



## A Mental Burden: New GoHealth Report Details Seniors' Struggle With Social Distancing

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**New study finds that pandemic-related isolation is leading to mental and physical health declines among seniors, but many are finding ways to cope.**

CHICAGO, Oct. 8, 2020 /PRNewswire/ -- While social distancing has been vital in keeping our seniors safe during the COVID-19 pandemic, those measures have had unintended consequences on the population's mental health. These findings are detailed in the new report, "[The Effect of Isolation on Older Americans](#)." GoHealth, Inc. (GoHealth) (NASDAQ: GOCO), today released a report that shows many seniors aren't only feeling lonely. They're experiencing anxiety, depression, sleep changes, among other mental and physical health declines.

**80% said the pandemic has impacted how often they see their family or friends, and roughly a quarter have felt a decline in physical health (26%) and/or mental health (25%). 29% feel lonely, of which almost all (92%) are feeling more lonely compared to the beginning of the pandemic.**

"Mental health can affect people at any stage of their life," said Clint Jones, co-founder & CEO of GoHealth. "Whether in adolescence or the golden years, people are struggling, especially during the pandemic, and we have to be more aware, ask questions, and reduce the stigma that creates barriers to much-needed help on the way to recovery."

To better understand the pandemic's effects on this group, GoHealth conducted 1,000 online interviews in mid-August 2020. Respondents were Medicare beneficiaries, age 65 and older in various income brackets and geographical regions to guarantee adequate representative sampling.

### Key Findings

- 33% live alone
- 28% haven't visited in-person with a non-household member in five or more months
- 49% are practicing more social distancing than compared with the beginning of the pandemic
- 29% feel lonely (Of those that live alone, 40% are lonely. Of those who live with others, only 24% are lonely.)
- For those experiencing mental health declines: 85% experience anxiety, 78% depression, or 76% irritability
- For those experiencing physical health declines: 87% experience fatigue or decreased energy, 70% changes in sleep, or 63% changes in appetite
- To cope, 73% have taken walks outdoors, 56% have visited with friends or family outdoors, and 47% have had video calls with others

### Additional Insights

- Women (28%) were more likely than men (18%) to report declines in mental well-being
- 33% of women feel lonely, while only 22% of men say the same. Women (94%) were more likely than men (88%) to say they feel more lonely now than at the beginning of the pandemic.
- While most Medicare beneficiaries know their access to mental health resources, 21% don't know or aren't sure.
- 47% participated in video calls with friends or family to prevent loneliness. Of those, 50% said they began using video conferencing technology after the pandemic began.

"We've built our customer-focused platform to be a first line of defense -- from knowing what each of our customers' individual needs are, to helping them understand and fully utilize their Medicare plan's offerings," said Ben Miller, Senior Vice President of Strategic Partnerships. "If feelings of anxiety or depression have an adverse affect on a person's ability to eat well, exercise, or follow a medication regimen, it's no wonder their health may decline. We aim to be a true partner to the customer to connect them to Medicare plans that can provide them benefits to improve their health, but also engage and connect them through our Encompass Platform into the programming and benefits that exist to address mental health. We want to help them connect to resources and solutions to improve both physical and mental health. And, with the upcoming Medicare annual enrollment period, we want to help people understand which Medicare plans are geared around this to improve their health outcomes."

Learn more about [GoHealth's Encompass Platform](#) and how it delivers personalized benefits navigation and customer health connectivity.

For more information about "The Effect of Isolation on Older Americans" report, visit <https://www.gohealth.com/effect-of-isolation-on-older-americans-report/>.

### About GoHealth, Inc.

As a leading health insurance marketplace, GoHealth's mission is to improve access to healthcare in America. Enrolling in a health insurance plan can be confusing for customers, and the seemingly small differences between plans can lead to significant out-of-pocket costs or lack of access to critical medicines and even providers. GoHealth combines cutting-edge technology, data science and deep industry expertise to match customers with the healthcare policy and carrier that is right for them. Since its inception, GoHealth has enrolled millions of people in Medicare and individual and family plans. For more information, visit <https://www.gohealth.com/>.

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