
Health Unit *A Partnership of the Kaiser Family Foundation and The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer*

The
**NEWS
HOUR**
with Jim Lehrer

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Highlights and Chartpack

The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer/Kaiser Family Foundation/Harvard School of Public Health

National Survey on Nursing Homes

October 2001

Methodology:

The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer/Kaiser Family Foundation/Harvard School of Public Health National Survey on Nursing Homes is a product of an ongoing partnership between *The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer* and the Kaiser Family Foundation to improve coverage of health issues. The Foundation provides financial support for *The NewsHour* Health Unit, conducts surveys with *The NewsHour* and provides background research on certain health-related issues covered by *The NewsHour*. The Kaiser/Harvard survey research team, led by Dr. Mollyann Brodie, Vice President of the Kaiser Family Foundation, and Professor Robert Blendon of the Harvard School of Public Health, worked with *The NewsHour* to develop the survey questionnaire and to analyze the results with *The NewsHour* maintaining sole editorial control over its broadcasts on the survey.

The results of this project are based on a telephone survey conducted from April 23, 2001 – June 3, 2001 among a randomly selected nationally representative sample of 1309 adults, 18 years or older. The study included an oversample of 301 adults age 45 and over. For the purposes of this analysis we defined “people with substantial nursing home experience” (323 adults), as those who, in the past three years, have been a resident in a nursing home or have known someone in a nursing home AND visited them at least once a month over that time. The margin of sampling error is +/-3 percentage points for the whole sample, and +/- 6 percentage points for the experienced group. For results based on subsets of respondents, the margin of error is higher. Note that in addition to sampling error, there are other possible sources of measurement error. Fieldwork was conducted by ICR/International Communications Research.

Note: (vol.) means response was volunteered by respondent, not an explicitly offered choice. Citations for facts reported are given at the end of the chartpack on the reference page.

The Kaiser Family Foundation is an independent, national health care philanthropy dedicated to providing information and analysis on health issues to policymakers, the media, and the general public. The Foundation is not associated with Kaiser Permanente or Kaiser Industries.

The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer, which is broadcast on more than 300 PBS stations nationally and by satellite throughout much of the world, is produced by MacNeil/Lehrer Productions. *The NewsHour* is funded by Archer Daniels Midland, Travelers Insurance, Salomon Smith Barney, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and PBS viewers.

Survey Highlights

A new national survey by *The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer*, the Kaiser Family Foundation, and the Harvard School of Public Health finds that Americans see an important role for nursing homes in providing care for those not able to care for themselves, yet they also voice significant concerns about the care provided in nursing homes. People who have had substantial experience with a friend or family member in a nursing home, or who have themselves been in a nursing home,¹ have generally positive views about the care provided. However, an important minority of those with experience say that the person they know has received poor quality care in the nursing home, with around a quarter reporting that the resident they know has been abused and a quarter reporting that the resident has been overmedicated.

The public's attitudes about nursing homes are mixed. Around a third says nursing homes are doing a good job serving health care consumers, around a third says they are doing a bad job, and the rest say they do a mixed job or that they don't know. Furthermore, six in ten Americans see an important role for nursing homes in providing affordable, round-the-clock care to people who need it. Yet on the other hand, majorities of the public believes that nursing homes are understaffed, that nursing home staff are often poorly trained, that at least some nursing home residents are abused and neglected, that many residents do not have enough privacy and cannot rely on the safety of their belongings, and that many residents are lonely. About half of Americans would be reluctant to move into a nursing home if they could not take care of themselves at home. The vast majority of the public believes that most people who enter a nursing home never go home, and nearly half the public believes that being in a nursing home makes people worse off than they were before coming to the nursing home.

The vast majority of Americans say they are familiar with both nursing homes and assisted living facilities. However, people are more likely to have heard, read, or seen a news story about nursing homes than about assisted living facilities in the last year. Most Americans recognize that care in a nursing home or assisted living facility is expensive, and that long-term care can sometimes lead to bankruptcy. A majority of Americans knows that the government currently regulates nursing homes.

However, there is also confusion about long-term care issues, with the majority of Americans saying they don't know where they would go for advice or information about long-term care, and with many Americans unsure about the role the government programs Medicare and Medicaid play in covering part of peoples' long-term care costs.

¹ About 2 in 10 (23%) Americans have had substantial experience with a resident in a nursing home. For the purposes of this analysis, people with substantial experience are defined as those who, in the past three years, have been a resident in a nursing home or have known someone in a nursing home AND visited them at least once a month over that time.

The majority of Americans see an important role for the government in long-term care, both in regulating the quality of long-term care facilities and in helping finance the costs for nursing home care. Majorities of Americans say the government is not doing enough to enforce existing quality standards for nursing homes and favors increasing regulation of nursing home quality. While assisted living facilities are not currently regulated, the majority of Americans favors government regulation of these facilities. And in terms of financing, seven in ten Americans favor the federal government doing more to help pay for nursing home care even if it requires an increase in taxes. Americans tend to prefer expanding government programs over tax credits and deductions.

Among those with nursing home experience, about one third have made a complaint to the administration of a nursing home and almost one in ten have made a complaint to a state or federal government agency. Often these complaints were not resolved to their satisfaction.

I. Attitudes and Perceptions About Nursing Homes and Assisted Living Facilities

General Attitudes and Perceptions

- ***Eight in ten Americans say they are familiar with both nursing homes and assisted living facilities.*** Americans are equally likely to say they have heard of or read about nursing homes (83%) and assisted living facilities (80%). (Chart 1) A third of Americans have had a friend or family member who was in a nursing home in the last three years and almost a quarter (24%) report that a friend or family member was in an assisted living facility during that time.
- ***Americans give nursing homes mixed ratings, with around a third saying nursing homes are doing a good job serving health care consumers (34%), around a third saying they are doing a bad job (35%), and the rest saying they do a mixed job (13%) and or that they don't know (18%). The public is more likely to have favorable impressions of assisted living facilities than nursing homes.*** (Chart 2)
 - Over one third (34%) of the public thinks nursing homes are doing a good job compared to 50% who say that assisted living facilities are doing a good job. Thirteen percent of the public say nursing homes are doing a mixed job compared to 7% who say this for assisted living facilities. Roughly two in ten people (18%) say they don't know how nursing homes are doing compared to 27% who say this for assisted living facilities.
 - Among the bad job ratings, health insurance companies (50%) and HMOs (47%) rank above nursing homes (35%), which are roughly tied with pharmaceutical companies (33%). Americans are less likely to give hospitals (17%), assisted living facilities (16%), doctors (13%), and nurses (6%) a "bad job" rating.
 - Americans who have had substantial experience are more likely than those without experience to say nursing homes (47% vs. 31%) are doing a bad job in serving health care consumers.
- ***Four in ten (40%) people say their views of nursing homes are based on personal experience, compared to around 6 in 10 (58%) who say their views are based on what they've learned from the media or from friends and family members. People are even less likely to say their views of assisted living facilities are based mainly on personal experience (22%).*** Just over seven in ten (71%) say their views of assisted living facilities are based on information from the media or friends and family. (Chart 3)
- ***People are more likely to say they have seen, read, or heard a news story about nursing homes than assisted living facilities (60% vs. 44%) in the last year.*** (Chart 4)

- ***A large majority (68%) of Americans believe that around 1 in 4 or even fewer of all people age 65 and older go into nursing homes.*** In reality, 43% of people who in 1990 turned age 65 were expected to spend time in a nursing home before they die.¹ (Chart 5)
- ***The vast majority (86%) of the public believes that most people who enter a nursing home never go home, and nearly half (45%) of the public believes that being in a nursing home makes people worse off than they were before coming to the nursing home.*** Almost a quarter (24%) of the public says that nursing homes make people better off than they were before, and 21% believes that being in a nursing home doesn't make much difference. (Fact: Among the 2.1 million nursing home patients discharged from a nursing home in 1997, 29% were discharged because they stabilized or recovered, 28% were admitted to a hospital, 8% went to another nursing home, and 27% died in the nursing home.²) (Chart 6)
- ***A majority of Americans (57%) say they would accept moving into a nursing home if they could not take care of themselves at home. However, this is often a reluctant acceptance, and hospitals and assisted living facilities tend to be viewed as preferable options over nursing homes.*** Forty-seven percent (47%) say they wouldn't like moving into a nursing home, but they would accept it as being the best thing for them, compared to 10% who would accept it with less hesitation. More than four in ten (43%) Americans would find moving into a nursing home totally unacceptable. (Chart 7) The majority (55%) of Americans say they would prefer a hospital over a nursing home if they were hospitalized and needed round-the-clock care, and over three-quarters (78%) prefer assisted living facilities to nursing homes. While these are Americans' preferences, often where people actually go is based on the severity of their disability. (Chart 8)

Perceptions About Nursing Home Care

- ***Americans see an important role for nursing homes in providing affordable, round-the-clock care.*** Six in ten (60%) Americans say that nursing homes provide an affordable way for people who need round-the-clock care to be able to get it. (Chart 9)
- ***In a few areas, the majority of Americans have positive views of nursing homes, seeing nursing homes as a place where many people can get needed help from concerned staff.*** (Chart 10)

Staff

- Over two thirds (67%) think nursing homes have staff who are concerned about the well-being of their patients.

Living Environment

- Seven in ten (71%) people believe almost all or many nursing home residents receive help they couldn't get if they were living alone.
- Nursing homes are thought by 69% of the public to provide frail and disabled people with a safe and protected environment they couldn't have at home.

- ***In other areas, views are more mixed...*** (Charts 11 and 12)

Care

- More than half (57%) think almost all or many residents receive help with bathing and feeding, but 40% believe only some or hardly any residents receive help.
- Over half (55%) of the public say that almost all or many nursing home residents receive the medical treatment they need, but 42% believe that that only some or hardly any receive the treatment they need.
- Just over half (52%) think some or hardly any nursing home residents receive enough nursing care when they need it, but 45% think that almost all or many receive enough nursing care.

Living Environment

- Just over half (52%) of Americans think almost all or many nursing home residents participate in more recreational and social activities than they could have if they were living at home, but 44% say this is true for only some or hardly any residents.
- Over half (52%) of Americans believe that some or hardly any nursing home residents make new friends, but 46% think almost all or many residents make new friends.
- Half (50%) the public believes some or hardly any nursing home residents live in clean facilities, while almost half (47%) think almost all or many live in clean facilities.
- Half (50%) of the public believes nursing homes provide high-quality services for people who need them. However, 45% disagree. (Chart 12)

Staff

- Half of Americans believe managers of nursing homes are concerned about their patients' well-being, but 42% disagree. (Chart 12)

- ***In many areas, majorities are more negative. For example, majorities believe that nursing homes are understaffed, that at least some residents are mistreated, and that many residents are lonely, lack privacy, and cannot rely on the safety of their personal belongings...*** (Charts 13 and 14)

Staff

- A large majority (80%) believes nursing homes don't have enough staff.
- About two thirds (65%) of Americans think the staff at nursing homes are often poorly trained.
- Six in ten (61%) Americans think there is too much waste, fraud, and abuse by managers of nursing homes.

Care

- Over three quarters (77%) believe the staff neglects at least some nursing home residents.
- Over three quarters (77%) of Americans believe at least some nursing home residents are overmedicated to make sure they behave.
- About two thirds (67%) say the staff abuses at least some nursing home residents.
- About two thirds (64%) of Americans think at least some nursing home residents are placed in physical restraints.
- Six in ten believe that only some or hardly any nursing home residents are treated with dignity.

Living Environment

- Seven in ten (71%) Americans believe some or hardly any nursing home residents have enough privacy.
- About two thirds (64%) think some or hardly any nursing home residents can rely on their personal belongings being safe.
- A majority (63%) of the public perceives many or almost all nursing home residents to feel lonely and isolated.
- Six in ten (62%) of the public thinks some or hardly any of nursing home residents have enough recreational activities.

- ***Americans with substantial experience with nursing homes hold more negative views of certain aspects of nursing homes than those without experience.*** People with substantial experience are more likely than those without nursing home experience to say almost all or many nursing home residents feel lonely and isolated (74% vs. 60%), to strongly agree that families of those who use nursing homes are not involved enough in what is going on with the nursing home resident (50% vs. 39%), to say hardly any nursing home residents can rely on their personal belongings being safe (37% vs. 27%), and to say that nursing home staff are not concerned about the well-being of residents (35% vs. 24%). However, Americans with substantial experience (40%) are more likely than those without nursing home experience (30%) to say almost all or many nursing home residents have enough recreational activities.
- ***Almost half (47%) of Americans say non-profit companies offer better quality nursing home services compared to roughly one third (35%) who say this about for-profit companies.*** People with substantial experience with nursing homes are more likely than those without experience to believe non-profit companies offer better quality nursing home services (54% vs. 45%).
- ***The majority (60%) of people say they don't know where they would go for advice or information if they or a family member needed nursing home or assisted living care, though people do say they could get helpful information from various sources when asked about them specifically.*** (Charts 15 and 16) More than eight in ten people say they could get helpful information from community service agencies (86%), doctors (85%), state and local government programs (85%), books or reports (84%), and friends and family (82%). More than seven in ten think information on the Internet from government agencies (75%) and their church or synagogue (72%) would be very or somewhat helpful, and a smaller majority (56%) thinks their lawyer would be very or somewhat helpful.
 - The majority (72%) of the public has not heard or read about government information that rates the quality of care at different nursing homes. People with substantial experience are more likely than those without (34% vs. 25%) to have heard or read about such information.

II. Views of Those with Substantial Nursing Home Experience

About two in ten Americans (23%) reported having substantial experience with a resident in a nursing home. For the purposes of this analysis, people with substantial experience are defined as those who report that, in the past three years, they have been a resident in a nursing home or have known someone in a nursing home AND visited them at least once a month over that time.

