A decorative graphic is present on the page. It features a large, thin, light-brown arc that starts near the top right and curves down towards the bottom right. A horizontal line and a vertical line intersect at the end of this arc, with a small yellow square at the intersection point. Another horizontal line and a vertical line intersect at the end of the arc, with a small yellow square at the intersection point. A green rectangular block is in the top left corner, and a small yellow square is at the bottom right corner of this green block.

**Nursing Home Quality
and Long-Term Care in
the District of Columbia:
A Survey of Registered
Voters Age 35+**

May 2006



Nursing Home Quality and Long- Term Care in the District of Columbia: A Survey of Registered Voters Age 35+

**Data collected by Alan Newman Research
Report Prepared by Erica L. Dinger, J.D.**

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AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan membership organization that helps people 50+ have independence, choice and control in ways that are beneficial and affordable to them and society as a whole. We produce *AARP The Magazine*, published bimonthly; *AARP Bulletin*, our monthly newspaper; *AARP Segunda Juventud*, our bimonthly magazine in Spanish and English; *NRTA Live & Learn*, our quarterly newsletter for 50+ educators; and our website, www.aarp.org. AARP Foundation is our affiliated charity that provides security, protection, and empowerment to older persons in need with support from thousands of volunteers, donors, and sponsors. We have staffed offices in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Acknowledgements

AARP staff from the District of Columbia State Office, State Affairs, and Knowledge Management contributed to the design of the study. Special thanks go to AARP staff including Mimi Castaldi, Grier Mendel, and Louis Davis, District of Columbia State Office; Ilene Henshaw, State Affairs; Lauren Jones, Outreach and Services; and Rachelle Cummins, Jennifer Sauer, and Cheryl Barnes, Knowledge Management. Alan Newman Research prepared the data. For more information, contact Erica Dinger at (202) 434-6176.

Background

Americans are facing major long-term care challenges as the United States' population ages. People are living longer, with the oldest of the 77 million baby boomers reaching age 60 in 2006. During 2006, 7,918 people a day will turn 60, which amounts to 330 every hour.¹ The expected growth in the number of people needing long-term care is staggering. Sixty percent of those reaching the age of 65 are expected to need long-term care at some point in their lives. Currently, 12.2 percent of District of Columbia residents are age 65 and older, and that percentage will increase to 13.4 percent by 2030.²

Compared to all of the states, the District has the second highest percentage of its over 65 population with incomes at or below the poverty level. Many of these individuals will need some type of long-term care services and supports, and will likely look to public funding sources to meet those needs.

Currently, the District spends more than 83 percent of its long-term care funds on nursing homes and only 13 percent on long-term care services that allow people to stay in their homes and communities. Compared to the 50 states, the District ranks last in the percentage of long-term care dollars it spends on home- and community-based services.³

This survey was commissioned for AARP District of Columbia to explore voter's opinions of long-term care services and the quality of nursing home care in the District of Columbia. The quality and regulation of long-term care services affects not only AARP members, but anyone in the District who has a friend or family member who has used or may use long-term care. Ensuring that quality long-term care services are available to all citizens is of primary importance to AARP District of Columbia.

The present report is based on data from a phone survey of 801 District of Columbia registered voters age 35 and over. It was conducted by AARP from April through May 2006. The survey has a sampling error of plus or minus 3.5 percent, and the sample was weighted by age and gender to represent the actual composition of District of Columbia registered voters age 35 and older. The full methodology is provided at the end of the report and the full annotated questionnaire is contained in the Appendix A of this report. Verbatim answers to question 12 are available upon request. Percents may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

¹ United States Census Bureau, Newsroom, Special Edition, Oldest Baby Boomers Turn 60! (January 3, 2006).

² United States Census Bureau, Interim Projections of the Population By Selected Age Groups for United States and States: April 1, 2000 to July 1, 2030. Downloaded from www.census.gov/population/projections/summaryTabB1.pdf on May 19, 2006.

³ AARP Public Policy Institute, *Across the States: Profiles of Long-Term Care* (2004).

Highlights

Long-Term Care Services

- Nine in ten (90%) District registered voters age 35 and over say it is important to them to be able to remain at home as long as possible if they need long-term care services.
- Over eight in ten (86%) support increasing funds for services that help people remain in their homes and communities as they age.

Nursing Home Quality

- Almost all (95%) say it is important that the District of Columbia hold nursing homes responsible for care violations.
- Nearly nine in ten (87%) say it is important that District-owned nursing homes be examples of high-quality care.
- More than nine in ten say improving nursing home quality and access to long-term care services should be a top (24%), high (40%), or medium (29%) priority for the new mayor.

Resources and Information

- Three-fourths (75%) of respondents say it is important that they have a centralized place to get information on all the long-term care services they may need.
- More than eight in ten (86%) say it is important for newspapers to publish information on nursing home violations.
- About eight in ten (83%) say it is important for the Department of Health website to offer more consumer information on nursing homes.

Emergency Planning

- Nine in ten (90%) District registered voters age 35 plus say it is important for the District to have an effective plan for addressing the needs of nursing home residents and other older residents in the case of an emergency.

