

**New York
Assisted Living Facility Survey
Summary Report**

**Data Collected by Zogby International
Report Prepared by Rachelle Cummins**

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AARP
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Washington DC
<http://research.aarp.org>**

AARP is the nation's leading organization for people age 50 and older. It serves their needs and interests through information and education, research, advocacy, and community services which are provided by a network of local chapters and experienced volunteers throughout the country. The organization also offers members a wide range of special benefits and services, including *Modern Maturity* magazine and the monthly *Bulletin*.

Acknowledgments

AARP Knowledge Management staff collaborated with Bill Ferris of AARP New York-Albany to conduct the New York Assisted Living Facility Survey. Rachelle Cummins led the research effort including preparation of this report with oversight from Gretchen Straw and a report review by Gene Wright. Other AARP staff included DaCosta Mason, State Affairs, Fred Griesbach, New York-Albany, Elizabeth Clemmer, Public Policy Institute, and Bernadette Wright, Public Policy Institute. For more information about this survey, contact Rachelle Cummins at (202) 434-6297.

Survey Findings At A Glance

AARP commissioned Zogby International to conduct a random-digit-dial telephone survey of 703 New Yorkers age 50 and older (± 3.8 percent sampling error) from December 14, 2000 through December 18, 2000 on assisted living facilities. The survey finds that

Personal Experience	About a quarter (23%) of respondents have lived or know someone who has lived in an assisted living facility in the last five years.
Exposure to Advertising	About seven in ten (68%) have seen, read, or heard promotions of assisted living facilities in New York through newspapers, television, radio, or direct mail.
Desire to Age in Place	Staying in the same facility and getting all the care needed instead of moving to a nursing home is important to 91 percent of respondents. For eight in ten (80%) it is very important.
Confidence in Ability to Afford	Two in five (40%) 50+ New Yorkers are not at all confident that they could afford the cost of care in an assisted living facility, and one in five (20%) give a not very confident rating.
Support for Legislative Actions	<p>Nearly three in five (57%) strongly support and 26 percent somewhat support the New York Legislature making assisted living more affordable for low and middle-income people, even if it means an increase in taxes.</p> <p>Almost two-third (65%) of respondents strongly support, and 22 percent somewhat support, New York overseeing all assisted living facilities to ensure consumer protection and quality care.</p> <p>At least half of 50+ New Yorkers strongly support legislation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Requiring facilities with special care environments for people with Alzheimer's or dementia to meet a specific set of standards (76%)◆ Giving assisted living facility residents the right to appeal decisions affecting them (69%)◆ Requiring standardized written contracts to specify lease terms and the services and care in an assisted living facility (68%)◆ Making all assisted living facilities follow the same rules for residents including those for admitting and discharging (54%)

Purpose

Assisted living is the fastest growing type of senior housing in the United States with an estimated 15 to 20 percent annual growth rate over the last few years.¹ According to a recent industry estimate, assisted living accounted for 75% of new senior housing in 1998.² For frail older persons and adults with disabilities who need some assistance to live independently, or who no longer want to remain at home, assisted living provides an option for meeting their personal and supportive care needs.

However, the cost of assisted living still poses a considerable problem for many older persons who desire this housing arrangement but do not have the resources or who fear they may outlive their resources. In New York, assisted living costs between \$1,500 and \$4,000 per month.³ Generally, Medicare, Medicaid, and private insurance do not pay these costs. The resident pays nearly all of the cost.

According to the New York State Department of Health's May 1999 report, *Assisted Living in New York: Preparing for the Future*, a "look-alike" adult home industry (which operates without state oversight or licensure) has experienced significant growth in the last three years in New York. The average age of a person living in this type of unlicensed facility was 78 years old—with over 40% of the population between 81 and 90 years old.

Consumer advocates, providers, and regulators alike are raising questions about the need for standards to preserve and enhance assisted living residents' autonomy, maintain residents' dignity, and create a setting where residents may age in place. AARP commissioned this survey to explore the experience and opinions of the 50+ New York population on assisted living facilities.⁴ The survey covers five topics:

- ◆ Experience with assisted living facilities
- ◆ Exposure to assisted living facility promotions
- ◆ Desire to age in place
- ◆ Confidence in ability to afford costs
- ◆ Support for actions to protect consumers and ensure quality assisted living

¹ *The Assisted Living Sourcebook*, 1998. National Center for Assisted Living. American Health Care Association (AHCA), 1998.

