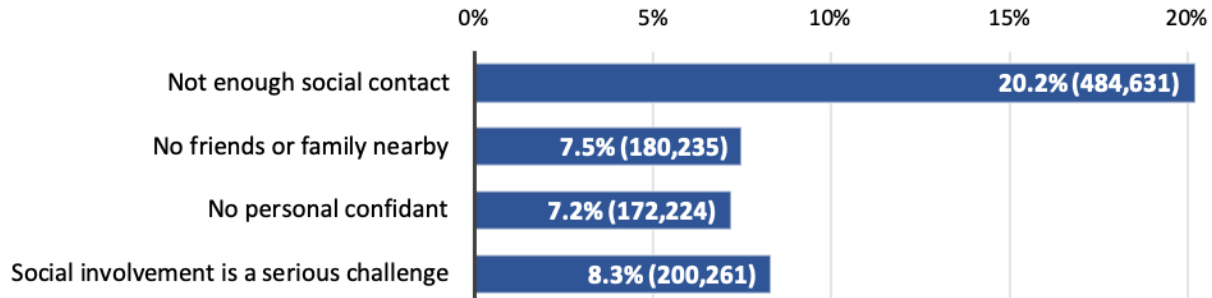




SOCIAL INVOLVEMENT AMONG OLDER MICHIGAN RESIDENTS

Findings from the Area Agencies Association of Michigan
2019 Older Michigander Needs & Solutions Assessment Survey

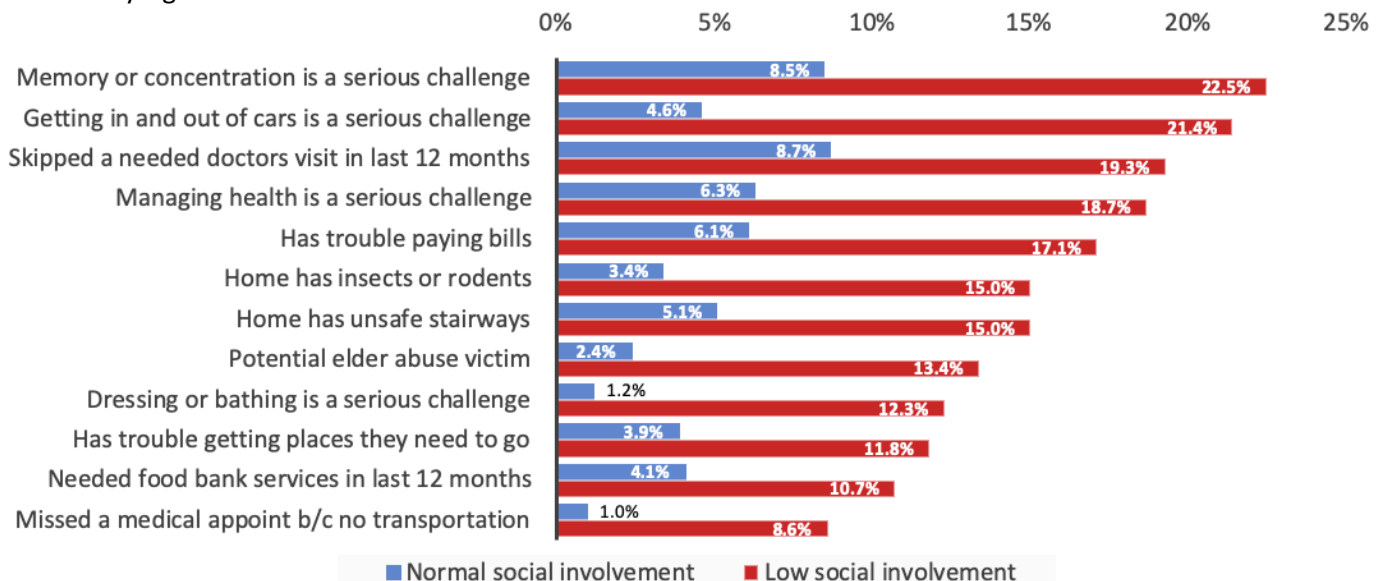
More than 1 in 5 older Michiganders say they do not have enough contact with friends, neighbors, or relatives and would like more, as shown in the figure below. This represents nearly half a million people and indicates how widespread loneliness is among Michigan’s older adults.