- ***The majority of Americans who have had substantial experience say the nursing home resident they know is satisfied with the services at their nursing home, but a sizable minority says the resident they know is dissatisfied.*** (Chart 17)

- About three quarters (74%) say they or their friend or family member would not want to move to another nursing home, 16% say they would want to move, and 10% don't know if they would move.
 - Overall 60% are satisfied with the services provided by the nursing home, but 37% are dissatisfied.
 - Similarly, 62% would recommend the nursing home to someone else who needs nursing home care, but 36% would not.
- ***About one third (34%) of those with experience have made a complaint to the administration of a nursing home and almost one in ten (8%) have made a complaint to a state or federal government agency. Often these complaints were not resolved to their satisfaction.*** (Chart 18)
 - More than half (56%) of the people who made complaints to the administration of a nursing home did not have it resolved to their satisfaction, 43% say the complaint did get resolved to their satisfaction.
 - ***Majorities of those with substantial experience also have positive views about the conditions in the resident's nursing home...*** (Charts 19, 20, and 21)

Living Environment

Majorities say that nursing homes are well set up for people with physical disabilities and have enough spiritual and recreational activities for residents.

- Over three fourths (76%) say the resident they know has religious or spiritual services available when they want them.
- Also, 76% of Americans with substantial experience believe that nursing homes are well set up for people with physical disabilities.
- Six in ten (59%) people with substantial experience think there are enough appropriate recreational activities to meet nursing home residents' needs.

Care

A majority believes the resident they know is treated well.

- About three quarters (74%) report their friend or family member residing in a nursing home is generally bathed and groomed in a satisfactory way and 76% report the nursing home room is generally clean and properly smelling.
- Roughly seven in ten (72%) say the resident they know did not develop bedsores or skin ulcers.
- Seven in ten (70%) say the resident has not been overmedicated.

- Around seven in ten (69%) say the nursing home resident they know has not been placed in physical restraints.
- Around seven in ten (69%) report that the resident has not been treated badly or abused by the staff.

Staff

A majority believes the nursing home staff handle their jobs with skill and care and considers nursing home staff to be available and responsive to the residents' or residents' family members' needs.

- About three quarters (73%) say the staff provides adequate help at mealtimes.
- Around seven in ten (71%) say the staff is interested in and responsive to family members' concerns about the person who needs the care.
- Around seven in ten (69%) says the nursing home staff handles their jobs with skill and care.
- Almost six in ten (62%) say the nurses handle procedures with skill and care.
- Six in ten (60%) say a physician has visited or talked with the nursing home resident by telephone since they moved into the nursing home.
- About half (52%) say there are enough other staff on duty whenever they are needed to provide adequate care.
- Roughly half (51%) believe there is a physician available whenever one is needed.

Safety and Privacy

Majorities believe nursing homes are safe for residents and their belongings and residents have enough privacy.

- Almost two thirds (64%) of those with substantial experience say the resident they know feels safe in the nursing home, and is not concerned about their safety.
- More than half (57%) believes that the residents in the nursing home are able to keep personal items safe and maintained with privacy.
- About half (52%) report that the residents they know feel they have enough privacy.

- ***However, significant minorities of those with substantial experience with nursing homes say that the nursing home residents they know have sometimes had serious negative experiences ...*** (Charts 19, 20, and 21)

Living Environment

A significant minority says there are not enough activities for nursing home residents and they often feel isolated and unattended.

- Four in ten (39%) say the resident they know often feels isolated or unattended.

- About one third (32%) say that there are not enough appropriate recreational activities to meet nursing home residents' needs.
- About three in ten (28%) say the nursing home is not well set up for people with memory problems, and around two in ten (16%) say that the nursing home is not well set up for people with physical disabilities.
- One in ten (10%) say the resident they know does not have religious or spiritual services available when they want them.

Care

Around one quarter say the nursing home resident they know is abused or neglected by the staff.

- One quarter (25%) say the resident they know has been placed in physical restraints.
- One quarter (25%) report that the nursing home resident they know has been treated badly or abused by the staff.
- One quarter (25%) report their friend or family member residing in a nursing home was not generally bathed and groomed in a satisfactory way and 23% report the nursing home room was not generally clean and properly smelling.
- About one quarter (23%) say the person they know developed bedsores or skin ulcers.
- About one quarter (23%) say the resident they know has been overmedicated.

Staff

A significant minority of those with substantial nursing home experience considers nursing home staff to be unavailable, non-responsive to the residents' or residents' family members' needs, and lacking in skill or care.

- Four in ten (41%) think there is not enough staff on duty whenever they are needed to provide adequate care.
- About one third (32%) do not think there is a physician available when needed.
- Roughly three in ten (29%) say a physician has not visited or talked with the nursing home resident by telephone since they moved into the nursing home and 11% don't know if they have.
- A quarter (25%) say the staff do not handle their jobs with skill and care, and two in ten (21%) of those with substantial experience believe that nursing home staff do not provide adequate help at mealtimes.
- Almost one quarter (24%) do not think the staff is interested in and responsive to family members' concerns about the resident.

Safety and Privacy

Significant minorities believe nursing homes are not safe for residents or their belongings and that residents do not have enough privacy.

- Over one third (37%) say the person they know in a nursing home feels that they do not have enough privacy.
 - Over one third (36%) say the person they know does not think personal items are safe and maintained with privacy.
 - One quarter (26%) say the resident they know does not feel safe in the nursing home, or is concerned about their safety.
- ***In two areas, majorities of those with experience with nursing homes have negative views about the life of the resident they know.*** (Chart 22)
 - More than half (58%) say there are not enough nurses on duty when needed.
 - Seven in ten (70%) say the nursing home feels more like an institution than a home.

III. Financing Long-Term Care

- ***Most Americans recognize that care in a nursing home or assisted living facility is expensive, and can sometimes lead to bankruptcy.*** (Charts 23 and 24)
 - About three in ten (29%) think \$35,000 is close to what one year in a nursing home would cost, 27% say \$45,000, 27% say \$60,000, and one in ten (10%) think it would cost \$20,000. (Fact: All answers could be right, as nursing home costs vary greatly by geographic area. The national average cost for one year in a nursing home is \$54,000.³)
 - For assisted living facilities, about three in ten (28%) think \$35,000 comes closest to what one year in an assisted living facility would cost, 23% say \$45,000, 19% say \$60,000, and around two in ten (19%) think it would cost \$20,000. (Fact: Median estimates of the basic rate for one year in an assisted living facility range from \$21,600 to \$26,300. In many facilities residents pay more if they need more than basic assistance.⁴)
 - An overwhelming majority (92%) thinks it would be impossible (46%) or very difficult (46%) for them or their family to afford \$60,000 for one year of nursing home care. Only 8% think it would not be very difficult (5%) or would not be a problem at all (3%). For three years at \$60,000 each year, 62% say it would be impossible to afford and 30% say it would be very difficult for them or their families to afford.

- Around half (51%) of Americans believe many nursing home residents and 30% believe families of nursing home residents go bankrupt because of the cost of nursing home care. (Fact: Many qualify for nursing home assistance from Medicaid by depleting their assets and income (spend-down), although they never officially declare bankruptcy. Thirty percent of elderly nursing home residents who were admitted in 1990 as private pay residents eventually spent down to qualify for Medicaid.⁵ Fifty-three percent of all private pay residents with a length of stay in 1990 of five years or more spent down to qualify for Medicaid.⁵)
- ***While Americans say nursing homes are expensive, the majority (62%) also believes that nursing homes are not paid enough by insurers.***
- ***Six in ten Americans believe that if they needed nursing home care for themselves or a family member it would be paid for with personal or family funds and savings (37%) or private health insurance (23%).*** Eighteen percent (18%) of Americans say if they or a family member had a long-term illness or disability and had to go into a nursing home the care would be paid for through government assistance, Medicare, or Medicaid, 13% say they did not know how the bill would be paid, 4% of Americans say that they would not be able to pay, 3% say they would have to sell their home, and 1% say they would have to take out a loan or borrow money. (In fact, in 1998, 46% of total nursing home expenditures were paid for through Medicaid, 33% were paid for out of people's own pockets, 12% were paid for by Medicare, 5% were paid for through private insurance, and the remaining 5% were paid for through other sources.⁶) (Chart 25)
- ***Twenty-one percent of Americans say they have private long-term care health insurance policies.*** (Fact: In 2000, there were 6 million long-term care insurance policies⁷ out of 209 million American adults⁸, or approximately 3%, suggesting that Americans may be confused about what is covered by their insurance.) The 72% of Americans who say they currently do not have private long-term care insurance, top reasons for not purchasing insurance include the policies costing too much (74%), it is not something they have thought about (61%), long-term care insurance policies don't cover enough of the expenses (55%), Medicare will cover long-term care costs (50%), Medicaid will cover these costs (46%), or people think family will take care of their long-term care needs (43%). (Charts 26 and 27)
- ***Many Americans are unsure about the role the government programs Medicare and Medicaid play in helping people pay for long-term care.*** When asked which government program provides health insurance for low-income people who need nursing home care or home care over a long period of time, 41% correctly chose Medicaid and 36% incorrectly chose Medicare. When asked if Medicare currently pays for nursing home care for an extended time, limited time or no time at all, 50% correctly said limited time, 18% incorrectly said extended time and 21% said they did not know. (Chart 28)

IV. Policy Options

Government Role in Regulating Long-term Care Facilities

- ***The majority of Americans correctly say that the government currently regulates nursing homes (62%).*** Two in ten (20%) Americans incorrectly say that nursing homes are not currently regulated and 18% do not know if they are regulated. Four in ten (44%) Americans believe the government currently regulates assisted living facilities, and three in ten (30%) don't know. (Fact: The federal government currently regulates nursing homes but not assisted living facilities. However, 29 states and the District of Columbia regulate assisted living facilities in some capacity.⁹) (Chart 29)
- ***About two thirds (65%) of Americans say the government is not doing enough to enforce existing quality standards for nursing homes.*** (Chart 30)
- ***The public tends to favor increasing regulation of the quality of nursing homes.*** (Charts 30 and 31) About two thirds (66%) agree with the statement that there is not enough government regulation of the quality of nursing homes and 24% disagree. When asked whether there was too much, not enough, or about the right amount of regulation of various health care institutions, over four in ten (45%) said nursing homes do not have enough government regulation similar to health insurance companies (46%) and HMOs (44%). Thirty-seven percent of people said that pharmaceutical or drug companies do not have enough government regulation, and even fewer said assisted living facilities (27%) and hospitals (24%) do not have enough regulation.
 - Americans with substantial nursing home experience are more likely than those without to “strongly agree” that there is not enough government regulation of the quality of nursing homes (55% vs. 39%).
- ***Assisted living facilities are not currently regulated, but the majority of Americans (59%) favor government regulation of these facilities.***

Government Role in Helping Cover Costs for Nursing Home Care

- ***Eighty-two percent of Americans say that the government should have the main responsibility for paying nursing home bills, either in all cases (48%) or if the patients and families cannot pay the costs themselves (34%).*** About half (48%) of the public thinks the government through tax revenues should have the main responsibility for paying the bill when people are admitted to nursing homes compared to 44% who think the patients and their families themselves should be responsible initially. Eight percent (8%) say that if the patients and their families cannot pay, charities should have the main responsibility for paying for nursing home care. (Chart 32)
- ***Seven in ten Americans favor the federal government doing more to help pay for nursing home care, even if it requires an increase in taxes. Americans tend to prefer expanding government programs to tax credits or deductions as a mechanism for financing care.*** (Charts 33, 34, and 35) Forty-six percent of the public favors expanding government programs to cover most of the cost of nursing home care and 21% favors a tax credit for purchasing a private health insurance plan. Around a quarter (26%) oppose the federal government doing more. When asked about Medicare specifically, more than six in ten (65%) Americans favor the government expanding Medicare to cover most of the costs of nursing home care, even if it would require a tax increase.
- ***About half of Americans say that a tax credit would encourage them to purchase long-term care insurance, but about half say it would make no difference.*** If the federal government were to give a tax deduction or tax credit for purchasing long-term care insurance, 49% of Americans who do not have long-term care insurance say this would make them more likely to purchase the insurance, but 48% say the tax credit or deduction would make no difference in the likelihood that they would purchase it. (Chart 36)

Section I:

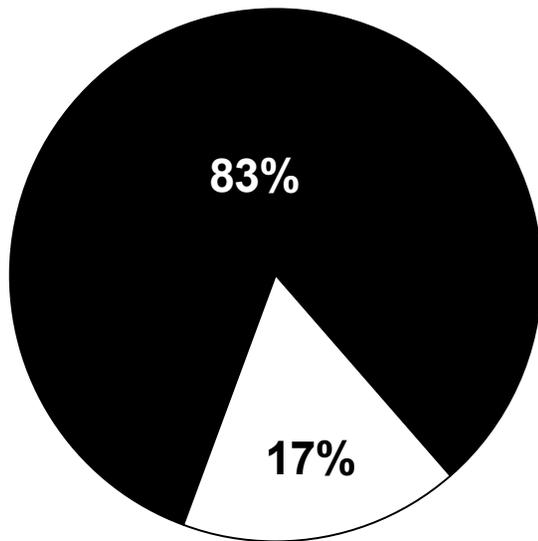
Attitudes and Perceptions About Nursing Homes and Assisted Living Facilities

