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**AARP Alaska  
Member Survey:  
Concerns, Interests, and  
Legislative Priorities**

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# **AARP Alaska Member Survey: Concerns, Interests, and Legislative Priorities**

**Data Collected AARP  
Data Prepared by FGI, Inc.  
Report Prepared by Katherine Bridges  
AARP Knowledge Management**

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AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan membership organization for people 50 and over. We provide information and resources; advocate on legislative, consumer, and legal issues; assist members to serve their communities; and offer a wide range of unique benefits, special products, and services for our members. These benefits include *AARP Webplace* at [www.aarp.org](http://www.aarp.org), *Modern Maturity* and *My Generation* magazines, and the monthly *AARP Bulletin*. Active in every state, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, AARP celebrates the attitude that age is just a number and life is what you make it.

## **Acknowledgments**

This report was prepared for the AARP Alaska State Office. AARP Knowledge Management State Member Research staff contributing to this report includes Katherine Bridges, Gretchen Straw, Erica Dinger, Darlene Matthews and Jennifer Leslie. Special appreciation goes to John Dittman and Phyllis Brewton for their contributions to this study. For more information about this report, contact Katherine Bridges at (202) 434-6329.

## Survey Highlights

- The top concerns mentioned by Alaska members focus on financial security, fitness, and independent living. Younger members report higher levels of concern about finding affordable, high-quality health insurance than older members, while older members show greater concern about independent living, Social Security and Medicare information.
- The top legislative priorities of Alaska members are health care issues and independent living. Older members are generally more likely than those 50-59 to rate independent living and long-term care as top legislative priorities.
- Members look to AARP for information on independent living, fitness, and entitlement programs. Older members express more interest than their younger counterparts in getting information from AARP on these and other issues.
- Mail is the most preferred method for receiving information about AARP activities by members of all ages. While younger members tend to prefer getting information online, older members show greater preference for finding out about AARP activities through newspapers.
- Members say they would use written information and referral services provided by AARP that focused on their concerns and interests. Younger members are more likely than older members to say they would pursue opportunities with AARP.
- About four in ten members say they are interested in participating in educational courses. Additional survey results may help in planning such personal enrichment activities for members in Alaska:
  - Most members have not engaged in adult education courses and prefer learning through published materials. Those who are interested in adult or continuing education opportunities prefer to attend traditional on-site courses rather than remote access courses.
  - Courses that provide an opportunity to learn about government benefits, physical fitness, or arts and crafts are the most appealing to members.
  - Winter is the most preferred time of year for taking classes. Members age 50-59 would prefer to attend classes on weeknights and weekend days, whereas older members prefer weekdays.
- Members' responses to health questions provide a comparison to the findings from a sample of Alaska residents in the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System survey. Here we find:
  - About sixty percent of members have sought medical advice for joint symptoms, such as pain, aching, or stiffness, but only one in eight members have been diagnosed with arthritis.

- Three in ten members who have been diagnosed with arthritis or have been symptomatic in the last month say their usual activities are now limited because of the pain or other joint symptoms; one-fifth say the symptoms have affected their work lives.
  
- One-third of members say, in the past year, they have been advised by a medical professional to lose weight. However, over half say they have not been advised about their weight despite high proportion of Alaskans who are overweight or obese.

## About This Survey

This mail survey addresses member concerns, interests, and priorities for state legislative issues. The survey also explores member preferences for involvement with AARP and for getting information from us.

AARP conducted the *AARP Alaska Member Survey* in September through November 2001<sup>1</sup>. A sample of 2,000 AARP members in Alaska was selected from AARP's Insight© database. Forty-six percent of Alaska members returned surveys by the cut-off date, providing 914 useable surveys for analysis. The survey has a sampling error of  $\pm 2.2\%$ .

This report summarizes overall findings on top-rated concerns, interests, involvement preferences, and legislative issues addressed in the survey. The report also discusses substantive differences (greater than ten percentage points) among AARP's key target age segments (50 to 59, 60 to 74, and 75 and older) on top-rated survey topics. Throughout the report, statistics representing member responses are reported in percentages. In some instances, percentages are small and may not seem to represent a significant proportion of members, yet when projected to the total Alaska membership the actual number of people may be substantial. As of October 2001, the number of member households in Alaska was 41,393, which results in approximately 66,229 members in the state.

This report also contains three appendices: the **Core Question Tables** contains the three age-segment responses for each item in the five core questions; **Segments at a Glance** summarizes top-rated findings for each target age group; and the **Annotated Questionnaire** is an actual survey with the percent of Alaska members selecting each response category for each item.

## Findings

### What are Alaska members most concerned about?

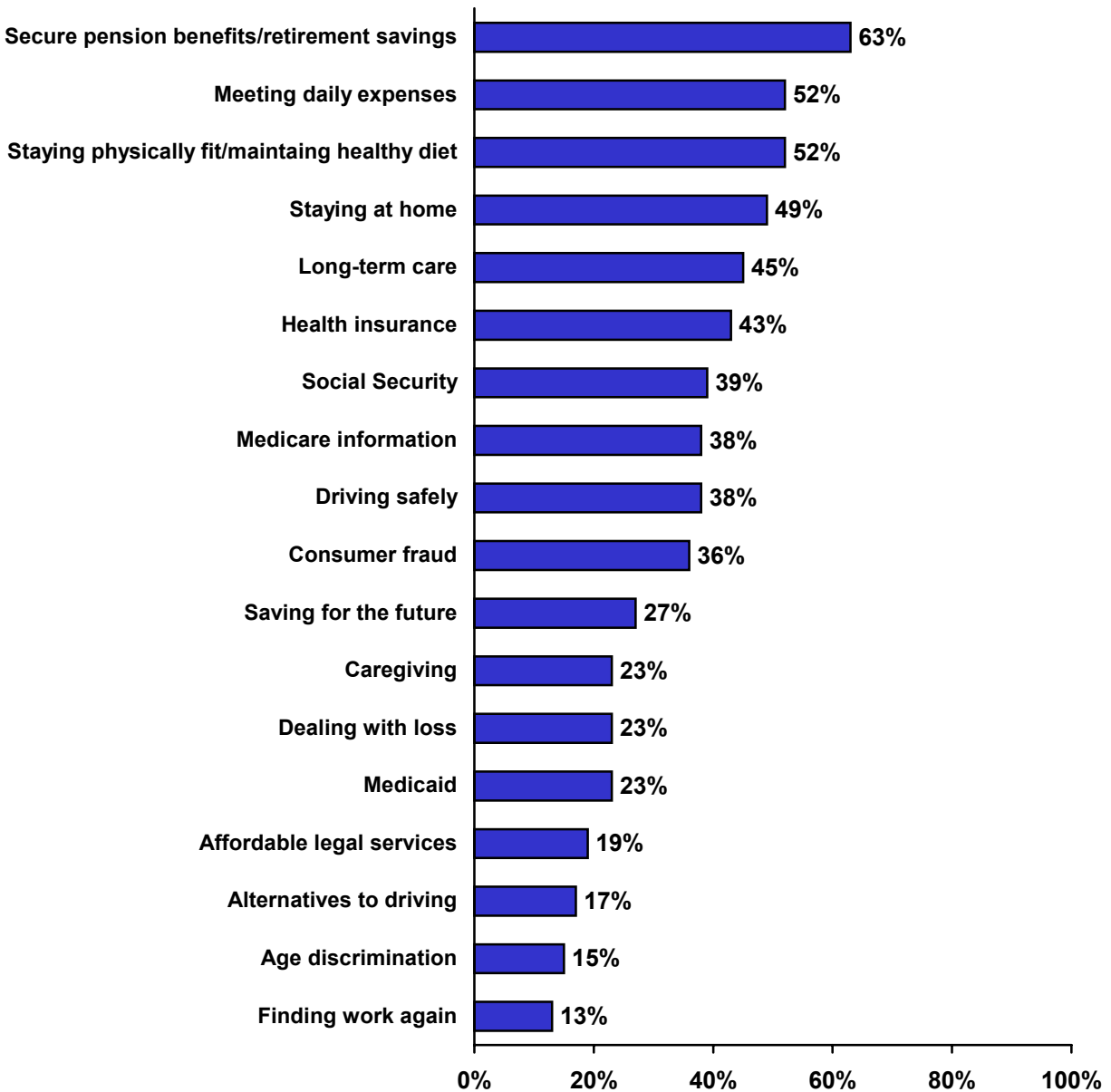
Six in ten Alaska members report that they are *extremely concerned* about the safety and security of their pension benefits and retirement savings. About half are also *extremely concerned* about meeting daily expenses, staying physically fit/maintaining a healthy diet, and staying in their own home as they get older. Younger members report higher levels of concern about finding affordable, high-quality health insurance than older members, while older members show greater concern about independent living, Social Security, Medicare, continuing to drive safely, and consumer fraud (see Appendix A).

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<sup>1</sup> This survey was conducted in the wake of the September 11, 2001 terrorists' attacks and while in the field the anthrax scare began. In consideration of concerns about anthrax-contaminated mail from Washington DC, the second mailing of the survey was sent from Alaska. However, there is no way to judge the impact of these events on survey completion or opinion.

## Concerns About Key Issues (Percent Extremely Concerned)

(base: 914)

