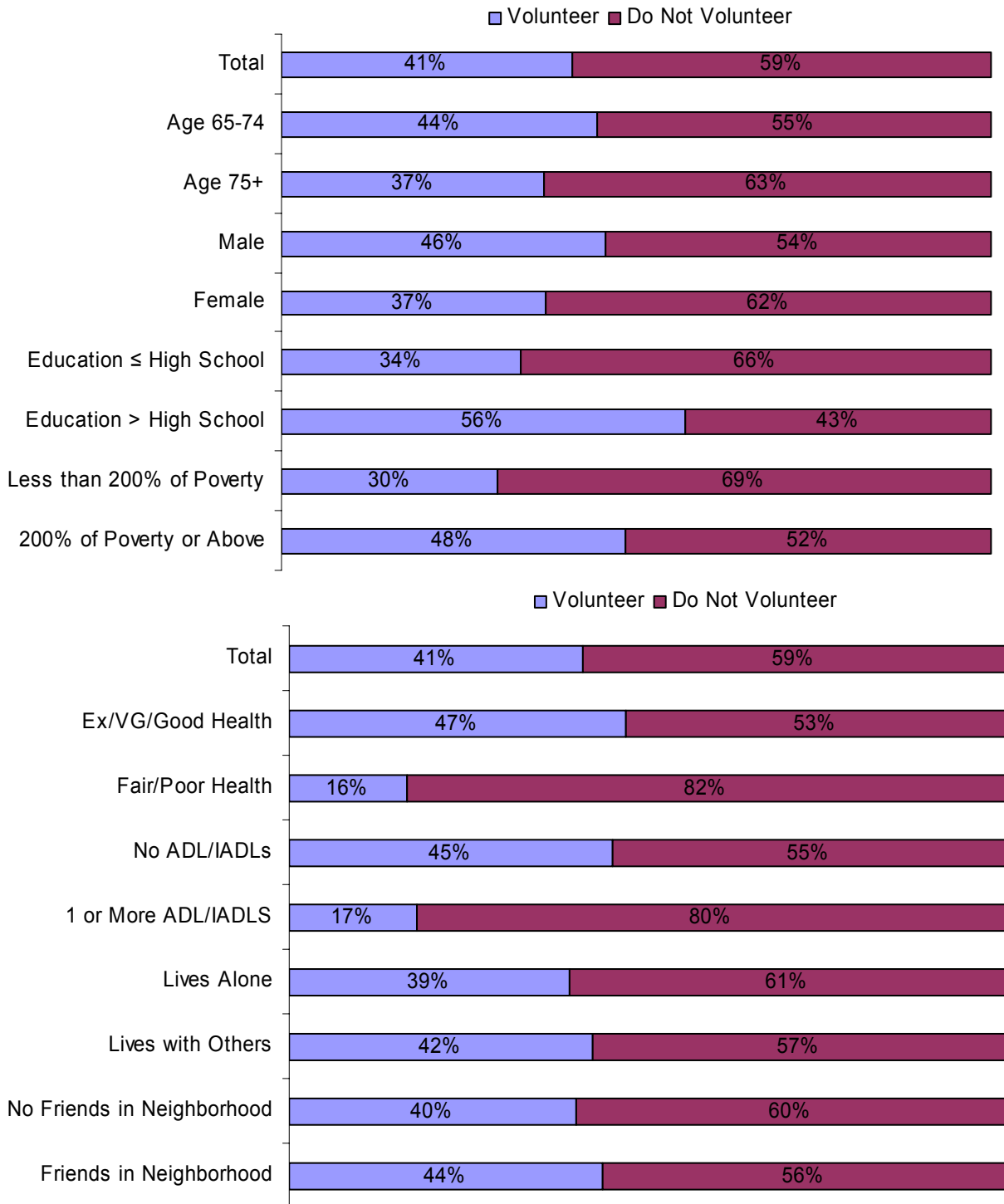


Of those who volunteer in Newaygo County:

- About a third (30%) donate their time to religious groups.
- About one in ten do favors/chores for family and friends (12%), visit the sick or work in hospitals (10%), provide services for seniors (9%), or work with private organizations (9%).
- Other significant volunteer activities include working with kids (6%), providing driver or delivery services (7%), working in civic/social organizations (8%), and doing repair or carpentry work (7%).