Chart 1

Familiarity with Nursing Homes and Assisted Living Facilities

Nursing Homes

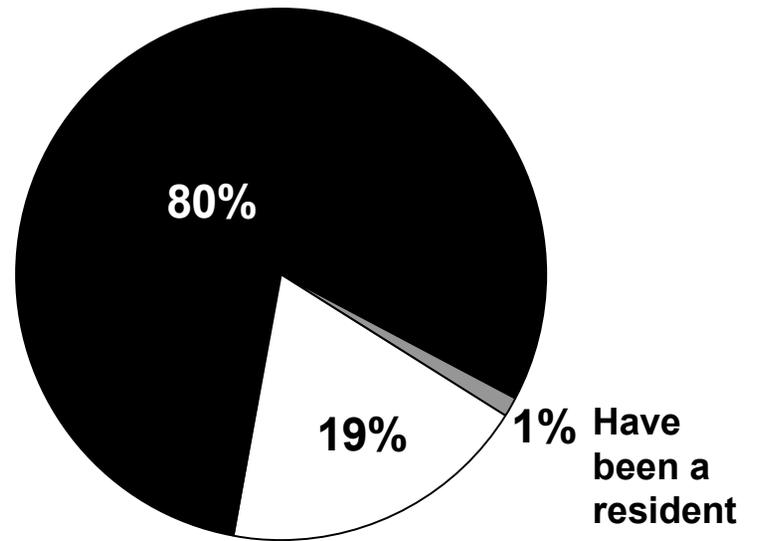
Have heard/read about



Have not heard/
read about

Assisted Living Facilities

Have heard/read about



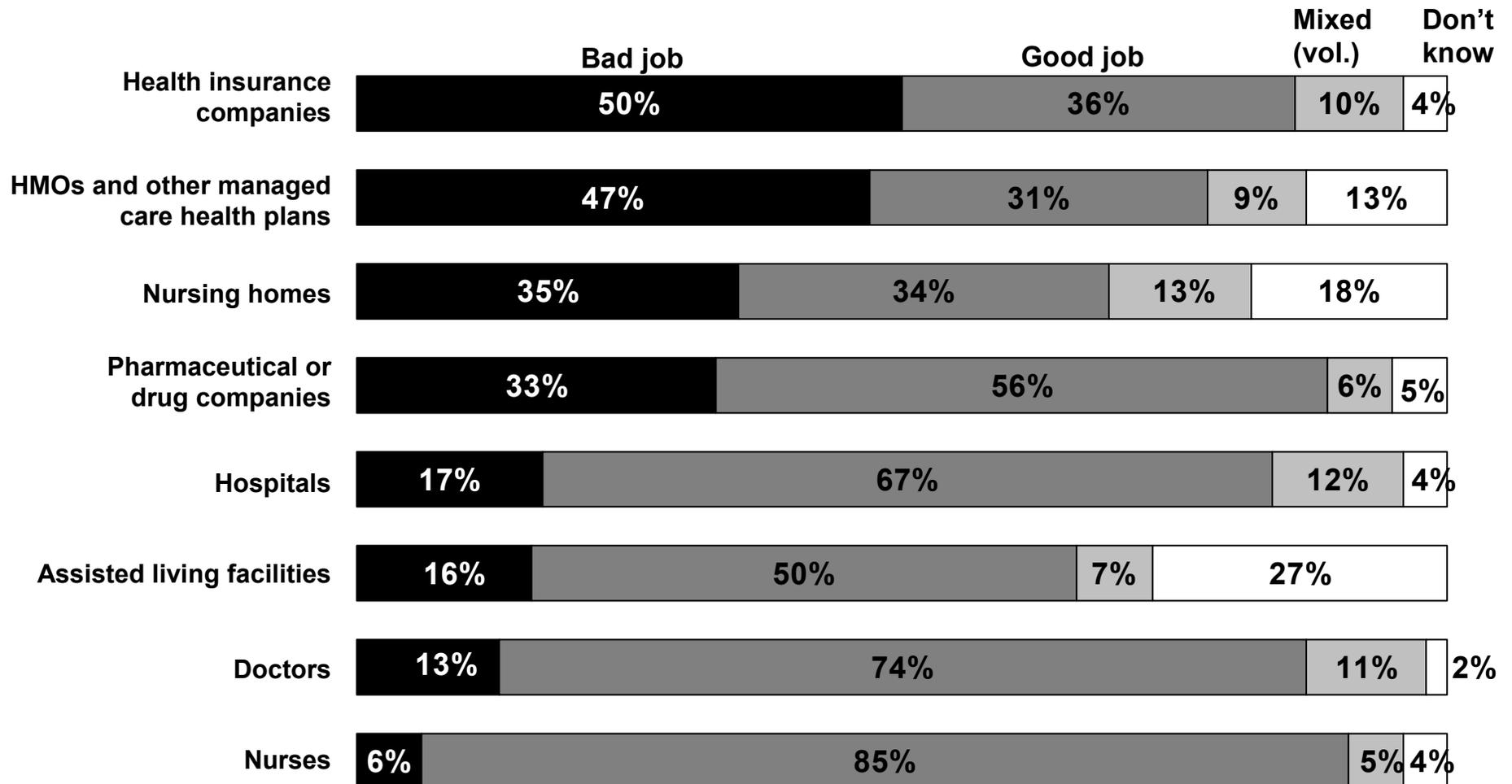
Have not heard/
read about

1% Have
been a
resident

Chart 2

Views of Health Care Institutions and Groups

In general do you think ... are doing a good job or a bad job in serving health care consumers?

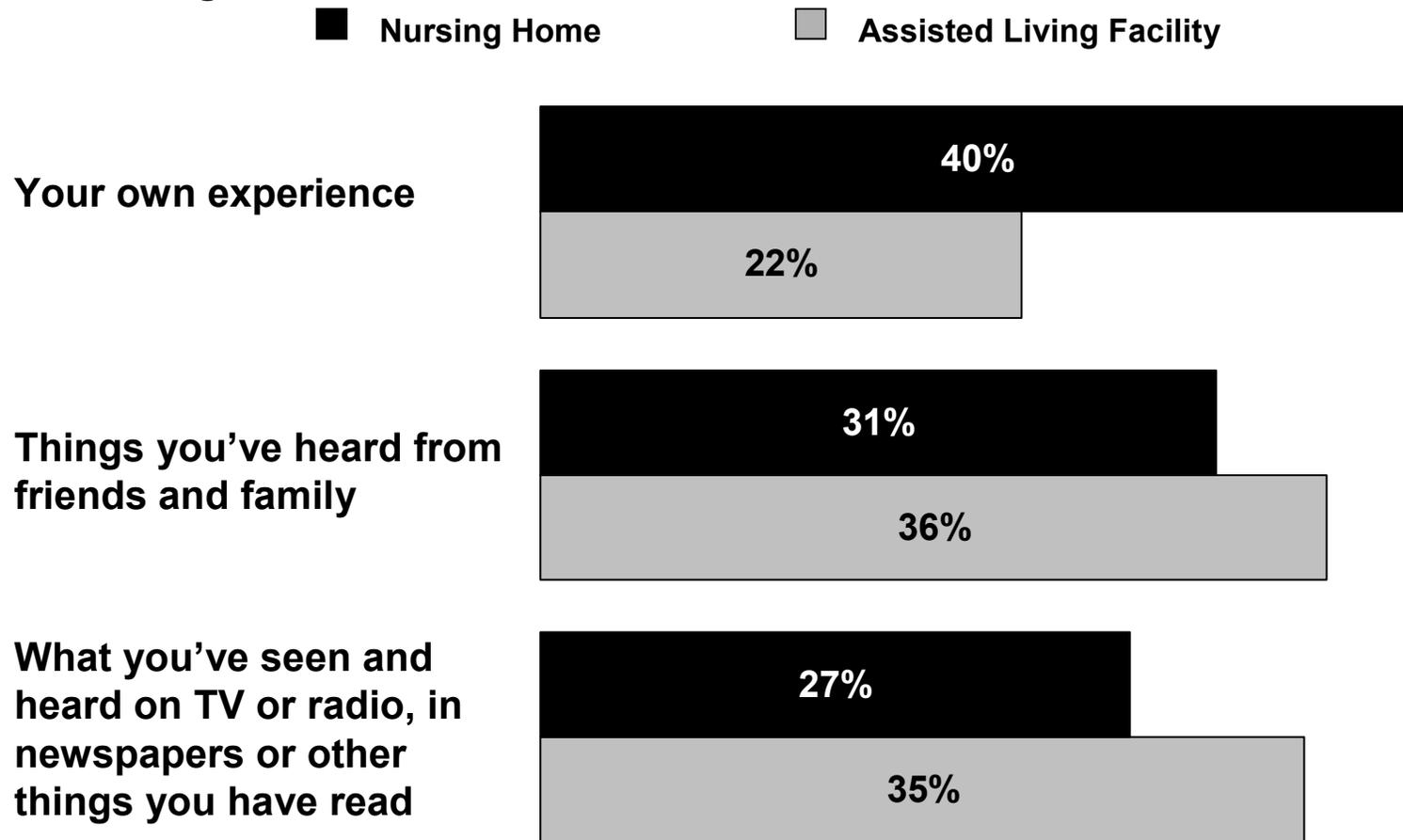


Source: *The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer*/ Kaiser Family Foundation/ Harvard School of Public Health *National Survey on Nursing Homes*, September 2001 (conducted April-June 2001)

Chart 3

Sources of Impressions About Nursing Homes and Assisted Living Facilities

Is your impression of nursing homes in this country based mainly on which of the following...?



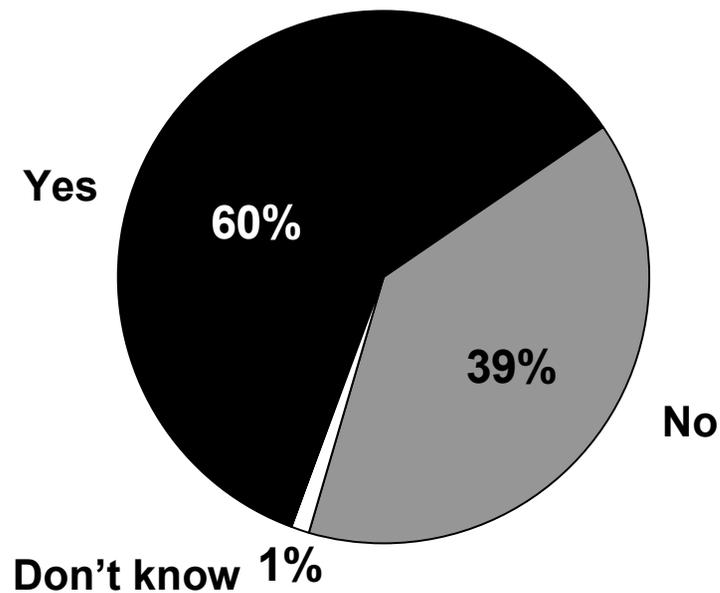
Note: Don't know not shown

Source: *The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer*/ Kaiser Family Foundation/ Harvard School of Public Health *National Survey on Nursing Homes*, September 2001 (conducted April-June 2001)

Chart 4

During the past year, have you heard, seen, or read any news stories about...?

Nursing Homes



Assisted Living Facilities

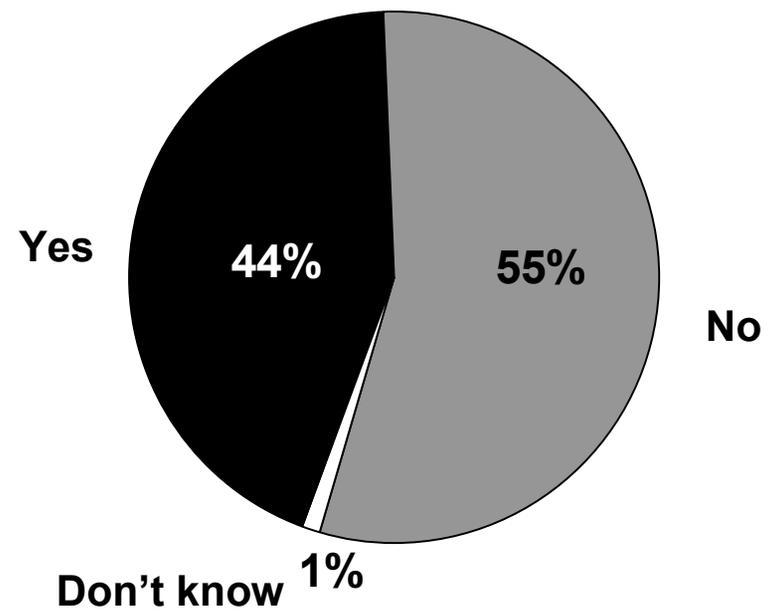
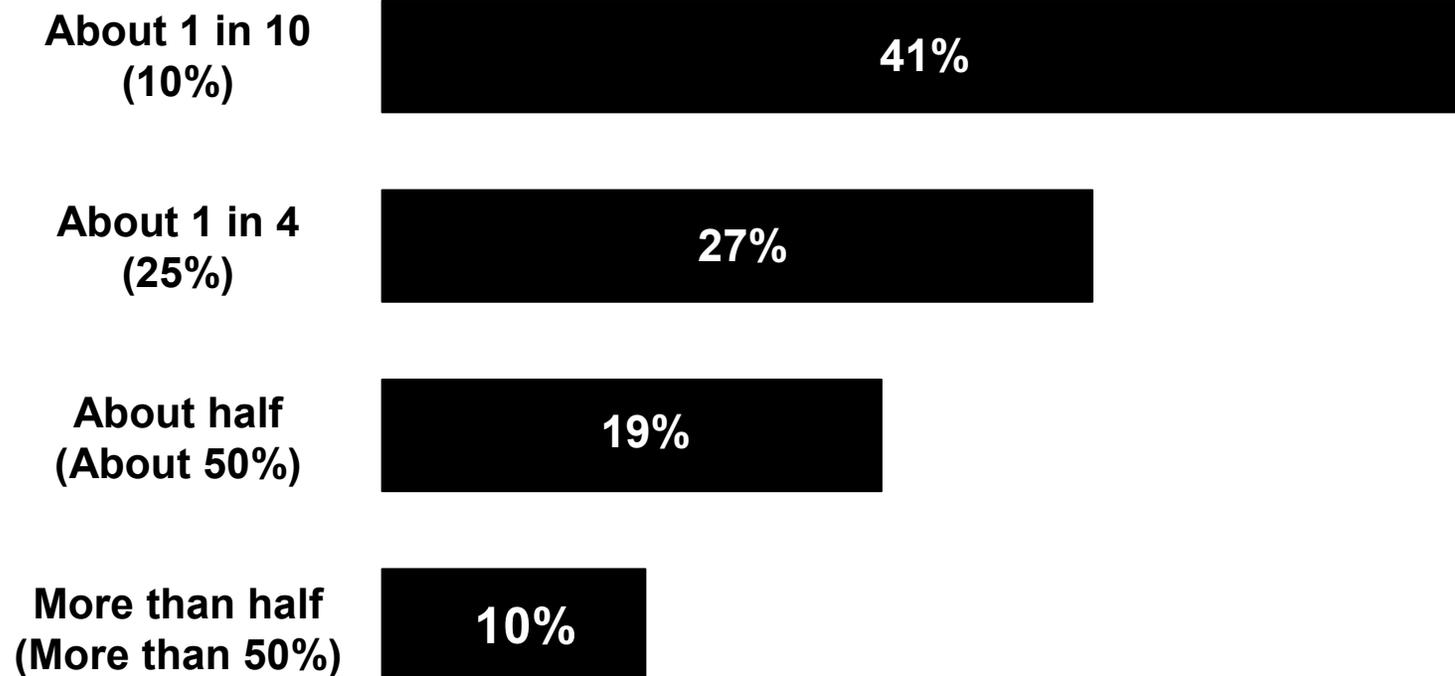


Chart 5

How many people do you think go into a nursing home when they are age 65 or older?