When asked if they have any family or friends living nearby who they can ask for help if they need it, about 7.5% of seniors say no. This represents more than 180,000 older Michiganders who have nobody close to whom they may turn if they need assistance or in case of emergency. Likewise, about 7.2% of our sample, representing over 172,000 older adults in the Michigan population, answered no when asked, “Is there someone you feel you can tell just about anything to, someone you can count on for understanding and advice?” Having a personal confidant is an important component of social support, and so the absence of such a person in one’s life may constitute a threat to well being.

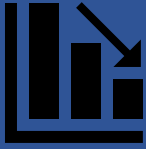
About 8.3% of respondents, when asked about things that pose a serious challenge, answered that social involvement was a seriously challenging activity for them. **Taken together, about 31.2% of survey respondents reported insufficient social contact or social support in one or more of these four areas.** This represents almost three-quarters of a million Michigan seniors who may not be getting the social involvement they need. Those living below 150% of the poverty line are more likely to report low social involvement than their higher-income peers.

Furthermore, when comparing the 31.2% of older adults who report some kind of insufficient social involvement with those who don’t, the people who don’t get enough social contact or support face many more challenges and disadvantages. Some examples of those differences are illustrated in the chart below; all differences shown are statistically significant.



See the complete report here:

https://4ami.org/uploads/files/document/2019_Older_Michigander_Needs_and_Solutions_Assessment_final.pdf



SOLUTIONS TO REDUCE SOCIAL ISOLATION FOR THE ONE IN FIVE SOCIALLY ISOLATED SENIORS

Aging Network Resources that Address Social Isolation

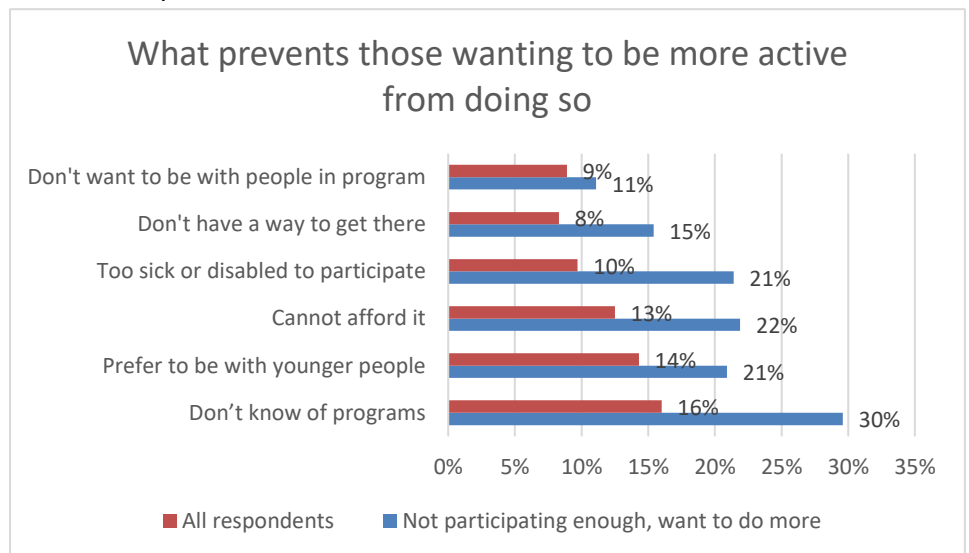
- Senior Centers
- Public Transportation
- Health and Wellness Classes
- Friendly Reassurance Programs
- Peer Counseling
- RSVP/Volunteer programs
- Communication and Monitoring Technologies



SOLUTIONARY ACTIONS TO REDUCE THE PREVALENCE OF SOCIAL ISOLATION

Recommendations

- Identify, promote and adopt best practices that reduce social isolation among older adults, reduce the risk of social isolation, and achieve positive outcomes.
- Designate the reduction of social isolation as goal in the Aging and Adult Services Agency State Plan for Aging.
- Recognize social isolation as a public health issue and make it a priority for funding in the \$500,000 senior center health related mini-grants established by the Legislature for FY 2020.
- Encourage foundations to prioritize older adult social isolation as a senior health issue and consider soliciting and or accepting grant proposals that address social isolation.



ABOUT THE SURVEY

In 2019 the Michigan Health Endowment Fund provided funding to the Area Agencies on Aging Association of Michigan (4AM) to develop a need assessment toolkit of validated need assessment questions across a dozen domains for use by organizations to measure older adult needs and preferences. 4AM partnered with the Wayne State Institute of Gerontology to create a targeted need and solutions assessment



AREA AGENCIES ON AGING
ASSOCIATION OF MICHIGAN

instrument and contracted with Mitchell Research & Communications to conduct a statewide telephone survey of 600 Michigan residents over the age of 60.