

Media, Digital, & Influencer Scan

LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS & INTERVIEWS

Opening Doors to Aging Services

LeadingAge[®]

Methodology

This presentation includes findings from online research, as well as insights from policy experts, academics, organizations, and leaders active in the aging services sector.

LeadingAge staff and research partners Ward Circle Strategies and 3W Insights led this phase of the research.

3W Insights conducted seven interviews via teleconference with policy experts between April 7 and April 15, 2021. Each discussion lasted approximately 45 minutes.

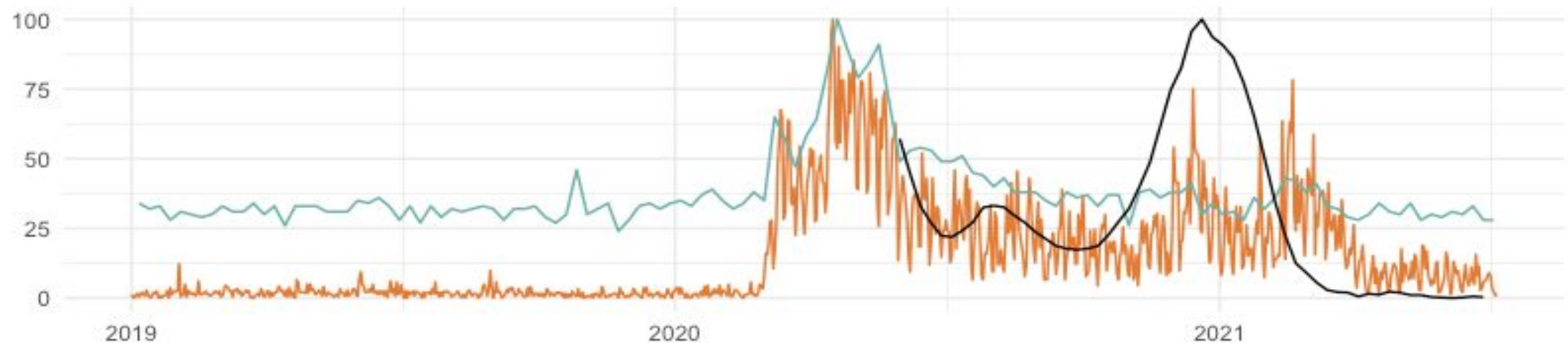
Ward Circle Strategies interviewed academics on March 10, 2021. The interviews were conducted via teleconference and lasted approximately 60 minutes.

Using natural language processing techniques, researchers scanned ~29,000 articles related to aging services that ran between January 2020, and July 2021 to identify frequently mentioned stakeholders and issues impacting older adults and the aging services sector.



Media & digital scan

COVID-19 put a spotlight on nursing homes



- “Nursing home” search trend; *Google Trends data*
- National media coverage; *Mediacloud.org*
- COVID Deaths in Long-Term Care Facilities; *Center for Medicare & Medicaid Services*

Numerous COVID challenges emerged...



Elizabeth Warren
@SenWarren

Genesis nursing homes got \$665 million in state and federal aid in 2020, didn't do enough to help their residents and workers who were dying from COVID, and nearly went bankrupt. Then they gave their CEO a \$5.2 million bonus. The greed is unfathomable.



6:14 59.5K views
Responding to coronavirus was nging for every health care provider.

Elizabeth Warren on Genesis Healthcare and COVID-19 in nursing homes
Senator Warren questioned a certified nursing assistant and the Chief Medical Officer of the American Health Care Association at a March 17, 2021 Finance Committee hearing on COVID in nursing homes.

NATIONAL

Why Nursing Homes' COVID-19 Legal Shields May Interfere With Other Cases

January 25, 2021 · 5:00 AM ET
Heard on [Morning Edition](#)



Nursing Homes Are Getting Billions in COVID Aid — Where Is It Going?

Facilities are calling for more assistance, but industry experts want answers

by Andrew Soergel, **AARP**, November 24, 2020 | Comments: 5

Most nursing homes say they won't be able to stay open another year due to pandemic costs

Increased staffing, personal protective equipment and testing contributed to the mounting financial crisis that could jeopardize the care of thousands of older Americans, many of whom are women.

Where nursing home staff vaccinations lag, COVID-19 outbreaks may follow, experts warn

Nationwide vaccination rates among nursing home staffers are lagging behind.

By **Laura Romero** and **Meredith Deliso**
June 7, 2021, 5:04 AM · 10 min read



Is Extended Isolation Killing Older Adults in Long-Term Care?