Fact: Forty-three percent (43%) of people who in 1990 turned age 65 were expected to spend some time in a nursing home before they die.¹

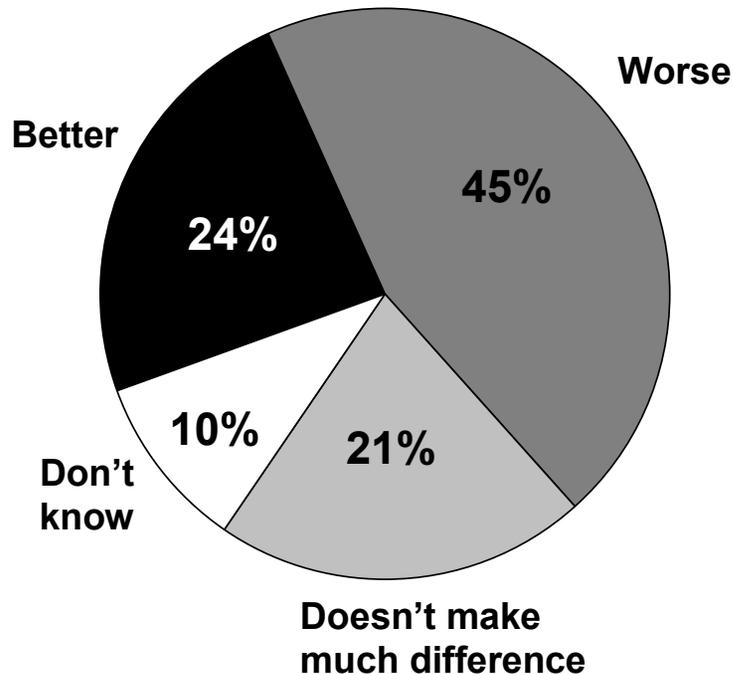
Note: Don't know not shown

Source: *The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer*/ Kaiser Family Foundation/ Harvard School of Public Health *National Survey on Nursing Homes*, September 2001 (conducted April-June 2001)

Chart 6

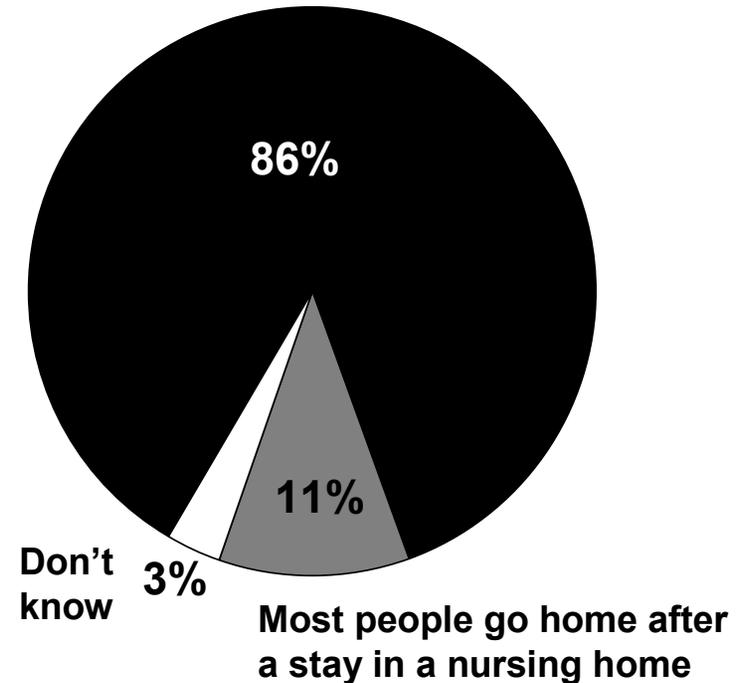
Do nursing home residents get better and leave?

For most people who move into a nursing home, do you think being in the nursing home makes them better or worse off than before, or doesn't make much difference?



Which of the following statements do you agree with more?

Most people who stay in a nursing home never go home



Fact: Among the 2.1 million nursing home patients discharged from a nursing home in 1997, 29% were discharged because they stabilized or recovered, 28% were admitted to a hospital, 8% went to another nursing home, 8% went somewhere else, and 27% died.²

Chart 7

Willingness to Accept Moving Into a Nursing Home

Which of the following statements comes closest to how you think you would feel if you had to move into a nursing home?

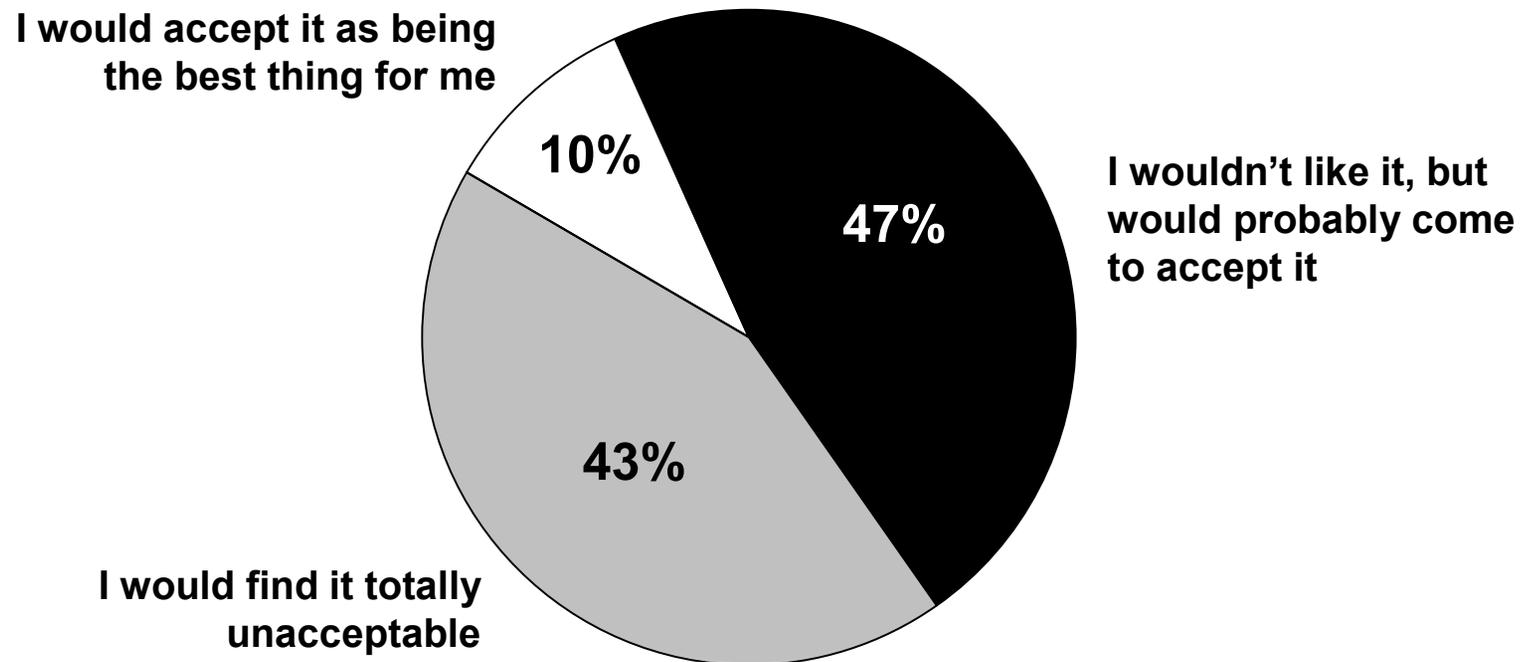
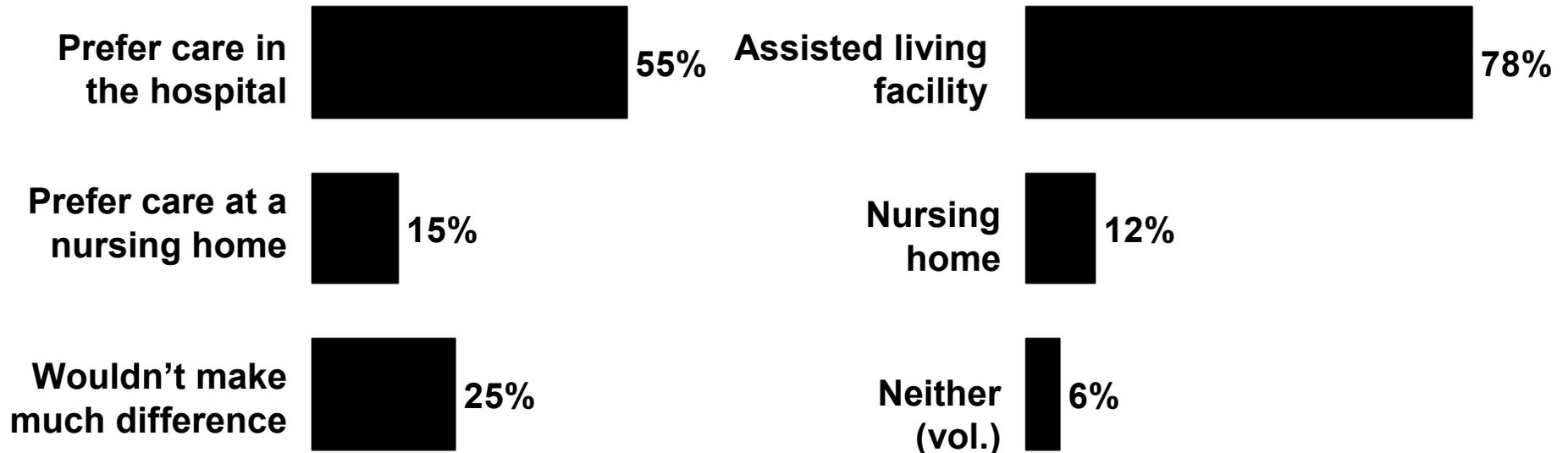


Chart 8

Where would you prefer to get care?

If you had been hospitalized and required round-the-clock medical care in an institution, would you prefer to keep getting care in the hospital or to get care in a nursing home, or wouldn't it make much difference to you?

If your health deteriorated to the point where you couldn't take care of yourself at home, would you prefer to go to a(n)...



Note: Don't know not shown

Note: These numbers represent preferences, but often where people actually go is based on the severity of their disability.

Chart 9

Do nursing homes provide an affordable way for people who need round-the-clock care to be able to get it?

Percent who...

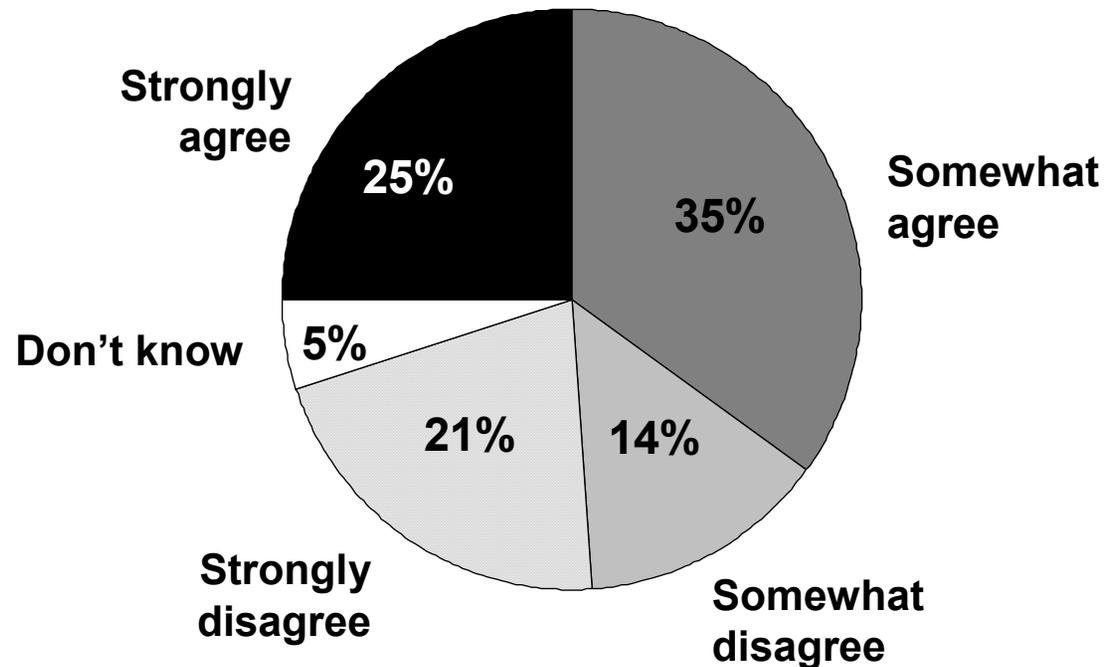


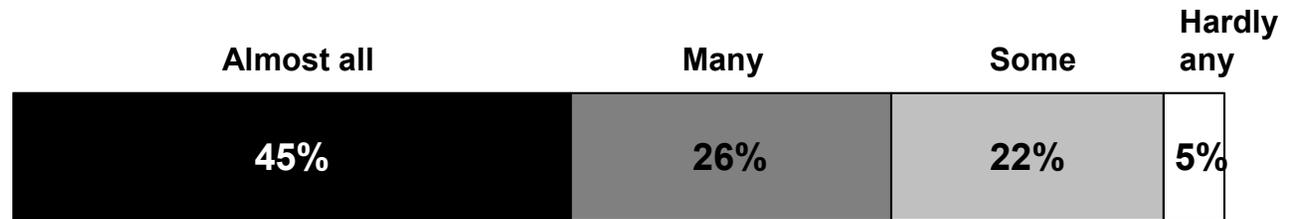
Chart 10

Majorities Have Positive Views in Some Areas...