Findings

Long-Term Care Services

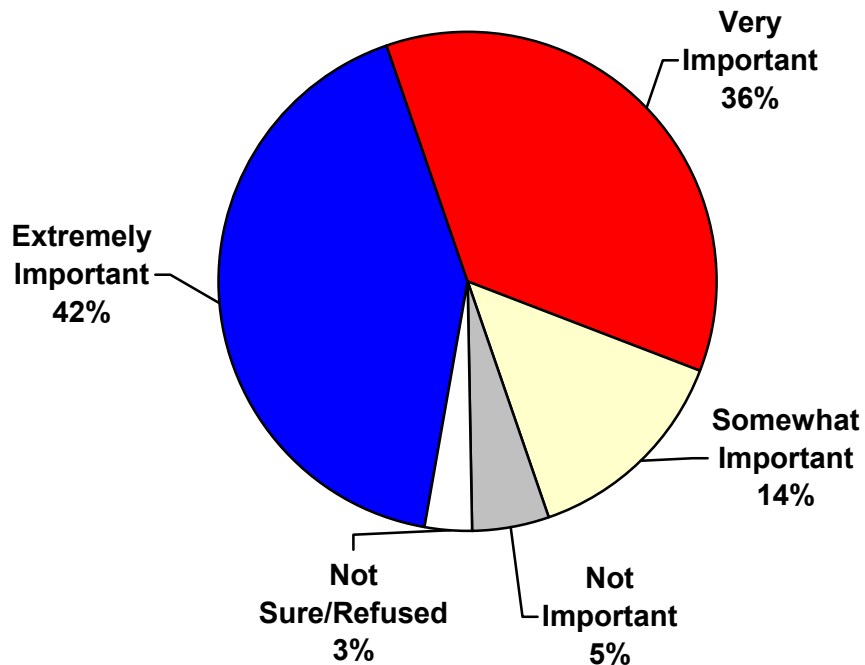
Nine in ten District registered voters age 35 and older say it is important to be able to stay at home as long as possible.

Nine in ten (90%) respondents say it is extremely (58%) or very (32%) important that they have the ability to stay at home as long as possible if they or a family member need long-term care services.

Almost eight in ten District registered voters age 35 and older say it is important that the District make home- and community-based services available.

Almost eight in ten (78%) voters age 35 and older say that it is important for the District to make home- and community-based services available to all residents who need long-term care services. Home- and community-based services help people remain in their own homes by providing services such as home care aides and delivered meals.

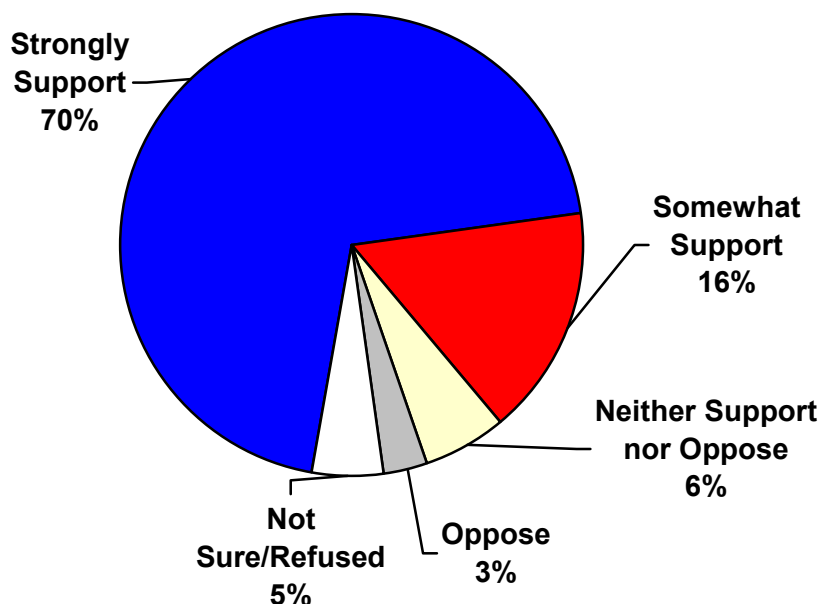
**Importance of Making Home- and Community-Based Services Available
(N =801)**



Almost nine in ten District voters support the District spending more money on home- and community-based services.

Currently, the District spends more than 83 percent of its long-term care funds on nursing homes and only 13 percent on long-term care services that allow people to stay in their homes and communities. Compared to the 50 states, the District ranks last in the percentage of long-term care dollars it spends on home- and community-based services.⁴ Almost nine in ten (86%) respondents support increasing funds for services that help people stay in their homes and communities.

Support for Increasing Funding for Services That Allow People to Stay in Their Homes and Communities (N =801)



Three in ten registered voters in the District age 35 and older say they or a family member has used long-term care services in the last five years.

