

America's Health Rankings® Senior Data Update: Implications for Geriatric Providers

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Purpose

To document and disseminate a comprehensive analysis of senior population health on a national and state-by-state basis across ~35 measures.

Rationale

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, adults ages 65 and older now comprise more than 15% of the total population. By 2030, that number will climb significantly to 20%. Adults ages 65 and older are the largest consumers of health care and this poses challenges to policy-makers, Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security in addition to the effect on families, communities and health care providers including advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs).

Social isolation is an absence of meaningful social relationships. According to the National Institute on Aging, social isolation and loneliness are associated with high blood pressure, heart disease, obesity, anxiety, depression, cognitive decline, Alzheimer's disease and increased risk of mortality.

Theoretical Framework

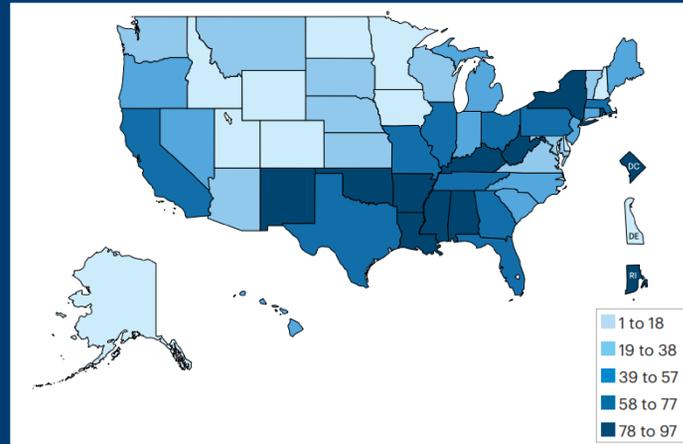
America's Health Rankings® Senior Data Update was built upon the World Health Organization (WHO) definition of health. The model reflects that determinants of health directly influence health outcomes.



Results

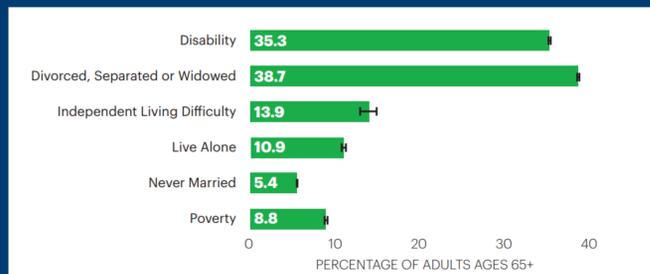
Risk of Social Isolation by State 2020

States with the lowest risk of social isolation are throughout the West and Midwest, while higher risk states are in the South and in New Mexico, New York and Rhode Island



Risk of Social Isolation by Factor

The most common risk factors are being divorced, separated or widowed, followed by having a disability. Of the six risk factors associated with social isolation, being divorced, separated or widowed and having an independent living difficulty are most strongly correlated (both $r=0.9$) at the state-level with the overall risk of social isolation measure, followed by living below the poverty level ($r=0.8$), and having a disability ($r=0.6$).



Social Isolation Risk Factors by State

The risk factors for social isolation among seniors vary across states:

- Living below the poverty level is 2.4 times higher in Mississippi than in Alaska.
- Living alone is 1.8 times higher in Maine than in Utah.
- Being divorced, separated or widowed is 1.3 times higher in Mississippi than in Utah.
- Having never been married is 3.4 times higher in New York than in Utah.
- Having a disability is 1.4 times higher in West Virginia than in Delaware.
- Having an independent living difficulty is 1.8 times higher in Mississippi than in North Dakota.