Do you think this is something that happens to almost all nursing home residents, many of them, some of them, or hardly any?

Living Environment

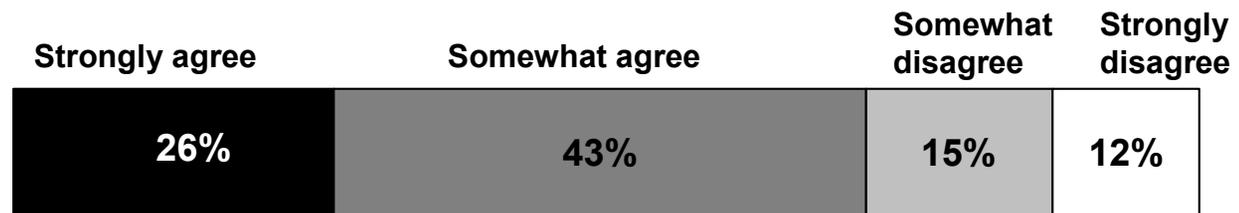
Residents receive help they couldn't get if they were living alone



Living Environment

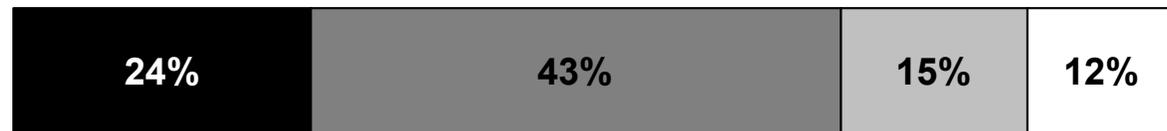
Nursing homes provide frail and disabled people with a safe and protected environment they couldn't have at home

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements about nursing homes...



Staff

Nursing home staff are concerned about the well-being of their patients



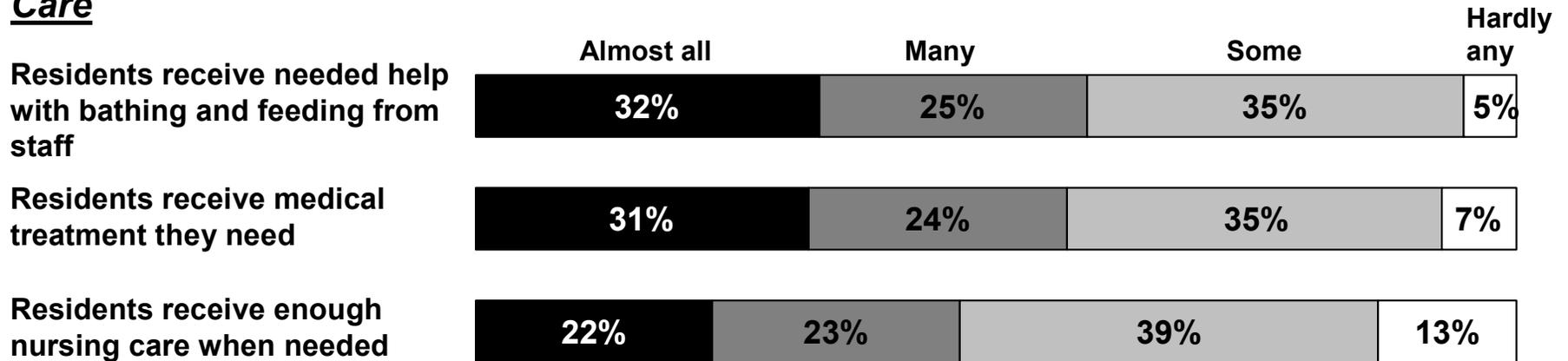
Note: Don't know not shown

Chart 11

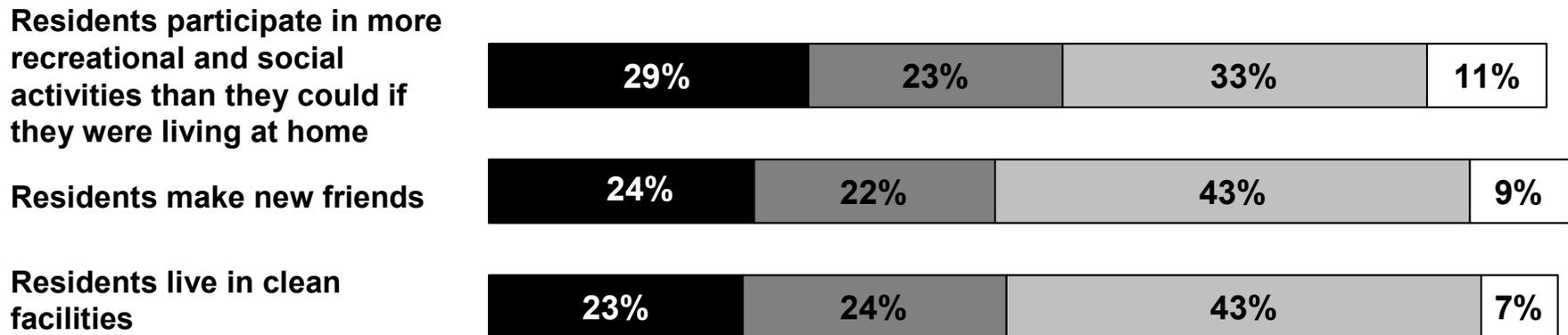
In Other Areas, Views are More Mixed...

Do you think... is something that happens to almost all nursing home residents, many of them, some, or hardly any?

Care



Living Environment



Note: Don't know not shown

Source: *The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer*/ Kaiser Family Foundation/ Harvard School of Public Health *National Survey on Nursing Homes*, September 2001 (conducted April-June 2001)

Chart 12

More Mixed Views (continued)...

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements...

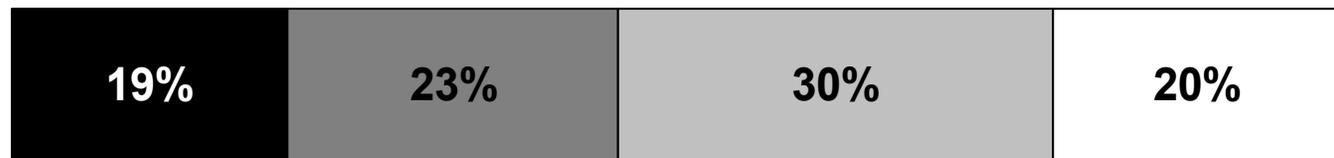
Living Environment

Nursing homes provide high-quality services for people who need them



Staff

Managers of nursing homes are not concerned about their patients' well-being

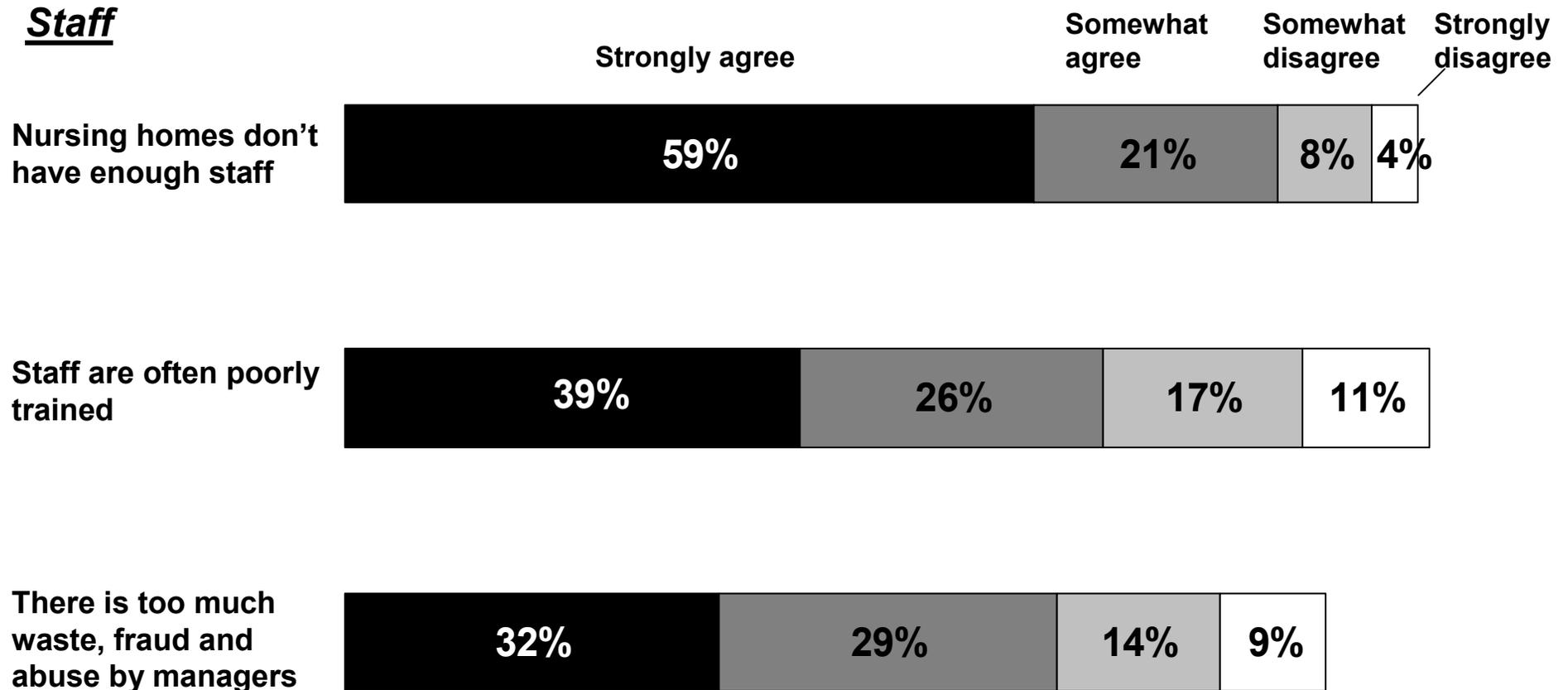


Note: Don't know not shown

Source: *The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer*/ Kaiser Family Foundation/ Harvard School of Public Health *National Survey on Nursing Homes*, September 2001 (conducted April-June 2001)

Chart 13

Majorities Have Negative Views in Some Areas...



Note: Don't know not shown

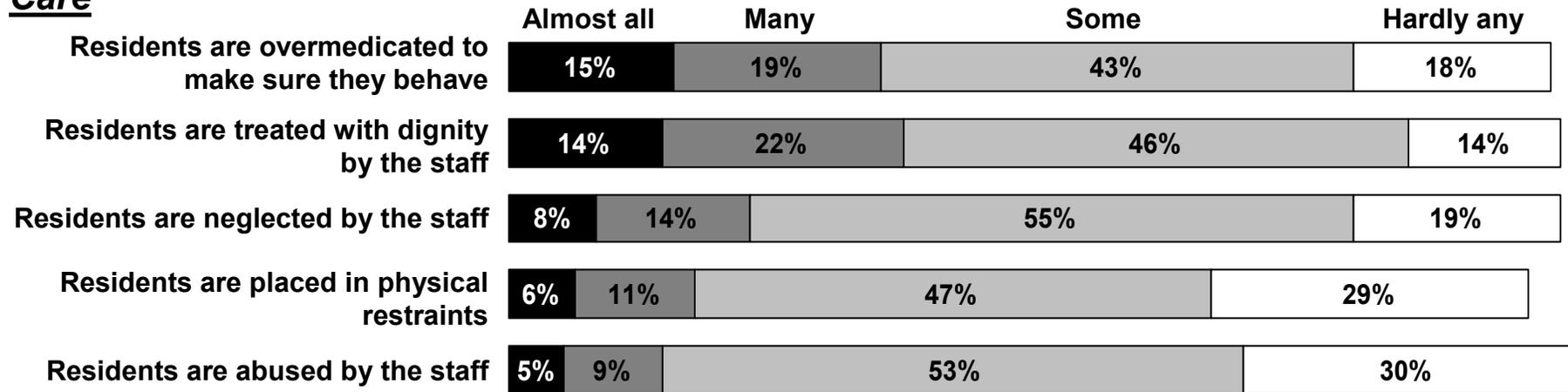
Source: *The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer*/ Kaiser Family Foundation/ Harvard School of Public Health *National Survey on Nursing Homes*, September 2001 (conducted April-June 2001)

Chart 14

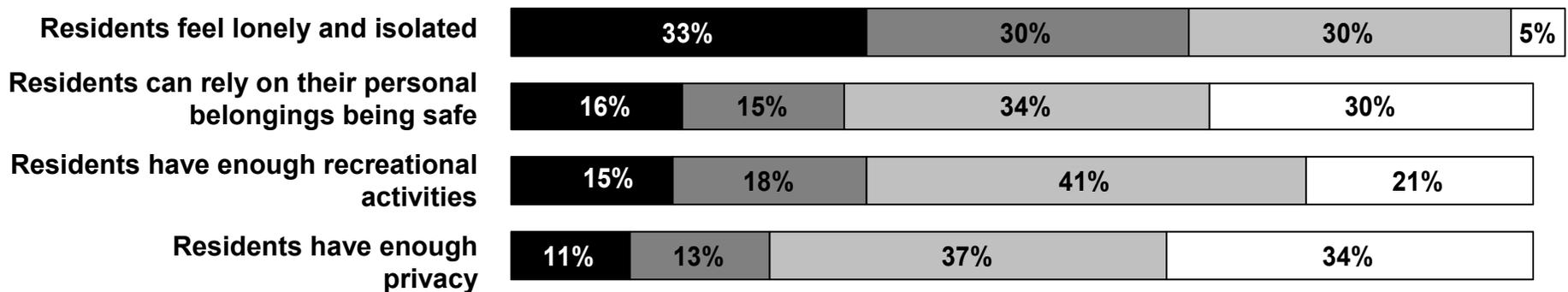
Many Have Negative Views Regarding Care and the Nursing Home Living Environment

Do you think each of the following is something that happens to almost all nursing home residents, many of them, some, or hardly any?