² *Trends and Data: Aging Housing and Services Field*. American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging, 1999.

³ *Assisted Living in New York: Preparing for the Future*. New York State Department of Health, 1999.

⁴ An assisted living facility was defined in the survey as a group residential setting often more like an apartment building rather than an institutional setting like a nursing home. Assisted living facilities provide personal care services such as help with bathing and dressing, meals, and social activities. They also may provide or coordinate some limited health care services like medication monitoring or physical therapy.

Methodology

AARP contracted with Zogby International to ask New York adults age 50 and older about assisted living facilities. Zogby interviewed a total of 703 adults age 50 and older by telephone from December 14, 2000 through December 18, 2000.⁵ Weighting, a technical procedure applied to data to correct for imbalances between survey respondents and the New York population age 50 and older, in this case age and gender, was applied to assure a representative sample.

With a sample of 703, the survey has a sampling error of ± 3.8 percent. This means that in 95 out of 100 samples of this size, the results obtained in the sample would fall in a range of ± 3.8 percentage points of what would have been obtained if every adult age 50 and older in New York had been surveyed.

Report Organization

This report presents results for the five assisted living facility topics covered by the survey.⁶ It identifies statistically significant differences by age, education, income, marital status, and gender for all survey questions.⁷ Additionally, the report presents significant differences by opinion questions including exposure to advertisements, experience with assisted living facilities, belief in making assisted living affordable, and belief in oversight of assisted living facilities. The report includes a demographic profile of the sample on page 13. An annotated questionnaire, appended to the report, discloses all responses to the survey.

⁵ To generate this sample, Zogby used a random set of 13,490 telephone numbers yielding a 30 percent cooperation rate and a 13 percent response rate. Cooperation rate = the proportion of individuals interviewed among all households who answered the telephone. Response rate = the proportion of individuals who completed the interview among all eligible telephone numbers tried during the study period.

⁶ Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

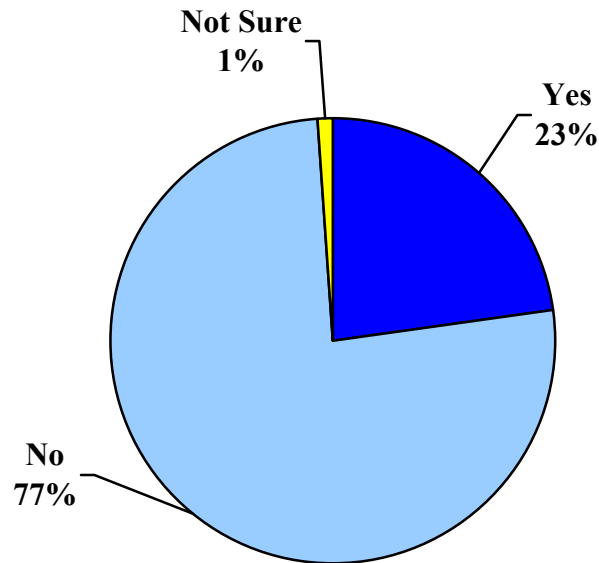
⁷ Differences in percentages are statistically significant at the .05 level, meaning 95 times out of 100, a difference of this size would not have occurred by chance.

Experience with Assisted Living Facilities

Almost one in four (23%) 50+ New Yorkers have lived or have had a family member or friend live in an assisted living facility in New York in the last five years. There are no significant differences by age, income, education, marital status, or gender.

