

Sector Insider Perspectives

AGING SERVICES RESEARCH

Opening Doors to Aging Services

LeadingAge[®]

Provider & partner views

METHODOLOGY

LeadingAge conducted an online survey of its membership, which consists primarily of nonprofit aging services providers, May 19-May 28, 2021, eliciting 262 responses.

Between February 26 and March 24, 2021, Ward Circle Strategies, a LeadingAge research partner, conducted 24 in-depth interviews via teleconference with a range of sector insiders. Interviewees included aging services providers, association partners, and related businesses.

“Age discrimination in our country is alive and well. It was visible during the pandemic as people saw seniors get sick and die, and it was as if they were just collateral damage. We must do a better job at helping younger generations see the worth in older people and figure out ways for people of all ages to collaborate and see the value in ALL people!”

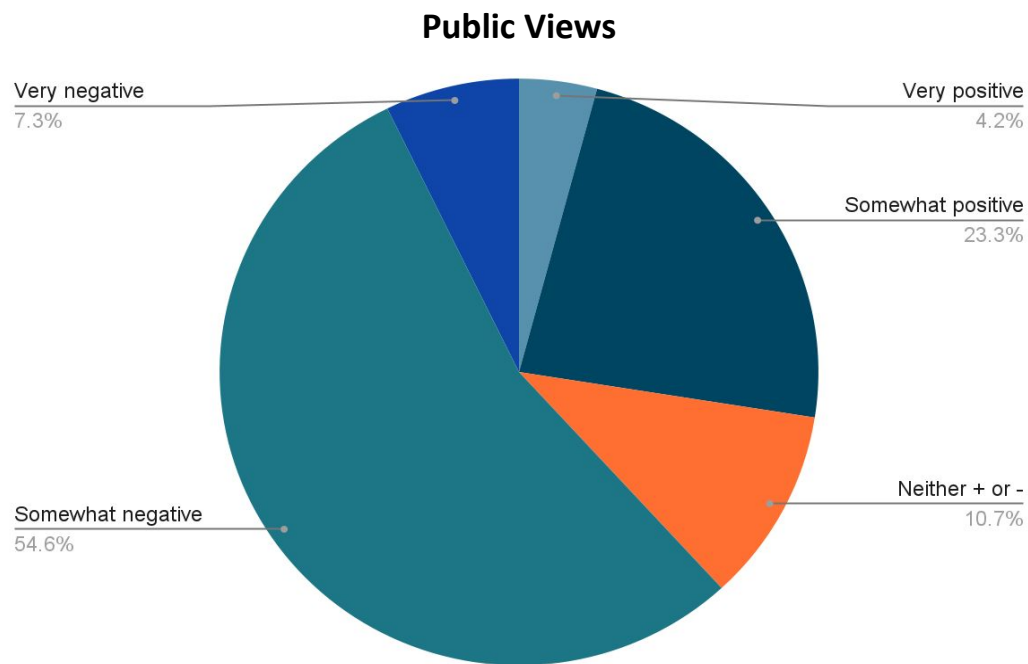
--LeadingAge member survey respondent



How providers view public perception of the sector

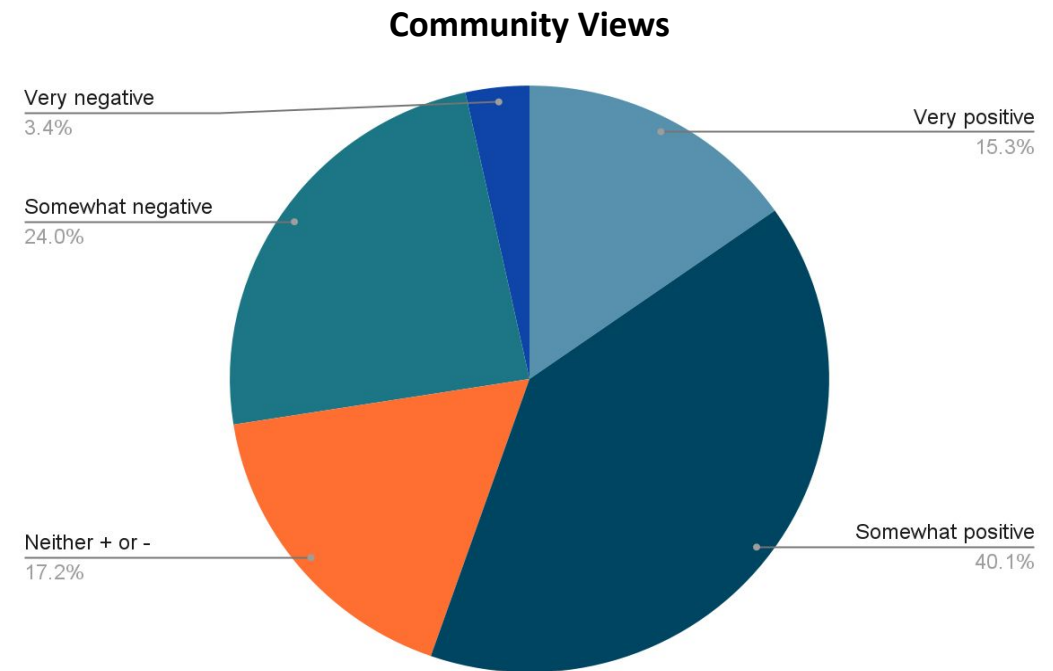
Q: How do you think the public views the aging services sector?