Care



Living Environment



Note: Don't know not shown

Source: *The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer*/ Kaiser Family Foundation/ Harvard School of Public Health *National Survey on Nursing Homes*, September 2001 (conducted April-June 2001)

Chart 15

Awareness of Sources for Advice or Information

If you or a family member needed nursing home or assisted living care, do you know where you would go for advice or information?

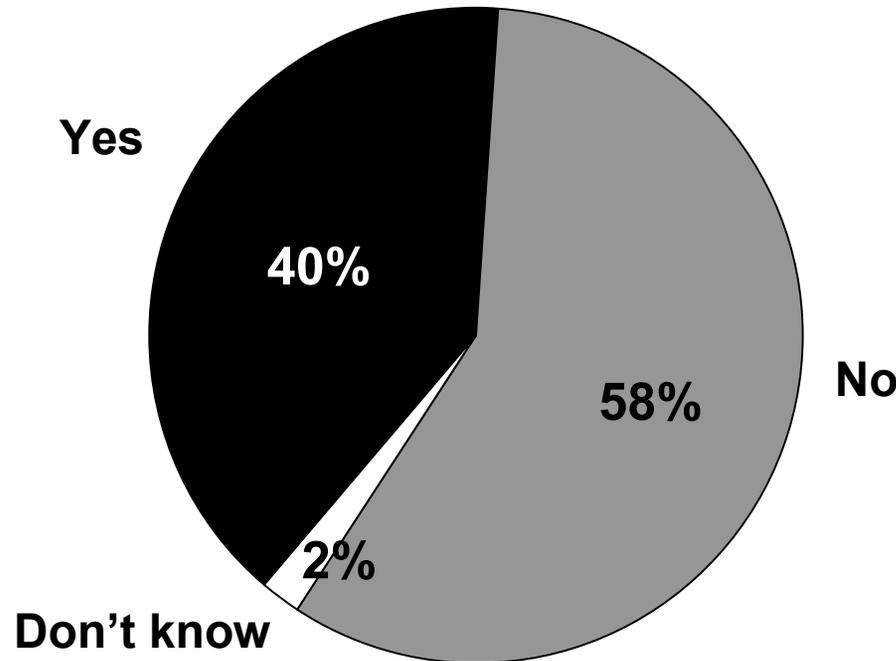
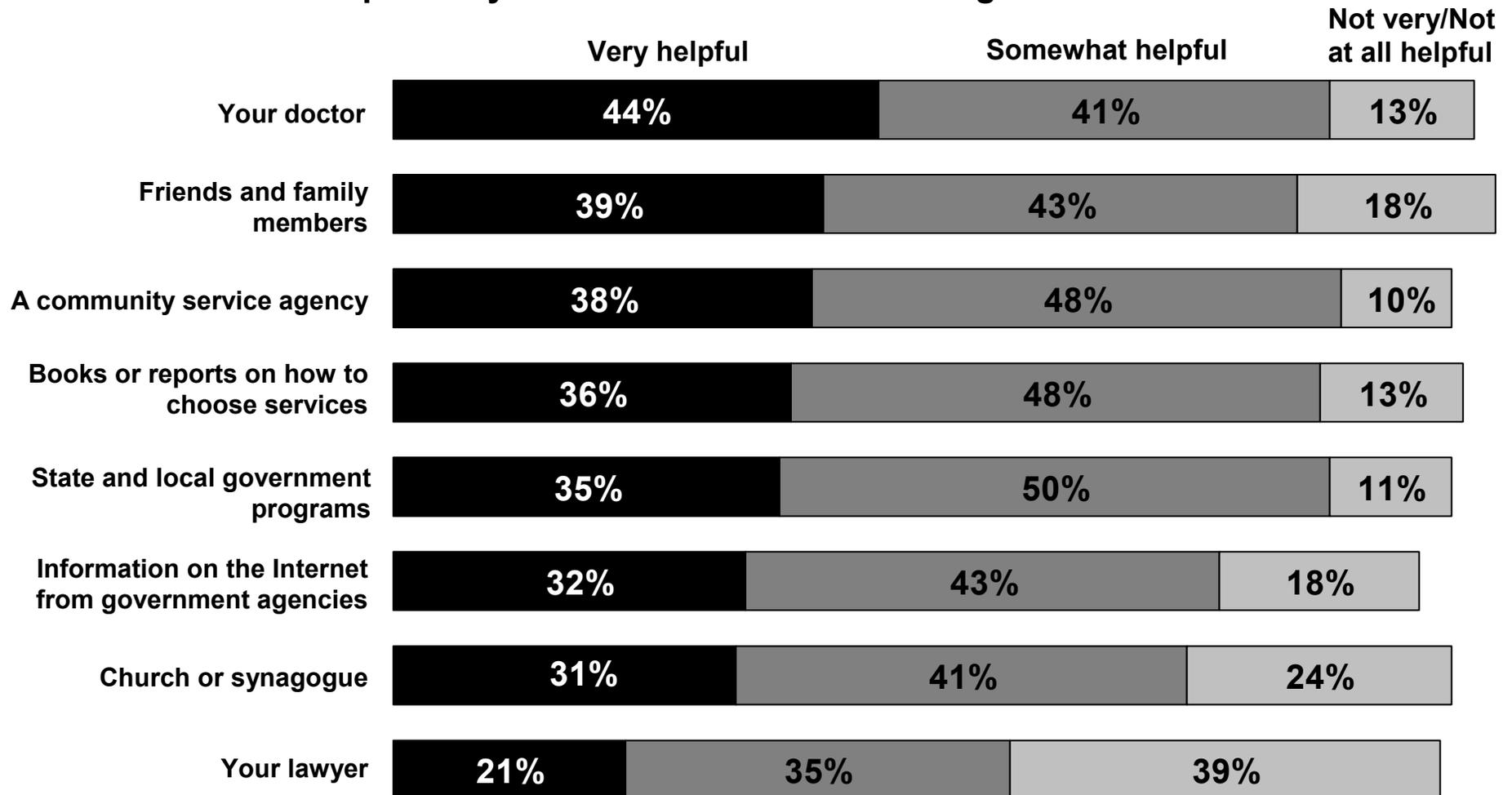


Chart 16

How helpful would these sources be?

If you needed advice or information about nursing home or assisted living care, how helpful do you think each of the following sources would be?



Note: Don't know not shown

Source: *The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer*/ Kaiser Family Foundation/ Harvard School of Public Health *National Survey on Nursing Homes*, September 2001 (conducted April-June 2001)

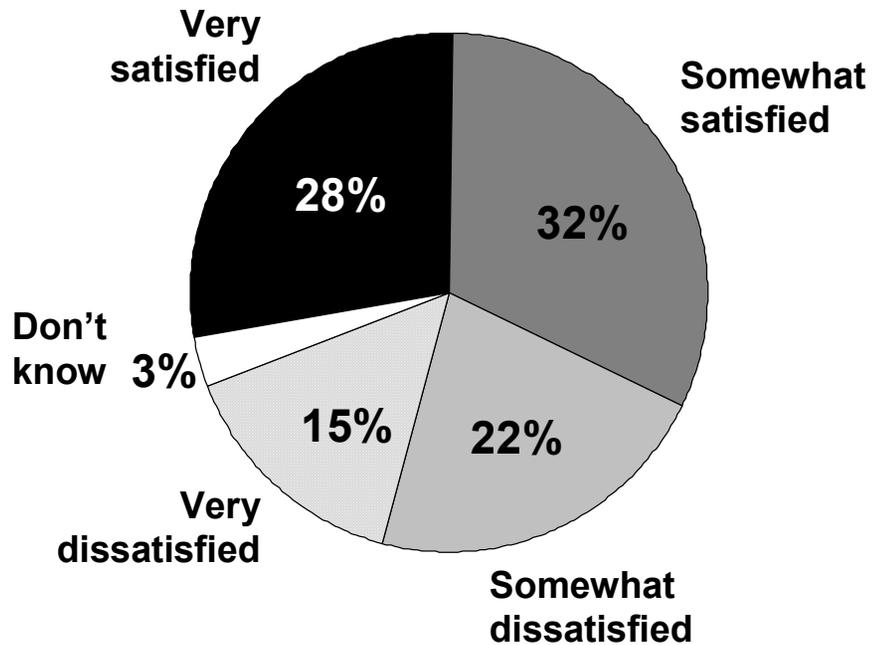
Section II:

Views of Those with Substantial Nursing Home Experience

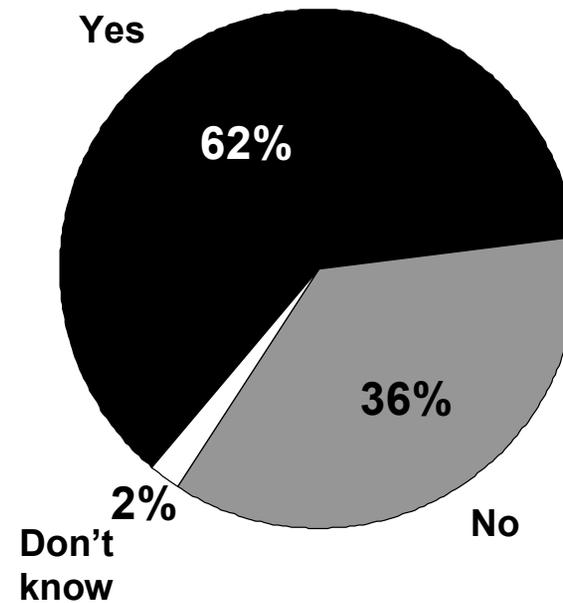
****Note: About 2 in 10 (23%) Americans reported having substantial experience with a resident in a nursing home. For the purposes of this analysis, people with substantial experience are defined as those who report that, in the past three years, they have been a resident in a nursing home or have known someone in a nursing home AND visited them at least once a month over that time.***

Satisfaction with Nursing Home Care (Of Those with Substantial Nursing Home Experience*)

Overall, how satisfied are you with the services provided by the nursing home?



Would you recommend this facility to someone else who needs nursing home care or not?



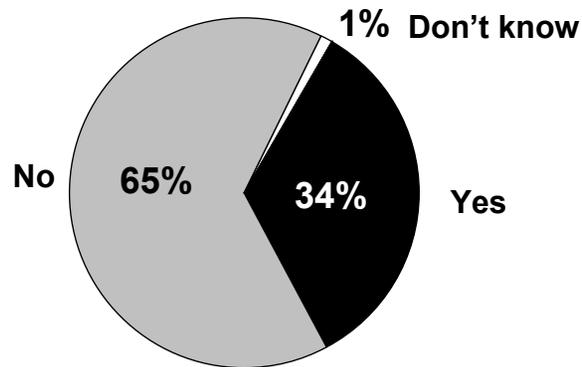
*See definition in Methodology.

Source: *The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer*/ Kaiser Family Foundation/ Harvard School of Public Health *National Survey on Nursing Homes*, September 2001 (conducted April-June 2001)

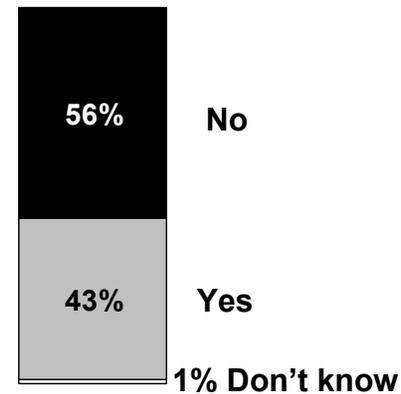
Chart 18

Complaints Made to the Administration of a Nursing Home or to State or Federal Government Agency (Of Those with Substantial Nursing Home Experience*)

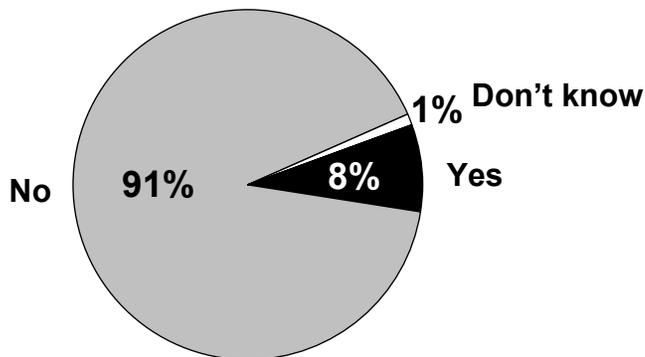
Have you ever made a complaint to the administration of a nursing home?



(Of those who made a complaint to the administration of a nursing home) Was that complaint resolved to your satisfaction?



Have you ever made a complaint a state or federal government agency about a nursing home?