Five months of COVID-19 lockdowns have created a mental health crisis

by Emily Paulin, **AARP**, September 3, 2020 | Comments: 56

...and other long-standing challenges remain

Private equity ownership is killing people at nursing homes

A new study describes the human toll of private equity firms buying up nursing homes.

By Dylan Scott | @dylaniscott | dylan.scott@vox.com | Feb 22, 2021, 4:30pm EST



Maggots, Rape and Yet Five Stars: How U.S. Ratings of Nursing Homes Mislead the Public

Nursing homes have manipulated the influential star system in ways that have masked deep problems — and left them unprepared for Covid-19.

The New York Times

COMPLIANCE

COVID-19 Crisis Reveals Deep Cracks, Conflicting Priorities in Nation's Nursing Home Infrastructure

By Alex Spanko | April 16, 2020

Skilled Nursing News

The image shows a preview of an article from Skilled Nursing News. The background is a dark, textured surface with a prominent crack. The text is white and orange. A small orange box with the word "COMPLIANCE" is in the top left. The main title is in large white font. Below it, the author and date are in a smaller white font. The Skilled Nursing News logo is in the bottom right.

RETIREMENT | FEATURE

Demand for Home Care Is Expected to Boom. Finding It Might Not Be So Easy.

By Jessica Hall | May 30, 2020 8:00 am ET

BARRON'S

COVID damaged nursing homes reputationally

How has your perception of U.S. nursing homes changed during the course of COVID-19 crisis?



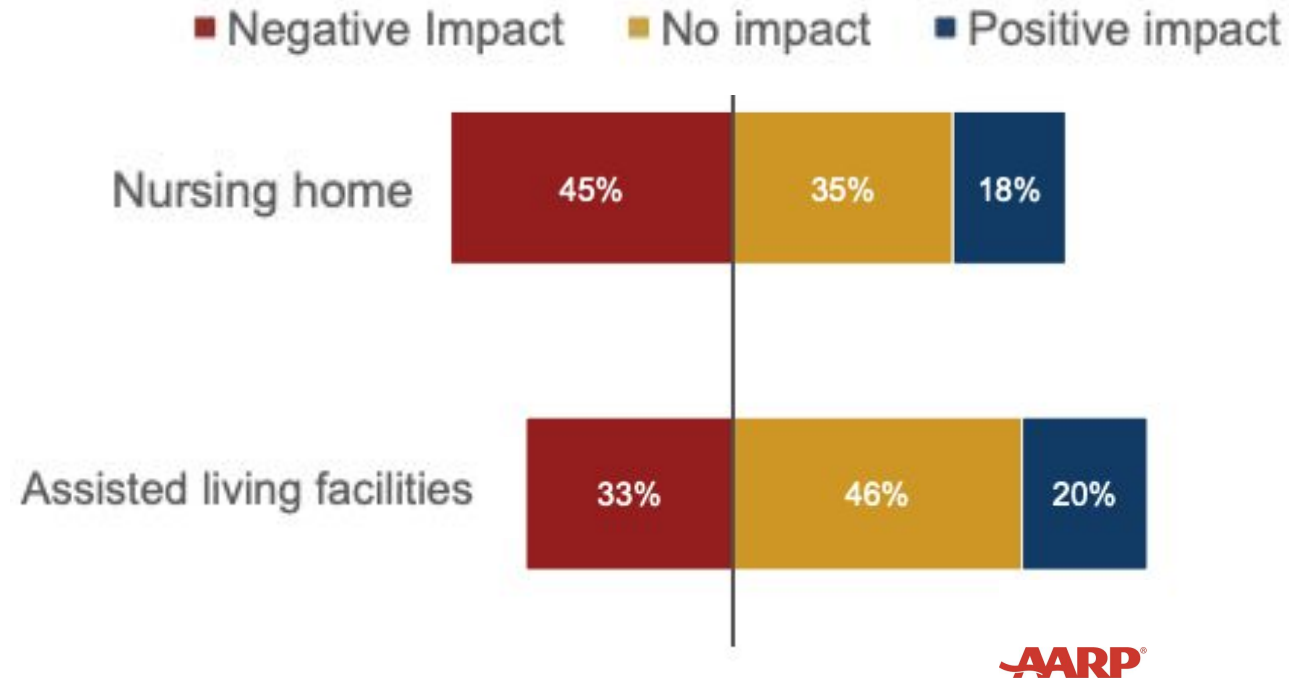
Margin +/- 3% 1749 responses from 5/13/2020 to 05/15/2020