Individuals with higher levels of educational attainment and individuals in good health are more likely to participate in volunteer work than their counterparts with poor health and less education.

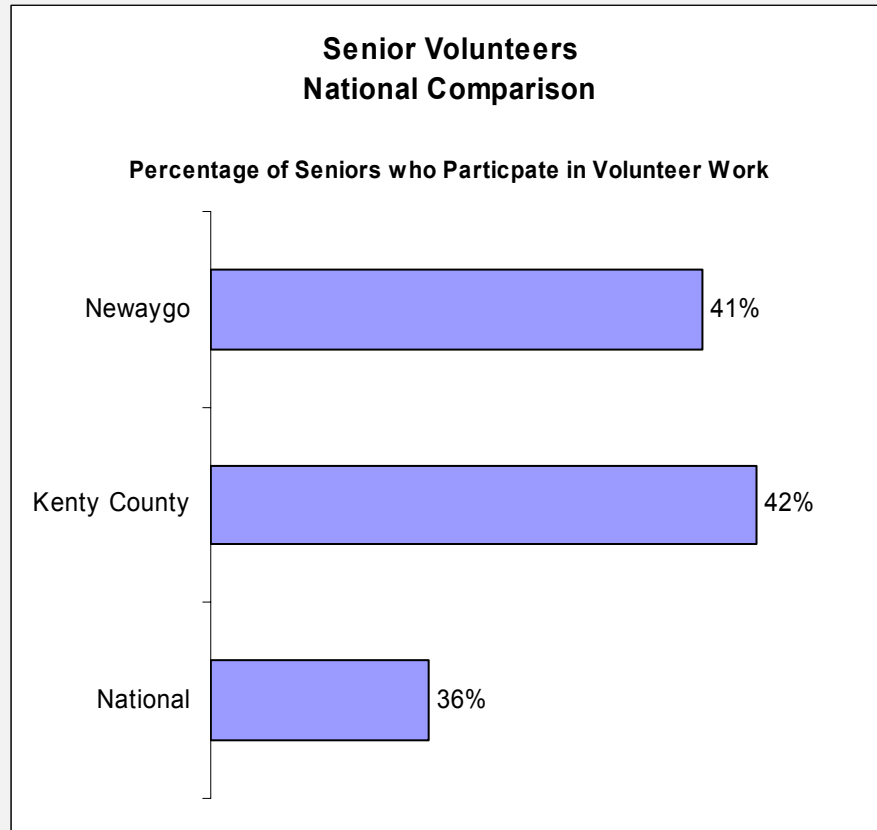
**Exhibit 31.2 - Percentage of People Age 65+ who Participate in Volunteer Work, By Demographics<sup>36</sup>, Newaygo County 2005**



Margin of Error ranges from ± 9% - 17% depending on sample size

## How Does Newaygo County Compare?

When taken in isolation, the Newaygo County volunteer rate may seem less than might be expected. However, when compared to the national average, Newaygo County has a large percentage of people who volunteer.



## Dimension 17 Community Residents Help and Trust Each Other

In 2001, Community Foundations across the United States joined together to conduct a Social Capital Community Benchmark Survey. The survey found that trust between residents is a key dimension of a socially connected and thriving community that can provide help and support to its residents.

