

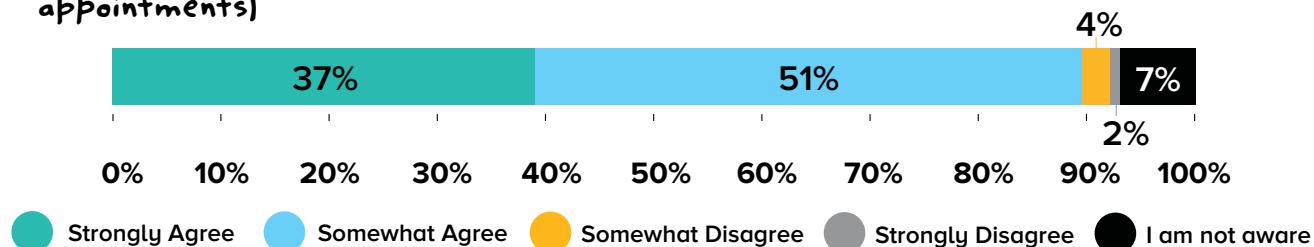


Rural VIP No. 8: Seniors' Health and Well-being during COVID-19

The eighth survey for the members of the Rural Voice Information Panel (Rural VIP) was sent out May 7, 2020 to 184 members. When the survey closed on May 18, a total of 57 panel members (31%) had completed the five-question survey. This document provides a summary of the responses.

1. Rate your agreement with the following statements:

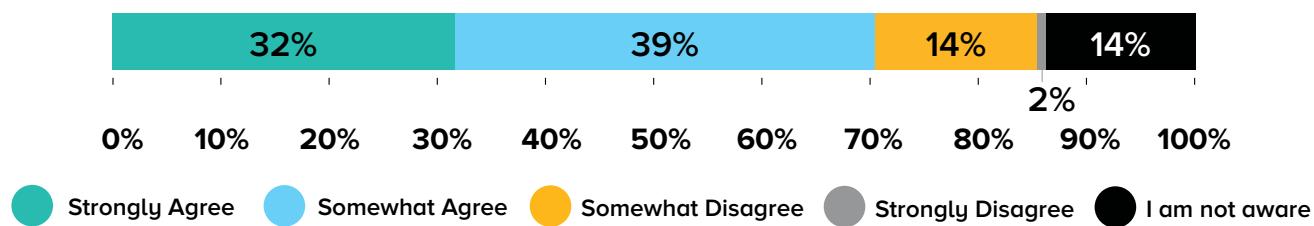
My community has services for seniors' personal health during COVID-19 (e.g. grocery delivery, prescription pickup, transportation to medical appointments)



Good to know

- Nearly 90 per cent of respondents somewhat or strongly agreed that their communities had supports for seniors' personal health during COVID-19, such as grocery delivery, prescription pickup, or transportation to medical appointments.

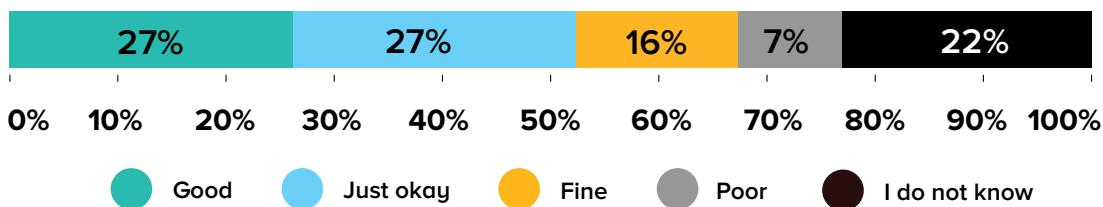
My community has supports for seniors' mental well-being during COVID-19 (e.g. social distance check-ins through phone or video calls, outdoor visits)



Good to know

- Overall, 71 per cent of respondents somewhat or strongly agreed that their communities had supports for seniors' mental well-being, such as social distance check-ins through phone or video calls or outdoor visits.