Figure 1
Experience Living in an Assisted Living Facility

In the last five years, have you, a family member, or a friend ever lived in an assisted living facility in New York?
(n=703)



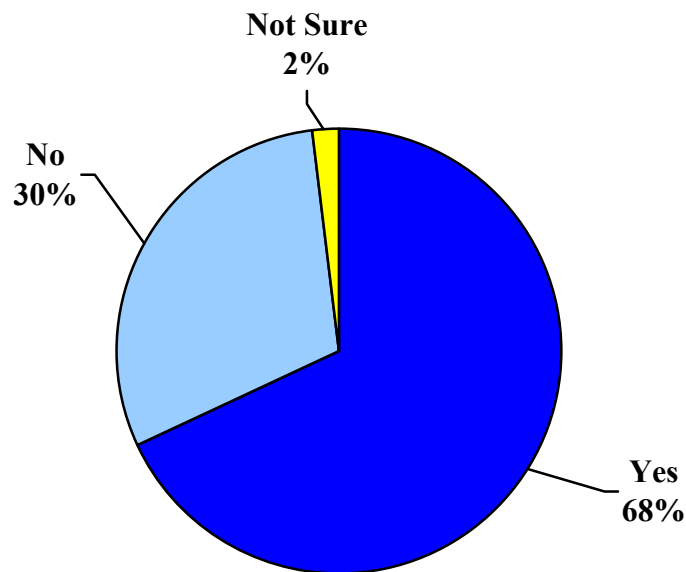
Source: AARP New York Assisted Living Facility Survey, December 2000

Exposure to Assisted Living Facilities Advertising

Two-thirds (68%) of 50+ New Yorkers have seen, read, or heard advertisements promoting assisted living facilities in New York through newspapers, television, radio, or direct mail.

Figure 2
Exposure to Assisted Living Facility Advertising

Have you seen, read, or heard advertisements promoting assisted living facilities in New York through newspapers, television, radio, or direct mail?
(n = 703)



Source: AARP New York Assisted Living Facility Survey, December 2000

Exposure to assisted living advertising is higher among more educated, more affluent, married, and female respondents. There are significant differences by education, income, marital status, and gender.

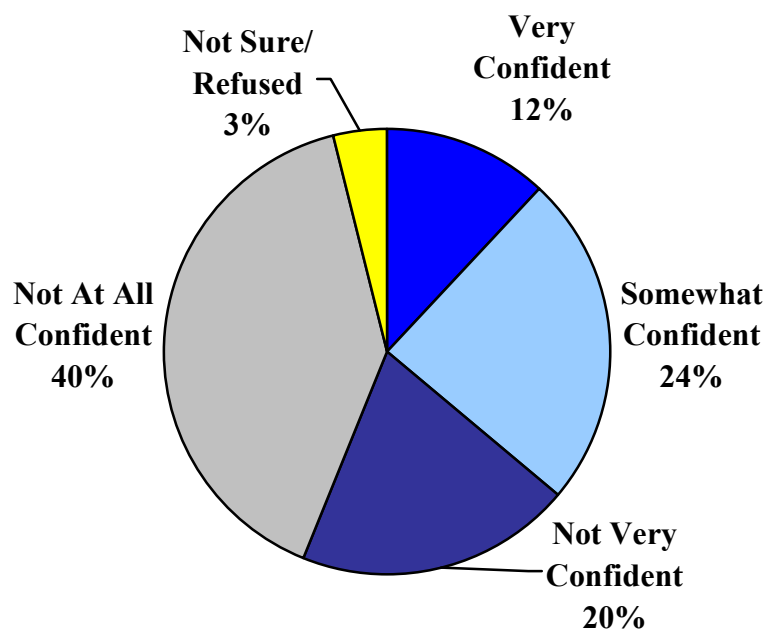
- ◆ New Yorkers with a high school education or less (55%) report less exposure to advertising than those with more education (73%).
- ◆ New Yorkers with annual income less than \$25,000 (56%) are also less exposed than others with higher incomes (72%).
- ◆ Married New Yorkers (71%) recall seeing, reading, or hearing promotions more than non-married ones do (57%).
- ◆ Women (72%) are more likely than men (64%) to have seen, read, or heard advertisements.

Confidence in Ability to Afford the Costs

Nationally, the average cost for a person living in an assisted living facility is about \$2,500 per month. In New York, assisted living costs between \$1,500 and \$4,000 per month.⁸ Generally, Medicare, Medicaid, and private insurance do not pay these costs. The person pays for nearly all of the cost. Knowing this, two in five (40%) 50+ New Yorkers are not at all confident that they could afford the cost of care in an assisted living facility. Another one in five (20%) are not very confident.