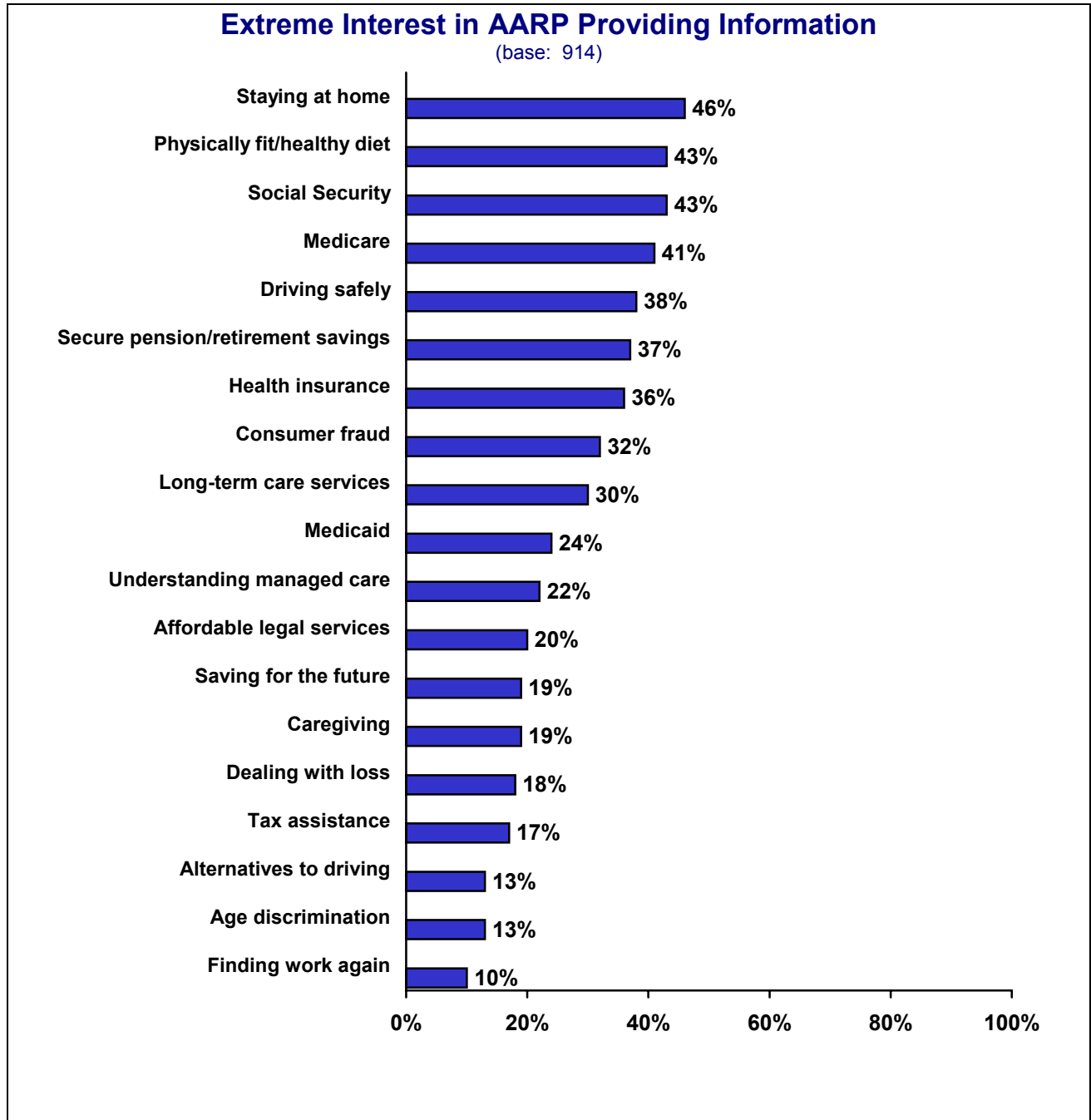


In the 1997 Alaska Needs and Expectations Survey, members were asked a similar question about top concerns.<sup>2</sup> Four issues rated as extreme concerns more frequently in 2001 than they did in 1997, indicating an increase in concern about financial security and independent living. The issues that show increases in concern levels are: safety and security of pensions and retirement savings (63% vs. 49%); having enough money to meet daily expenses (52% vs. 27%); continuing to drive safely (38% vs. 28%); and remaining at home with increased age (49% vs. 36%).

<sup>2</sup> In 1997, members were asked to rate their concerns on a 5-point scale, where 5 meant that it was “a major concern” and 1 meant that the item was “not at all a concern.”

## In what AARP information are most Alaska members interested?

Nearly half of Alaska members are *extremely interested* in AARP information about staying at home as they get older. Four in ten are *extremely interested* in receiving information on physical fitness, Social Security, and Medicare. Older members express more interest than their younger counterparts in information on the top five topics of interest (see Appendix A).

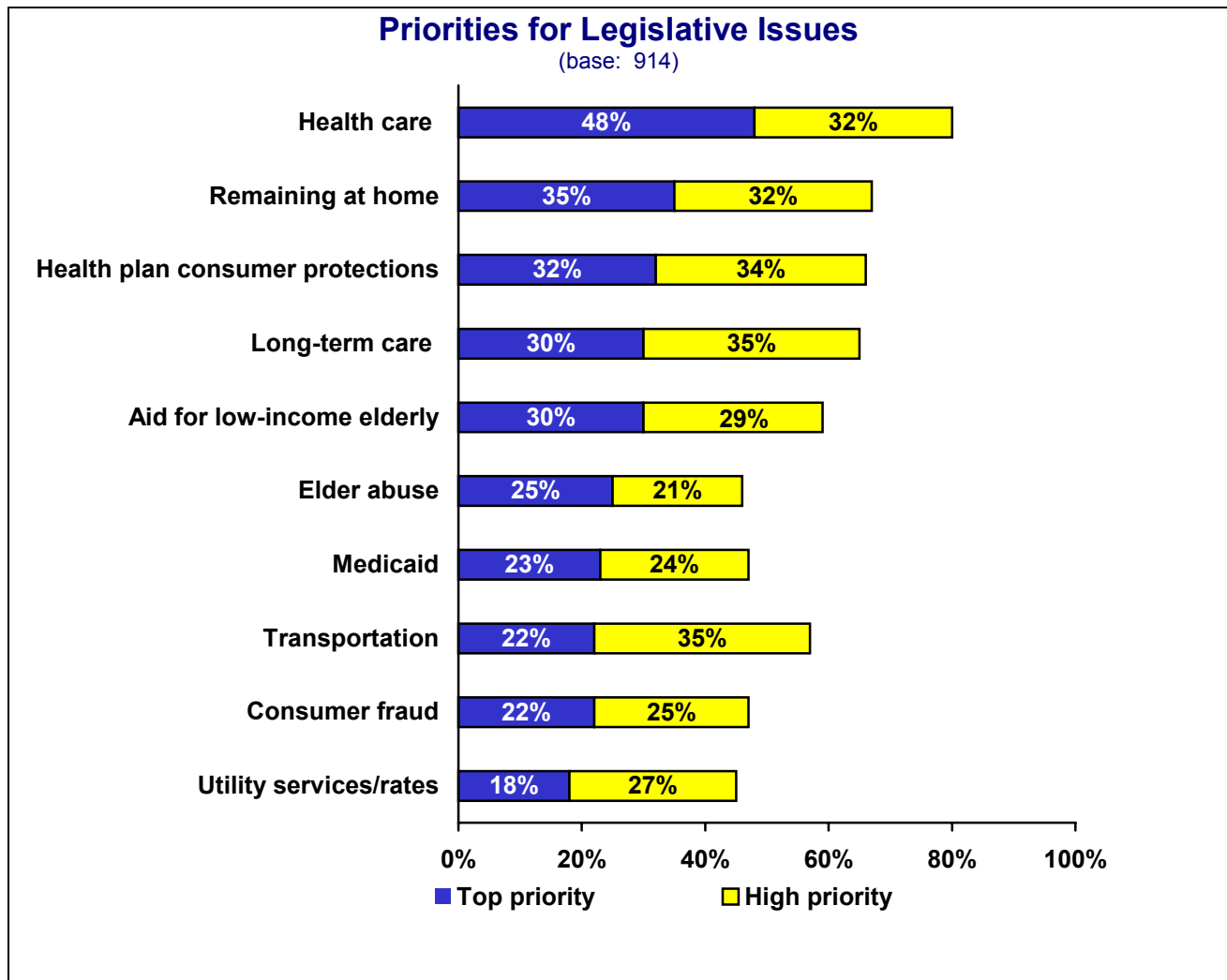




In the 1997 Alaska Needs and Expectations Survey, members were asked a similar question about interest in AARP information.<sup>3</sup> In 2001, substantially more members express an interest in AARP information on remaining at home with increased age (49% vs. 37%) and continuing to drive safely (38% vs. 26%) than they did in 1997-- again reflecting the increased level of concern about independent living.

## What are the top legislative priorities for Alaska members?

Nearly half of Alaska members rate health care issues as a *top* legislative priority for AARP in the state. About one-third believe that the issues of ensuring older adults can remain in their homes as they age and health plan consumer protections are *top* priorities. Health care issues and health plan consumer protection have similar ratings across age segments, yet older members are generally more likely than those 50-59 to rate issues as top legislative priorities, especially independent living, long-term care and aid for low-income elderly (see Appendix A).

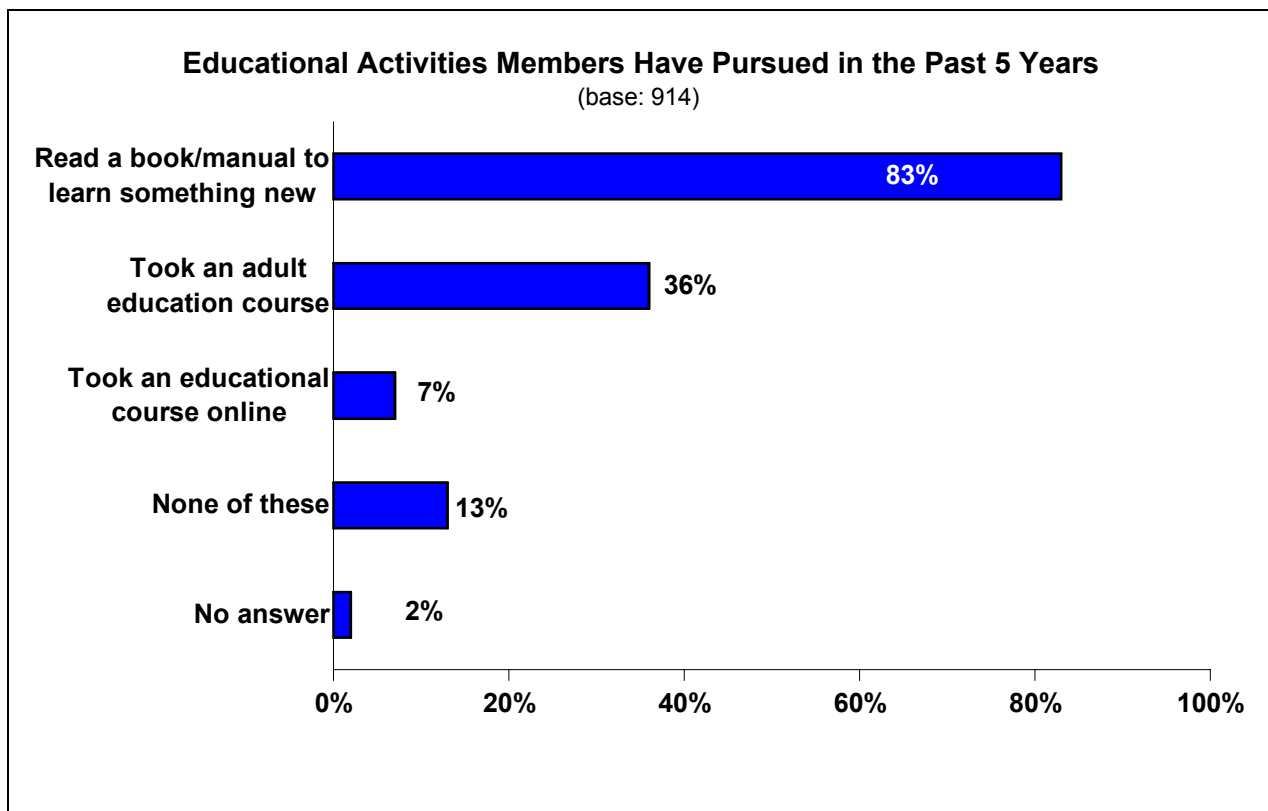


<sup>3</sup> In 1997, members were asked to rate their interest on a 5-point scale, where 5 meant that they were “very interested” and 1 meant that they were “not at all interested” in the item.

## What are members' personal enrichment activity preferences?

In order to better target personal enrichment activities and develop valuable programs for members in the state, members were asked a series of questions that focused on their preferences for and experiences with personal enrichment activities. Overall, most members have not engaged in adult education courses and appear to prefer learning through published materials. Yet, those who are interested in adult or continuing education opportunities would prefer to attend traditional on-site courses rather than using remote access methods.

