

## 10 Powerful Senior Living Statistics

GlynnDevins advertising and marketing agency pulled together 10 powerful, surprising, startling and interesting statistics in the field of senior living. They hope providers will find them useful in their marketing and communications to help make the case as to why community living may be the best option.

### 1. Many ignore the reality of long-term care.

You may have heard the statistic that nearly 7 out of 10 Americans over age 65 will need long-term care, but did you know in a study by [Genworth Financial](#), more than half of all respondents (55%) reported that their greatest fear regarding a long-term care illness or event was being a burden on their family. In fact, they reported being five times more concerned about being a burden than dying. However, more than 90% surveyed have not talked about critical long-term care issues with their spouse/partner, aging parents or adult children. Perhaps this is why AARP recently launched its [Decide.Create.Share.<sup>sm</sup> program](#) to provide planning education and tools.

### 2. BINGO and sewing are *not* favorite activities among seniors.

At Exploritas, formerly known as Elderhostel, [the proportion of travel adventurers over age 85 has increased more than 70 percent since 2004](#). In [another study](#), seniors reported their common activities were reading (71%) and pursuing religious activities (53%). Other popular activities included bicycling, gardening, talking on the telephone and watching television. Even tennis, swimming, golf and exercise classes were more frequent forms of recreation than bingo or sewing.

### 3. Socialization is still a key to healthy aging.

Harvard School of Public Health (HSPH) researchers found evidence that [elderly people in the U.S. who have an active social life may have a slower rate of memory decline](#). In fact, memory decline among the most sociable was less than half the rate among the least sociable. Senior author Lisa Berkman, chair of the Department of Society, Human Development and Health, went on to say, "We know from previous studies that people with many social ties have lower mortality rates. We now have mounting evidence that strong social networks can help to prevent declines in memory. As our society ages and has more and more older people, it will be important to promote their engagement in social and community life to maintain their well-being."

### 4. Many families are affected financially *and* emotionally by long-term care.

The cost of long-term care extends beyond the senior. In the Genworth Financial study cited above in #1, 83% of primary caregivers contributed financially during a long-term care situation – an average \$8,800 for out-of-pocket care expenses. In the same study, 44% of primary caregivers experienced increased stress with their spouse during a long-term care situation.

### 5. Occupancy trends are looking up.

According to the National Investment Center for the Seniors Housing and Care Industry, the average occupancy rate for senior housing properties was 88.1% during the third quarter of 2011, up 0.2% from the previous quarter, showing [occupancy rates continuing to recover](#). In fact, the senior housing average occupancy rate has risen in six consecutive quarters.

### 6. Staying active is important.

[A study at Hebrew University Medical Center and Hebrew University Hadassah Medical School](#) reported that seniors who do any amount of exercise appear to live longer and have a lower risk of disability. In addition, the [benefits associated with physical activity](#) were seen not only in individuals who maintained an existing level of physical activity, but also in those who began exercising between ages 70 and 85.

**7. “I wish I’d done this sooner” is still a popular phrase.**

According to the *2009 Independent Living Report* by the ProMatura Group, LLC, research shows that when you become part of an independent living retirement community, you’re more likely to make new friends and try new things — most report a better experience than they expected.

**8. If you’re over 70, owning your house may not make as much sense as it once did.**

As a long-time homeowner, maintenance costs are sure to be a future necessity. We’ve researched several websites and found the following cost estimates for maintaining your home, which may vary depending on what area you live in. According to CostHelper.com, it costs approximately \$10,000 to replace your furnace and central air conditioner system. Lawn care for 10 years is approximately \$25,000, according to The-Lawn-Advisor.com. Depending on size, shape and quality, CostVsValue.com says replacement windows for an average home is \$11,000, and the average roof replacement using composite shingles costs roughly \$20,000.

**9. Not everyone dreams of retiring.**

In fact, [some people are rejecting retirement all together](#) and continuing to work into their 90s. According to the U.S. Department of Labor statistics, there are 1.2 million people 75 and older who work full- or part-time. By 2019, [more than 40 percent of Americans 55-plus will be working](#), making up over 25% of the U.S. labor force.

**10. How does your community compare?**

Washington, D.C. tops the national average cost for assisted living at over \$5,700 per month. To see where your community stacks up in assisted living, nursing, adult day service or home care, check out [this great resource by MetLife](#).

Source: GlynnDevins, *Insights – Sharing Ideas for Senior Living*, December 12, 2012, By [Andrea Graham](#)