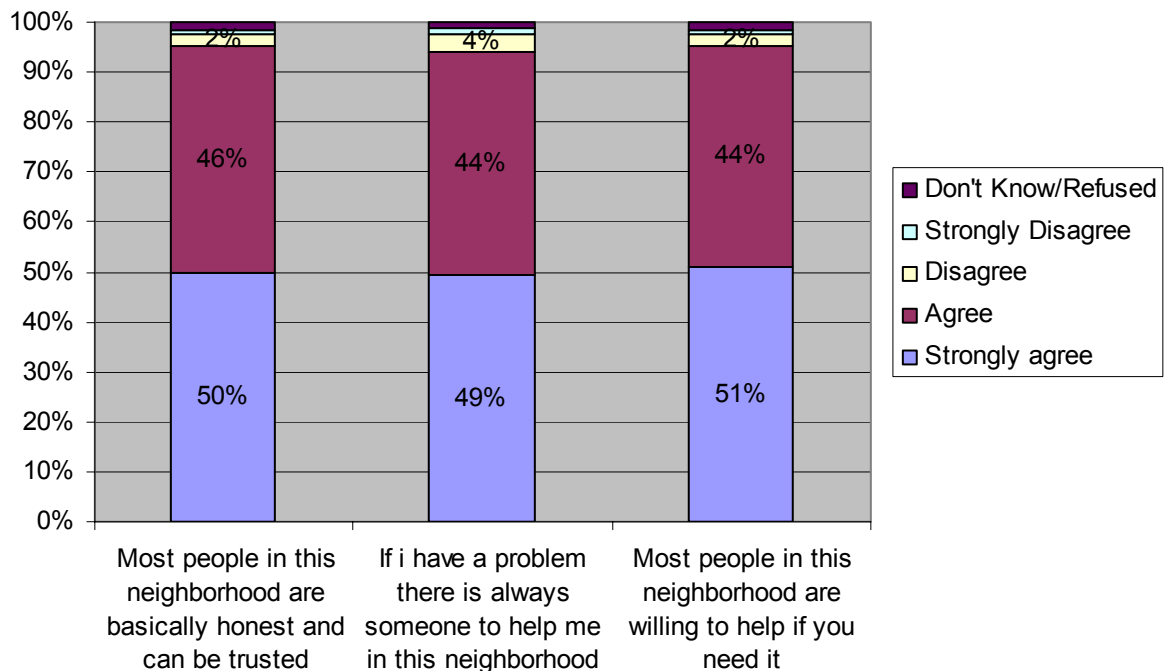
### Indicator 32) Percentage of People Age 65+ who Live in “Helping Communities”

The results of the AdvantAge survey would seem to indicate that for Newaygo County residents age 65+, there is a high level of trust and connection in their community. They were asked to indicate their level of agreement with three statements:

1. Most people in the neighborhood are basically honest and can be trusted
2. If I have a problem there is always someone to help me in this neighborhood
3. Most people in this neighborhood are willing to help if you need it

Ninety percent of those responding to the AdvantAge survey agreed with all three of these statements.

