

# Experiences of Nursing Home Residents During the Pandemic:

*What we learned from residents about  
their lives under Covid-19 restrictions  
and what we can do about it*

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# Experiences of Nursing Home Residents: Social Isolation, Loneliness, Safety & Care



- ▲ Altarum's Program to Improve Eldercare saw that no one had asked residents directly what their experiences are like during Covid-19
- ▲ Decision was made to develop, fund, field an online survey for distribution to interested residents in any U.S. nursing home
- ▲ Link to the full [survey](#)
- ▲ Distributed with help from Ombudsmen, Consumer Voice, LeadingAge, AHCA, AMDA, and others
- ▲ Online survey open during July and August 2020
- ▲ 365 responses from 36 different states

## *A Second, Silent Epidemic:*

Social interactions *within and outside* the nursing home dropped sharply

- ▲ **13%** reported eating meals in the dining room after Covid-19, **69%** before the outbreak.
- ▲ **5%** of respondents reported having visitors 3+ times per week, compared to **56%** before the outbreak.
- ▲ **28%** went outside for fresh air one or more times a week -- **83%** before the pandemic.



**76%**  
*felt lonelier  
than usual*



## *A Second, Silent Epidemic:*

Social interactions *within and outside* the nursing home dropped sharply

- ▲ **93%** did not leave their nursing home for routine activities, e.g., shopping and visiting family, **42%** before restrictions.



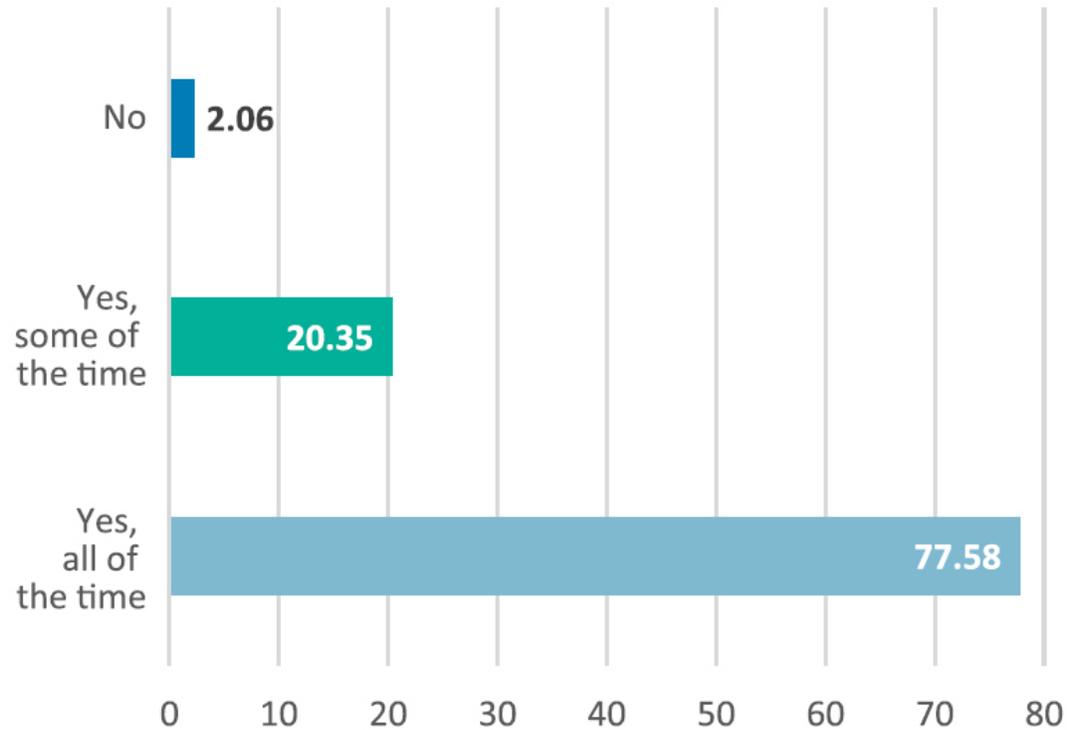
**64%**  
*did not leave  
their rooms  
to socialize*