Generated by CivicScience® on May 15, 2020 at 16:40:46 EDT



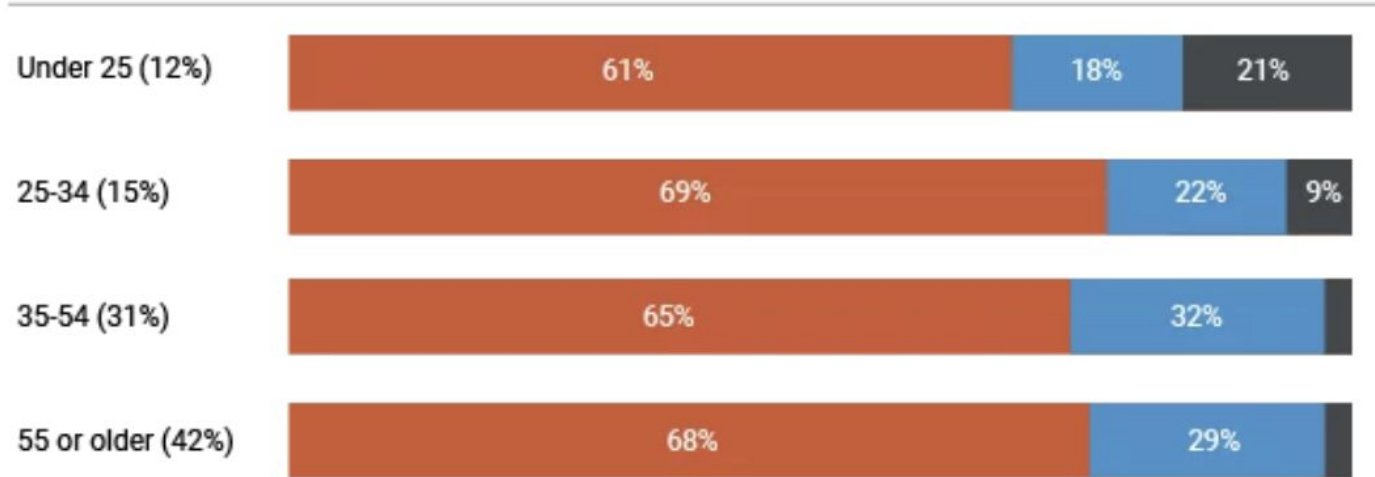
Assisted living also suffered a reputational hit

COVID-19 Impact on Opinion



As did senior housing

- I am less likely to pursue senior housing for myself or for a loved one
- My likelihood of pursuing senior living for myself or a loved one has not changed
- I am more likely to pursue senior housing for myself or for a loved one



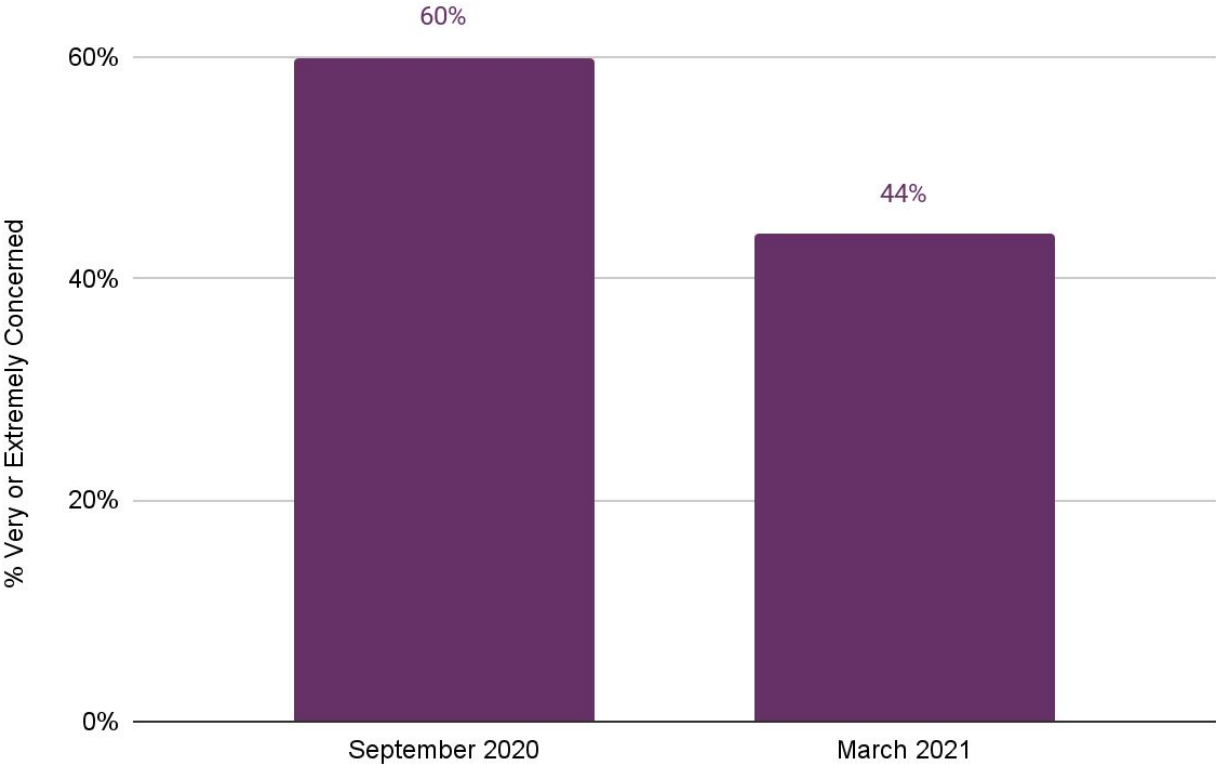
Overall, 65% of respondents to the SNN/CivicScience poll said that they were less likely to pursue senior housing for themselves or a loved one in the wake of COVID-19