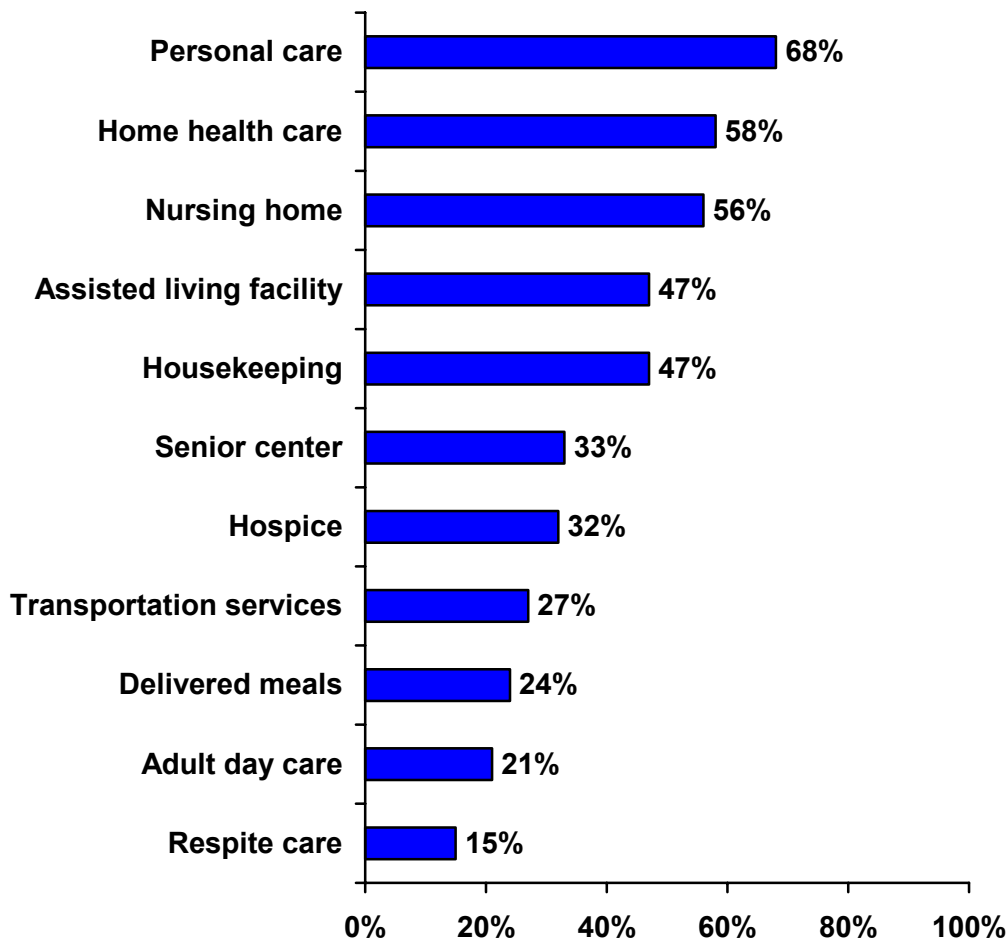
Three in ten registered voters age 35 and older in the District say they or family members such as grandparents, parents, children, or a sibling, has used long-term care services within the past five years. About seven in ten (69%) say they have not used these services. Of those who have used long-term care services, almost a quarter (24%) have used services in the District of Columbia. Three-fourths (76%) say they have used long-term care services outside of the District.

⁴ AARP Public Policy Institute, Across the States: Profiles of Long-Term Care (2004).

Of those who used long-term care services in the past five years, personal care, home health care, and nursing home care are the most common services used.

Of those who say they or a family member have used long-term care service in the past five years, the most common types of care reported are: personal care services, such as help with bathing or dressing, home health care, and nursing home care.

**Types of Long-Term Care Services Received
(n=239 who have used long-term care services in the past 5 years)**



Awareness of long-term care services is high among those who have not used these services in the past five years.

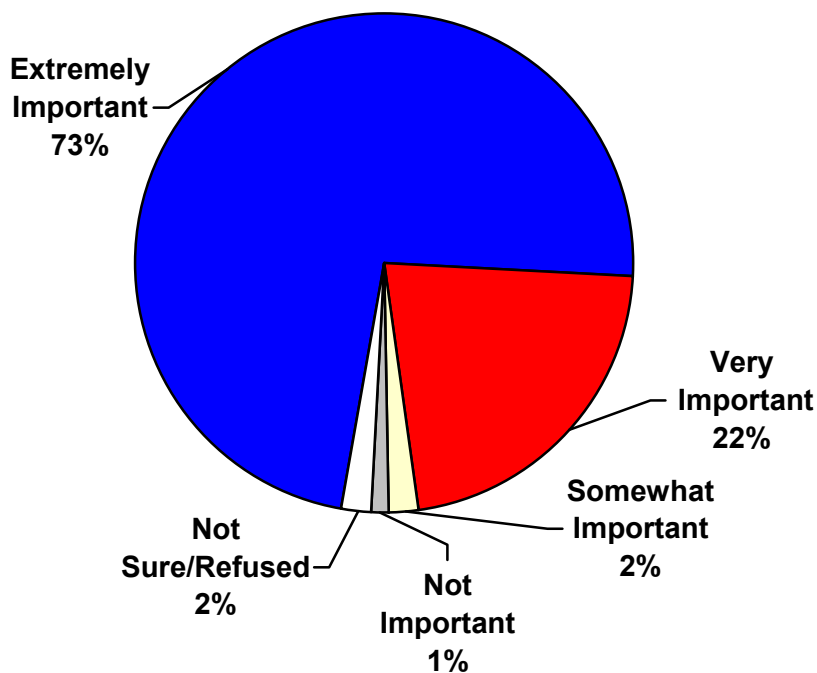
Awareness of available long-term care services is high among those District voters who have not used long-term care services in the past five years (n=562). Nine in ten say they are aware of public transportation services, such as Metro Access, while more than a quarter know of home delivered meals. However, only 35 percent are aware of respite care.

Nursing Home Quality

More than nine in ten District registered voters age 35 and older say it is important for the District government to hold nursing homes accountable for care violations.

In 2003, a government report on nursing home conditions in the District of Columbia found that more than 40 percent of District nursing homes had violated the law in ways that harmed residents or placed them at risk of death or serious injury.⁵ More than nine in ten (95%) respondents say that it is important that the District government hold nursing homes accountable for these violations.