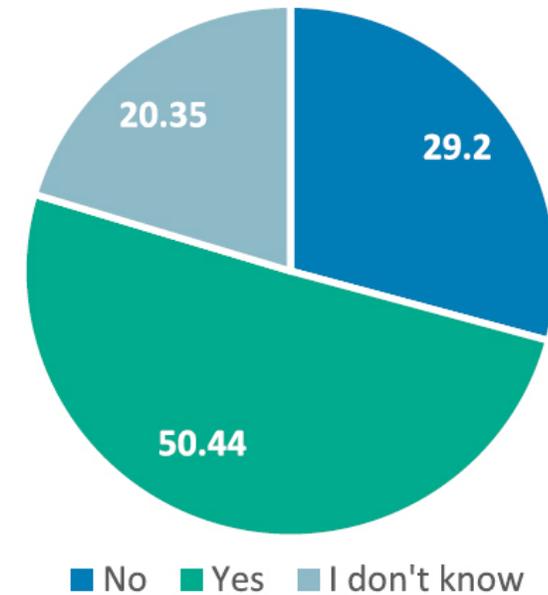
# Safety & Care



Do staff wear protective gear (e.g., masks, gloves, etc.) when they help you bathe, dress, or eat?



AFTER the Coronavirus restrictions, are there less staff available now to take care of you?



# Residents' Voices



*“If the virus doesn’t kill me the loneliness will.”*

*“Covid-19 has limited my visits with my son; there is no hope.”*

*“I feel like I am in prison and need to get out and visit my kids and grandkids and be able to run around town with my daughter.”*

*“I have become more anxious and depressed due to the separation from my loved ones. I have little appetite and am losing weight.”*

*“I miss hugs and touch, especially from my family members!”*

# Residents' Voices



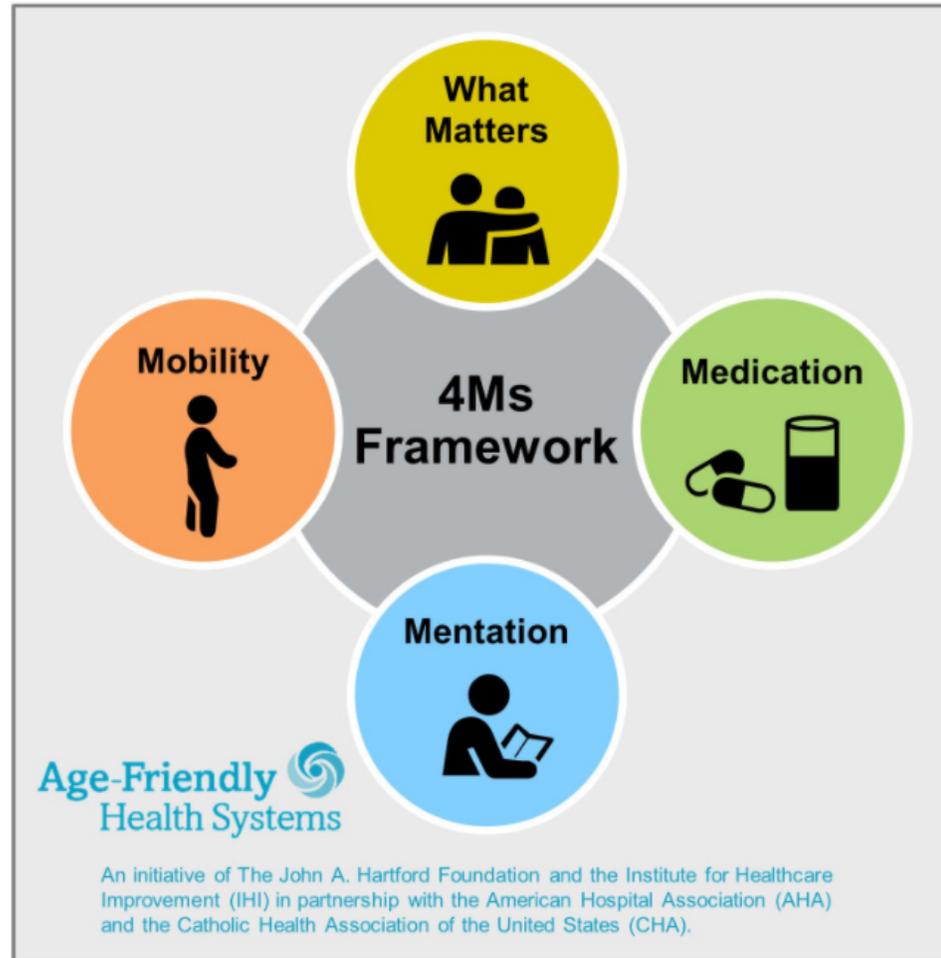
*I want visitors to be able to come inside to see me. I don't want to be restricted to my room all day and night. I want decent food and to have access to it. I want to be able to walk outside of my room and to see my friends and family that I would usually see daily. I want to regain my strength, better quality of life and independence. I want to be informed regularly about what the facility is doing and what is going to happen. I want to have my rights restored. I want to have the freedom to come and go like everyone else.*