1070 responses. Significance: $X^2_{(df=6)} = 66.344, p < 0.001$, High Strength of Association (T=0.159)

Generated by CivicScience® on May 18, 2020 at 15:41:41 EDT



Signs of improvement after COVID-19 battering



Drop in concerns about nursing homes

Americans very or extremely concerned about a loved one needing long-term care in a nursing home.

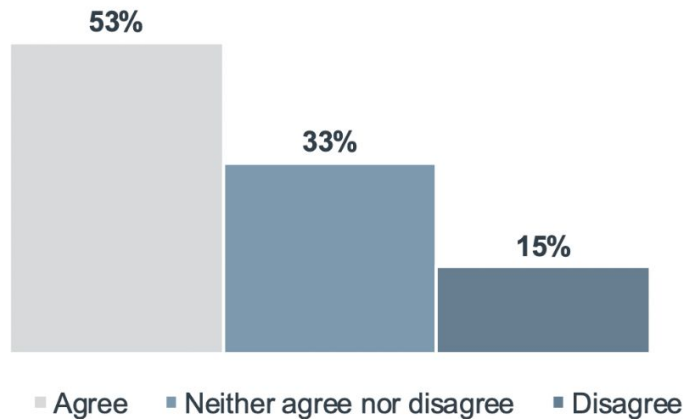
Source: AP-NORC poll, Feb. 12 – March 3, 2021

Public perception of nursing homes and long-term care is staid, but positive

Question: Do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? ¹

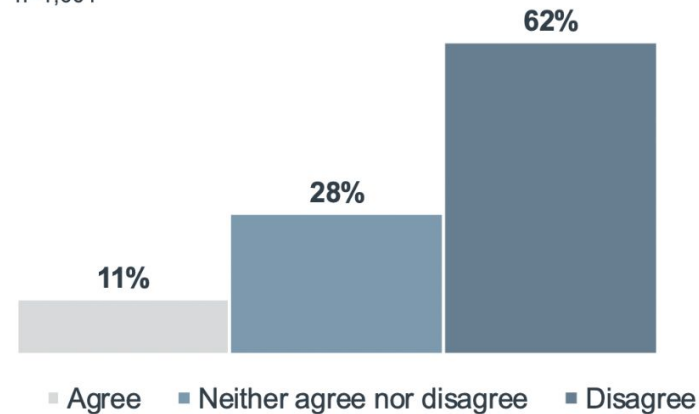
I believe most nursing homes in my local area would take good care of me or my loved ones

n=1,001



Placing a loved one in a nursing home or long-term care facility shows disrespect for that person