Importance of Holding Nursing Homes Accountable for Care Violations (N = 801)

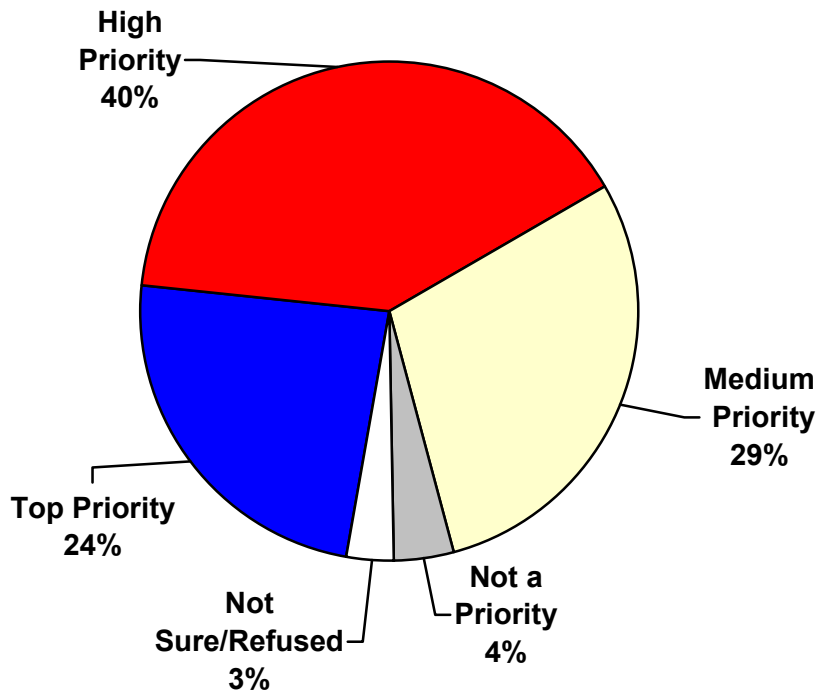


⁵ Minority Staff, Special Investigations Division, Nursing Home Conditions in the District of Columbia: Many Nursing Homes Fail to Meet Federal Standards for Adequate Care (January 7, 2002).

Nine in ten District voters age 35 and older say improving nursing home quality and access to long-term care should be a priority for the new mayor.

In the coming months, the District of Columbia will be electing a new mayor. More than six in ten (64%) registered voters age 35 and older say that improving nursing home quality and access to long-term care should be a top or high priority for the new mayor. An additional 29 percent say this should be a medium priority for the mayor. Overall, 93 percent of those surveyed said the mayor should make this issue a priority.

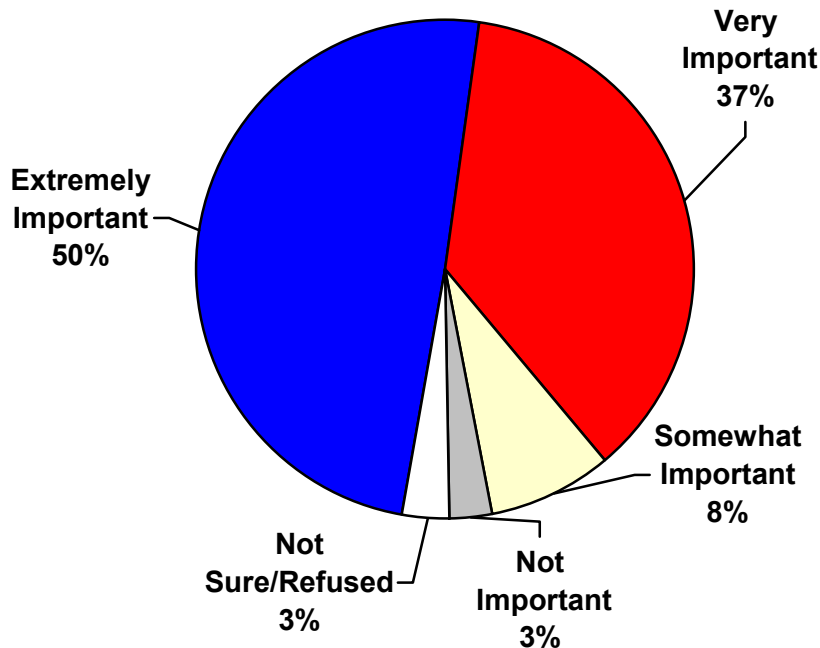
**Priority for Improving Nursing Home Quality and Long-Term Care Access
(N =801)**



Almost nine in ten registered voters age 35 and older in the District say it is important that the District-owned nursing homes be examples of high-quality care.

The District of Columbia currently owns two nursing homes. Almost nine in ten (87%) District registered voters age 35 and older say it is important that these District-owned homes be examples of high-quality nursing home care.

**Importance of Making District-Owned Nursing Homes Examples of High-Quality Care
(N =801)**



Respondents were also asked if there was anything else about nursing homes or long-term care services that they would like to tell the candidates for District Mayor or Council. For a list of these responses, please contact the author.

Resources and Information

Over eight in ten District registered voters age 35 plus say it is important for newspapers to publish information on nursing home violations.

Eighty-five percent of registered voters age 35 and older in the District say it is extremely (56%) or very (29%) important that newspapers, such as The Washington Post or The Washington Times, publish information on nursing homes that have been cited or fined for violations. Nine percent said such reporting is somewhat important, while four percent said it was not important.

More than eight in ten registered voters age 35 and older in the District say it is important for the Department of Health website to offer information on nursing homes.

More than eight in ten (83%) registered voters age 35 and older in the District say it is important for the Department of Health website to offer comprehensive information on nursing homes that would allow consumers to compare things such as quality, cost, and staffing and help them choose the best nursing home for their needs. Almost half (47%) say this is extremely important, while 35 percent say such information is very important. Eleven percent says providing this information is somewhat important. Only three percent feel that it is not important.