**Exhibit 32.1 - Percentage of people age 65+ who live in “Helping Communities”<sup>37</sup>, Newaygo County 2005**

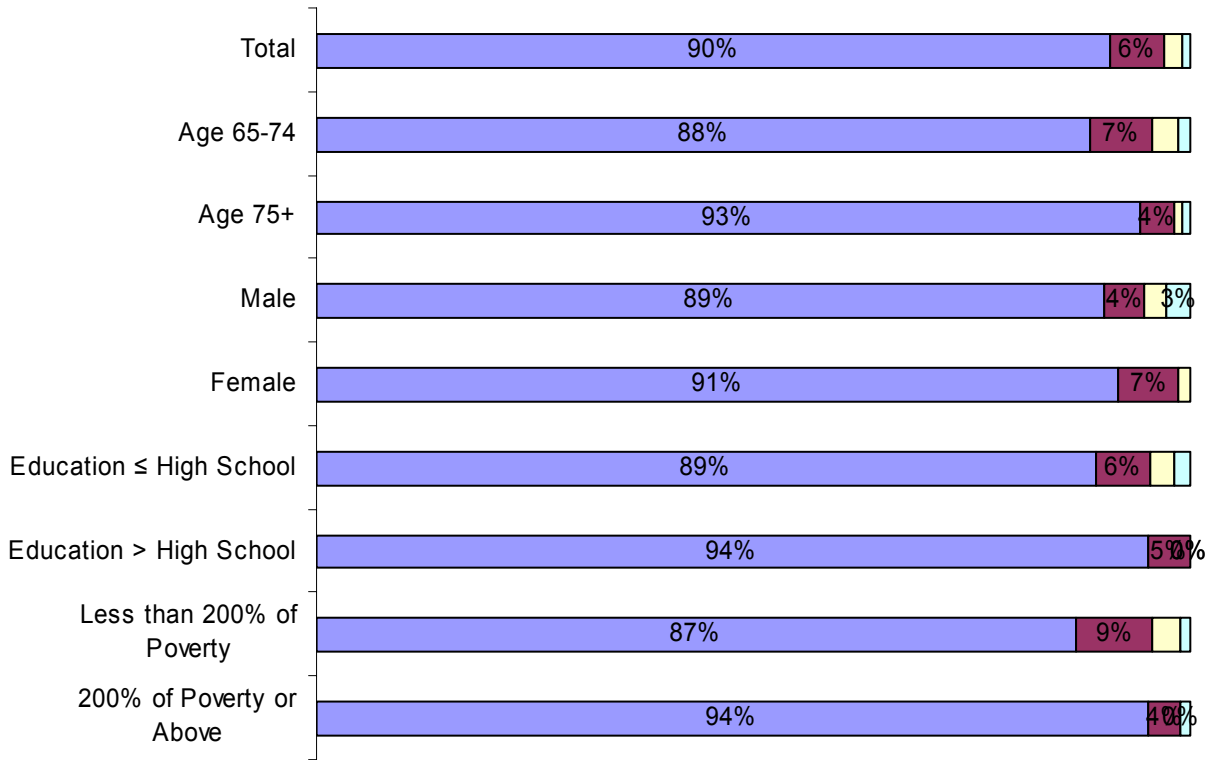


Unweighted N = 255 Weighted N = 6,598

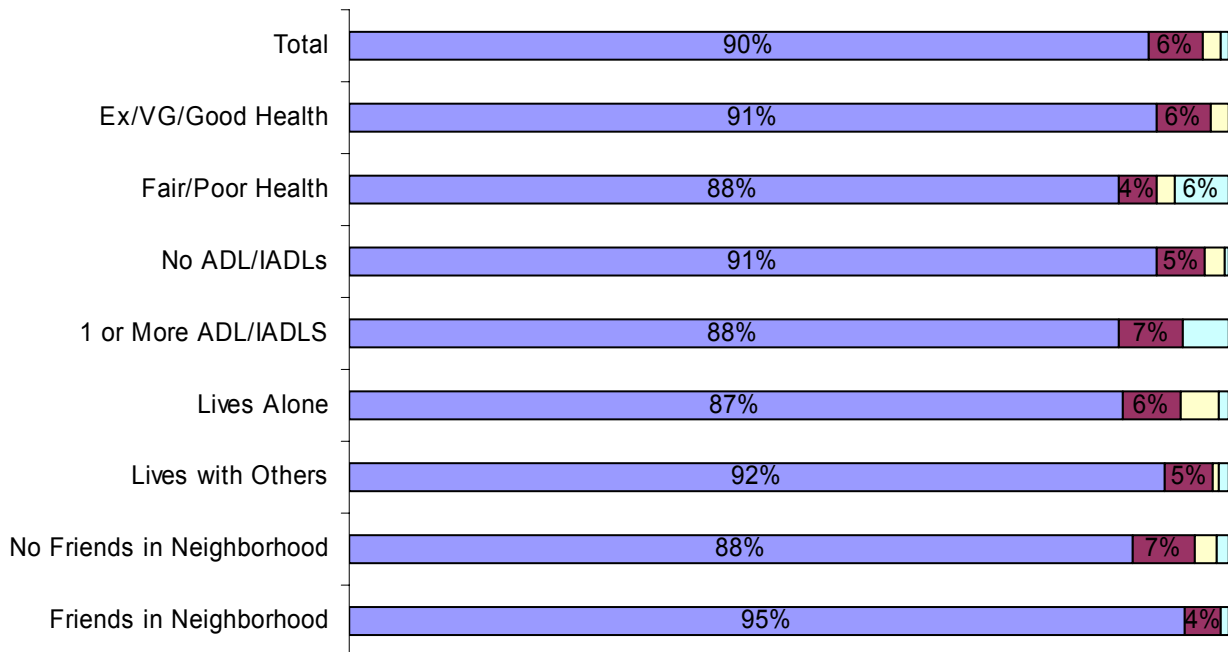
<sup>37</sup> People were asked whether they strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with the following 3 statements: “Most people in this neighborhood are basically honest and can be trusted”; “If I have a problem there is always someone to help me in this neighborhood”; “Most people in this neighborhood are willing to help if you need it”. Percentage of people who “agreed” includes those who said they “strongly agreed” or those who said they “agree”.

