The National Poll on Healthy Aging:
Elevating the Voices of Older Adults

INSTITUTE FOR HEALTHCARE POLICY AND INNOVATION
NATIONAL POLL ON HEALTHY AGING
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

The National Poll on Healthy Aging (NPHA) is a trusted and versatile tool for gathering, interpreting, and disseminating timely data from a recurring nationally representative sample of adults aged 50 and older. It provides critical insights from older adults about their perspectives and experiences related to their health and well-being, and how they think about and prioritize where and how to access care. The NPHA is a well-respected and widely cited source of information for older adults and caregivers, as well as health care providers, the media, policymakers, advocates, and other key stakeholders.

In 2017, the University of Michigan (U-M) Institute for Healthcare Policy and Innovation (IHPI), with instrumental support from AARP and the Michigan Medicine Department of Communications, developed and launched the NPHA. Its goal is to gain a deeper understanding of the health and health care issues affecting older adults and their caregivers, and better inform health care research, policy, and practice nationally.

Building off the success of the national poll, the Michigan Poll on Healthy Aging, launched in May 2024 with support from the Michigan Health Endowment Fund, gathers insights from older Michiganders to inform policy, planning, and practice in our state.

The NPHA and the Michigan poll are signature initiatives of IHPI, which unites 750+ faculty researchers across diverse disciplines at U-M, the nation's largest public research university, to collaboratively address the most challenging issues facing U.S. health care. A team of IHPI faculty and staff with deep expertise in health, aging, and survey research direct the poll, and over 70 IHPI faculty members have contributed their expertise as poll collaborators.

A timely, valuable, and rich source of data on healthy aging

The NPHA team and IHPI faculty collaborate to develop poll questions around a wide range of health and health care topics. NPHA surveys are fielded twice per year to a diverse, nationally representative sample of more than 3,000 U.S. adults age 50 and older from NORC's AmeriSpeak panel. The Michigan poll includes a diverse sample of nearly 1,000 Michiganders age 50 and older from across the state.

NPHA surveys have been fielded 16 times; data from 12 fieldings have been released for free public use through the National Archive of Computerized Data on Aging's Open Aging Repository. NPHA data have been downloaded 1,600 times by researchers worldwide.

The poll team makes its Michigan data, including comparisons with national data, available through online interactive data dashboards to inform journalists, policymakers and other leaders on the state level. The five dashboards produced to date have received 2,000 cumulative views as of January 2025.

Highly productive use of data

The NPHA team has produced nearly 70 reports based on national poll data. Reports are publicly available and distributed widely about eight times per year, shedding light on key issues including:

- caregiving
- technology use & health
- health care decision-making
- medication use
- brain health
- falls
- loneliness & social isolation
- ageism
- oral health
- aging in place

Since May 2024, the NPHA team has also developed six reports featuring Michigan findings, released alongside national reports on the same topics.

In addition, the NPHA team has created nearly 25 poll extras: short, engaging articles that feature timely NPHA data to answer urgent questions in health and health care. Poll extras are possible because of the depth and richness of poll data and offer new, highly relevant findings that go beyond those included in NPHA reports.

IHPI researchers have used poll data to develop nearly 40 peer-reviewed academic publications in high-profile journals, including the *American Medical Association (JAMA)*, *Annals of Internal Medicine*, *JAMA Neurology*, *JAMA Network Open*, and the *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*.

To further expand the dissemination of poll results, the team has also developed multiple "patient pages" for Michigan Medicine and JAMA with actionable information for older adults and their families.

The NPHA team routinely disseminates poll findings via presentations at national, state, and local events and meetings.

Broad reach with key audiences

NPHA data have been featured hundreds of times across major media outlets, including *The New York Times*, *US News & World Report*, *CNN*, *NPR*, *Politico*, *The Washington Post*, *HealthDay News*, *Newsweek*, *People*, *Reuters*, *Forbes*, *NBC News*, *Consumer Reports*, *Fortune*, and *USA Today*. NPHA results have also been covered widely in more specialized professional publications such as *CIDRAP News* and *McKnight's Senior Living*, and in Michigan media outlets like the *Detroit Free Press* and *Bridge Michigan*.

In the past year, the poll's website had over 129,000 views, and press releases had 100,000 views.

The NPHA team has created and disseminated nearly 25 videos that have 40,000 views on YouTube, including an overview of the poll and a presentation on how to use poll data.

NPHA reports and poll extras reach large audiences through U-M communications channels, including the Michigan Health Lab blog, Michigan Medicine social media accounts, and the U-M Alumni Association Education Gateway, curated for U-M's 640,000+ alumni and also accessible to the general public.

Since fall 2023, the NPHA team and the Michigan Medicine Department of Communications produced nine broadcast clip packages for local and regional news stations with video segments featuring poll data. These packages have formed the basis for more than 100 documented stores on 16 stations across 13 markets in the Midwest, and several markets in Florida and Texas, reaching more than three million people and an estimated publicity value of over $775,000.

Poll evidence informs policymaking

The NPHA has played a pivotal role in shaping policies that enhance the well-being of older adults across the nation. NPHA data has been cited in congressional testimonies in the U.S. House and Senate and included in the introduction of legislation. The poll team regularly engages with bipartisan legislative staff, ensuring that policymakers have access to the latest evidence to guide decision-making.

Looking to the future

In its first eight years, the NPHA fully established itself as a well-respected, accessible, and timely source of information about the health and aging experiences and preferences of adults age 50 and older from across the country and the state of Michigan. With ongoing and emerging challenges facing the nation's growing older population and the health systems that care for them, the NPHA regularly reveals insights from older adults that can advance policy, public health, and health care innovations to support healthy aging and the delivery of age-friendly care. The NPHA team looks forward to continuing to effectively elevate the voices of older adults to achieve even greater impact well into the future.

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