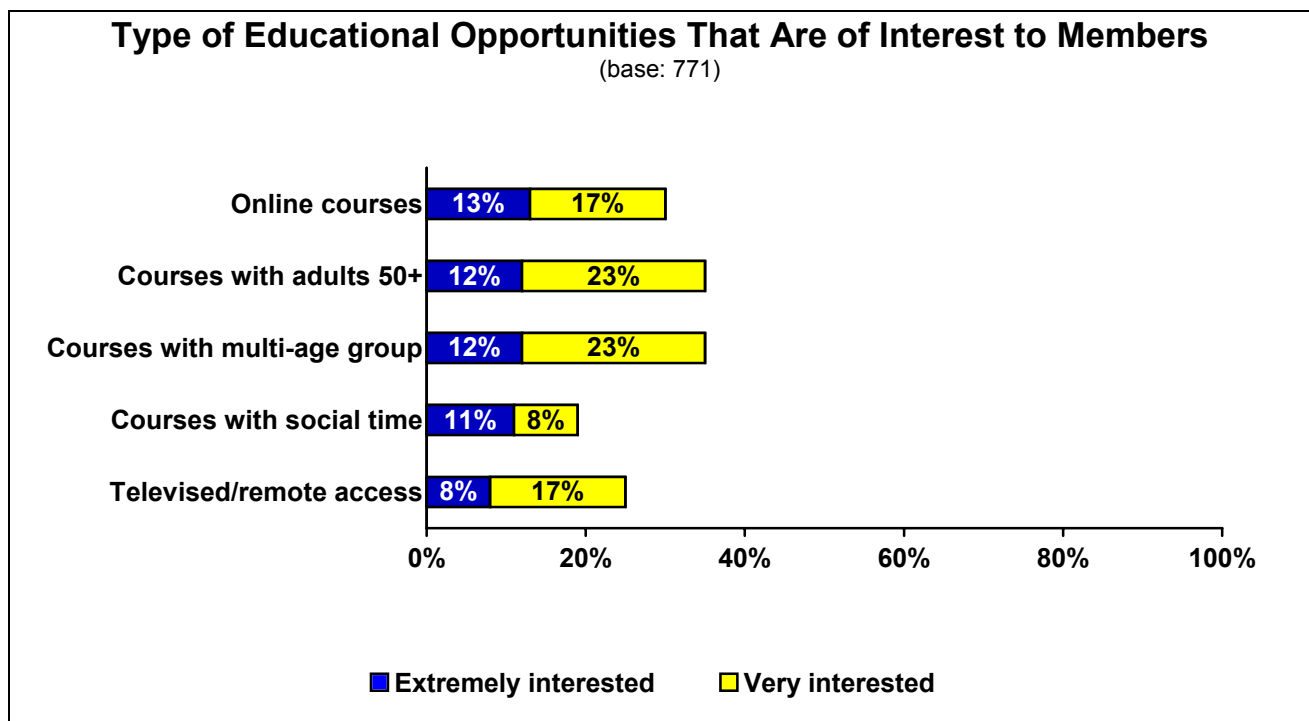
To demonstrate this, eight in ten Alaska members say they have read a book or manual in the last five years to learn something new. Far fewer have taken an adult education course, even though over three-quarters (77%) say adult education courses are offered in their communities. Younger members are significantly more likely than those ages 60 and older to say they have engaged in any of these educational activities in the past five years (see Appendix A).



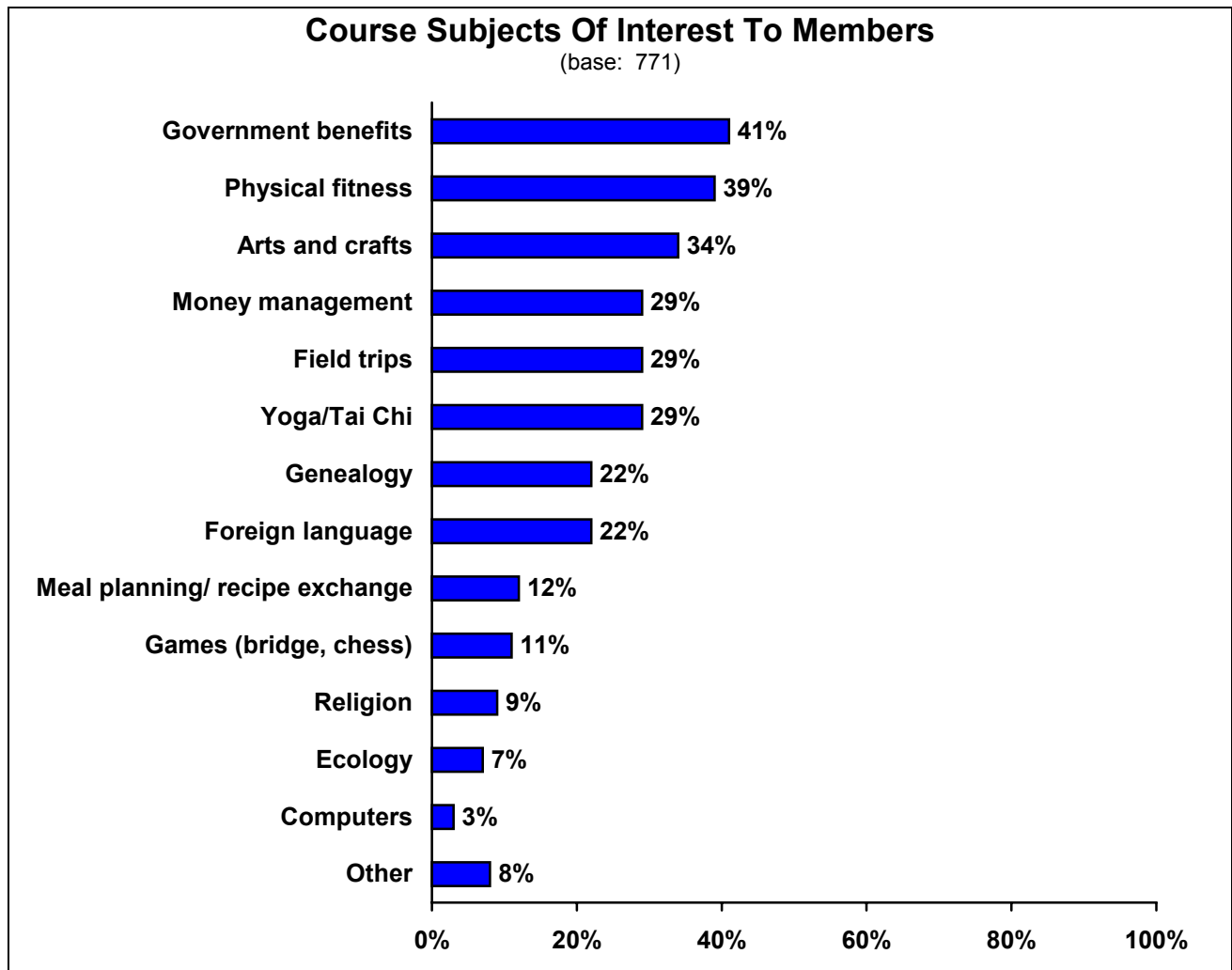
Members appear to be nearly as willing to teach as they are to take a course. About four in ten members (39%) say they have a skill, talent, or knowledge they would be willing to share with others who find their area of expertise interesting to learn about. Similarly, four in ten (39%) say they would be interested in participating in an educational course if courses were available in their community, on television, or online. Members ages 50-59 are particularly interested in sharing their knowledge with others (45% 50-59 vs. 36% 60-74 and 35% 75+) and they express greater interest than older members in participating in an educational course (48% 50-59 vs. 34% 60-74 and 30% 75+).

Those who have taken educational courses either online or in the classroom in the last five years are more inclined to be interested in taking courses in the future: 64 percent with recent experience with coursework are interested in taking courses again and about one-third (32%) might be interested. In addition to the younger age, members who are interested in taking courses tend to female (45% vs. 33% male), have higher educations (44% vs. 21% high school education or less), and are still the working (44% vs. 34% not working).

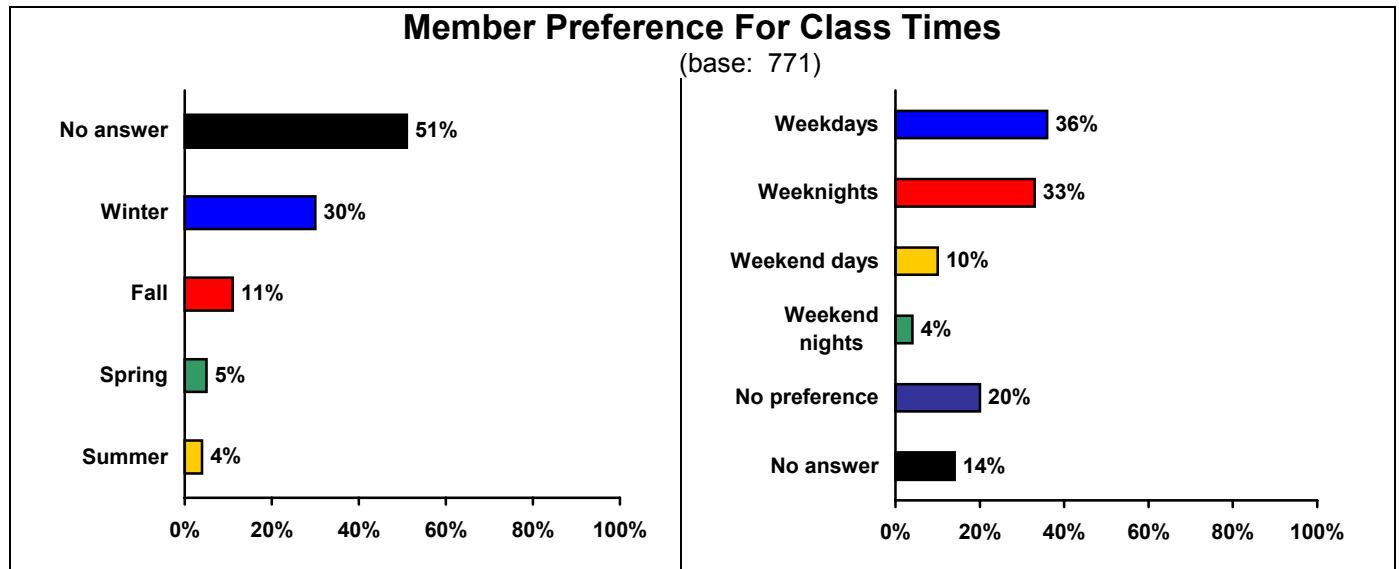
Of those who indicated they were either interested or unsure about participating in an educational course, traditional on-site courses appear to be most appealing: 35 percent say they are *extremely* or *very interested* in taking courses with adults 50+ and/or multiage courses. Nearly as many are interested in online courses. Members age 50-59 again express greater interest levels than older members for nearly all of these educational opportunities presented (see Appendix A).



