

Media Relations

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UNH Research Finds Older Adults Not Receiving the Care They Need

DURHAM, N.H. – More than one-third of all adults in the United States aged 65 and older who need care do not receive it, according to new research from the Carsey School of Public Policy at the University of New Hampshire. Unmarried men and women and those who live alone are particularly vulnerable.

“The graying of the U.S. population foretells a crisis in care,” the researchers said. “In 2012, about 43.1 million U.S. adults – 13.7 percent of the population – were ages 65 and older. By 2050 those figures are estimated to climb to 83.7 million and 20.9 percent. The aging of the baby boomers accelerates this growth, and its effects ripple across our social institutions and pose challenges to individuals, families, care providers and policy makers.”

Needing care is defined as being frail and having at least one functional limitation: needing help bathing dressing, taking medications, preparing food and performing other tasks associated with daily living. Thirty-six percent of the older adults who meet this criteria receive no care from family members, friends or paid providers.

Other findings on older U.S. adults include:

- Among the unmarried, 44 percent of men and 32 percent of women had an unmet need for care
- Among those living alone, 47 percent of men and 36 percent of women had an unmet need for care
- Men are more likely than women to receive care from a spouse (39 versus 15 percent)
- Women who need care are more likely than men to receive care primarily from a daughter (20 versus 7 percent) even when the woman’s husband is alive

“As the population ages, policy makers must contend with the funding, provision and coordination of long-term care supports for older adults and their families, especially those who are unmarried and living alone,” the researchers said.

The research was conducted by Rebecca Glauber, associate professor of sociology and a faculty fellow at the Carsey School, and Melissa Day, a doctoral candidate in sociology at UNH.

To download a copy of the report, go to <https://carsey.unh.edu/publication/vulnerability-older-adults>

The Carsey School of Public Policy is nationally acclaimed for its research, policy education and engagement aimed at addressing important societal challenges. The school takes on the pressing issues of the 21st century, striving for innovative, responsive and equitable solutions at all levels of

government and in the for-profit and nonprofit sectors.

The [University of New Hampshire](#), founded in 1866, is a world-class public research university with the feel of a New England liberal arts college. A land, sea, and space-grant university, UNH is the state's flagship public institution, enrolling 13,000 undergraduate and 2,500 graduate students.

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