Figure 4
Confidence in Ability to Afford Costs of Assisted Living

How confident are you that you could afford the cost of care in an assisted living facility?
(n = 703)



Source: AARP New York Assisted Living Facility Survey, December 2000

There are significant differences by education, income, and marital status.

- ◆ One in two (52%) New Yorkers with college education or more are very (17%) or somewhat (35%) confident compared to about one in five (23%) with less than college educations who are very (10%) or somewhat (13%) confident.
- ◆ As income increases, so does confidence in affording the cost of care in an assisted living facility. New Yorkers with less than \$35,000 (17%) are less confident than those with \$35,000 to \$50,000 (35%) and \$50,000 or more (51%).

⁸ *Assisted Living in New York: Preparing for the Future*. New York State Department of Health, 1999.

- ◆ Married New Yorkers (42%) express more confidence than single (33%) and divorced, widowed, or separated New Yorkers (29%).

Confidence also relates to exposure to promotions and experience living in an assisted living facility. Those who have been exposed (41%) are more likely to be confident than those who have not (27%) or are not sure about their exposure (27%). Fifty-plus New Yorkers with assisted living facility experience in the last five years (47%) are more likely to be confident than those without experience (34%).

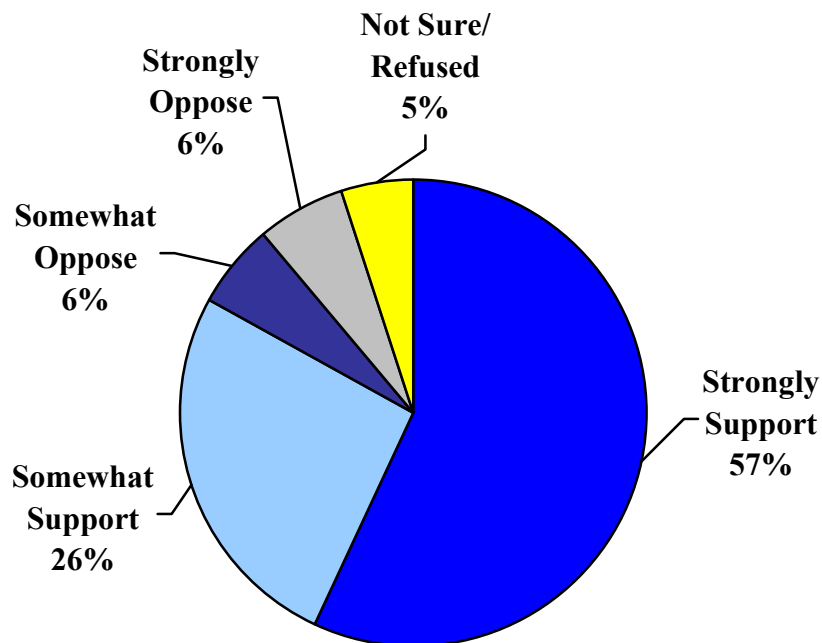
Action to Protect Consumers and Ensure Quality Assisted Living

Make Assisted Living More Affordable

Fifty-plus New Yorkers support (83%) the New York State Legislature making assisted living more affordable for low and middle-income people, even if it means an increase in taxes. Fifty-seven percent strongly support it while 26 percent somewhat support it.

Figure 5
Support for Making Assisted Living More Affordable
for Low and Middle-Income People

How strongly do you support or oppose the New York State Legislature making assisted living more affordable for low and middle-income people, even if it means an increase in taxes?
 (n=703)