n=1,001



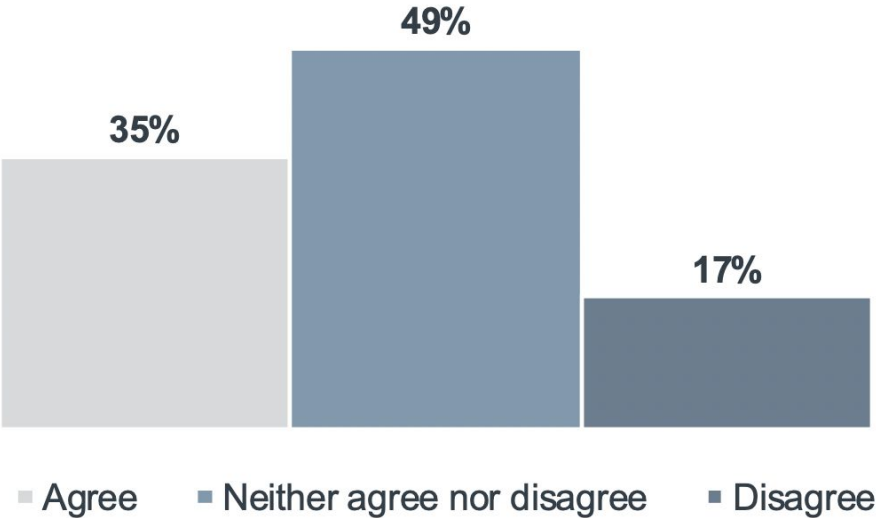
Source: Post-Acute Care Collaborative 2021 Consumer Survey and analysis



Twice as many Americans agree nursing homes safer now than before COVID. Half unsure.

Question: Do you agree or disagree with the following statement?
Nursing homes are safer now than they were before Covid-19¹

n=1,001



Source: Post-Acute Care Collaborative 2021
Consumer Survey and analysis



Discussion shifts to building a better system and more public investment

COVID-19 Exposed the Faults in America's Elder Care System. This Is Our Best Shot to Fix Them



BY ABIGAIL ABRAMS
JUNE 15, 2021 7:00 AM EDT



Workers and seniors deserve investments in home care infrastructure

BY REP. STEVEN HORSFORD (D-NEV.), OPINION CONTRIBUTOR — 06/07/21 01:00 PM EDT
THE VIEWS EXPRESSED BY CONTRIBUTORS ARE THEIR OWN AND NOT THE VIEW OF THE HILL

Jun 21, 2021, 08:59am EDT | 371 views

Will COVID-19 Improve Long Term Care?



William A. Haseltine Contributor
Health



July 13, 2021

Care infrastructure 'vital for our economic prosperity,' Commerce Secretary Raimondo says



Liza Berger

McKnight's
SENIOR LIVING
News, perspective and analysis



Action at multiple levels for better system

Economic Policy

Biden jobs plan seeks \$400 billion to expand caretaking services as U.S. faces surge in aging population

White House, lawmakers remain at odds over broader spending package.



(iStock)
By Jeff Stein
April 2, 2021 | Updated April 2, 2021 at 10:54 a.m. EDT

The Washington Post

Senator Bob Casey Says 'Better Care Better Jobs' Act Aims To Help Caregivers And Seniors

June 25, 2021 at 7:14 am Filed Under: Bob Casey, Local TV, Senator Bob Casey, Senior Citizens, Washington D.C.



4:40 64°
NEW THIS MORNING
Better Care Better Jobs Act aims to help caregivers and seniors
KDKA 2
DAY WILD: 7 ● PICK 2 DAY: 3-7 (7) ● PICK 3 DAY: 1-3-9 (7) ● PICK 4 DAY: 3-3-1-1 (7) ● PICK 5 DAY: 4-2