Three-fourths of District registered voters age 35 plus say it is important that they have one place to turn to for information on long-term care services.

Three-fourths of voters age 35 and older say it is extremely (45%) or very (30%) important that they be able to turn to one place for information and help in getting all of the long-term care services they or a family member might need. Almost two in ten (19%) say such a centralized source is somewhat important. Five percent say such a source of information is not important.

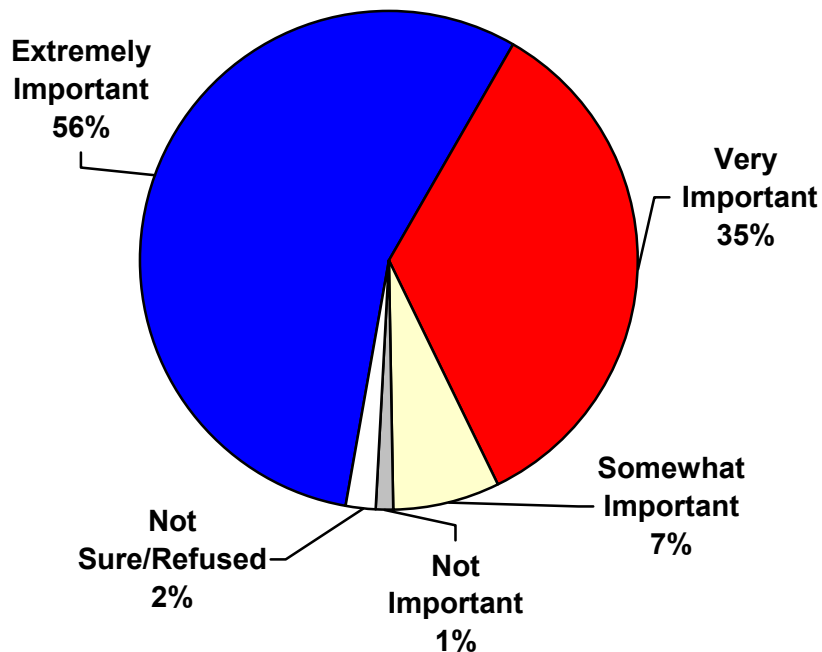
Emergency Planning

Nine in ten District registered voters age 35 plus say it is important that the District have an effective emergency plan for nursing home residents and older residents.

Following Hurricane Katrina, many individuals began to prepare plans in case of a similar major emergency. Over half (56%) of District residents say they have a personal emergency plan. This plan could include having a place to meet family or friends, having bottled water and other non-perishable food items stored in the house, or having an emergency kit in the car.

In addition to personal emergency plans, many jurisdictions began to prepare or enhance plans in case of an emergency that would require evacuation or sheltering in place. Nine in ten (90%) respondents say it is extremely or very important for the District to have an effective plan for addressing the needs of nursing home residents and older residents in the case of an emergency.

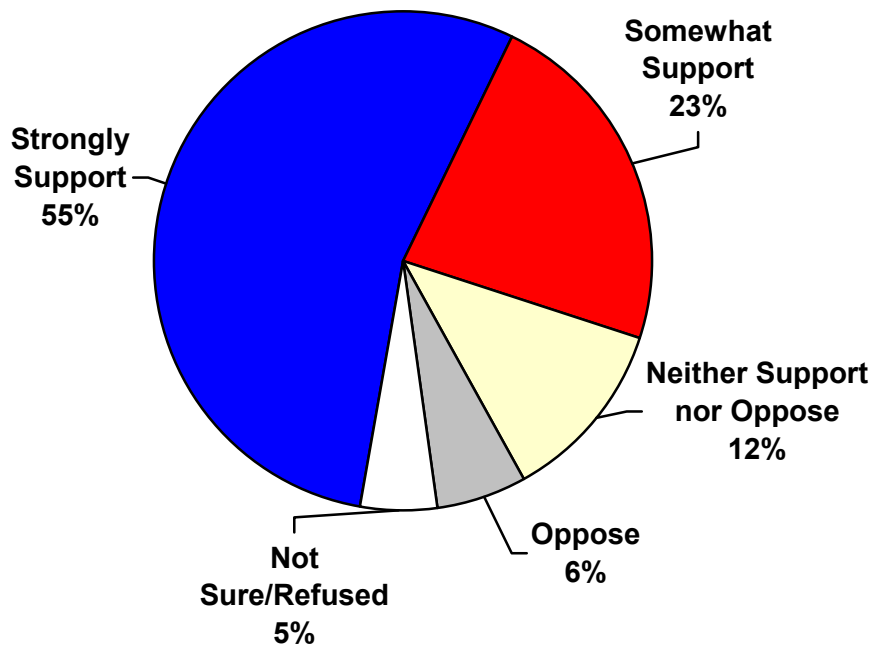
**Importance of an Effective Emergency Plan for Nursing Home Residents and Older Residents
(N =801)**



Almost eight in ten District registered voters age 35 plus support an emergency database of those who may need extra assistance in the case of an emergency.

Some states have created databases of seniors and persons with disabilities who may need extra assistance in the case of an emergency. This database is voluntary and confidential, meaning that only emergency personnel would be able to access the names in the database. Almost eight in ten (78%) registered voters age 35 and over support the District of Columbia creating such a database to use in the case of an emergency.

**Support for an Emergency Database
(N =801)**



Voting Profile of Respondents

Eight in ten (80%) respondents say they always vote in elections for District of Columbia Mayor and Council. Almost seven in ten (68%) consider themselves Democrats, while 5 percent say they are Republican, and 17 percent say they consider themselves Independent. In addition, 68 percent of those age 50 and over (n=420) said they were members of AARP.