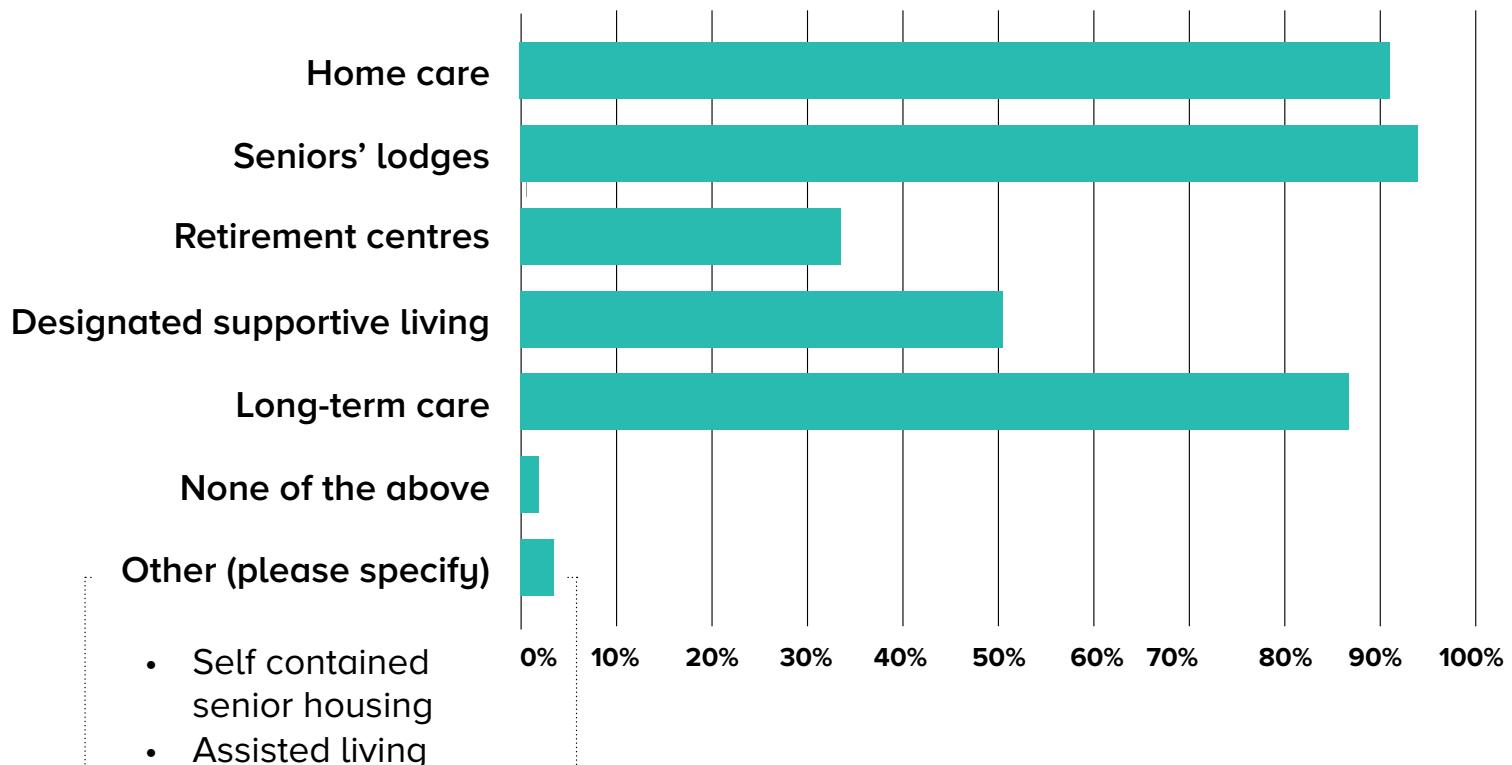
2. In general, how is the emotional health of seniors in your community right now?

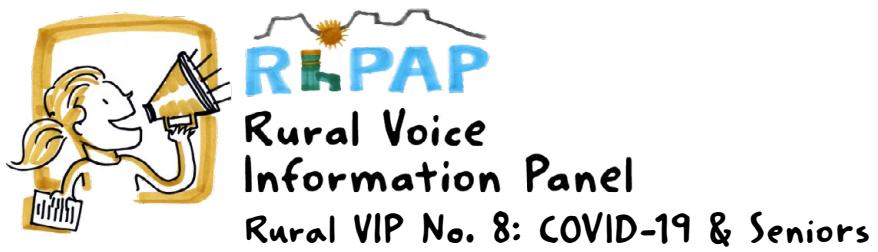


Good to know

- 54 per cent of respondents reported that the emotional health of seniors in their community was good or just okay; 16 per cent said that seniors were fine, and seven per cent said seniors' emotional health was poor.