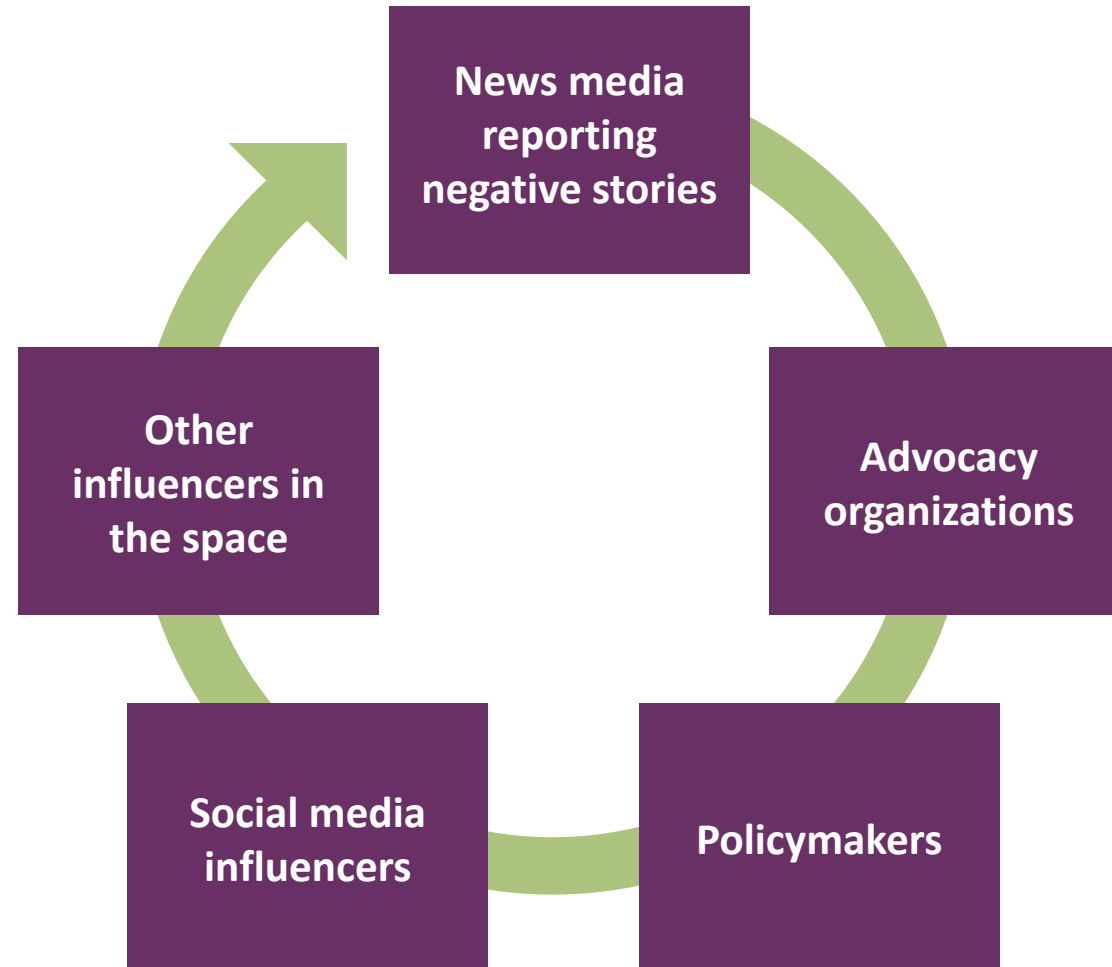
Local home care workers leave to march on Washington for higher wages

HANNAH WYMAN
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette
ONE OF AMERICA'S GREAT NEWSPAPERS

Influencer views

Who is driving a lack of trust in the field?



Criticism of nursing homes during pandemic

*“The nursing home **industry has been aggressive in shifting the blame** and in trying to avoid the financial consequences of the deaths in its facilities...data is beginning to show **linkages between nursing home quality and coronavirus cases. Risks may be even worse at for-profits run by private-equity firms**, which acquire nursing homes, cut costs and then sell at a profit.” AARP*

*“After months of devastation for residents and their families, I **have yet to hear a single apology, a single provider say ‘We have learned, and next time we’ll do better.’**” Richard Mollot, executive director of Long Term Community Care Coalition*

*“It seems like **bad practice to put 150 people in their 80s together in tight quarters, two to a room, sleeping four feet away from each other. That’s about the worst thing you can do.**” Eric Carlson, attorney for Justice in Aging*

*“Nursing homes are **pillaging taxpayers while the body bags continue to mount.**” Families for Better Care*

*“I **consistently read horror stories** from around the country **of nursing homes that could have done better to protect their residents...**We must ensure nursing home residents are not harmed because of deficiencies in the facilities they rely on to survive...What is the answer for our elders?” Rep. Jan Schakowsky (IL-9)*

*“The next time there’s a pandemic, **seniors shouldn’t be stuck in subpar institutions run by greedy CEOs and vulture firms** in order to make a quick buck.” Sen. Elizabeth Warren (MA)*

*“We risk life and limb every single day to help these people, hold their hands as they pass, make them as comfortable as possible...and I know personally eight people on unemployment who are making more money than I am. **You can make more money flipping a burger than you can make literally caring for people’s loved ones.**” Mike, a CNA in Utah*

Drivers of negative comments during COVID

- **COVID-19 outbreaks and deaths in nursing homes**
- **Visitation restrictions fostering perceptions of lack of transparency**
- **Regulatory and immunity debates elevating concerns about accountability**
- **Long-standing negative view of “homes” and stigma of aging**
- **Lack of understanding of the sector and services provided**
- **Perceptions about quality**
 - Reports of poor infection control and resident neglect
 - Insufficient, underpaid, and untrained staff
- **Perceptions of profiteering**
 - Government resources misused, lined pockets of some nursing home owners
 - Private equity squeezing money out of care
- **Vaccine hesitancy among aging services staff**