Public: 62% view negatively



Q: How do you think people view the aging services sector located in your own community?

My Community: 27% view negatively



How insiders view public perceptions of aging services

People don't understand aging services until they or a loved one are in need of care

- **Widespread lack of knowledge about aging services** and how to access them
- **Negative view of “aging” and getting older** causes inability to think longer-term
 - “I’ll get to it when I need it” or “That’s for somebody older than me”
- **Lack of public understanding** about available aging services
 - Fueled by denial about aging and needs, concerns about lack of independence
 - People do not seek services until needed
- **Isolation and lack of visitation** impacting older adults and their families
- **Positive perception of heroic frontline workers** as a result of COVID

How insiders view public perceptions of aging services (continued)

People don't understand aging services until they or a loved one are in need of care

- **Aging services defined by nursing homes** -- not depth and breadth of services across sector
 - Negative stories during COVID reinforced long-standing negative nursing home stereotypes: “putting” someone in the “home”
 - “Bad apples” attract media attention and paint the rest of the field with the same brush
- **Those familiar with aging services better understand different types of care**
 - Belief that the public perceives CCRCs, independent-living, home care, and hospice more favorably than nursing homes
- **Lack of regulation of home health services** in some states--where anyone can hang out a shingle--is negatively impacting reputable home health service providers

How providers view public perceptions of nonprofit vs. for-profit

58% of surveyed members think the public has different perceptions of for-profit and nonprofit providers

Q: “Do you think the public has different perceptions of **for-profit and nonprofit providers?**”

Much different	13%
Somewhat different	45%
Not really different	35%
Not different at all	7%

How providers view influencers' perceptions of nonprofit vs. for-profit

67% of surveyed members think key influencers and policymakers have different perceptions of for-profit and nonprofit providers

Q: "Do you think key influencers and policymakers have different perceptions of **for-profit and nonprofit providers**?"

Much different	19%
Somewhat different	48%
Not really different	29%
Not different at all	4%

Insiders' perceptions of nonprofit vs. for-profit

- Nonprofit and mission-driven aging services providers are distinct in the field and their attributes should be emphasized
- Perceptions of for-profits and “the bottom line” are negatively impacting the sector’s reputation
- Though nonprofit and for-profit providers operate differently, the general public does not typically make a distinction when thinking or making a decision about aging services
- Belief that policymakers more attune to for-profits due to PAC money

Insiders' views on public understanding of workforce



- Positive perception of **heroic frontline care professionals**, but aging services care workers did not get same recognition as hospital workers
- Public **more aware of trauma, lack of resources, and sacrifices** made by health care workers than portrayed in media
- Although generally respected by the public, most care workers feel **underappreciated and undervalued**
- Belief the public would say workplace issues--such as **understaffing, retention, and compensation**--need to be addressed in the aging services field