Risk of Social Isolation Rank	Poverty (%)	Live Alone (%)	Divorced, Separated or Widowed (%)	Never Married (%)	Disability (%)	Independent Living Difficulty (%)	
Utah	6.4	7.2	32.4	2.7	34.0	12.7	
New Hampshire	5.4	10.7	36.6	4.4	31.9	10.6	
Minnesota	7.2	10.8	35.2	5.3	31.2	11.5	
Delaware	6.6	10.8	36.0	5.3	30.5	11.9	
Colorado	7.5	9.3	37.7	4.3	32.2	11.6	
Alaska	5.4	7.3	38.5	5.2	39.1	13.3	
Iowa	7.1	11.9	36.7	4.5	31.5	11.0	
Wyoming	7.9	10.5	37.5	2.7	36.3	10.5	
North Dakota	9.1	10.6	36.1	4.7	33.4	10.5	
Idaho	9.0	10.4	35.0	3.1	36.0	12.0	
Wisconsin	7.6	11.4	35.9	5.8	31.2	11.9	
Nebraska	7.6	11.2	36.7	4.3	34.1	11.6	
South Dakota	9.2	11.5	36.1	5.0	32.7	10.6	
Montana	8.4	12.0	36.7	4.1	34.3	10.6	
Virginia	7.6	10.1	38.4	5.0	32.9	13.8	
Washington	7.7	10.0	38.0	4.3	35.5	13.6	
Arizona	9.0	10.8	37.0	4.2	34.3	12.6	
Kansas	7.6	11.1	38.0	4.0	36.0	12.9	
Maryland	7.6	10.3	40.1	6.5	31.3	13.6	
Vermont	7.6	12.9	37.9	5.5	32.6	11.8	
Connecticut	7.3	11.7	39.1	7.1	30.6	13.6	
Hawaii	8.0	10.0	37.8	7.1	33.5	15.5	
Indiana	7.5	10.8	39.5	4.3	36.5	13.7	
Maine	8.8	13.0	37.7	5.1	33.5	11.6	
Nevada	8.8	9.9	41.1	5.2	34.8	12.8	
Oregon	8.0	11.5	38.8	4.2	36.2	13.6	
New Jersey	8.3	11.1	39.0	7.2	31.6	14.3	
Michigan	8.3	11.6	38.7	5.2	34.9	14.3	
South Carolina	9.2	11.0	38.5	4.2	35.9	14.8	
North Carolina	9.2	10.6	39.5	4.4	35.8	14.5	
Georgia	31	10.3	9.1	40.5	4.7	36.1	14.8
Texas	32	10.7	8.2	39.9	4.2	38.0	15.9
Ohio	33	8.1	11.7	40.2	5.3	34.6	14.0
Missouri	34	8.6	11.4	39.8	4.2	36.8	14.0
Illinois	35	8.8	11.2	39.7	6.6	33.5	14.5
Massachusetts	36	9.0	11.8	38.8	8.2	32.2	13.7
Pennsylvania	37	8.1	12.6	38.9	6.6	34.1	14.2
Florida	38	10.3	12.8	38.8	4.6	33.1	13.2
California	39	10.3	9.3	38.4	6.6	34.9	16.8
Tennessee	40	9.4	10.6	39.9	4.1	38.7	16.3
Oklahoma	41	8.6	10.9	40.6	3.0	41.9	15.3
Rhode Island	42	9.9	12.7	40.7	8.0	33.4	14.3
Arkansas	43	10.2	11.3	40.1	3.5	41.9	16.8
New York	44	11.5	11.9	39.9	9.2	33.0	15.4
Kentucky	45	10.8	11.0	40.6	4.1	41.3	16.8
Alabama	46	10.3	11.4	41.3	4.1	40.9	17.4
West Virginia	47	9.4	12.9	39.5	4.5	43.1	17.4
Louisiana	48	12.6	10.8	42.3	5.9	39.1	16.3
New Mexico	49	12.2	12.1	40.1	6.2	39.9	16.2
Mississippi	50	12.7	11.3	42.6	4.8	42.1	18.8

Methods

This descriptive study draws data from more than a dozen government agencies and leading research organizations to create a focused, uniquely rich dataset for measuring health at the state level. A composite variable focused on social isolation in older adults will include analysis of measures from the AARP Foundation Isolation Framework Report (2012) and the American Community Survey (ACS). Quantitative analysis included descriptive statistics and standard formulas to determine a score for each state and rankings on key measures.

Definition

Percentile of the mean z-scores for the following risk factors in adults ages 65 and older: poverty; living alone; divorced, separated or widowed; never married; disability; and independent living difficulty

Data Source & Years

U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2014-2018

For more definitions and information, visit AmericasHealthRankings.org

Application to Practice

Continued population growth, coupled with more complex medical conditions and social isolation threaten to further strain the health care system.

APRNs caring for older adults can take an active role in improving overall health outcomes for their populations by leveraging these data. In addition, APRNs have an opportunity to collaborate with additional inter-professional teams to drive policy change and promote the health of older adults.

Acknowledgments

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Disclosure

Arundel Metrics receives funding from United Health Foundation to produce America's Health Rankings. Arundel Metrics (arundelmetrics.com) is a data-driven public health firm specializing in population health measurement and index generation.