### Exhibit 32.3 – Number of Statements about Helping Communities People “Agreed” With, by Demographics

Agreed with Three Agreed with Two Agreed with One Agreed with None



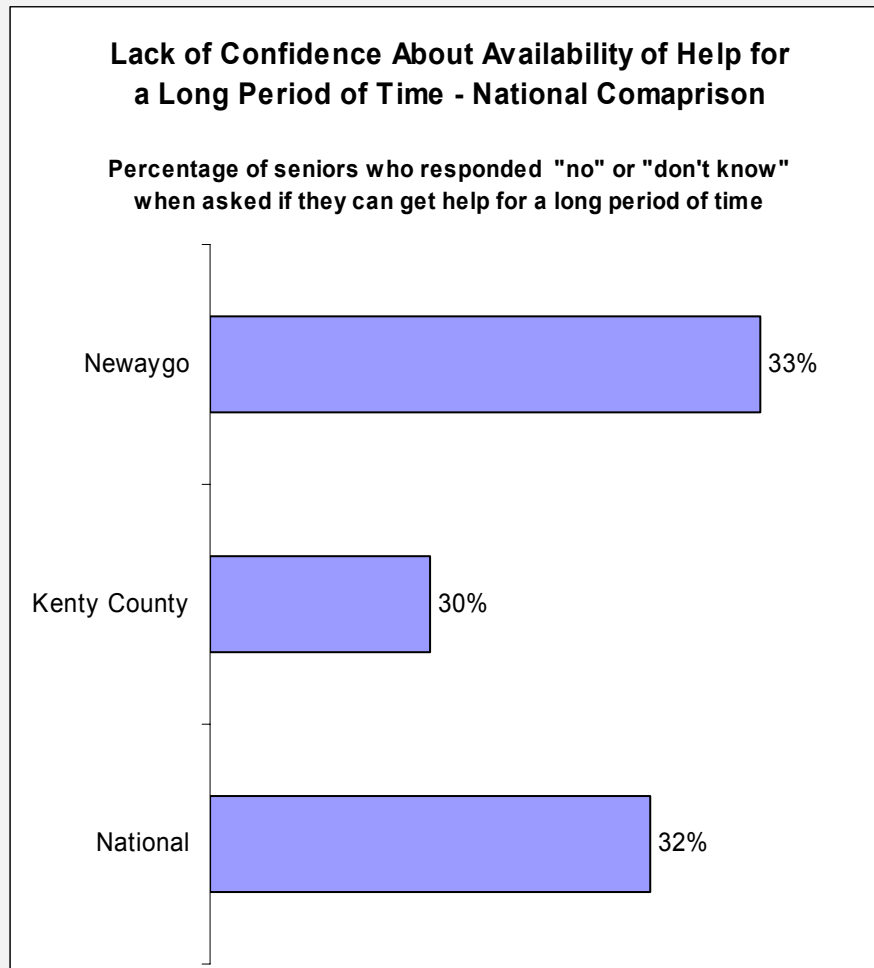
Agreed with Three Agreed with Two Agreed with One Agreed with None



Margin of Error ranges from ± 9% - 17% depending on sample size

## How Does Newaygo County Compare?

Individuals need long-term care when a chronic condition, trauma, or illness limits their ability to carry out basic self-care tasks. Nationally, over three quarters (78%) of the adults living in the community and in need of long term care depend on family and friends as their source of help (informal care). In Newaygo County, 33% of older adults who were asked if they would be able to get help if they needed it for a long period of time said 'no' or 'don't know'. This level of doubt was higher than the level of doubt shown by their national peers and their peers in Kent County.



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## Dimension 18

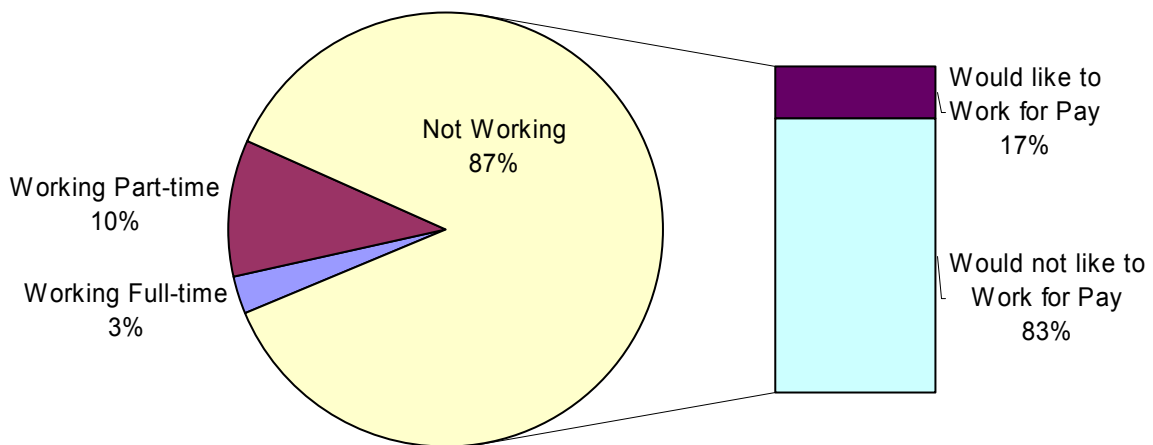
### Appropriate Work is Available to Those Who Want It

