



Social Threats to Aging Well in Nevada: New Data Reveals Economic Instability, Loneliness, Transportation Access as Top 3 Social Barriers to Senior Health

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Nearly a quarter of senior Nevadans list the inability to pay as their top barrier to health care in the next year, according to a new Alignment Healthcare statewide survey

LAS VEGAS and ORANGE, Calif., Sept. 20, 2022 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Nevada seniors have more trouble paying medical bills, are lonelier and have less access to reliable transportation compared to seniors on a national level, according to the **2022 Social Threats to Aging Well in America** survey by [Alignment Healthcare](#), a tech-enabled Medicare Advantage company. Based on responses from 2,601 seniors ages 65 and older, the inaugural study explores the financial, physical and emotional barriers impacting seniors' access to comprehensive, affordable, high-quality health care.

Like their counterparts in the national survey, seniors in Nevada rank economic instability and loneliness as their top two social barriers to health. However, seniors in the state say that access to reliable transportation is their third most problematic social barrier, while, nationally, seniors cite food insecurity among their top three. Nationally, 15% of seniors anticipate difficulty putting healthy food on their table in the next year amid rising food prices and other physical challenges. Nevadans fare only slightly better at 14%.

"As we continue to focus on social determinants of health, the survey helps us better understand the issues that seniors across America face, including in Nevada, which is one of the three fastest-growing states for people 65 and over," said Dr. John Kim, senior vice president of western region market management, Alignment Healthcare. "These findings provide insights into the health and lifestyle needs of seniors in Nevada as well as the obstacles they are met with when making decisions about their health care. Alignment currently offers a range of HMO and dual-eligible special needs plan options to seniors in Clark, Nye and Washoe counties, and we expect to serve more seniors in the state as we expand into Carson City, Douglas and Storey in 2023, subject to approval by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services."

Highlights from the benchmark survey include:

Economic instability

- From medical debt to copays and more, survey results uncover that **24% of Nevada seniors list the inability to pay as their top barrier to health care in the next year** – higher than the national average (22%).
- **Seventeen percent, or roughly 1 in 6, of Nevada seniors say they do not have the resources and support** to cover medical bills in the next year, compared to 11% nationally.
- **More than 1 in 5 (21%) seniors in Nevada carry medical debt** — compared to the national average of 16%.
- Of those with medical debt, **25% in Nevada owe amounts equal to three months or more in living expenses.**

Loneliness

- Seniors in Nevada are lonelier than their peers across the country. Compared to 1 in 8 (13%) nationally, **nearly 1 in 5 of Nevadans (19%) goes a month or more without seeing family, friends or other companions – if ever.**
- The problem is getting worse as **22% of seniors in Nevada say they feel more isolated or lonely now than they did a year ago** – versus 20% nationally.

Transportation:

- Lack of consistent transportation to medical care in the next year is a bigger problem in Nevada, where **nearly 1 in 5 (19%) seniors will not have reliable transportation to access non-emergency care in the next year**, compared to 1 in 7 (14%) nationally.
- In Nevada, 1 in 5 (20%) seniors would use transportation benefits very frequently if available, versus the national average of 1 in 8 (14%).

While these top social factors remain a challenge to care, 23% of seniors in Nevada – more than any other state surveyed – believe their most significant health care obstacle in the next year will be their medical providers' lack of responsiveness to their health concerns, compared to 14% nationwide. Nevada also outpaces its counterparts in reported need for rent, mortgage and utility assistance, with 45% of Nevada seniors naming it as a top preferred benefit, compared to 34% nationally.

Administered by Toluna and sponsored by Alignment, the study polled seniors on their biggest social obstacles to health care and the support they need to overcome those challenges. The study focused on environmental factors known as social determinants of health such as income and access to reliable transportation and healthy foods. These factors are proven to have a far more significant impact on overall health than clinical care alone, [according to the National Academy of Medicine](#).

About the "2022 Social Threats to Aging Well in America" study

The online survey was conducted from July 24 to Aug. 13, 2022, and included a nationally and regionally representative sample of 2,601 seniors aged 65 and older, including more than 100 senior residents each in six states: Arizona, California, Florida, Nevada, North Carolina and Texas. This survey

was designed to generate important conversations about barriers to senior care. As this is the first Social Threats to Aging Well in America survey, it will serve as a benchmark for comparison for future results when possible and highlight differences for seniors going forward. You can view the full national report [here](#).

About Alignment Healthcare

Alignment Healthcare is a consumer-centric platform delivering customized health care in the United States through its Medicare Advantage plans. The company provides partners and patients with customized care and service where they need it and when they need it, including clinical coordination, risk management and technology facilitation. Alignment Healthcare offers health plan options through Alignment Health Plan and also partners with select health plans to help deliver better benefits at lower costs.

An infographic accompanying this announcement is available at <https://www.globenewswire.com/NewsRoom/AttachmentNg/e985ce57-87b5-4c3f-b65a-742f794d1093>

Media Contact

Priya Shah
mPR, Inc. for Alignment Healthcare
alignment@mpublicrelations.com