Source: AARP New York Assisted Living Facility Survey, December 2000

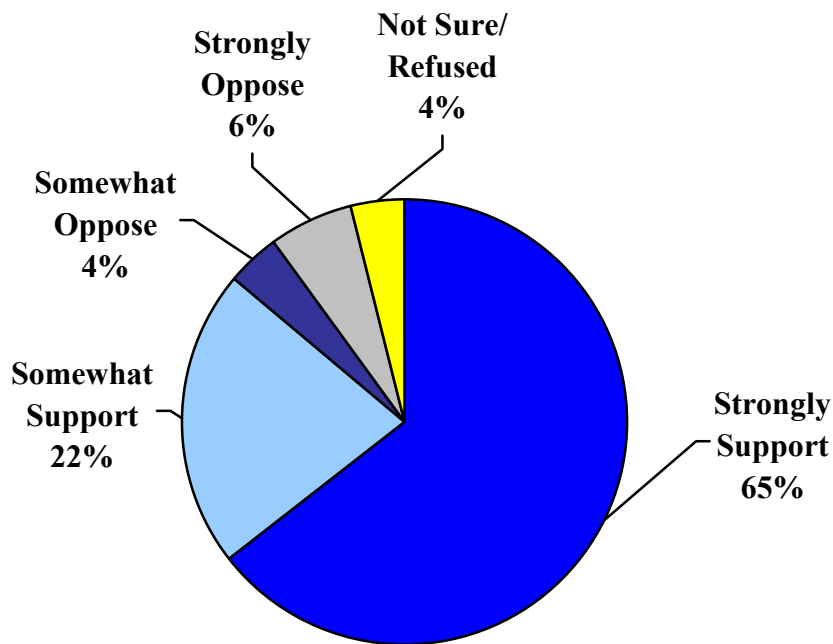
Women (60%) are slightly more likely to strongly support this initiative than men (52%).

Oversee All Assisted Living Facilities

Nearly two in three (65%) 50+ New Yorkers strongly support New York overseeing all assisted living facilities to ensure consumer protection and quality care. One in five (22%) somewhat supports oversight.

Figure 6
Support for Overseeing All Assisted Living Facilities

How strongly do you support or oppose New York overseeing all assisted living facilities to ensure consumer protection and quality care?
(n=703)



Source: AARP New York Assisted Living Facility Survey, December 2000

Although support is strong among all 50+ New Yorkers, those 65 years or older (71%) are more likely to strongly support oversight than those 50-64 years old (59%). There are no significant differences by education, income, marital status, or gender.

Supporters of making assisted living more affordable even if it means an increase in taxes (67%) are more likely than non-supporters (46%) to strongly support New York

overseeing all assisted living facilities to ensure consumer protection and quality care. Non-supporters of making assisted living more affordable are still more likely to support (63%) than oppose (31%) oversight.

Give Assisted Living Facility Residents the Right to Appeal

Sixty-nine percent of 50+ New Yorkers strongly support legislation that gives assisted living facility residents the right to appeal decisions affecting them, such as being discharged from a facility, to government agencies or a court. Nineteen percent somewhat support a right to appeal. See Figure 7 on the next page. There are no significant differences by age, education, income, marital status, or gender.

Both support for affordable assisted living and oversight relate to support for giving residents the right to appeal as expected. Even among those who oppose action to promote affordable assisted living and greater oversight, majorities support the right to appeal.

- ◆ Supporters of affordable assisted living even if it means a tax increase (89%) are more likely than non-supporters (70%) to support this initiative.
- ◆ Oversight supporters (89%) are more likely than those opposed to oversight (64%) to support this initiative.