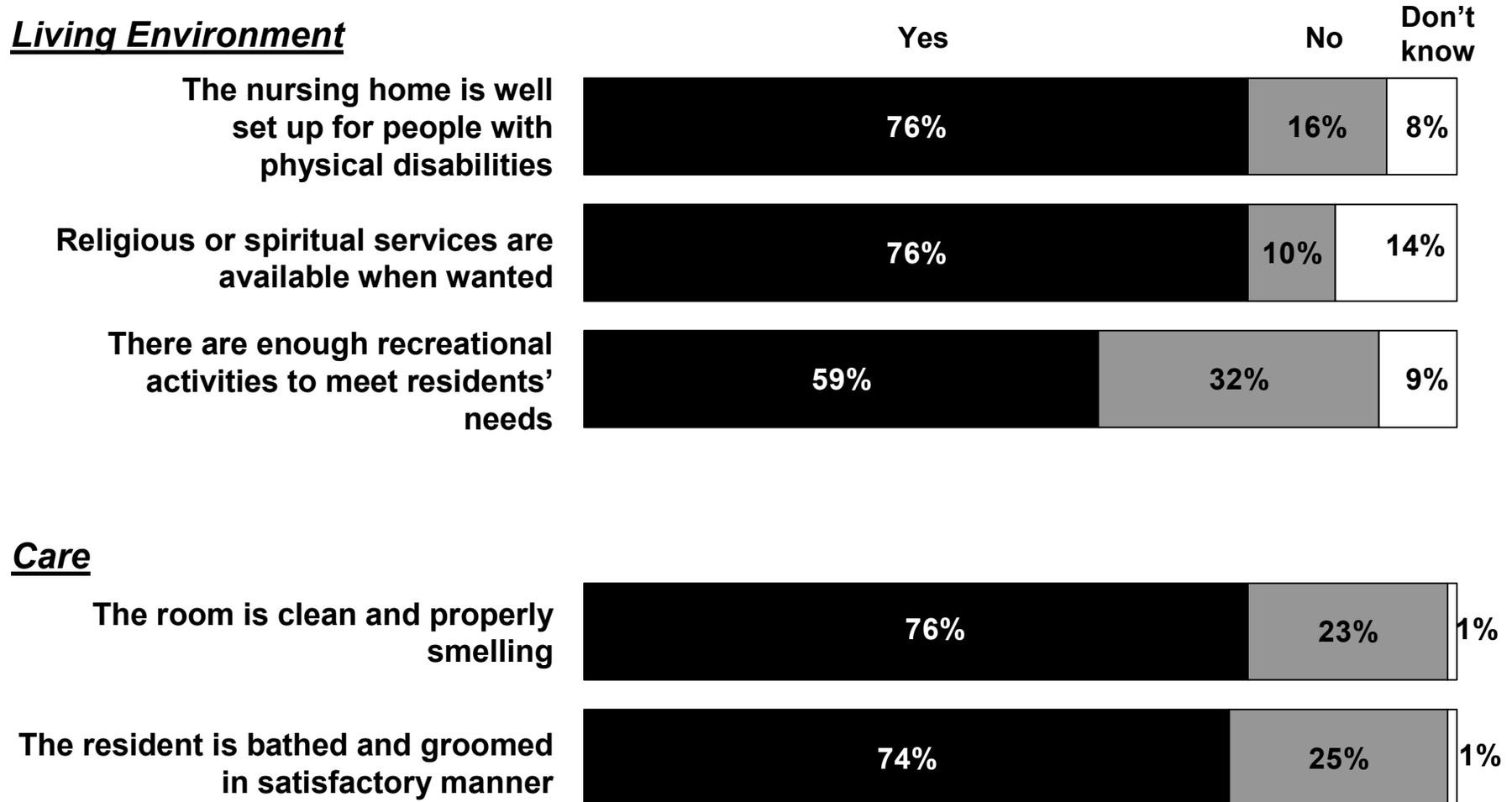
*See definition in Methodology.

Source: *The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer*/ Kaiser Family Foundation/ Harvard School of Public Health *National Survey on Nursing Homes*, September 2001 (conducted April-June 2001)

Chart 19

Living Environment and Care In a Nursing Home (Of Those with Substantial Nursing Home Experience*)

Majorities have positive views, but others disagree...

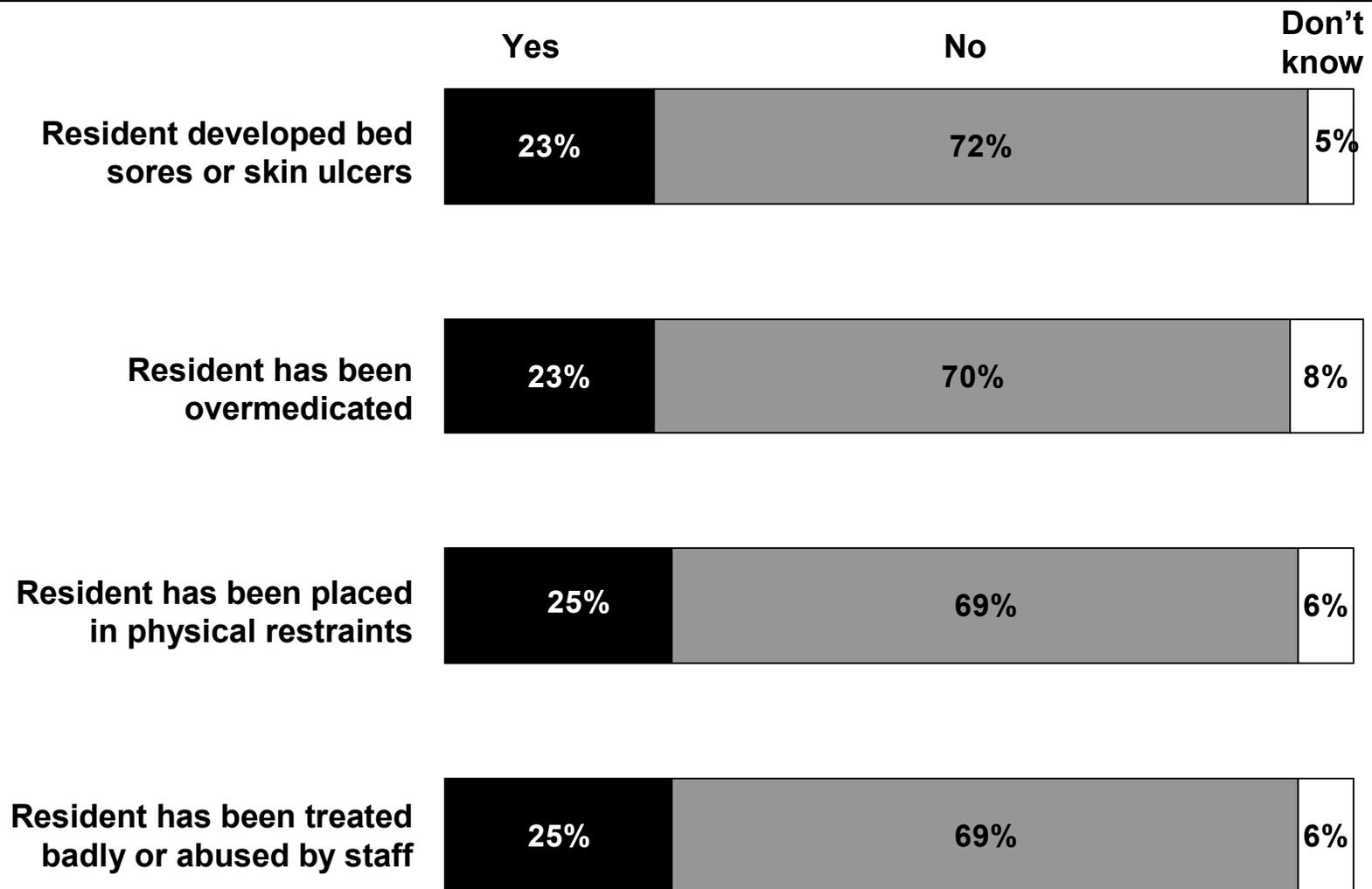


*See definition in Methodology.

Source: *The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer*/ Kaiser Family Foundation/ Harvard School of Public Health *National Survey on Nursing Homes*, September 2001 (conducted April-June 2001)

Chart 20

About a Quarter Say the Person They Know Has Experienced Serious Consequences (Of Those with Substantial Nursing Home Experience*)



*See definition in Methodology.

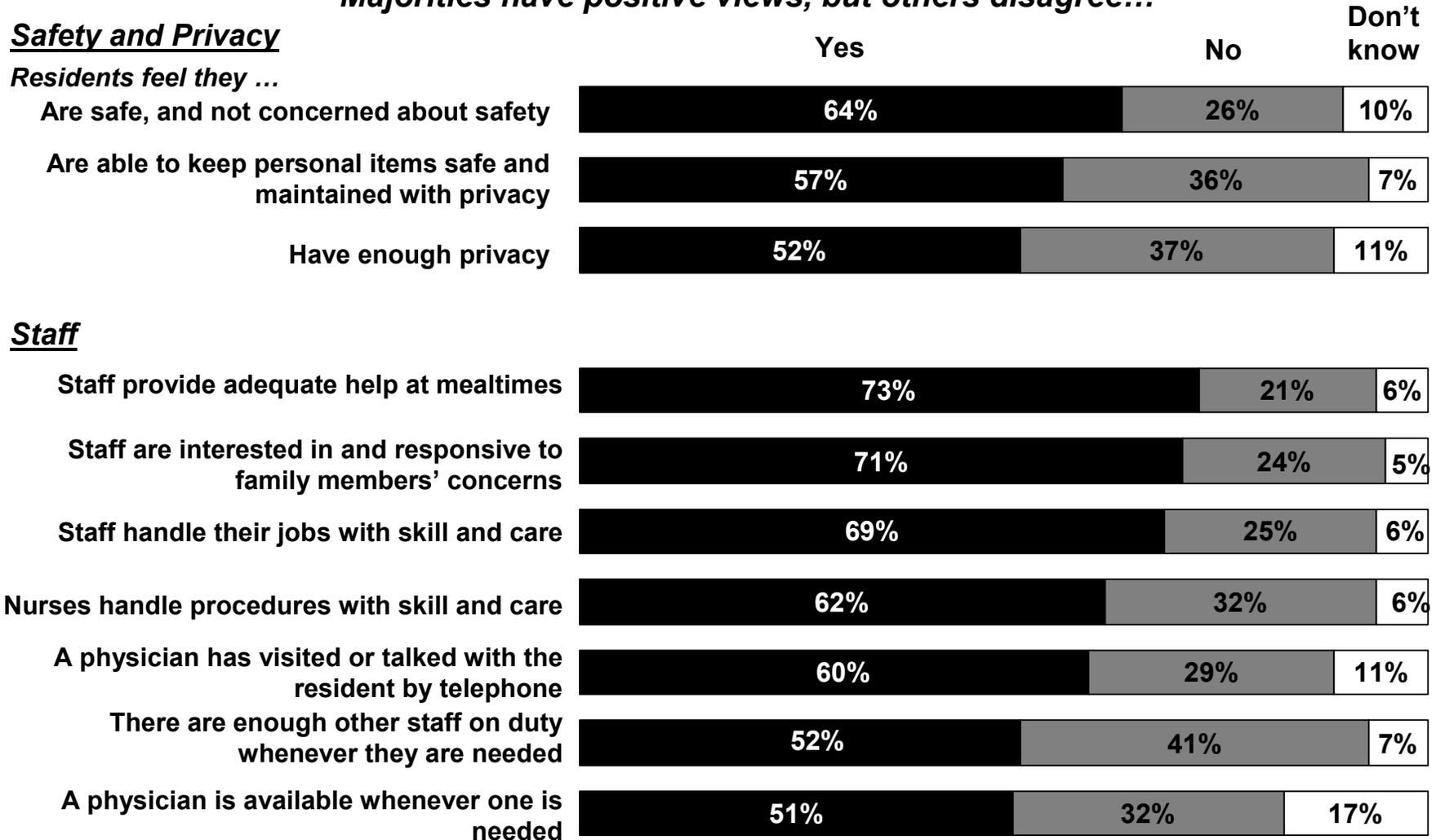
Source: *The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer*/ Kaiser Family Foundation/ Harvard School of Public Health *National Survey on Nursing Homes*, September 2001 (conducted April-June 2001)

Chart 21

Staff, Safety and Privacy in the Nursing Home

(Of Those with Substantial Nursing Home Experience*)

Majorities have positive views, but others disagree...



*See definition in Methodology.

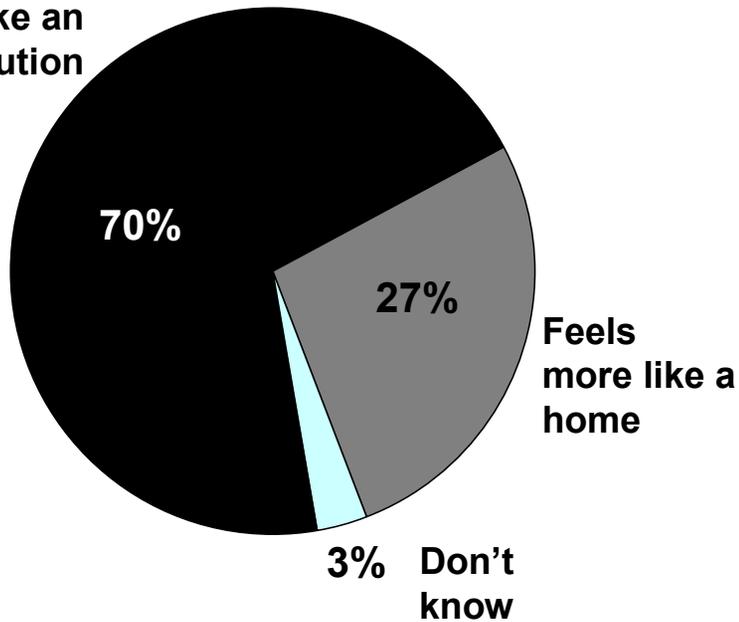
Source: *The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer*/ Kaiser Family Foundation/ Harvard School of Public Health *National Survey on Nursing Homes*, September 2001 (conducted April-June 2001)

Majorities Have Negative Views in a Few Areas

(Of Those with Substantial Nursing Home Experience*)

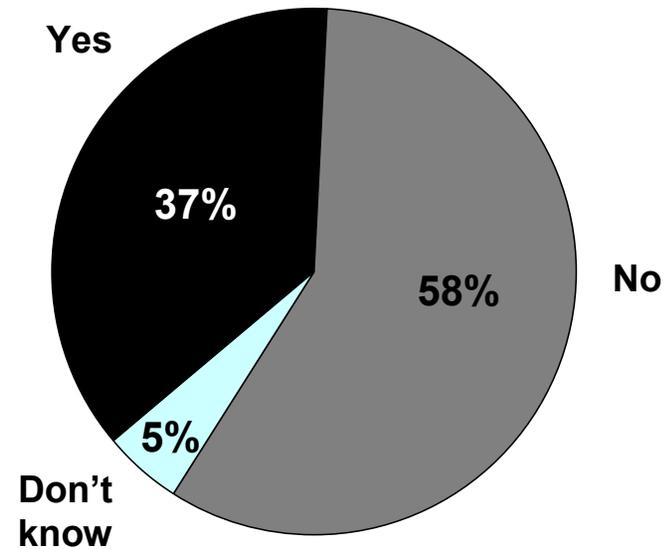
Does the nursing home your family member or friend lives in feel more like a home or more like an institution?