Conclusion

Issues surrounding long-term care and nursing home quality are of prime importance to District registered voters age 35 and older. Nine in ten say that it is important to be able to remain at home as long as possible if they need long-term care, and more than eight in ten say it is important for the District to make home and community based services more available to residents. The vast majority supports the District spending more money on home and community based services.

Despite the widespread desire to remain at home, many District residents who become ill or disabled have no option but to move to a nursing home. District registered voters age 35 and older are concerned about the quality of care received by District nursing home residents. Nine in ten say it is important for the District to hold nursing homes accountable for any care violations that endanger residents, and most want the two District-owned nursing homes to be examples of high-quality care. More than nine in ten say that improving nursing home quality and long-term care should be a priority for the new mayor.

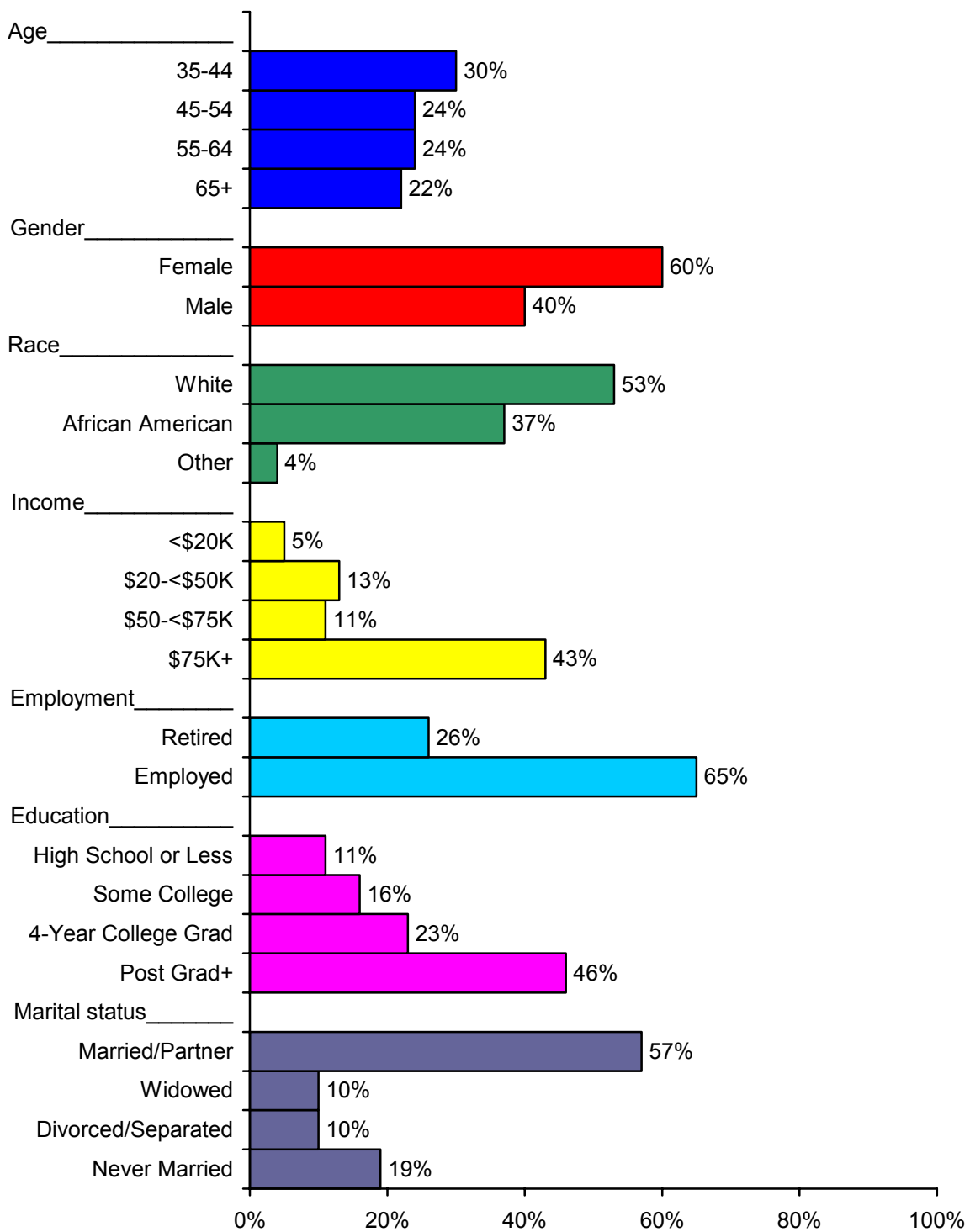
District voters also call for more information and resources to make long-term care and nursing home decisions for themselves or loved ones. They want one place to turn for help in finding all of the long-term care services they might need. In addition, they want newspapers and the Department of Health website to offer nursing home information, including fines and violations that will help them make decisions about care.

Finally, District registered voters age 35 and over say it is important for the District to have an effective emergency plan to aide nursing home residents and older residents in the case of an emergency. Eight in ten support the creation of an emergency database so emergency personnel know how to locate those who may need extra assistance in the case of an emergency.