3. Which of the following continuing care facilities and services are available in your community (select all that apply):



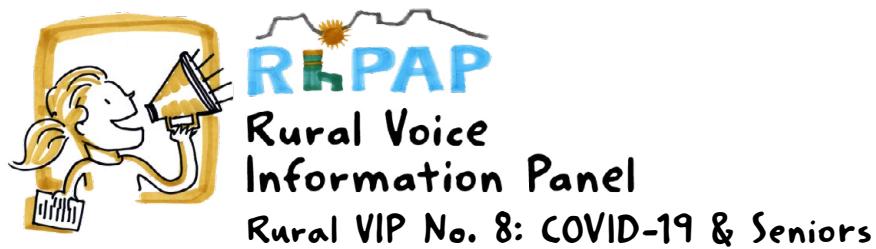


What you said about senior emotional health:

“My community is very family-oriented and finds it very hard not to be able to visit our parents and spouses in the senior facilities. In the 2 months of isolation, senior health has really gone down. We see this in our senior customers that do come to the stores that are open.

Also, our seniors don’t have Skype or social media. They feel devastated not to be able to go to church. I think that might be the biggest hardship for them and the whole community in general.”



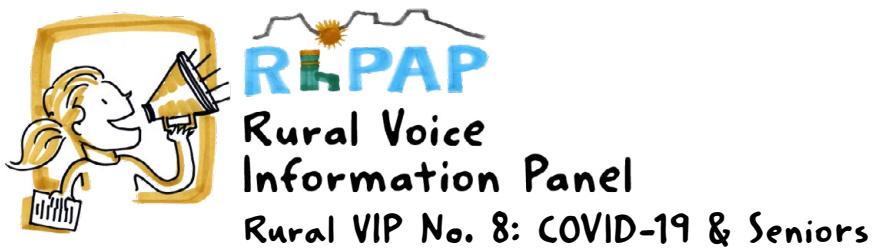


4. In last month's survey, we asked about acts of kindness taking place during the pandemic and received many comments about caring for seniors. Have you seen or provided supports for seniors in your community that we could share through the RhPAP website and social media? If so, please provide a brief description below:

# of comments	Theme of the comments
13	Helping with seniors' personal health needs Providing deliveries, rides to medical appointments, meals and care packages, and mental health resources
11	Staying connected, creatively Outdoor and distance visits, using technology to remain connected, writing cards and letters, outdoor music performances, wellness checks and visits over the phone
4	Showing support and gratitude Parades and drive-by events, giving custom t-shirts with an appreciation letter to the local lodge
3	Other Not aware, isolation challenges facing seniors and their families

Good to know

- Respondents shared many examples of the creative and caring gestures taking place throughout their communities to support senior citizens during the pandemic.



What you said about acts of kindness: (sample comments)...