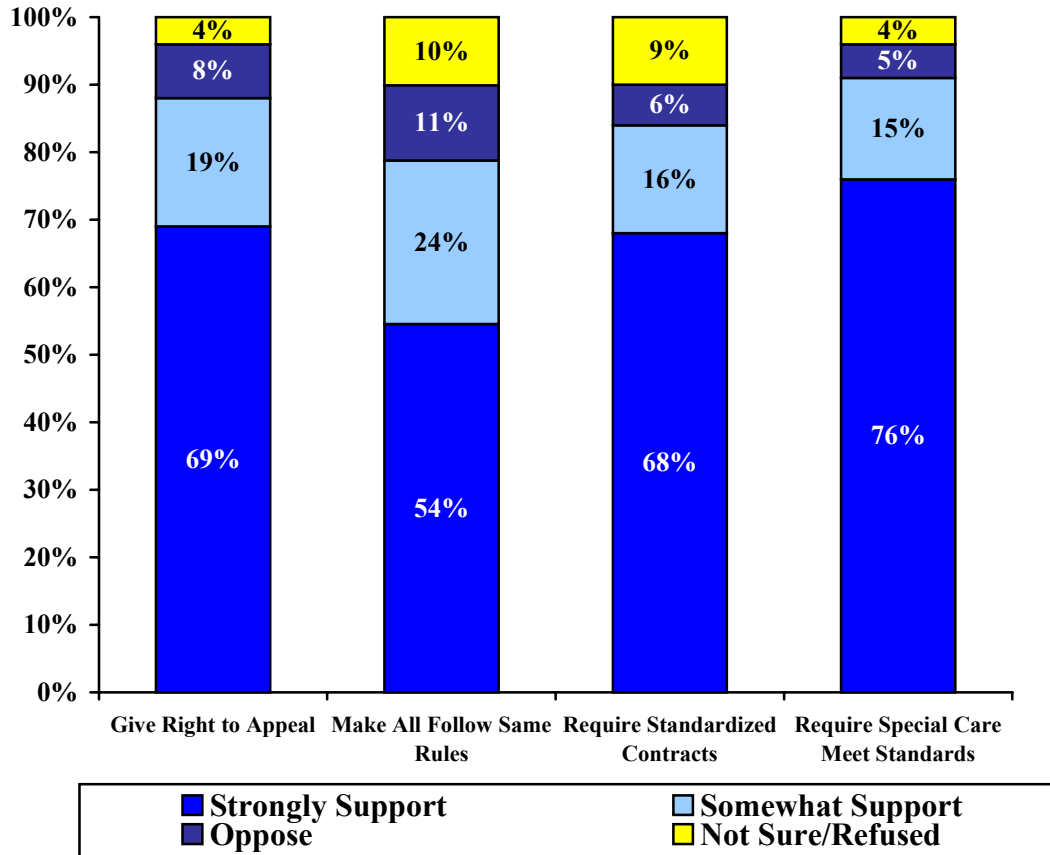
Make All Assisted Living Facilities Follow the Same Rules

Three-quarters of the 50+ New Yorkers strongly (54%) or somewhat (24%) support legislation in New York that makes all assisted living facilities follow the same rules for residents including those for admitting and discharging residents. See Figure 7 on the next page.

Differences by education and income exist for this initiative.

- ◆ New Yorkers with high school educations or less (64%) are more likely to strongly support it than those with more education (51%).
- ◆ Likewise, New Yorkers with incomes less than \$75,000 (59%) are more likely to strongly support assisted living facilities following the same rules than those with higher incomes (44%).

Figure 7
Specific Legislation to Provide Consumer Protection and Quality Care
 (n=703)



Source: AARP New York Assisted Living Facility Survey, December 2000

Fifty-plus New Yorkers who support affordable assisted living even if it means a tax increase (82%) are more likely than those who oppose making it more affordable (56%) to support making assisted living facilities follow the same rules for residents. Those who oppose making it more affordable are still more likely to support enforcing rules than oppose the initiative (32%).

The opposition to oversight is evenly split between those who support (46%) making all assisted living facilities follow the same rules for residents and those who oppose (47%). Comparatively, those who support oversight (82%) are more likely than non-supporters to support this legislative initiative.

Require Standardized Written Contracts Specify Lease Terms

Two in three (68%) 50+ New Yorkers strongly support legislation that requires the standardized written contracts between assisted living facility residents and the facility to specify lease terms and the services and care to be provided or arranged. Sixteen percent somewhat support the legislation. See Figure 7 on the previous page.

Those with \$35,000 or more income (75%) strongly support the specification of lease terms in standardized written contracts while fewer of those with less income (61%) strongly support it.

Supporters of assisted living facility oversight (87%) are more likely than those who oppose oversight (63%) to support standardized written contracts specifying lease terms and the services and care provided. The opposition to oversight is still more likely to support than oppose (28%) this initiative.

Require Assisted Living Facilities with Special Care to Meet Standards

Three-quarters (76%) of 50+ New Yorkers strongly support legislation that requires assisted living facilities that advertise that they provide a special care environment for persons with Alzheimer's disease or other dementia to meet a specific set of standards for care of such persons. Fifteen percent somewhat support the legislation. See Figure 7 on the previous page. There are no significant differences by age, education, income, marital status, or gender.