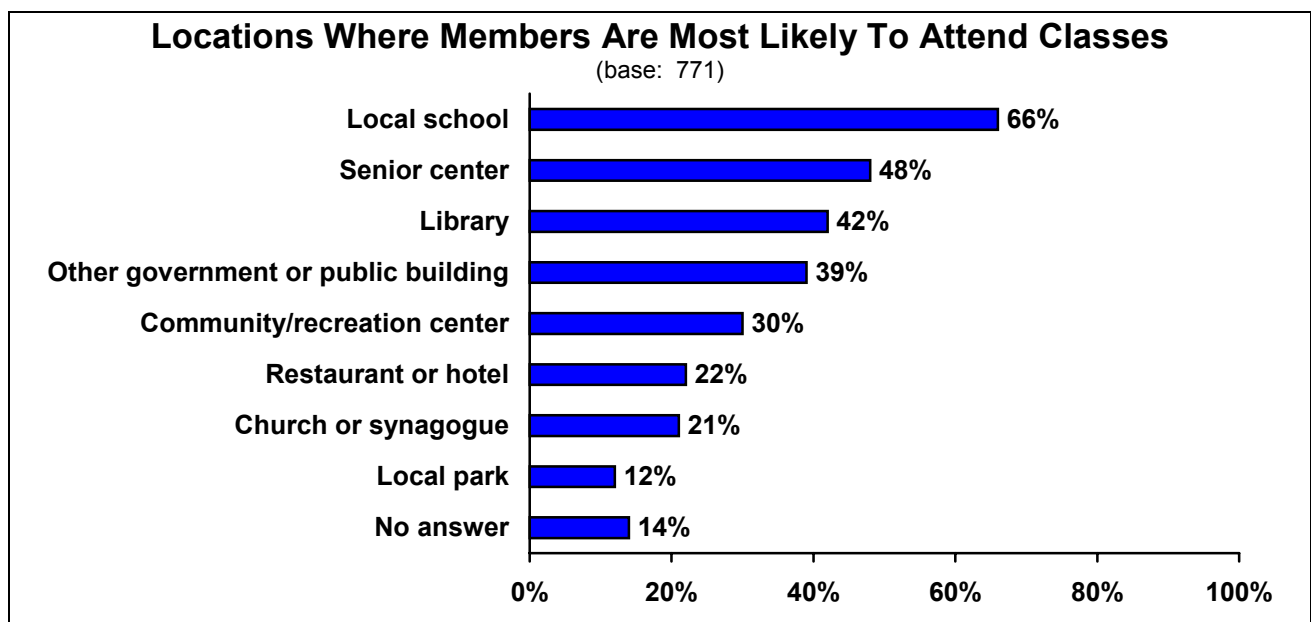
Those who said they were interested or uncertain about their interest in participating in educational opportunities were presented a list and asked to indicate whether they would be interested in taking a class on any of the subject areas. From the list provided, more members said they were interested in an introductory course on Social Security and Medicare (“Making Sense of Government Benefits”) or physical fitness classes than they were any of the others. Overall, younger members show greater interest in most of these subjects than older members (see Appendix A).



Winter is the time of year that most members, especially those ages 50-59, say they would prefer to take classes. Weekdays and weeknights are similarly rated as the most appealing time of the week for members, in general. Yet, as could be expected from those who are working, members 50-59 are more likely to prefer weeknights and weekend days for classes, and those age 60 and older prefer classes to be offered during weekdays (see Appendix A).



Local schools are the location where the most members say they would be likely to take classes. However, in looking at the differences in location preference by age, local schools are the preference for younger members, while older members are more likely to attend classes offered at a senior center (see Appendix A).

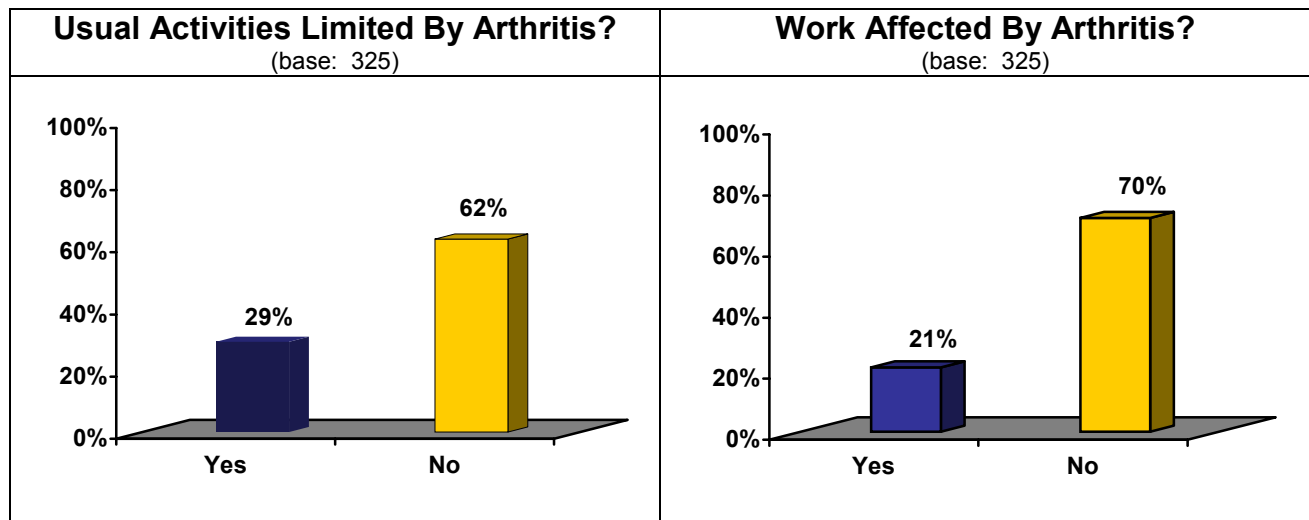


## Are members' lives affected by arthritis?

According to the Arthritis Foundation, about one in every seven Americans (43 million) have arthritis. While the disease affects people of all ages, it is more prevalent among older adults (University of Washington, 2002). The disease more frequently affects individuals who are overweight, since excess weight increases risk for developing osteoarthritis, especially in women. Among the more than 100 types of arthritis, the term “arthritis” includes rheumatoid arthritis, osteoarthritis (degenerative joint disease), gout, lupus, and carpal tunnel syndrome (University of Washington, 2002).

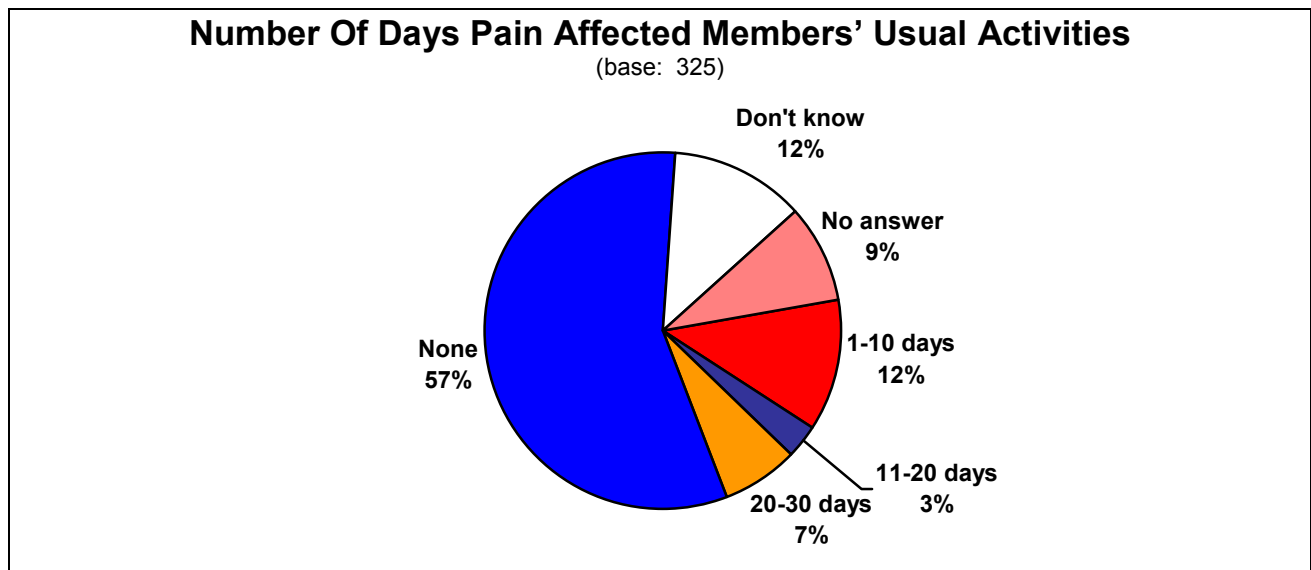
In this survey, we asked Alaska members about their personal experience with arthritis and/or symptoms of the disease that affect their daily lives. Six in ten members (61%) say they have seen a doctor or other health professional for joint symptoms, such as pain, aching, or stiffness. While only one in eight (13%) members has been diagnosed with arthritis by a doctor, about one-quarter (23%) has had arthritis symptoms in the last month. As could be expected, the number of members who have seen a health professional for joint symptoms increases with age (54% 50-59; 63% 60-74; 78% 75+).

The majority of members (79%) who have been diagnosed or have been symptomatic in the last month say their symptoms first began more than 3 months ago. About three in ten (29%) say their usual activities are now limited because of arthritis or joint symptoms, and about one-fifth (21%) say the symptoms have affected their work lives, that is whether they work for pay or the type or amount of work they do.



\*About one in ten members answered “Don’t Know” or did not answer these questions at all (see Appendix C).

Pain made it difficult for one in ten members with arthritis symptoms to do their usual activities, such as personal care, household chores, work, or recreation on at least 11 days the previous month. A similar percent were affected by pain between one and ten days the previous month.



Excess weight and obesity are health risk factors that lead to numerous diseases and disabling conditions, including osteoarthritis. While about six in ten Alaskans are overweight, The Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System found that only ten percent of Alaskans had been advised to lose weight and 87 percent had not been given medical advice about their weight (National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention & Health Promotion, 2000). When asked the same question in this survey, one-third of Alaska members responded that, in the past twelve months, a doctor or other health professional had advised them to lose weight and about half had not received advice about their weight.

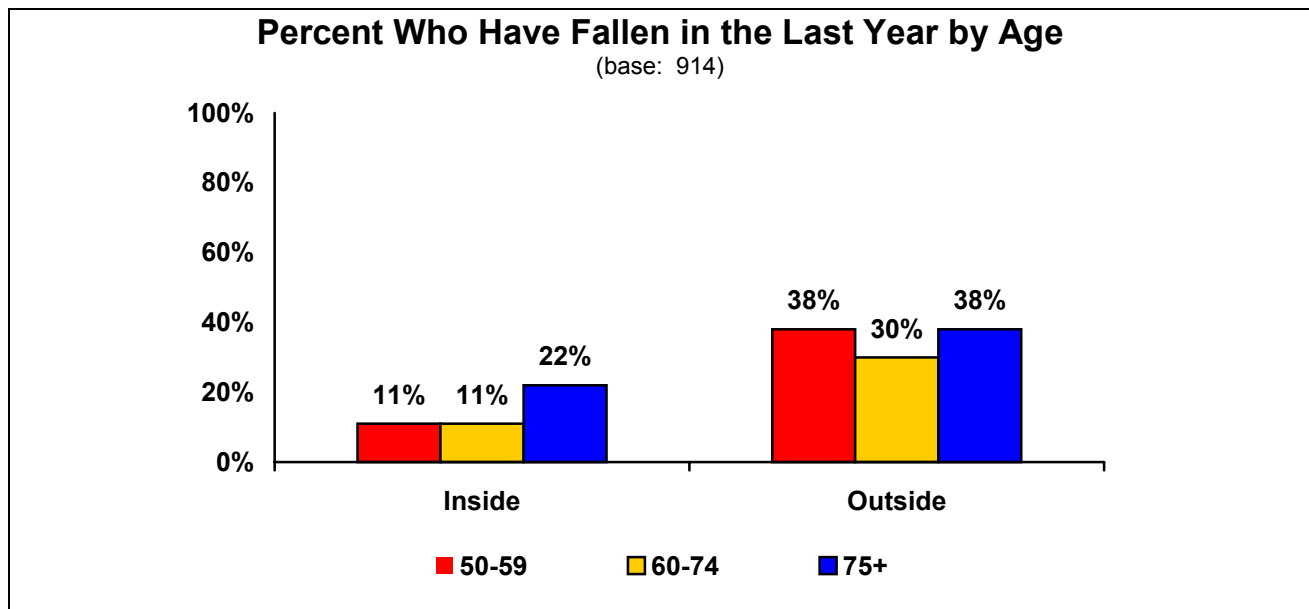


Interestingly, members express similar interest in information from AARP about physical fitness and maintaining a healthy diet regardless of whether they have been advised about their weight in the last year. However, those who have been advised to lose weight more often indicate an interest in exercise classes (fitness, tai chi, or yoga) than those who did not receive such advice (47% vs. 40%).