Who providers view as key stakeholders



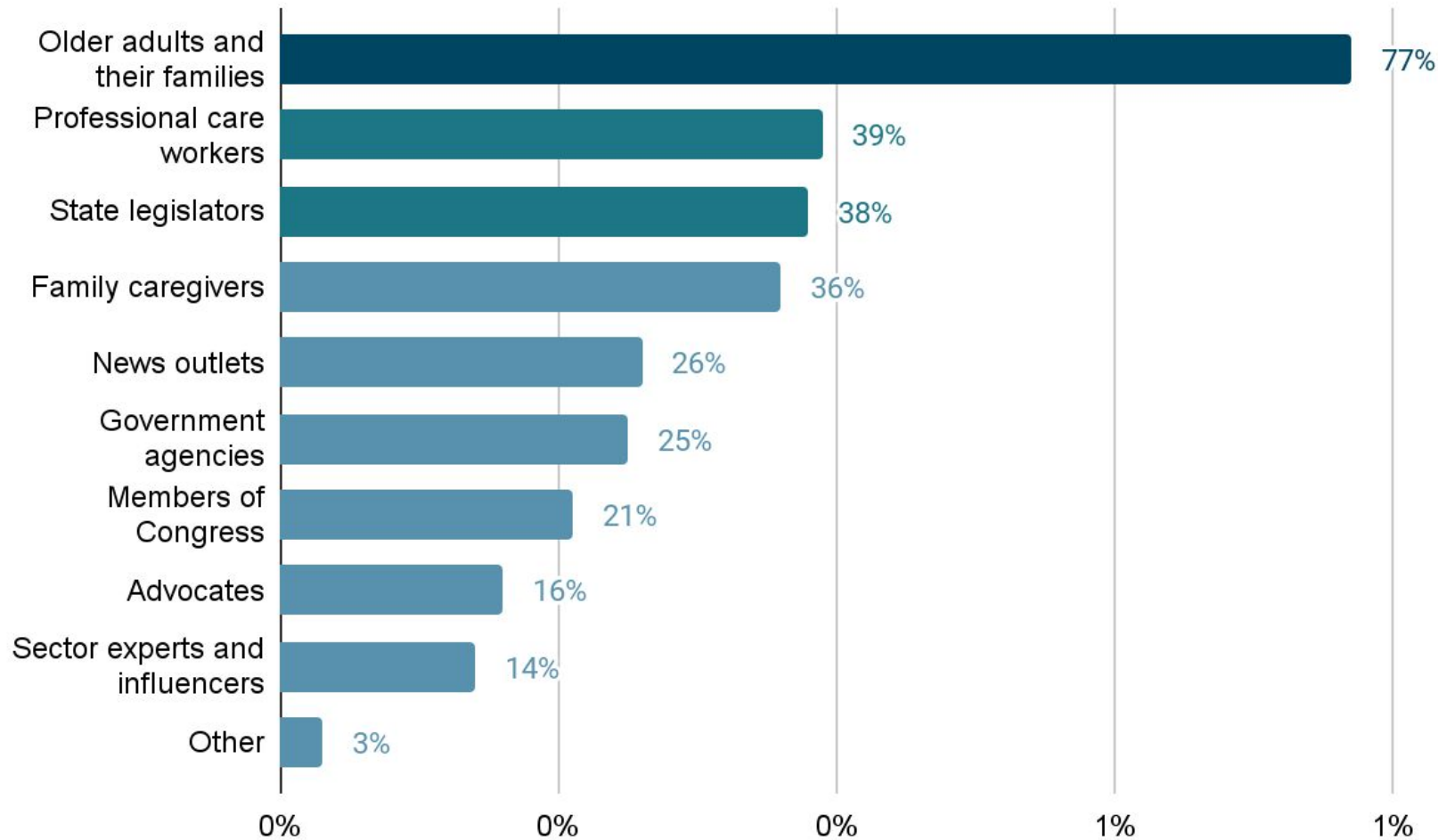
Who are they?

- Dedicated care workers
- Older adults served
- Families of those served
 - Many providers singled out adult daughters, who tend to be responsible for care
- Policymakers
- Media

How do they get information:

Providers believe these stakeholders receive information on aging services through a variety of media/news outlets, word-of mouth experiences, field experts, online resources (i.e. LeadingAge, AHCA, McKnight's, AARP), and constituent feedback

Consumers' & family members' views seen as highly significant



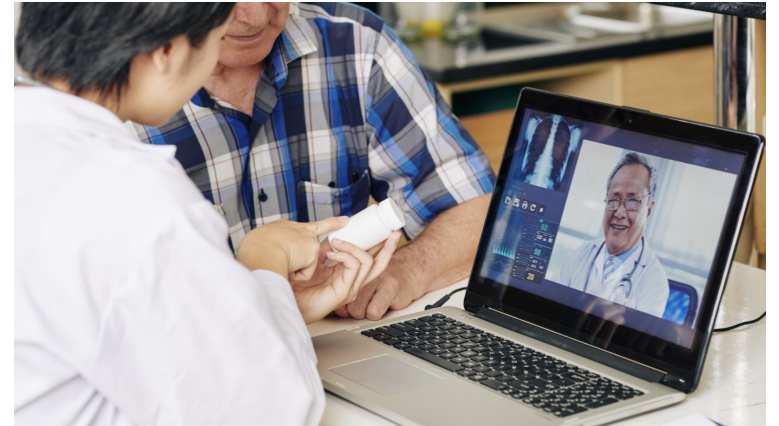
Which **audiences'** perceptions of the aging services sector are most important? Select up to three.

Where providers see opportunities

- Important to **proactively explain the aging services field** and how to access care and services
- **Repetition of positive stories and testimonials**--particularly those showing a sense of independence, quality of care, and purpose for individuals--is critical for driving trust and confidence in the field
- There is an opportunity to **reinvent post-pandemic**, incorporating new learnings and technology, showcasing positive stories, and exploring issue-specific workforce data to better understand and improve the aging services field
- **Focus on older adults** during pandemic must be sustained post-pandemic

Business partners identify key issues

- Older adults and their families need information on options and benefits of aging services
- Emphasize nonprofit status
- Helpful for public to see new models and ways of operating, including technology solutions
- Debunk image of institutional models that served “your grandmother”



“We’re a taxi, and we need to be a Lyft.”

***-- Participant, in-depth interview
with business partner***

"There has never been a better time to reimagine, reinvent, and transform aging services than now, while the damage from the pandemic is still fresh in everyone's mind."

--Aging services provider and LeadingAge member from member survey





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