Fifty-plus New Yorkers who support oversight of assisted living facilities (94%) are more supportive of requiring facilities to meet a set of standards for special care than those who oppose oversight (73%). New Yorkers who oppose oversight, however, are still more likely to support than oppose (21%) this initiative.

Summary

One in five (23%) New Yorkers age 50 and older have lived or know someone who lived in an assisted living facility in the last five years. Seven in ten (68%), however, have seen, read, or heard advertising on assisted living facilities in New York. New Yorkers age 50 and older (91%) would want to remain in the same assisted living facility instead of moving to a nursing home if their need for care changed. Yet, 60 percent do not express confidence in their ability to afford the cost of care in an assisted living facility.

In each of six legislative initiatives tested, strong support among 50+ New Yorkers surpasses 50 percent, and total support is more than 75 percent. New Yorkers 50 and older support

- ◆ Making assisted living more affordable even if it means an increase in taxes (83%)
- ◆ Overseeing all assisted living facilities to ensure consumer protection and quality care (87%)
- ◆ Giving assisted living facility residents the right to appeal decisions affecting them (88%)
- ◆ Making all assisted living facilities follow the same rules for residents (78%)
- ◆ Requiring standardized written contracts that specify lease terms and the services and care in an assisted living facility (84%)
- ◆ Requiring facilities with special care environments to meet a specific set of standards (91%)

Demographic Profile of Respondents (Weighted n = 703)

Demographic Characteristic	Percent
Gender	
Male	41%
Female	59%
Age	
50-64	52%
65+	48%
Marital Status	
Married	54%
Single	9%
Divorced/Widowed/Separated	35%
Living together	2%
Not sure	<1%
Refused	1%
Education	
Less than High School	6%
High School	25%
Some College	24%
College or more	45%
Refused	<1%
Income	
Less than \$15,000	14%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	12%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	12%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	11%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	16%
\$75,000	17%
Refused	18%
Region	
Upstate	46%
Suburbs	30%
New York City	24%
AARP Member	
Yes	61%
No	38%
Not sure	1%

Appendix
AARP New York
Assisted Living Facility
Annotated Survey

AARP New York Assisted Living Facility Survey, December 2000
(Weighted n = 703; Sampling Error \pm 3.8%)
(Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.)

Hi, my name is _____. I am calling from Zogby International and we are doing a survey of adults about assisted living facilities in New York State. May I speak with someone in the household who is 50 years or older?

701. May I please have your age?

%
52 50-64
48 65+

(Systems: Only for those 50 and older)

An assisted living facility is a group residential setting often more like an apartment building rather than an institutional setting like a nursing home. Assisted living facilities provide personal care services such as help with bathing and dressing, meals, and social activities. They also may provide or coordinate some limited health care services like medication monitoring or physical therapy.

1. Have you seen, read, or heard advertisements promoting assisted living facilities in New York through newspapers, television, radio, or direct mail?

%
68 1. Yes
30 2. No
2 3. Not sure **(Do not read)**
-- 4. Refuse **(Do not read)**

2. In the last five years, have you, a family member, or a friend ever lived in an assisted living facility in New York?

%
23 1. Yes
77 2. No
1 3. Not sure **(Do not read)**
-- 4. Refuse **(Do not read)**

3. Currently, if someone living in an assisted living facility needs more health care services, they may have to move to a nursing home to get the care they need. If you were living in an assisted living facility in New York and your need for care changed, how important would it be for you to stay in the same facility and get all the care you needed instead of moving to a nursing home? Would it be. . .?

- %
- | | |
|----|------------------------------------|
| 80 | 1. Very important |
| 11 | 2. Somewhat important |
| 3 | 3. Not very important |
| 3 | 4. Not at all important |
| 4 | 5. Not sure (Do not read) |
| <1 | 6. Refuse (Do not read) |

Nationally, the average cost for a person living in an assisted living facility is about \$2,500 (**Two-thousand five hundred dollars**) per MONTH. In New York, assisted living costs between \$1,500 (**One-thousand five hundred dollars**) and \$4,000 (**Four-thousand dollars**) per MONTH. Generally, Medicare, Medicaid, and private insurance do not pay these costs. The person pays for nearly all of the cost.