## Are members affected by osteoporosis?

Osteoporosis or low bone mineral density is a condition that is more prevalent among women and older adults. One in eight members (12%) say a doctor has told them that they have osteoporosis or low bone mineral density. Since prevalence of this condition increases with age, it is not surprising that the percentage of members who report having been told they have osteoporosis also increases with age (8% 50-59; 14% 60-74; 18% 75+). Similarly, three times more female members than males say a doctor has told them that they have such a condition (18% vs. 6%).

One indicator of osteoporosis or low bone mineral density is an increase in falls. One in eight (13%) members say they have fallen or slipped while inside in the last twelve months and more than one-third (36%) say they have fallen or slipped while outside during this same time period. Inside falls appear to be more likely a result of complications from bone loss than outside falls, especially in Alaska where outside conditions are often slippery, since outside falls are not significantly different by age and those who say they have fallen inside are more apt to be those with a diagnosis of osteoporosis (23% osteoporosis diagnosis vs. 11% no diagnosis).





## How many members are caregivers?

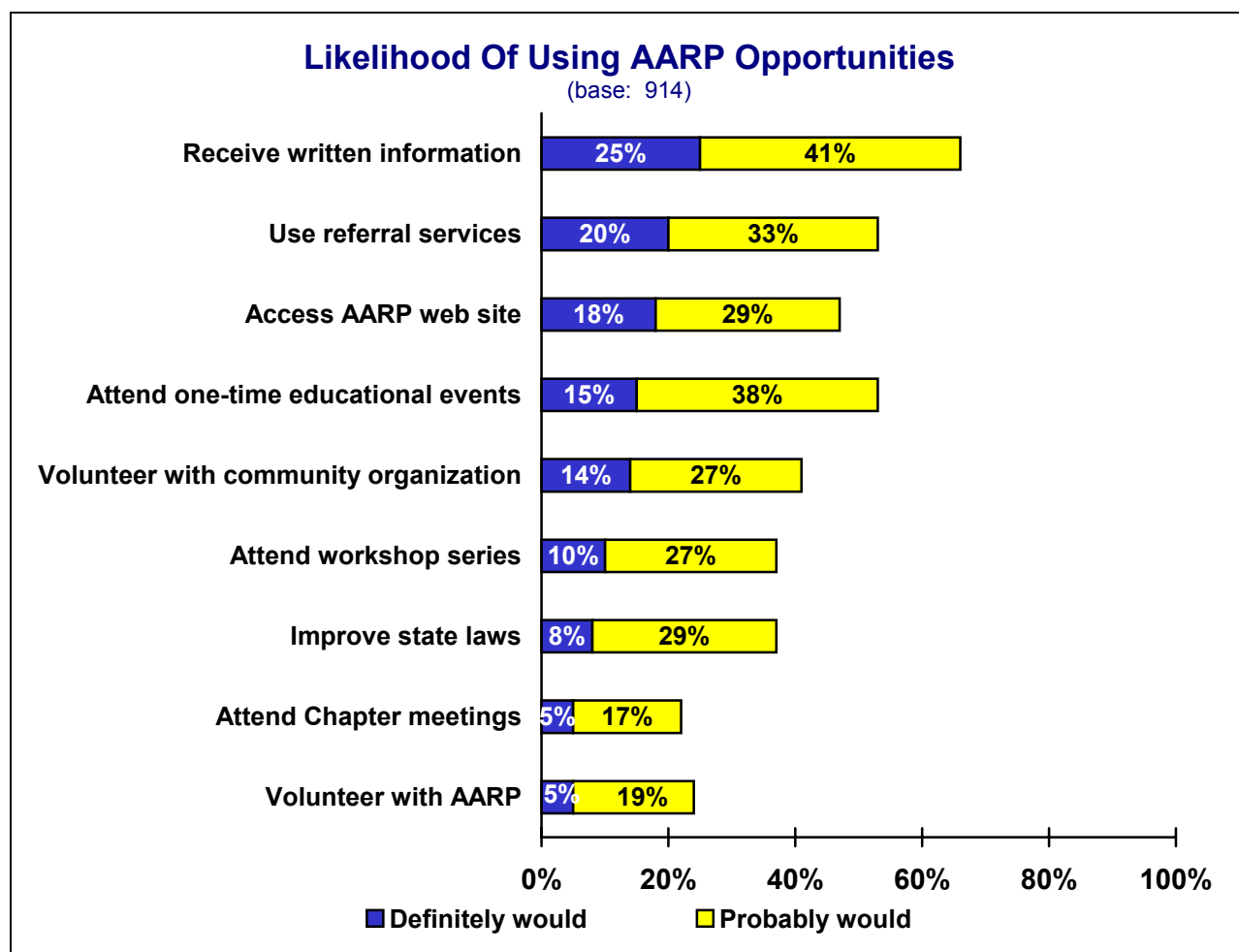
About one in six (17%) members, regardless of age, say they provided care or assistance in the past month to a family member or friend who has long-term illness or disability. As noted earlier, about one-quarter of members are *extremely concerned* about providing care for a parent or relative and nearly as many are *extremely interested* in information from AARP about this same issue.

Not surprisingly, members who are caregivers are significantly more likely than non-caregivers to be *extremely concerned* about providing care to a relative (41% vs. 20%), the loss of a close family member (33% vs. 22%), finding high-quality long-term care (59% vs. 43%), and the safety/security of their pensions and retirement savings (72% vs. 61%). Correspondingly, caregivers are more interested in information about caregiving (37% vs. 16%), loss of a close family member (29% vs. 16%), and long-term care (39% vs. 29%) than those who are not currently providing care to another person. The provision of information to fill these needs and advocating for services on behalf of caregivers will be beneficial to a large number of members in Alaska, and is likely to benefit even more members in the near future.

## How likely are Alaska members to use AARP offerings?

From the list of opportunities that AARP could provide within the state to meet member needs or interests, two-thirds probably would read written information from AARP and about half indicate they probably would use a referral service.

There have not been significant differences in response to this question between the 1997 and 2001 surveys. This is the first year, however, members are asked about their potential use of the AARP web site. Although nearly half of members indicate they would probably access the AARP web site, most of these are younger members (see Appendix A).

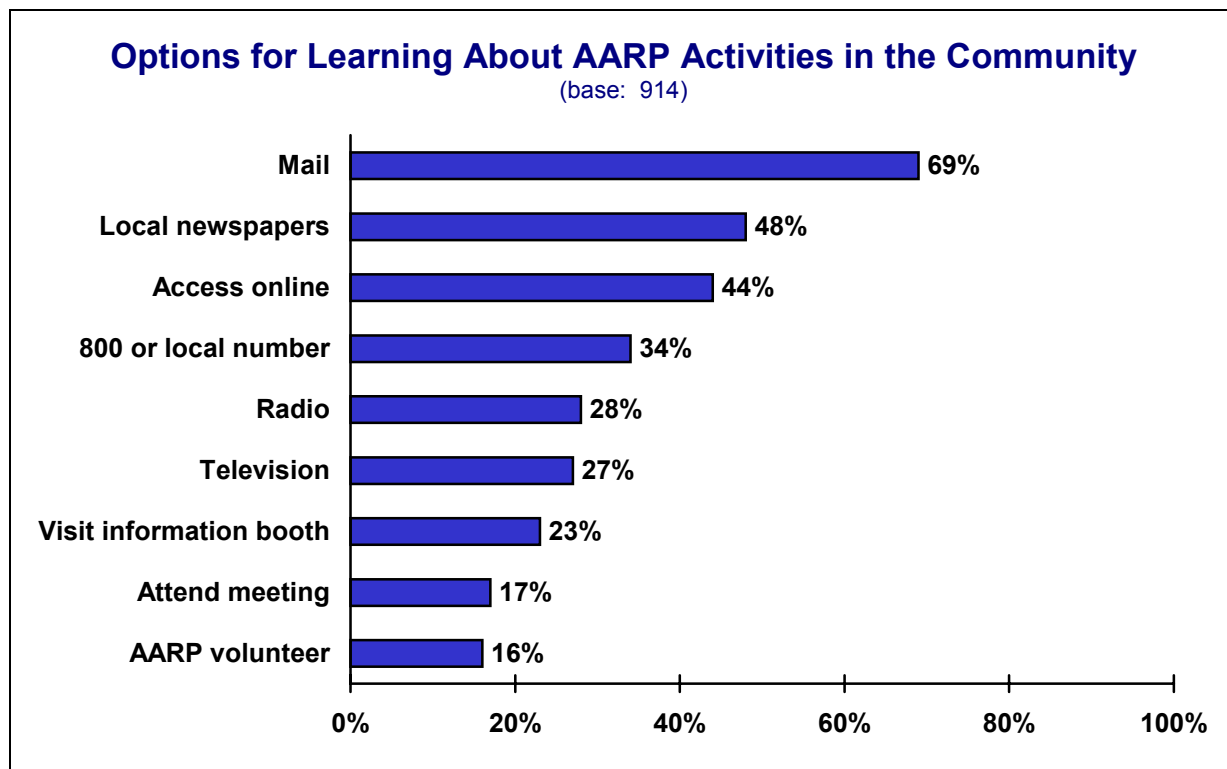


From experience, we know that the percentage of those who say they *definitely would* use opportunities is a more reliable indicator of intent to participate than the percentage that says they *probably would* use opportunities. For instance, while two in ten members say they *probably* or *definitely* would attend an AARP Chapter meeting, few members responding to the survey say that they have attended an AARP chapter (3%) or local RTA (2%) meeting in the last twelve months.

## How do Alaska members want to learn about AARP activities?

Seven in ten Alaska members say that mail is their most preferred way of learning about AARP activities in their community; nearly half indicate that local newspapers are their preferred option. Younger members more often than older members say they would like to access information online while older members more often prefer getting information through local newspapers (see Appendix A).

Three-quarters of Alaska members (77%) report having access to a personal computer at home, at work, or some other place. Seven in ten (67%) members say they have access to the Internet or the ability to use an online service, with younger members being more likely than older members to have such access (50-59: 86% vs. 60-74: 64% & 75+: 35%). Six in ten members 50-59 and about forty percent of those 60-74 say they would like to learn about AARP activities online (see Appendix A).