## Recommendations: *What we learned from residents about life during Covid-19 and what we can do about it*



- ▲ Provide residents with reliable, regular **access to communication** technology.
- ▲ Weather permitting, allow residents **to leave their room every day and go outside.**
- ▲ Ensure that residents nearing the end of life have **opportunities to see their families before the last few hours of life.**
- ▲ Provide **staff training** on: PPE; infection control; end-of-life care; resident isolation.
- ▲ Add **loneliness** and isolation to assessment and **care planning.**
- ▲ Direct CMS to require nursing homes to **report resident social isolation** and loneliness on a regular basis.
- ▲ Direct Long-Term Care **Ombudsmen** to pay close attention to **reports of social isolation.**
- ▲ Hold **Congressional hearings** and sponsor discussions for nursing home providers, public health officials, and the public about the dangers to elders of being socially isolated and how to remedy isolation.

# Use 4Ms to Focus on Resident Needs and Wants



## What Matters

Know and align care with each older adult's specific health outcome goals and care preferences including, but not limited to, end-of-life care, and across settings of care.

## Medication

If medication is necessary, use Age-Friendly medication that does not interfere with What Matters to the older adult, Mobility, or Mentation across settings of care.

## Mentation

Prevent, identify, treat, and manage dementia, depression, and delirium across settings of care.

## Mobility

Ensure that older adults move safely every day in order to maintain function and do What Matters.

For related work, this graphic may be used in its entirety without requesting permission.  
Graphic files and guidance at [ihi.org/AgeFriendly](http://ihi.org/AgeFriendly)

# What's Next

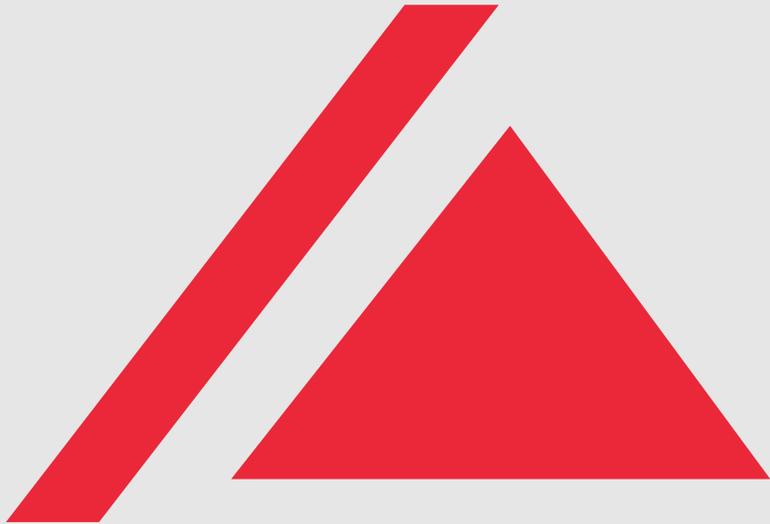


- ▲ National Academy of Medicine report
- ▲ Big Tent convening – planning toolkits for nursing homes, regulators, families, residents on promoting connection/reducing isolation
- ▲ Congress is paying attention
  - Grassley bill - Emergency Support for Nursing Homes and Elder Justice Reform Act
  - Casey bill - Nursing Home COVID-19 Protection and Prevention Act

# Resources: *What we learned from residents about life during Covid-19 and what we can do about it*



- ▲ **Coronavirus Commission for Safety and Quality in Nursing Homes Final Report.** Produced by MITRE Corporation for the U. S. Government. September 2020.
- ▲ **Nursing Home Visitation—Covid-19.** September 17, 2020. CMS’s updated guidance regarding visitation in nursing homes during the Covid-19 public health emergency.
- ▲ **Person-Centered Guidelines for Preserving Family Presence in Challenging Times.** Planetree. May 28, 2020 (updated 9.1.20). Guidelines for preserving family presence co-developed by an international, multi-stakeholder “pop-up” coalition including patient, resident, family and elder advocates, experts in quality, safety and infection control, clinicians, policymakers, and healthcare executives from a variety of care settings.
- ▲ **Recommendations to Allow Nursing Home Residents to Have Increased In-Person Contact with Family and Friends During the Covid-19 Pandemic.** The National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care. September 4, 2020. Offers CMS recommendations for nursing home visitation requirements during Covid-19 that will promote and protect resident welfare.
- ▲ **Covid-19 and Distance Socializing between People Living in a Residential Facility and Caregivers in the Context of a Visitors Ban.** Ministry of Health and Social Services, Gouvernement du Québec. March 31, 2020. A summary review of the published data to mobilize key knowledge and provide information to policy makers and to health and social service professionals.



Thank You!

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