Having a job is an important way for older adults to meet their economic, social, and psychological needs. Moreover, making use of a lifetime of knowledge and experience can help meet important community needs. Indeed, seniors have been called one of the greatest untapped resources society has for meeting the pressing challenges of our time.

#### Indicator 33) Percentage of People Age 65+ who would like to be Working for Pay

Overall, only a small proportion of older adults in Newaygo County work full time (3%) or part time (10%) – about the same as national figures. The vast majority (87%) do not work for pay and are not interested in working for pay. Only 17% of the non-working elders in Newaygo County would like to work for pay – fewer than the national average of 24%.

**Exhibit 33.1 - Percentage of People Age 65+ who would like to be Working for Pay<sup>1</sup>, Newaygo County 2005**

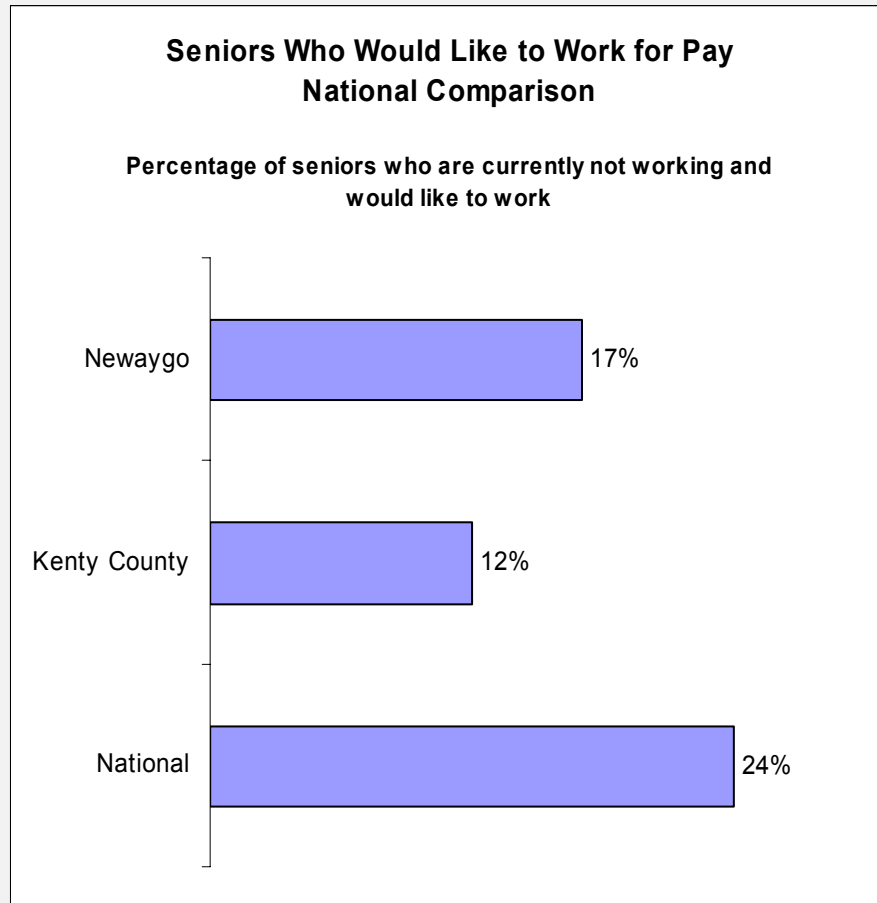


Unweighted N = 255    Weighted N = 6,598



## How Does Newaygo County Compare?

The percentage of Newaygo County people who are age 65 or older and are not currently working but would like to be working is quite a bit smaller than the national average. However, the percentage is slightly higher than the percentage in Kent County.





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