Two significant differences occur in responses between the 1997 and 2001 surveys. Members are less interested in learning about AARP activities by attending meetings than they were in 1997 (27% vs. 17%). However, the percentage of members who want to get AARP activity information online has more than doubled in this time period (20% vs. 44%).

## Conclusions

Overall, members' concerns, interests, and legislative priorities are consistent with AARP's strategic priorities. This finding supports continued focus in Alaska on AARP's strategic priorities. In particular, members express the greatest interest in AARP information on independent living, health, and entitlement programs. For the most part, their legislative priorities parallel these issues.

The topmost concerns for Alaska members, regardless of age, are finance-related, including the safety and security of their pensions and retirement savings and meeting daily expenses. In addition, younger members are particularly concerned about finding affordable health insurance—all concerns one would expect to find from those who are preparing for retirement. Conversely, older members' top concerns are those they are more likely to face while in their retirement years: finances, independent living, and consumer fraud.

Health is a very important issue for Alaska members. Most members are extremely concerned about staying physically fit and maintaining a healthy diet, and healthcare, including cost, quality, and availability, is rated as the topmost legislative priority among Alaska members. Beyond this, members who are interested in taking adult education courses prefer fitness classes above any other subject area offered. Given this level of interest and concern, developing classes that offer members an opportunity to improve their physical health will likely be well-received by members in Alaska and will fit within the strategic priorities of AARP. Additionally, working with medical professionals and community health partners in Alaska to promote healthy weight maintenance will benefit members and non-members alike across the state.

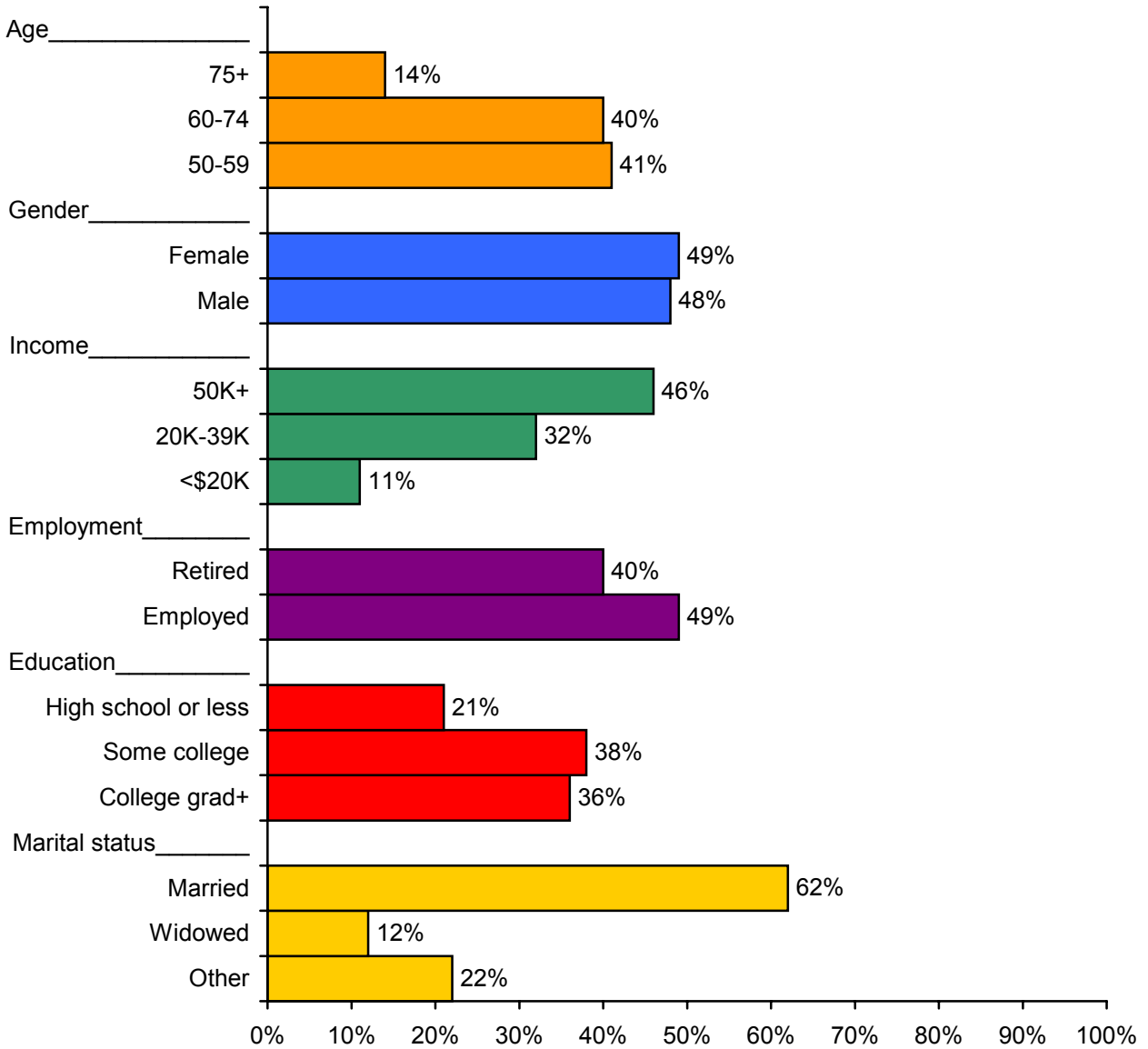
Independent living is also one of the most important issues for members. Half are extremely concerned about staying in their home as they get older, and the issue arises as one of the top two legislative priorities in the state. Additionally, nearly half of members are extremely interested in AARP information about how to continue living at home as they age, making it the top information interest. While health is a key factor in independent living, having long-term care options that enable older adults to remain in their homes is also an important factor. Independent living and long-term care are both issues that members may be willing to actively participate in legislatively given the high importance of these issues for them.

Forty percent of Alaska members say they would participate in educational opportunities in their communities if they were available. While there is some consensus by age about the times and locations that are most convenient for members to attend classes, there is a diverse range of interests in topics. Nonetheless, the two top areas of interest are learning about government benefits and physical fitness, which are both areas where AARP can be a valuable resource.

Even though multi-age courses and courses with participants age 50 and older are appealing to many members, it is clear that classes that are planned to target specific age groups will be most successful: Younger members are more likely to attend classes held on weekends and weeknights and classes held during weekdays are most appealing to older members. Similarly, location may impact attendance since older members believe that senior centers are the best place to offer classes and younger members think that schools are the most appealing location.

Member interests and concerns focus largely on health, independent living, and financial security. While mail is the most preferred means of getting information from AARP, there is clearly an interest in local educational opportunities, particularly in fitness. Educational campaigns promoting healthy lifestyles that use both mail and personal enrichment opportunities will be valuable to members in the state and could greatly enhance their aging experience and enable them to continue living independently.

## Demographic Characteristics



Eighty-six percent of Alaska members identify themselves as white or Caucasian, four percent say they are Native American or Alaska Native, and two percent are black. Overall, about one percent says they are Hispanic, Spanish, or Latino.

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## Appendix A: Core Question Tables

**Table 1**  
**Extremely Concerned About Key Issues**  
**By Age**

	<i>Percent Extremely Concerned</i>			
	Total (n=914)	50-59 (n=371)	60-74 (n=369)	75+ (n=131)
Safe and secure pension benefits/savings	63%	63%	63%	65%
Enough money for daily expenses	52	53	52	50
Staying physically fit/maintaining health diet	52	52	52	57
Staying in their own home as they get older	49	44	50	61
High quality long-term care	45	45	44	52
Finding affordable, high quality health insurance	43	48	38	42
Social Security as retirement income base	39	35	40	56
Adequate information on Medicare	38	30	44	51
Continuing to drive safely	38	30	40	48
Avoiding consumer fraud	36	32	38	50
Saving for the future	27	31	23	22
Providing care for parent or relative	23	27	20	21
Dealing with the loss of a family member	23	21	23	32
Having adequate information on Medicaid	23	22	24	26
Finding affordable legal services	19	17	20	24
Safe and affordable driving alternatives	17	13	17	28
Age discrimination in employment	15	21	12	8
Finding work after leaving workforce	13	18	11	4



**Table 2**  
**Extreme Interest in Receiving Information from AARP**  
**By Age**

	<i>Percent Extremely Interested</i>			
	Total (n=914)	50-59 (n=371)	60-74 (n=369)	75+ (n=131)
Staying in their home as they get older	46%	38%	47%	66%
Staying physically fit/maintaining healthy diet	43	39	45	53
Social Security	43	34	47	56
Medicare	41	31	46	56
Continuing to drive safely	38	27	43	55
Safety and security of pension/savings	37	35	37	44
Finding affordable, high quality health insurance	36	39	34	30
Avoiding consumer fraud	32	27	34	44
Long-term care services	30	25	31	42
Medicaid	24	25	23	21
Understanding managed care or health maintenance organizations	22	21	21	25
Finding affordable legal services	20	17	21	30
Saving for the future	19	25	14	18
Providing care for parent or relative	19	20	16	24
Dealing with the loss of a family member	18	17	17	26
Having assistance available preparing taxes	17	14	18	24
Safe and affordable driving alternatives	13	9	14	26
Age discrimination in employment	13	17	11	8
Finding work again after leaving workforce	10	14	8	5

**Table 3**  
**Top Priorities For General Legislative Issues**  
**By Age**

	<i>Percent Top Priority</i>			
	Total	Age		
	(n=914)	50-59 (n=371)	60-74 (n=369)	75+ (n=131)
Health care	48%	49%	47%	46%
Independent living	35	29	37	47
Health insurance consumer protections	32	32	34	29
Long-term care	30	26	30	42
Aid for low-income	30	25	32	34
Elder abuse	25	23	26	26
Medicaid	23	23	24	20
Consumer fraud	22	19	23	30
Transportation	22	18	23	32
Utility services/rates	18	16	20	21

**Table 4**  
**Educational Activities Members Have Pursued by Age**

	Age			
	Total	50-59	60-74	75+
	(n=771)	(n=336)	(n=305)	(n=99)*
Read a book or manual to learn something new	83%	88%	83%	76%
Took an adult education course	36	43	32	26
Took an educational course online	7	11	5	2
None of these	13	8	15	18

**Table 5**  
**Type of Educational Opportunities of Interest by Age**

	<i>Percent Extremely or Very Interested</i>			
	Total	Age		
	(n=771)	50-59 (336)	60-74 (n=305)	75+ (n=99)*
Online courses	30%	44%	22%	8%
Courses with adults 50+	35	42	31	22
Courses with multi-age group	35	46	27	17
Courses with social time	29	32	27	25
Televised/remote access	25	30	23	14

**Table 6**  
**Class Topics Members Are Interested in by Age**

	<i>Percent Very Important</i>			
	Total (n=771)	50-59 (n=336)	60-74 (n=305)	75+ (n=99)*
Making sense of government benefits: Introduction to Social Security and Medicare	41%	47%	37%	28%
Physical fitness	39	45	37	25
Arts and crafts	34	38	31	24
Money management	29	36	26	13
Field trips	29	33	29	17
Yoga/Tai Chi	29	38	22	18
Foreign language	22	29	18	11
Genealogy	22	23	21	20
Meal planning or recipe exchange	12	12	10	12
Bridge, chess, or other games	11	12	11	11
Religion	9	9	9	7
Ecology	7	9	6	5
Computers	3	4	3	4
Recreational lifestyles (RV, boating, travel)	1	1	1	<1
Other	8	9	10	2

\* Small base

**Table 7**  
**Preferred Time for Class Offerings by Age**

	<i>Percent Very Important</i>			
	Total (n=771)	50-59 (n=336)	60-74 (n=305)	75+ (n=99)*
Spring	5%	6%	4%	5%
Summer	4	3	4	7
Fall	11	11	13	11
Winter	30	33	32	16
No answer	51	50	49	62
Weekdays	36	27	42	50
Weeknights	33	48	24	11
Weekend days	10	13	7	7
Weekend nights	4	6	3	2
No preference	20	19	22	14
No answer	14	10	14	29

\* Small base.

