**SURVEY: One Pricey Trip to the ER Ranks First in Worries for Americans 55 and Older**

**One in four have also avoided at least one medical procedure due to expense**

**December 12, 2018 –** New York, NY **–**This year’s midterm election outcomes portend great potential for preserving health-related programs near and dear to aging Americans, from thwarting threats to Medicaid to preserving the Affordable Care Act (with special emphasis on threats to pre-existing condition protections), considering Medicare for All proposals and lowering prescription drug costs, all of which prompted The NHP Foundation, a not-for-profit provider of service-enriched affordable housing, **to look at how seniors are budgeting for housing and health.** The survey queried 500+ Americans 55 and older earning less than $60,000 per year (66% of whom are retired).

**Results show that, despite the new shift in Congress, 48% of seniors surveyed are “concerned to extremely concerned” that one costly emergency room visit will have devastating financial impact.** A quarter of the surveyed population also consider their health insurance burden only “somewhat manageable” or “not manageable” at all.

These financial fears have also prompted a full **25% of those surveyed** **to put off recommended medical procedures or appointments due to monetary worries.**

Considering that those surveyed make less than $60,000 a year (58% earn $35,000 or less), these fears are well-founded. **75% have monthly prescription drug costs and half of those surveyed have a chronic health condition requiring regular checkups.**

What’s the best prescription for this steadily growing share of the population? When it comes to taking care of their health, **50% of respondents ranked “stable housing” and “steady income” as the greatest factors to staying healthy.**

The same percentage is “concerned to extremely concerned” about maintaining this stable housing as they age. This information dovetails with Harvard’s Joint Center for Housing Studies (JCHS) recent look at older adult households. [Housing America’s Older Adults 2018,](http://www.jchs.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/Harvard_JCHS_Housing_Americas_Older_Adults_2018_1.pdf) which showed that 50% of all older renter households are cost-burdened and 41% of those 65+ still have mortgages.

Housing, [studies show,](https://www.csh.org/resources/housing-is-the-best-medicine-supportive-housing-and-the-social-determinants-of-health/) provides the greatest determinant of social well-being and health, particularly for low to middle income people living with chronic conditions, such as many seniors.

[Joshua Bamberger,](https://www.linkedin.com/in/joshua-bamberger-md-mph-b40860127/) a physician working with homeless seniors recently said that his greatest hope for America was that “no one over the age of 55 spend a night on the streets, a 55 year old homeless person has the health status of a 70 year old housed person,” and he feels that the healthcare industry can do a lot more to ensure that low income seniors have adequate housing and healthcare.

And it seems the industry is beginning to heed the call. Health insurance giant [Kaiser Permanente](https://www.citylab.com/equity/2018/05/a-healthcare-giant-enters-the-battle-for-cheaper-housing/560741/) recently pledged $200M toward affordable housing that will particularly aid those for whom medical care and housing costs are a serious burden. And the University of Illinois has seen [successful outcomes](https://www.fastcompany.com/40516121/why-hospitals-are-subsidizing-apartments-for-the-homeless) arising from housing many at-risk seniors and others.

These commitments coincide with an affordable housing reboot that many in the industry are calling for.

“We are looking to partner with others in affordable housing as well as healthcare, investment, policy and social services to explore a variety of strategies to ensure housing and healthcare for aging Americans,” said Dick Burns, President & CEO, The NHP Foundation. “Ideas include a new collaborative funding model of privatized housing vouchers to cover the rent for those in need.” Burns added that existing rental units made available via organizations such as NHPF and funded by investor-supported vouchers could be the key to much-needed housing and health stability for seniors now and in the future.

The NHP Foundation Senior Housing and Health survey is the sixth in a series. Other surveys have queried Baby Boomers on retirement planning finding that [**76% of those who say they rent or have a mortgage have no retirement budget.**](http://nhpfoundation.org/documents/FINAL%20RETIREMENT%20CONFIDENCE%20SURVEY%203.20.pdf) A survey of the general population about housing affordability, determined that [**75% of the population worried at any given time about losing their housing**](http://www.nhpfoundation.org/documents/PRWeb%20Survey%20090816.pdf) and a survey of millennials found that [**76% of that group have made compromises in order to find affordable housing.**](http://www.nhpfoundation.org/documents/prweb%20Millennials%20Survey%20101916.pdf)

**About The NHP Foundation**Headquartered in New York City with offices in Washington, DC, and Chicago, IL, The NHP Foundation (NHPF) was launched on January 30, 1989, as a publicly supported 501(c)(3) not-for- profit real estate corporation.  NHPF is dedicated to preserving and creating sustainable, service-enriched multifamily housing that is both affordable to low and moderate income families and seniors, and beneficial to their communities.  NHPF also provides a robust resident services program to nearly 18,000 community residents. Through partnerships with major financial institutions, the public sector, faith-based initiatives, and other not-for-profit organizations, NHPF has 49 properties, with more than 8,000 units, in 15 states and the District of Columbia.