Commentary on broader concerns

System of Funding

"The current system for **funding and delivering long-term care services is a national crisis** that we have to address." **Bob Kramer**, cofounder and strategic adviser for the **National Investment Center for Seniors Housing & Care** and co-founder of **Nexus Insights**

"[There are] **long-standing problems in the structure and financing of nursing homes**, which short-term funding, more regulation, and penalties for noncompliance are unlikely to fix." **Alice Bonner**, Associate Professor at **Northeastern University** and Advisor to **Center for Long-Term Care Quality & Innovation**

"Long-term care in the United States has suffered from **underfunding and inattention** for decades. Failure to address this crisis has enabled widespread coronavirus infection and death in our nation's nursing homes and assisted living facilities." **Milken Institute**

Government Failure During COVID

"Even the most ardent critics of the nursing home industry agree that it was **dealt a nearly impossible hand**, and in many cases, was left to take the brunt of public anger over the large number of deaths at nursing facilities. But that doesn't absolve the industry from the **poor decision-making** that made a bad situation much worse." **AARP**

"Americans have **sacrificed so much** since March, but [the federal government] hasn't stepped up to meet that sacrifice." **U.S. PIRG**

Community Spread

"If you're in an environment where there are a **lot of people in the community who have COVID, the patients in the building are more likely to have COVID**." **Vincent Mor**, professor of Health Services, Policy & Practice, **Brown University School of Public Health**

Vaccine Hesitancy

"But for all that progress, we're alarmed that **just 55% of nursing home workers nationwide**—whose job duties include bathing, dressing and feeding residents, the kind of close contact that makes it easier to catch COVID—have been vaccinated." **Chicago Sun Times** editorial