**Table 8  
Community Location Preference for Classes**

	Age			
	Total (n=771)	50-59 (n=336)	60-74 (n=305)	75+ (n=99)*
Local school	66%	77%	65%	35%
Senior center	48	40	51	62
Library	42	47	40	31
Other government or public building	39	47	34	24
Community/recreation center	30	41	26	14
Restaurant or hotel	22	29	20	10
Church or synagogue	21	25	21	12
Local park	12	19	9	3
No answer	14	10	13	28

\*Small base.

**Table 9  
Number of Days Affected by Pain from Arthritis  
By Age**

	Age			
	Total (n=914)*	50-59 (n=371)	60-74 (n=369)	75+ (n=131)
1 to 10 days	12%	16%	13%	4%
11 to 20 days	3	4	3	2
21 to 30 days	7	8	6	10
None	57	58	54	57
Don't know	12	10	14	14
No answer	9	6	10	12

**Table 10  
Members Who Received Professional Weight Advice by Age**

	Age			
	Total (n=914)	50-59 (n=371)	60-74 (n=369)	75+ (n=131)
Yes, lose weight	33%	39%	32%	20%
Yes, gain weight	1	-	1	3
Yes, maintain weight	9	7	9	12
No	55	53	56	60
Not sure	3	1	2	5

**Table 11**  
**Preferences for Learning about Local AARP Activities**  
**By Age**

	<i>Percent with a Preference</i>			
	Total (n=914)	50-59 (n=371)	60-74 (n=369)	75+ (n=131)
Mail	69%	68%	71%	73%
Local newspaper	48	45	48	58
Information online	44	59	40	18
Toll-free or local telephone number	34	31	39	30
Local radio	28	29	28	28
Television station	27	23	26	41
Visit information booth	23	22	23	28
Attend a meeting	17	13	18	21
AARP volunteer	16	14	17	23

**Table 12**  
**Likelihood of Using AARP Opportunities**  
**By Age**

	<i>Percent with a Preference</i>			
	Total (n=914)	50-59 (n=371)	60-74 (n=369)	75+ (n=131)
Written information	25%	27%	22%	23%
Referral services	20	18	19	26
Information online	18	24	14	8
One-time educational events	15	16	11	19
Volunteer in community	14	17	12	12
Attend workshop series	10	11	8	15
Improve state laws, policies, practices	8	9	6	11
Attend a meeting	5	4	5	8
AARP volunteer	5	5	4	5

## Appendix B: Segments At A Glance

<b>Segments at a Glance</b>		
<b>Members Age 50 to 59*</b>		
(base: 371)		
<b><i>Top Five Personal Concerns</i></b>	63%	Secure pension/savings
	53%	Meeting daily expenses
	52%	Physically fit/healthy diet
	48%	Affordable, high quality health insurance
	45%	High quality long-term care
<b><i>Top Five Interests in Information from AARP</i></b>	39%	Physically fit/healthy diet
	39%	Affordable, high quality health insurance
	38%	Staying at home as they get older
	35%	Secure pensions/savings
	34%	Social Security
<b><i>Top Four State Legislative Priorities</i></b>	49%	Health care
	32%	Health plan consumer protections
	29%	Independent living
	26%	Long-term care
<b><i>Top Four AARP-Provided Opportunities</i></b>	27%	Written information
	24%	Online
	18%	Referral services
	17%	Volunteer in community
<b><i>Top Four Methods for Learning about AARP Activities</i></b>	68%	Mail
	54%	Online
	45%	Local newspapers
	31%	Telephone

\*There are 18,379 member households in Alaska where the primary member is age 50-59.

**Segments at a Glance**  
**Members Age 60 to 74\***

(base: 369)

<b><i>Top Six Personal Concerns</i></b>	63%	Secure pension/savings
	52%	Meeting daily expenses
	52%	Physically fit/healthy diet
	50%	Staying at home as they get older
	44%	Long-term care
	44%	Medicare
<b><i>Top Five Interests in Information from AARP</i></b>	47%	Staying at home as they get older
	47%	Social Security
	46%	Medicare
	45%	Physically fit/healthy diet
	43%	Continuing to drive safely
<b><i>Top Four State Legislative Priorities</i></b>	47%	Health care
	37%	Independent living
	34%	Health plan consumer protections
	32%	Aid for low-income elderly
<b><i>Top Four AARP-Provided Opportunities</i></b>	22%	Written information
	19%	Referral services
	14%	Online information
	12%	Volunteer in community
<b><i>Top Four Methods for Learning about AARP Activities</i></b>	71%	Mail
	48%	Local newspapers
	40%	Online
	39%	Telephone

\*There are 15,719 member households in Alaska where the primary member is age 60-74.

<b>Segments at a Glance</b>		
<b>Members Age 75+*</b>		
(base: 131)		
<b><i>Top Five Personal Concerns</i></b>	65%	Secure pension/savings
	61%	Staying in home as they get older
	57%	Physically fit/healthy diet
	56%	Social Security
	52%	Long-term care
<b><i>Top Five Interests in Information from AARP</i></b>	66%	Staying at home as they get older
	56%	Social Security
	56%	Medicare
	55%	Continue to drive safely
	53%	Physically fit/healthy diet
<b><i>Top Five State Legislative Priorities</i></b>	47%	Independent living
	46%	Health care
	42%	Long-term care
	34%	Aid for low-income elderly
	32%	Transportation
<b><i>Top Four AARP-Provided Opportunities</i></b>	26%	Referral services
	23%	Written information
	19%	One-time educational events
	15%	AARP workshop
<b><i>Top Four Methods for Learning about AARP Activities</i></b>	73%	Mail
	58%	Local newspaper
	41%	Television
	30%	Telephone

\*There are 5,754 member households in Alaska where the primary member is age 75+.



## **Appendix C: Annotated Questionnaire**

# 2001 AARP Alaska Member Opinion Survey

**AARP MEMBERS = 914, RESPONSE RATE = 46% SAMPLING ERROR = +/- 2.2%**  
 (Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding or multiple responses. A “\*” means less than 1%)

## Your Concerns

1. Below is a list of concerns that have been expressed by people age 50 and older. Please rate your own level of concern about each item using a 5-point scale where 1 means you are "not at all concerned" and 5 means you are "extremely concerned."

	Extremely Concerned		3	Not At All Concerned		No Response
	5	4		2	1	
a. Having safe and affordable alternatives to driving	17%	17%	28%	18%	17%	3%
b. Having adequate information on Medicaid	23%	20%	27%	13%	15%	3%
c. Providing care for a parent or relative	23%	16%	19%	13%	25%	3%
d. Having adequate information on Medicare	38%	23%	24%	6%	6%	2%
e. Avoiding consumer fraud	36%	18%	21%	14%	10%	2%
f. Having Social Security as a base for retirement income	39%	18%	20%	11%	10%	2%
g. Continuing to drive safely	38%	23%	19%	10%	9%	2%
h. Finding affordable, high quality health insurance	43%	17%	15%	10%	13%	2%
i. Staying in your own home as you get older	49%	24%	14%	6%	5%	2%
j. Staying physically fit/maintaining a healthy diet	52%	28%	13%	3%	3%	1%
k. Having high quality long-term care for you or a family member	45%	25%	16%	5%	6%	2%
l. Making sure your pension benefits and/or retirement savings are safe and secure	63%	19%	9%	2%	5%	2%
m. Having enough money to meet daily expenses	52%	20%	15%	6%	5%	2%
n. Facing age discrimination in employment	15%	15%	20%	15%	31%	4%
o. Saving for the future	27%	23%	26%	9%	13%	3%
p. Finding work again once you leave the workforce	13%	13%	20%	17%	34%	4%
q. Finding affordable legal services	19%	20%	32%	12%	14%	3%
r. Dealing with the loss of a close family member	23%	19%	27%	14%	14%	3%

## AARP Roles and Activities at the State Level

2. Listed below are some opportunities AARP could provide within your state to address member interests and concerns. Please read each one carefully and indicate how likely it is that you, personally, would make use of the opportunity if it were offered in your state.

Opportunity to...	Definitely Would Use	Probably Would Use	Might or Might Not Use	Probably Would Not Use	Definitely Would Not Use	No Response
a. Attend workshop <u>series</u> or several meetings, or classes, on topics of interest or concern to me	10%	27%	38%	17%	5%	3%
b. Attend <u>one-time</u> educational events on topics of interest or concern to me	15%	38%	31%	10%	3%	3%
c. Receive written information on topics of interest or concern to me	25%	41%	23%	6%	2%	3%
d. Participate in activities to improve state laws, policies, regulations, or practices that affect me	8%	29%	35%	20%	6%	3%
e. Use referral services to help me find needed resources and services in my own community	20%	33%	29%	12%	4%	3%
f. Volunteer my time to an AARP activity in my own community	5%	19%	40%	25%	9%	4%
g. Volunteer my time with worthy organizations in my community	14%	27%	34%	15%	7%	3%
h. Attend AARP Chapter meetings in my community that give me an opportunity to meet other people and provide some community services	5%	17%	41%	25%	9%	2%
i. Access AARP's web site for information on topics of interest or concern to me and for information about upcoming AARP events in my state	18%	29%	22%	13%	14%	4%

## Interest in Receiving Information

3. For each topic listed below, please indicate how interested you would be in receiving information from AARP on that topic.

Information on ...	Extremely				Not At All	No	
	Interested	5	4	3	Interested	Response	
		5	4	3	2	1	0
a. Alternatives to driving	13%	14%	23%	19%	27%	4%	
b. Saving for the future	19%	22%	26%	13%	15%	5%	
c. Safety and security of pension benefits and/or retirement savings	37%	25%	19%	8%	8%	3%	
d. Social Security	43%	23%	19%	5%	7%	4%	
e. Staying physically fit/maintaining a healthy diet	43%	30%	15%	5%	4%	3%	
f. Staying in your own home as you get older	46%	26%	15%	5%	6%	3%	
g. Continuing to drive safely	38%	24%	17%	7%	10%	3%	
h. Long term care services	30%	27%	22%	9%	8%	4%	
i. Finding affordable, high quality health insurance	36%	19%	16%	11%	14%	4%	
j. Age discrimination in employment	13%	13%	19%	17%	34%	5%	
k. Avoiding consumer fraud	32%	20%	20%	12%	13%	3%	
l. Medicare	41%	24%	20%	6%	5%	4%	
m. Medicaid	24%	20%	22%	11%	18%	5%	
n. Understanding managed care or health maintenance organizations	22%	24%	24%	11%	14%	5%	
o. Finding affordable legal services	20%	21%	30%	12%	14%	3%	
p. Finding work again once you leave the work force	10%	13%	19%	15%	39%	5%	
q. Providing care for a parent or relative	19%	20%	19%	13%	26%	4%	
r. Dealing with the loss of a close family member	18%	18%	25%	15%	20%	4%	
s. Having assistance available on preparing taxes	17%	18%	22%	14%	26%	3%	

## AARP at the Community Level

4. If AARP has or were to have programs, services, or activities in your community, how would you want to find out about them? (*Check all that apply.*)

- 23% **Visit an AARP kiosk, booth, or office located in your community**
- 34% **Call a toll-free or local telephone number for a pre-recorded list of current AARP activities, programs, and services in your community**
- 16% **Contact an AARP volunteer or AARP Chapter member in or near your community**
- 17% **Attend a meeting at which AARP programs and activities are described**
- 69% **Receive information by mail (e.g., letter, brochure, flyer)**
- 44% **Use an on-line computer service to access AARP information**
- 48% **Read about local AARP activities in newspapers in your community**
- 27% **Tune in to a local TV channel or program**
- 28% **Hear about them on a local radio station/program**
- 3% **No Response**

## Personal Enrichment Activities

5. In the last five years, have you... (*check all that apply*)

- 36% **Taken an adult education course offered in your community?**
- 7% **Taken an educational course online?**
- 83% **Read a book or manual to learn something new?**
- 13% **None of the above**
- 2% **No Response**

6. Are any adult education courses offered in your community?

- 77% **Yes**    4% **No**    18% **Don't Know**    1% **No Response**

7. If you have a skill, talent, or knowledge that others would find interesting to learn about, would you be willing to share your expertise with others?