Methodology

The present report is based on data from a telephone survey of 801 District of Columbia registered voters age 35 and over. It was conducted by Alan Newman Research for AARP from April through May, 2006. The survey has a sampling error of plus or minus 3.5 percent, and the sample was weighted by age and gender to represent the population of District of Columbia registered voters age 35 and over. The full annotated questionnaire is contained in the appendix of this report. Percents may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

Demographic Profile of Respondents (N=801)



**ANNOTATED QUESTIONNAIRE
APPENDIX A**

**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
NURSING HOME QUALITY/LTC SURVEY**

Response Rate N=801; Sampling Error +/- 3.5%

Introduction

Hello, this is _____ calling from Alan Newman Research, a national opinion research firm calling on behalf of AARP. We are not telemarketers and are not trying to sell you anything. We would like to find out your opinions on long-term care in the District of Columbia. Your views are important and we would greatly appreciate your participation. All of your responses are kept entirely confidential. The survey should take less than 12 minutes of your time.

I1. RECORD GENDER OF PERSON WHO ANSWERED PHONE:

- 1) Male
- 2) Female

S1. Are you a resident of the District of Columbia?

S2. Are you at least 35 years old and a registered voter?

Long-term care refers to supports and services provided over an extended period of time at home, in a community setting such as an adult day care center or assisted living facility, or in a nursing home. These supports and services are available to people of all ages who are frail, ill, or have a disability and who need help with regular daily activities – such as getting dressed, bathing, preparing meals, or eating.

1. If you or a family member needed long-term care services, how important would it be to you to have services that would enable you or your family member to stay at home as long as possible?

<u>%</u>	
58	Extremely important
32	Very important
6	Somewhat important
1	Not very important
1	Not at all important
2	Not sure [VOLUNTEERED]
<.5	REFUSED

2. Have you or anyone in your family -- such as grandparents, parents, children, or a sister or brother -- used long-term care services within the last five years?

<u>%</u>	
30	Yes
69	No > GO TO Q3
1	Not sure > GO TO Q3 [VOLUNTEERED]
<.5	REFUSED

2a. Did the person receiving long-term care services receive them in the District of Columbia?

<u>%</u>	
24	Yes
76	No > GO TO Q3
0	Not sure > GO TO Q3 [VOLUNTEERED]
0	REFUSED

3. IF Q2=1: What type of long-term care service was received? Was it..... [READ LIST] IF Q2 =NOT 1: Are you aware of any of the following services in your community?.....[READ LIST] (n=239)

	Yes ▼	No ▼	Not Sure ▼	No Answer ▼
a. Nursing home care.....	56%	43%	1%	<.5
b. Home delivered meals	24%	75%	<.5	<.5
c. Assisted living facility (facility that provides housing, usually in an apartment-like setting, meals, and personal care services such as help bathing or dressing)	47%	53%	0	<.5
d. Home health care (such as a nurse or physical therapist who makes home visits)	58%	42%	0	<.5
e. Housekeeping or help with chores	47%	52%	0	<.5
f. Adult day care center (a center that offers health and social programs for older persons who need some supervision)	21%	77%	<.5	1
g. Senior center that provides meals.....	33%	67%	0	<.5
h. Public transportation services, such as Metro Access.....	27%	71%	2%	<.5
i. Hospice	32%	68%	<.5	<.5
j. Personal care (help with activities like bathing and dressing)	68%	31%	<.5	<.5
k. Respite care.....	15%	72%	13%	<.5

3a. IF Q2 =NOT 1: Are you aware of any of the following services in your community?.....[READ LIST] (n=562)

	Yes ▼	No ▼	Not Sure ▼	No Answer ▼
a. Nursing home care.....	70%	28%	2%	<.5
b. Home delivered meals	75%	23%	3%	0
c. Assisted living facility (facility that provides housing, usually in an apartment-like setting, meals, and personal care services such as help bathing or dressing)	64%	32%	4%	<.5
d. Home health care (such as a nurse or physical therapist who makes home visits)	67%	31%	3%	0
e. Housekeeping or help with chores.....	50%	47%	4%	0
f. Adult day care center (a center that offers health and social programs for older persons who need some supervision)	55%	40%	5%	0
g. Senior center that provides meals.....	58%	37%	5%	0
h. Public transportation services, such as Metro Access.....	90%	9%	1%	0
i. Hospice	66%	30%	4%	0
j. Personal care (help with activities like bathing and dressing)	52%	44%	4%	0
k. Respite care.....	35%	57%	8%	0

4. How important is it to you to be able to turn to one place for information and help in getting all of the long-term care services you or a family member may need?

<u>%</u>	
45	Extremely important
30	Very important
19	Somewhat important
4	Not very important
2	Not at all important
1	Not sure [VOLUNTEERED]
<.5	REFUSED

5. Home and community-based services refer to those long-term care supports and services people receive in their homes or in other home-like settings. How important is it to you that the District makes home and community-based care services available to all residents who need long-term care services?

<u>%</u>	
42	Extremely important
36	Very important
14	Somewhat important
3	Not very important
2	Not at all important
3	Not sure [VOLUNTEERED]
1	REFUSED

Interviewer: Now, I am going to ask you some questions about Nursing Homes in the District of Columbia

6. The District of Columbia spends more than 83% of its long-term care funds on nursing homes, and approximately 13% on long term care services that allow people to stay in their homes and communities. In fact, compared to the 50 states, the District ranks last in the percentage of long term care dollars it spends on home and community based long term care services. How strongly do you support or oppose increasing funds for services that help people stay in their homes and communities?"

<u>%</u>	
70	Strongly support
16	Somewhat support
6	Neither support nor oppose
1	Somewhat oppose
2	Strongly oppose
4	Not sure [VOLUNTEERED]
1	REFUSED

7. In 2003, a government report on nursing home conditions in the District of Columbia found that more than 40% of District nursing homes had violated the law in ways that harmed residents or placed them at risk of death or serious injury. How important is it to you that the District government hold nursing homes accountable for such violations?