4. Knowing that, how confident are you that you could afford the cost of care in an assisted living facility? Are you....?

- %
- | | |
|----|------------------------------------|
| 12 | 1. Very confident |
| 24 | 2. Somewhat confident |
| 20 | 3. Not very confident |
| 40 | 4. Not at all confident |
| 3 | 5. Not sure (Do not read) |
| <1 | 6. Refuse (Do not read) |

5. How strongly do you support or oppose the New York State Legislature making assisted living more affordable for low and middle income people, even if it means an increase in taxes? Do you....?

- %
- | | |
|----|------------------------------------|
| 57 | 1. Strongly support |
| 26 | 2. Somewhat support |
| 6 | 3. Somewhat oppose |
| 6 | 4. Strongly oppose |
| 5 | 5. Not sure (Do not read) |
| <1 | 6. Refuse (Do not read) |

According to the New York State Department of Health, there has been significant growth in assisted living facilities operating without any state oversight or licensing. The federal government does not regulate assisted living facilities, and New York regulates some but not all assisted living facilities in the state.

6. How strongly do you support or oppose New York overseeing all assisted living facilities to ensure consumer protection and quality care? Do you....?

%
65 1. Strongly support
22 2. Somewhat support
4 3. Somewhat oppose
6 4. Strongly oppose
4 5. Not sure (**Do not read**)
<1 6. Refuse (**Do not read**)

7. How strongly do you support or oppose legislation in New York that gives assisted living facility residents the right to appeal decisions affecting them, such as being discharged from a facility, to government agencies or a court? Do you.....?

%
69 1. Strongly support
19 2. Somewhat support
4 3. Somewhat oppose
4 4. Strongly oppose
4 5. Not sure (**Do not read**)
<1 6. Refuse (**Do not read**)

8. How strongly do you support or oppose legislation in New York that makes all assisted living facilities follow the same rules for residents including those for admitting and discharging residents? Do you.....?

%
54 1. Strongly support
24 2. Somewhat support
5 3. Somewhat oppose
6 4. Strongly oppose
10 5. Not sure (**Do not read**)
<1 6. Refuse (**Do not read**)

9. How strongly do you support or oppose legislation in New York that requires the standardized written contracts between assisted living facility residents and the facility to specify lease terms and the services and care to be provided or arranged? Do you.....?

%
68 1. Strongly support
16 2. Somewhat support
4 3. Somewhat oppose
2 4. Strongly oppose
9 5. Not sure (**Do not read**)
<1 6. Refuse (**Do not read**)

10. How strongly do you support or oppose legislation in New York that requires assisted living facilities that advertise that they provide a special care environment for persons with Alzheimer's disease or other dementia to meet a specific set of standards for care of such persons? Do you.....?

%
76 1. Strongly support
15 2. Somewhat support
3 3. Somewhat oppose
2 4. Strongly oppose
4 5. Not sure (**Do not read**)
<1 6. Refuse (**Do not read**)

Thank you, we're done. I just need some statistical information.

11. Are you or your spouse a member of AARP (**pronounce A-A-R-P**), the American Association of Retired Persons?

%
61 1. Yes
38 2. No
1 3. Not sure (**Do not read**)

903. Which of the following best describes your highest level of education?

%
6 1. Less than high school graduate
25 2. High school graduate
24 3. Some college
45 4. College graduate or more
<1 0. Refuse (**Do not read**)

914. Which of the following best describes your marital status?

- %
- 54 1. Married
 - 9 2. Single, never married
 - 35 3. Divorced/widowed/separated
 - 2 4. Not married, living together
 - 1 5. Not sure/refuse (**Do not read**)

921. Which of the following best represents your household income last year before taxes?

- %
- 14 1. Less than \$15,000
 - 12 2. \$15,000-\$24,999
 - 12 3. \$25,000-\$34,999
 - 11 4. \$35,000-\$49,999
 - 16 5. \$50,000-\$74,999
 - 17 6. \$75,000 or more
 - 18 0. Refuse

922. Gender (**Do not ask, simply record.**)

- %
- 41 1. Male
 - 59 2. Female

Thank you for your time and responses to this survey.

Region

- %
- 46 Upstate
 - 30 Suburbs
 - 24 New York City