- 39% **Yes**    15% **No**    44% **Don't Know**    3% **No Response**

8. If educational courses were available in your community or available by television or online, would you be interested in participating?

- 39% **Yes**
  - 45% **Not sure**
  - 14% **No**
  - 2% **No Response**
- ☛ *Please skip to Question 14*

9. Would you be interested in taking classes in any of the following areas? *(Check all that apply)*  
**(Base = 771)**

- |     |   |     |  |
|-----|---|-----|--|
| 34% | <b>Arts and crafts</b>  | 22% | <b>Genealogy</b>   |
| 39% | <b>Physical fitness</b>   | 29% | <b>Money management</b>  |
| 29% | <b>Yoga/Tai Chi</b>   | 11% | <b>Bridge/chess/other games</b>  |
| 7%  | <b>Ecology</b>  | 12% | <b>Meal planning/recipe exchange</b>   |
| 22% | <b>Foreign language</b>   | 9%  | <b>Religion</b>  |
| 29% | <b>Field trips (i.e., wildflowers/<br/>mushrooms/sightseeing)</b> | 41% | <b>Making sense of government<br/>benefits: Introduction to Social<br/>Security and Medicare</b> |
| 15% | <b>No Response</b>  |     |  |
| 8%  | <b>Other: (please list) _____</b>                                 |     |  |

10. Please indicate how interested you would be in participating in each of the educational opportunities described below. **(Base = 771)**

	<b>Extremely Interested</b>				<b>Not At All Interested</b>	<b>No Response</b>
a. Educational courses online	13%	17%	21%	11%	19%	19%
b. Educational courses with adults age 50+	12%	23%	25%	13%	9%	18%
c. Educational courses with a multi-age group	12%	23%	25%	11%	10%	20%
d. Televised or remote access classes	8%	17%	19%	17%	19%	20%
e. Educational courses that also included time to socialize	11%	18%	25%	15%	15%	16%

11. What time of year would you prefer to attend classes? *(check all that apply)* **(Base = 771)**

- 5% **Spring**      4% **Summer**      11% **Fall**      30% **Winter**      51% **No Response**

12. What time of week would you prefer to attend classes? *(check all that apply)* **(Base = 771)**

- 36% **Weekdays**  
 33% **Weeknights**  
 10% **Weekend days**  
 4% **Weekend nights**  
 20% **No preference**  
 14% **No Response**

13. Where would you be most likely to attend classes in your community? *(check all that apply)*  
**(Base = 771)**

- |     |                                    |     |  |
|-----|------------------------------------|-----|--|
| 66% | <b>Local school</b>                | 12% | <b>Local park</b>                          |
| 48% | <b>Senior Center</b>               | 22% | <b>Restaurant or hotel</b>                 |
| 30% | <b>Community/Recreation Center</b> | 42% | <b>Library</b>                             |
| 21% | <b>Church/Synagogue</b>            | 39% | <b>Other government or public building</b> |
| 14% | <b>No Response</b>                 |     |  |

## Health

14. Have you ever seen a doctor or other health professional for joint symptoms, such as pain, aching, or stiffness?

61% **Yes**      36% **No**      \* **Don't Know**      2% **No Response**

15. The term "arthritis" includes rheumatoid arthritis, osteoarthritis (degenerative joint disease), gout, lupus, carpal tunnel syndrome, ankylosing spondylitis, or fibromyalgia.

Have you had any symptoms of pain, aching, or stiffness in or around a joint during the past month, or has a doctor ever told you that you have some form of arthritis?

23% **Yes, I have had symptoms of pain, aching or stiffness in or around a joint during the past month.**

13% **Yes, a doctor has told me that I have arthritis.**

31% **No**

2% **Don't Know**

32% **No Response**

☛ *Please skip to Question 20*

☛ *Please skip to Question 20*

16. Did your joint symptoms first begin more than 3 months ago? **(Base = 325)**

79% **Yes**      12% **No**      3% **Don't Know**      6% **No Response**

17. Are you now limited in any way in any of your usual activities because of arthritis or joint symptoms? **(Base = 325)**

29% **Yes**      62% **No**      4% **Don't Know**      5% **No Response**

18. Does arthritis or joint symptoms now affect whether you work for pay, the type of work you do, or the amount of work you do? **(Base = 325)**

21% **Yes**      70% **No**      4% **Don't Know**      6% **No Response**

19. During the past 30 days, for about how many days did pain make it hard for you to do your usual activities, such as personal care, household chores, work, or recreation? **(Base = 325)**

12% **1 to 10 days**

3% **11 to 20 days**

7% **21 to 30 days**

57% **None**

12% **Don't Know**

9% **No Response**

20. People may provide regular care or assistance to an older adult or someone who has a long-term illness or disability. During the past month, did you provide any such care or assistance to a family member or friend who is 60 years of age or older?

17% **Yes**      78% **No**      1% **Don't Know**      5% **No Response**

21. In the *past 12 months*, has a doctor, nurse, or other health professional given you advice about your weight?

33%	<b>Yes, lose weight</b>	9%	<b>Yes, maintain current weight</b>
1%	<b>Yes, gain weight</b>	55%	<b>No</b>
3%	<b>No Response</b>		

22. Have you *ever* been told by a doctor that you have osteoporosis or low bone mineral density?

12%	<b>Yes</b>	82%	<b>No</b>	4%	<b>Don't Know</b>	2%	<b>No Response</b>
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23. In the *past 12 months*, have you fallen or slipped while inside?

13%	<b>Yes</b>	84%	<b>No</b>	1%	<b>Don't Know</b>	2%	<b>No Response</b>
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24. In the *past 12 months*, have you fallen or slipped while outside?

35%	<b>Yes</b>	63%	<b>No</b>	*	<b>Don't Know</b>	2%	<b>No Response</b>
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## State Legislative Issues

25. To be effective, the AARP Alaska State Legislative Committee wants to work on the most important issues facing Alaska AARP members. Keeping in mind what's most important to you, how much of a **priority** should it be for AARP to work on the following legislative issues in Alaska?

	<b>Top Priority</b>	<b>High Priority</b>	<b>Medium Priority</b>	<b>Low Priority</b>	<b>Not A Priority</b>	<b>Not Sure</b>	<b>No Response</b>
a. Transportation services for the elderly or disabled	22%	35%	25%	8%	5%	2%	4%
b. Health care issues like the cost, quality and availability of health care	48%	32%	12%	3%	2%	1%	3%
c. Issues concerning consumer protection against fraud	22%	25%	30%	12%	5%	2%	3%
d. Issues concerning utility services and rates	18%	27%	30%	12%	7%	1%	4%
e. Issues concerning how older persons can remain in their own homes or communities as they age	35%	32%	21%	6%	2%	1%	3%
f. Issues concerning development of consumer protection standards for health insurance including managed care plans	32%	34%	21%	5%	3%	1%	4%
g. Issues concerning long-term care services	30%	35%	22%	4%	3%	1%	6%
h. Assistance programs for low-income older state residents	30%	29%	23%	7%	5%	2%	4%
i. Issues concerning elder abuse	25%	21%	27%	10%	9%	3%	4%
j. Issues concerning expanding Medicaid	23%	24%	26%	10%	7%	6%	4%



## About You

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

26. In the *last 12 months*, have you attended a local AARP Chapter meeting?

3% **Yes**                      95% **No**                      \* **Don't Know**                      3% **No Response**

27. In the *last 12 months*, have you attended a local Retired Teachers Association Unit meeting?

2% **Yes**                      95% **No**                      - **Don't Know**                      3% **No Response**

28. Are you male or female?

48% **Male**                      49% **Female**                      3% **No Response**

29. What is your age as of your last birthday? \_\_\_\_\_ (in years)

41%    **50-59**  
40%    **60-74**  
14%    **75+**  
5%    **No Response**

30. What is your current marital status?

62%    **Now married**  
12%    **Widowed**  
17%    **Divorced**  
1%    **Separated**  
4%    **Never married**  
4%    **No Response**

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

4%    **Less than high school**  
16%    **High school graduate or equivalent**  
38%    **Some college or technical training beyond high school**  
16%    **College graduate (4 years)**  
21%    **Post-graduate or professional degree**  
5%    **No Response**

32. Which of the following best describes your current employment status?

37%    **Employed or self-employed full-time**  
13%    **Employed or self-employed part-time**  
40%    **Retired and not working**  
4%    **Other such as homemaker**  
2%    **Unemployed and looking for work**  
5%    **No Response**

## About You--continued

33. Have you ever retired?

52% **Yes**                      42% **No**                      1% **Don't Know**                      4% **No Response**

34. Do you have access to a personal computer at home, at work, or some other place?

77% **Yes**



If you checked "Yes:" Do you have access to the Internet or World Wide Web or the ability to use on-line services such as America OnLine (AOL)? (Base = 703)

19% **No**

4% **No Response**

87% **Yes**

7% **No**

2% **Don't Know**

5% **No Response**

35. Are you Hispanic, Spanish, or Latino?

1% **Yes**

92% **No**

1% **Don't Know**

6% **No Response**

36. What is your race?

86% **White or Caucasian**

2% **Black or African American**

1% **Asian**

4% **Native American or Alaskan Native**

\* **Hawaiian or Pacific Islander**

6% **No Response**

37. What is your 5-digit zip code? (WRITE IN YOUR ZIP CODE.) \_\_\_\_\_

38. What was your annual household income before taxes in 2000?

3% **Less than \$10,000**

8% **\$10,000 to \$19,999**

10% **\$20,000 to \$29,999**

10% **\$30,000 to \$39,999**

12% **\$40,000 to \$49,999**

20% **\$50,000 to \$74,999**

26% **\$75,000 or more**

12% **No Response**

Thank you for completing this survey. Please use the postage-paid envelope and return it to State Member Research, AARP, 601 E Street, NW, Washington, DC 20049, by **November 9, 2001.**

AARP  
Knowledge Management  
For more information contact Katherine Bridges (202) 434-6329