Key stakeholder alignment

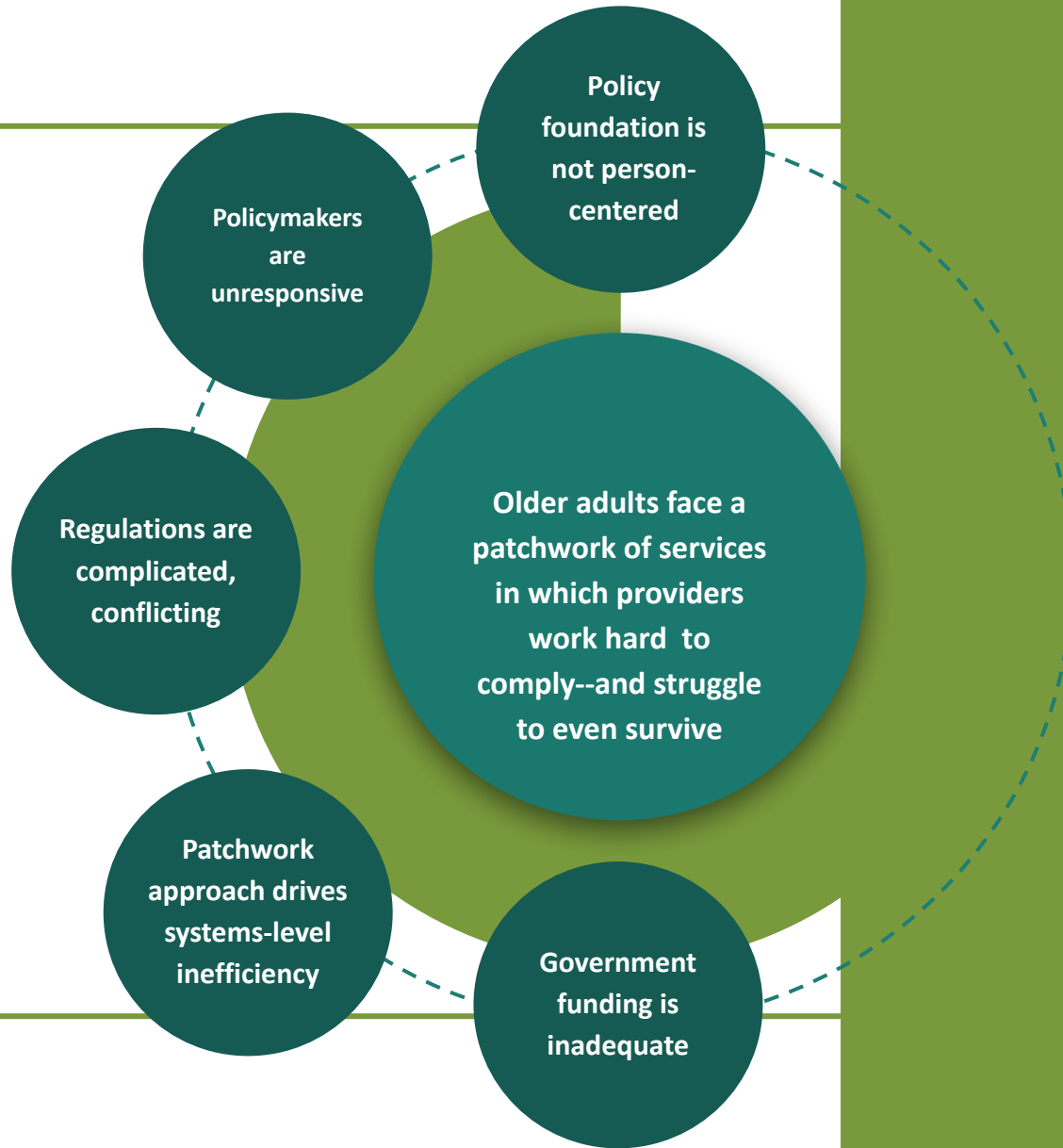


Despite differences, key stakeholders are committed to greater support for older adults and their providers. Most stakeholders:

- **Support more federal resources to cover care costs**
 - Support increase in Medicare and Medicaid
 - Support adjusting Medicaid reimbursement rates to cover actual costs
 - Agree care financing system was broken pre-COVID
- **Agree on expanding staff and attracting workers**

Perspective of influential policy experts

**It's not a true
public
“system,”
experts
agree**



Lack of system hinders consumers

The existing patchwork of services and providers makes it difficult for those needing services to identify where to even start to access the services they need



Aging services approach is based on false assumptions

In actuality:

- People are living longer and aging is a long process
- There are no long-term budget commitments
- We have an aversion to aging...and death
- Consumers and policymakers are in react mode



*"It's the 'wild, wild west' out there.
People are desperate."*

***-- Participant, in-depth interview with
policy experts***

Providers are generally well viewed

- **Nonprofit and religious institutions viewed more positively** (may have more challenges in this regulatory environment)
- Recognition that **no one was prepared for COVID**
- Need **more HCBS programs**; less congregate care
- **Better payment for care workers** is key to revamping aging services
- **“Bad apple” provider stories receive disproportionate spotlight**

**There is a perceived
absence of advocates for
older adults and
caregivers**



“I think that the political force for change really is caregivers, both paid and unpaid caregivers.”

***-- Participant, in-depth interview
with policy experts***

There is an advocacy role for providers

- Providers need to be **vocal advocates** to ensure government delivers needed resources for older adults
- Post-COVID can be an opportunity for providers to **shape public perceptions**--of them and the sector
- LeadingAge can provide leadership in helping providers **redefine themselves and the sector**



Perspective of academics



"I'm still using my power tools. Why would I care about long-term care?"

-- 85-year-old Ohioan, shared during in-depth interview with academics

Public misunderstanding and lack of knowledge

- Nursing homes dominate the thinking of the general public when talking about aging services
- Little understanding of the full range of aging services options
- Significant avoidance of learning about or planning for how to grow older on one's own terms. The "ick factor."

Major shifts in financial models in the sector

- Growth in **for-profit providers** changing nature of the industry
- Academics say for-profit providers **skew services to those who can pay**

“And these people going into this business, they don't know crap about what they're doing. For them it's sort of a business investment.”

-- Participant, in-depth interview with academics

Nonprofit vs. for-profit

"As nonprofits, most of us are running pretty lean and mean. It reminds me of watching The Ed Sullivan Show with the guy keeping the 19 plates up in the air.

I've got 19 plates in here and something's gonna fall at some point, and we are being hit from so many different directions now."

-- Participant, in-depth interview with provider

- **General public doesn't know the difference between for-profits and nonprofits**, though families of consumers likely have a better sense
- Many hospitals are nonprofit, increasing their favorable views
- Some decisions about care venues made under pressure, other factors dominate: e.g., convenience, location

Negative perceptions of nursing homes

“People can avoid nursing homes if they're wealthy enough.”

-- Participant, in-depth interview with academics

Nursing homes are most transparent, but least trusted

Negative perceptions of accountability and transparency diminish trust, especially of nursing homes

“Bad apple” stories negatively affect other providers



“The most appealing or compelling aspect of nursing homes, in some ways, is the workforce.”

-- Participant, in-depth interview with academics

Support for staff is high

- **Supporting the workforce is central to improving perception of aging services providers.** Must ensure professional caregivers’ economic and emotional needs are addressed
- **Telling the story of staff-resident bonds is powerful**
- The public recognizes there is **not enough staff**



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