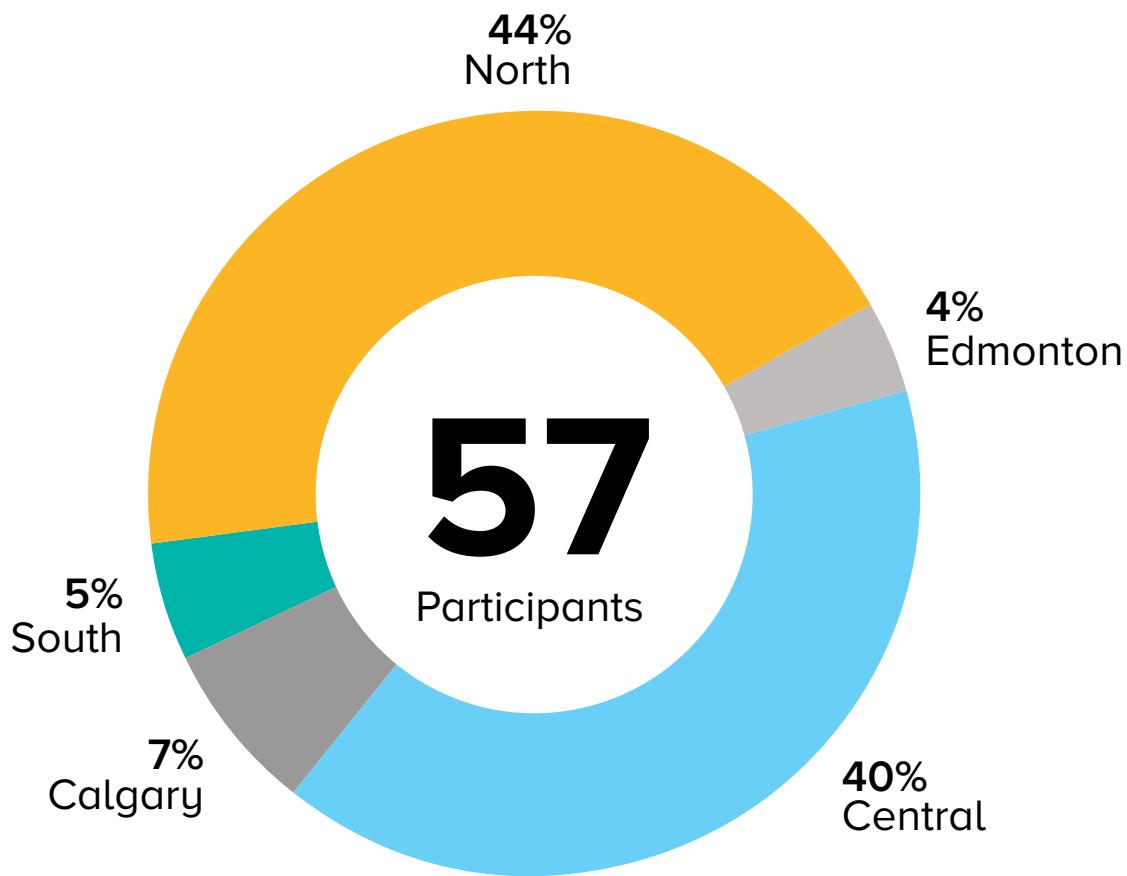
- “Our local drugstore owner has delivered prescriptions and items from the drugstore to our lodge and villa that the residents request. Since both places have been in lockdown, he has given each resident a gift card and one day, he went and purchased KFC for both places for the residents. I love our community!”
- “Music events have been provided by people in our community – performers outside the facility with the audience inside – a truly unique and appreciated series of events.”
- “Our FCSS department was able to repurpose a New Horizons [for Seniors Program] federal grant and provide 10 seniors’ locations in our region with TVs outfitted to allow seniors to communicate with their families through social media, as their families are not allowed to visit. This project also required internet to be installed at some of these sites. The project has caused considerable excitement for the staff and residents in our region, as these seniors will now be able to communicate with their loved ones.”
- “A nurse in our medical clinic is keeping a list of seniors or other individuals that are struggling with isolation. She phones them weekly or on a more frequent basis to check in and have a phone visit.”
- “[...] local business and private citizens have stepped forward and helped with delivery of essentials to seniors.”
- “Our local Rotary Club donated Chromebooks or tablets to the Extended Care Unit at the hospital for residents to use.”
- “As there are no funerals, our farming neighborhood [planned] a drive-by the farm on a Sunday afternoon to show support for the farm wife and family. 75 vehicles [participated] including our local firetruck that led the way.”



For more examples of what rural Alberta has been doing during the pandemic, visit rhpap.ca/COVID-19



5. In which AHS (Alberta Health Services) zone do you live?



* Totals may not add due to rounding

What will we do with this feedback?

RhPAP values the ideas and suggestions you provided about how we could further support your community during the pandemic. We will continue to share your stories through the RhPAP website and on our social media channels. Visit rhpap.ca/COVID-19 to read our Rural Health Beat coverage of rural Alberta during the pandemic.

Questions about RhPAP's Rural Voice Information Panel?

Email us at ruralVIP@rhpap.ca