<u>%</u>	
73	Extremely important
22	Very important
2	Somewhat important
<.5	Not very important
1	Not at all important
2	Not sure [VOLUNTEERED]
1	REFUSED

8. How important is it to you that newspapers, such as The Washington Post or The Washington Times, publish information on nursing homes that have been cited or fined for violations?

<u>%</u>	
56	Extremely important
29	Very important
9	Somewhat important
3	Not very important
1	Not at all important
2	Not sure [VOLUNTEERED]
1	REFUSED

INTERVIEWER: Now I have a few questions about the District of Columbia government.

9. How important is it to you that the Department of Health website offer comprehensive information on nursing homes that would allow consumers to compare things such as quality, cost, and staffing?

<u>%</u>	
47	Extremely important
35	Very important
11	Somewhat important
2	Not very important
1	Not at all important
3	Not sure [VOLUNTEERED]
1	REFUSED

10. In the coming months the District of Columbia will be electing a new mayor. How much of a priority should it be for the Mayor to improve nursing home quality and access to long-term care services?

<u>%</u>	
24	Top priority
40	High priority
29	Medium priority
2	Low priority
1	Not a priority
2	Not sure [VOLUNTEERED]
1	REFUSED

11. The District of Columbia currently owns and operates two nursing homes. How important is it to you that the District make its nursing homes examples of high-quality care?

%
50 Extremely important
37 Very important
8 Somewhat important
1 Not very important
2 Not at all important
2 Not sure [VOLUNTEERED]
1 REFUSED

12. Is there anything else about nursing homes or long-term care services in the District that you would like to tell the candidates for District Mayor or Council?

Interviewer: Now, I will be asking you some questions about major emergencies, such as Hurricane Katrina.

13. How important is it to you that the District have an effective plan for addressing the needs of nursing home residents and other older residents in the case of an emergency?

%
56 Extremely important
35 Very important
7 Somewhat important
1 Not very important
1 Not at all important
1 Not sure [VOLUNTEERED]
1 REFUSED

14. An emergency plan could include having a place to meet family or friends, having bottled water and non-perishable food items stored in the house, or having an emergency kit in the car. Do you have a plan in the case of an emergency?

%
56 Yes
42 No
1 Not sure [VOLUNTEERED]
1 REFUSED

15. Some states have a database of seniors and persons with disabilities who may need extra assistance in the case of an emergency. This database is voluntary and confidential, so only emergency personnel have access to the names in the database. Do you support or oppose the District of Columbia creating such a database?

%
55 Strongly support
23 Somewhat support
12 Neither support nor oppose
2 Somewhat oppose
3 Strongly oppose
3 Not sure [VOLUNTEERED]
2 REFUSED

The following questions are for classification purposes only and will be kept entirely confidential.

D1.) Record Gender [If not known]

%
40 Male
60 Female

D2.) What is your age as of your last birthday _____ (in years)?

%
30 35-44
24 45-54
24 55-64
22 65+
0 REFUSED

D3.) What is your current marital status?

%
50 Married
7 Not married, living with partner
10 Widowed
9 Divorced
1 Separated
19 Never married
4 REFUSED

D4.) [IF 50+ on D2] Are you or your spouse currently a member of A-A-R-P, formerly the American Association of Retired Persons? (n=420)

<u>%</u>	
68	Yes
31	No
1	Don't know
1	REFUSED

D5.) Thinking about District elections for Mayor and Council in the last ten years, which of the following best describes your voting behavior?

<u>%</u>	
80	Always vote
14	Most of the time
1	About half the time
1	Seldom
1	Never vote
1	Don't know
3	REFUSED

D6.) Do you consider yourself to be a Democrat, Independent, Republican, or something else?

<u>%</u>	
5	Republican
68	Democrat
17	Independent
3	Something else
1	Don't know
6	REFUSED

D7.) What is the highest level of education that you completed?

<u>%</u>	
2	0-12 th grade (no diploma)
9	High school graduate (or equivalent)
8	Post-high school education (no degree)
8	2-year college degree
23	4-year college degree
10	Post-graduate study (no degree)
36	Graduate or professional degree (s)
4	REFUSED

D8.) Which of the following best describes your employment status?

<u>%</u>	
10	Self employed part-time
4	Self employed full-time
44	Employed full-time
6	Employed part-time
26	Retired, not working at all
3	Not in labor force for other reasons
3	Unemployed but looking for work
<.5	Don't know
3	REFUSED

D9.) Are you of Hispanic or Latino origin or descent??

<u>%</u>	
3	Yes
92	No
1	Don't know
4	REFUSED

D10.) What is your race?

<u>%</u>	
53	White or Caucasian
37	Black or African American
<.5	American Indian or Alaskan Native
1	Asian
0	Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
2	Other
1	Don't know
6	REFUSED

D11.) For statistical purposes only, please stop me when I get to your household income level, before taxes, for 2005:

<u>%</u>	
1	Less than \$10,000
4	\$10,000 to less than \$20,000
6	\$20,000 to less than \$35,000
7	\$35,000 to less than \$50,000
5	\$50,000 to less than \$60,000
7	\$60,000 to less than \$75,000
43	\$75,000 or more
3	Don't know/not sure
25	REFUSED

D12.) Please tell me your 5-digit zip code: _____

AARP
Knowledge Management
For more information contact Erica Dinger at (202) 434-6176.