Feels more like an institution



Do you think there are enough nurses on duty whenever they are needed, or not?

Yes



*See definition in Methodology.

Source: *The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer*/ Kaiser Family Foundation/ Harvard School of Public Health *National Survey on Nursing Homes*, September 2001 (conducted April-June 2001)

Section III:
Financing Long-Term Care

Chart 23

Estimates of Nursing Homes and Assisted Living Facilities Costs

Fact:

•All answers could be right, as nursing home costs vary greatly by geographic area. The national average cost for one year in a nursing home is \$54,000.³

•Median estimates of the basic rate for one year in an assisted living facility range from \$21,600-\$26,300. In many facilities, residents pay more if they need more than basic assistance.⁴

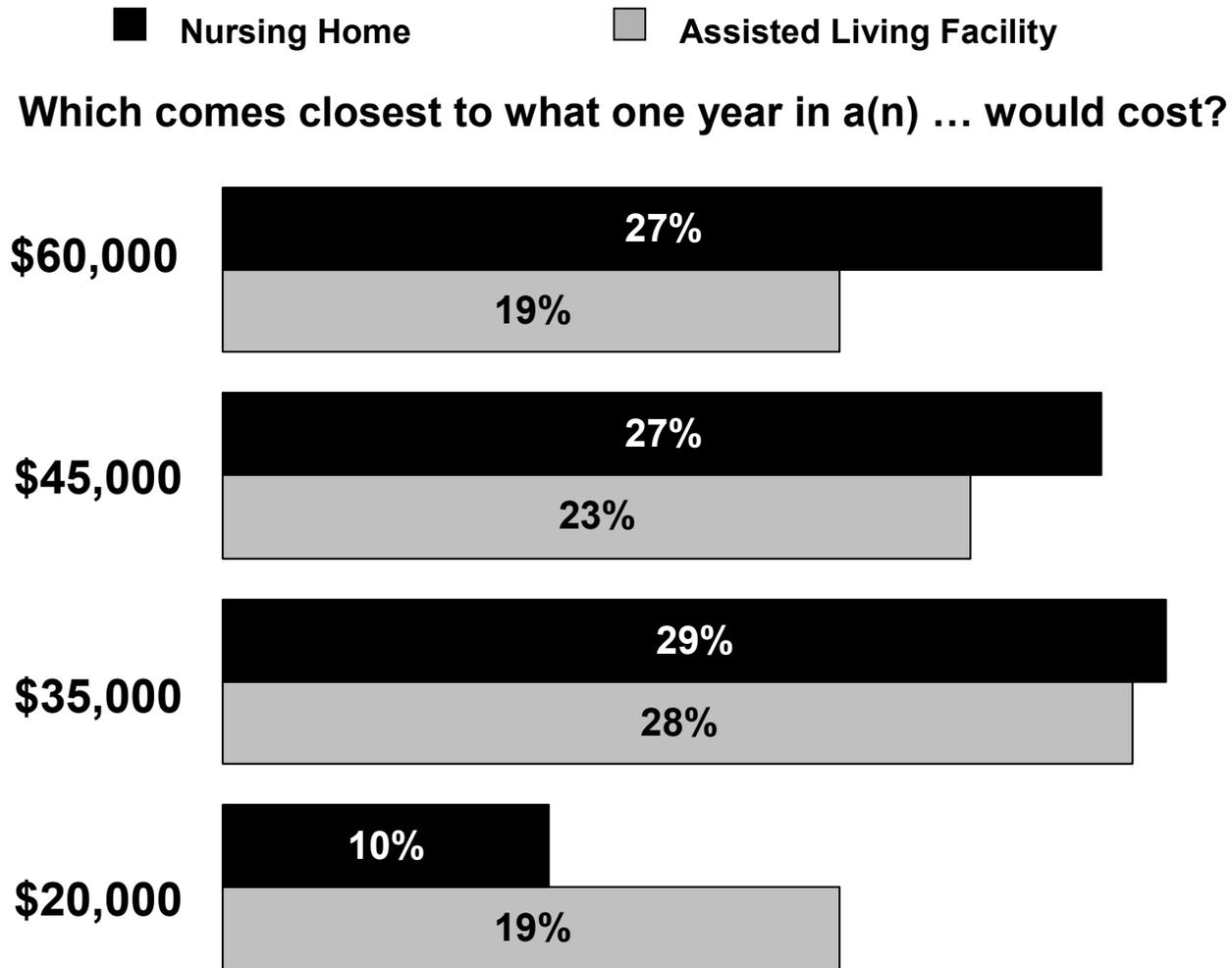
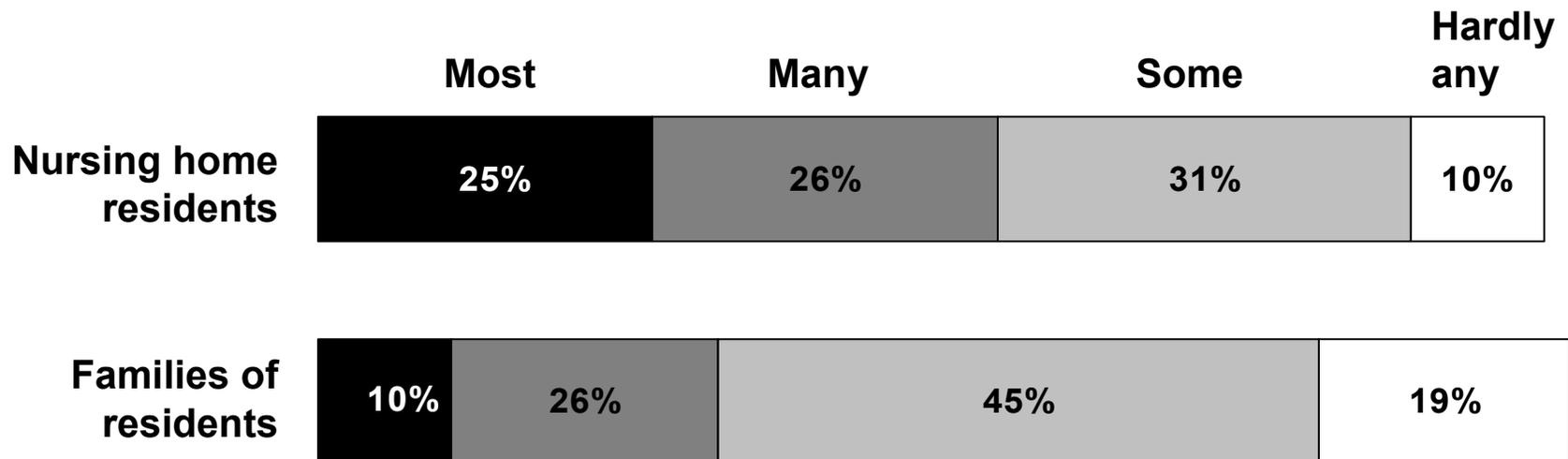


Chart 24

Bankruptcy and Nursing Homes

How often do you think...go bankrupt because of the cost of nursing home care?



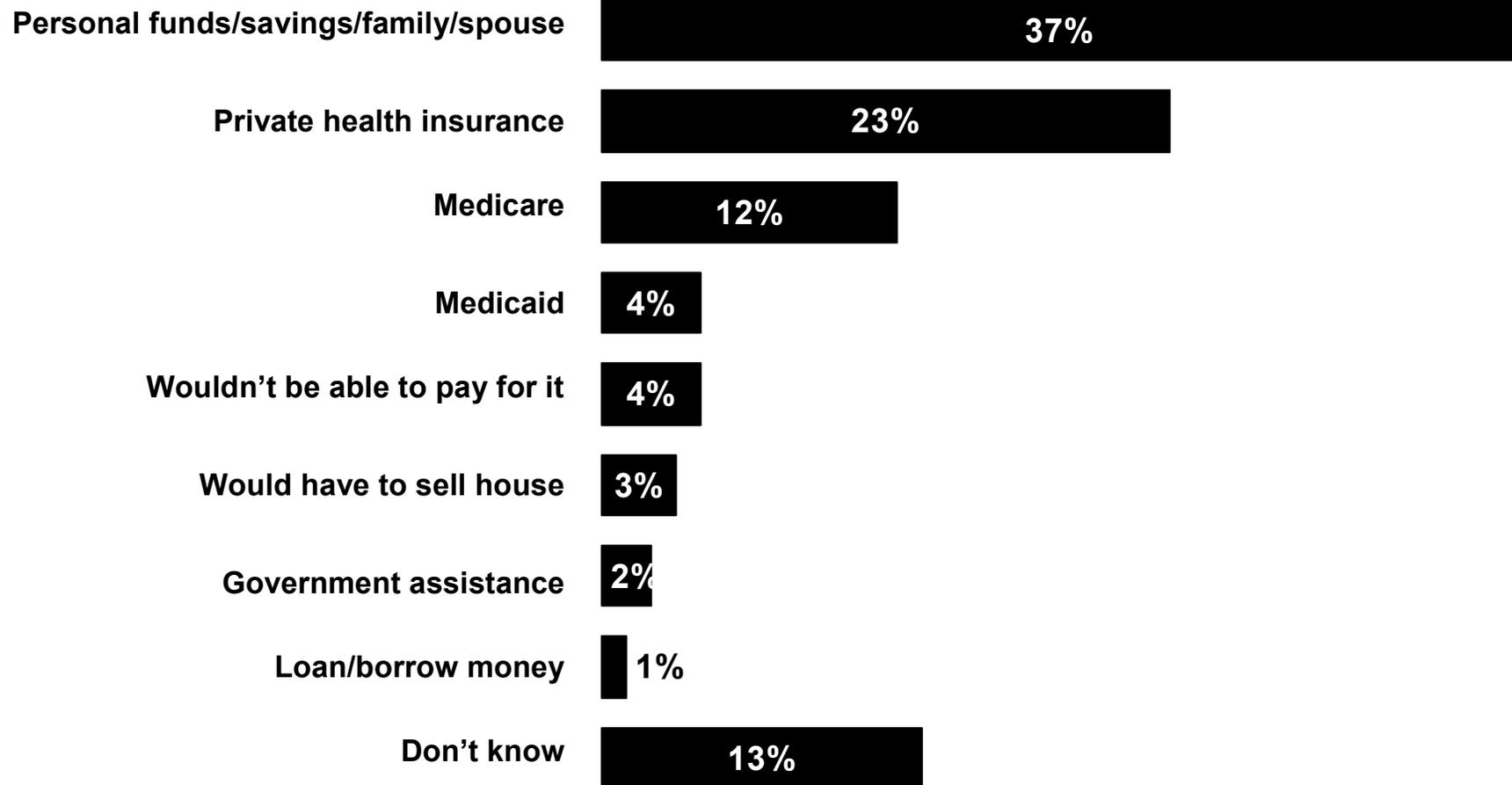
Note: Don't know not shown

Fact: Many qualify for nursing home assistance from Medicaid by depleting their assets and income (spend-down), although they never officially declare bankruptcy.

- Thirty percent (30%) of elderly nursing home residents (age 65 and over) who were admitted in 1990 as private pay residents eventually spent down to qualify for Medicaid.⁵
- Also, 53% of all private pay residents with a length of stay in 1990 of five years or more spent down to qualify for Medicaid.⁵

Chart 25

How People Say They Would Pay If a Family Member Had To Go Into a Nursing Home



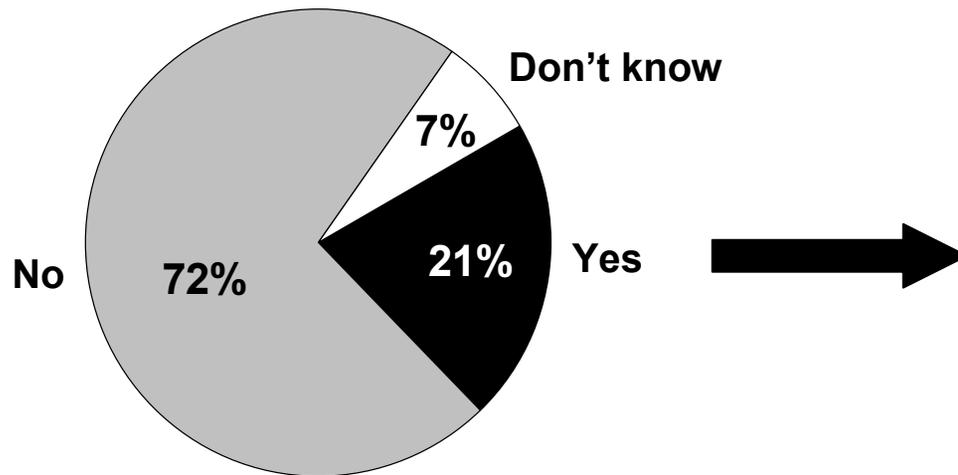
Fact: In 1998, 46% of total nursing home expenditures were paid for through Medicaid, 33% were paid for out of people's own pockets, 12% were paid for by Medicare, 5% were paid for through private insurance, and the remaining 5% were paid for through other sources.⁶

Source: *The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer*/ Kaiser Family Foundation/ Harvard School of Public Health *National Survey on Nursing Homes*, September 2001 (conducted April-June 2001)

Long-Term Care Health Insurance Policies

Do you have a private long-term care insurance policy, that is insurance that pays for nursing home and home care services over a long period of time, or not?

How long have you had long-term care insurance?



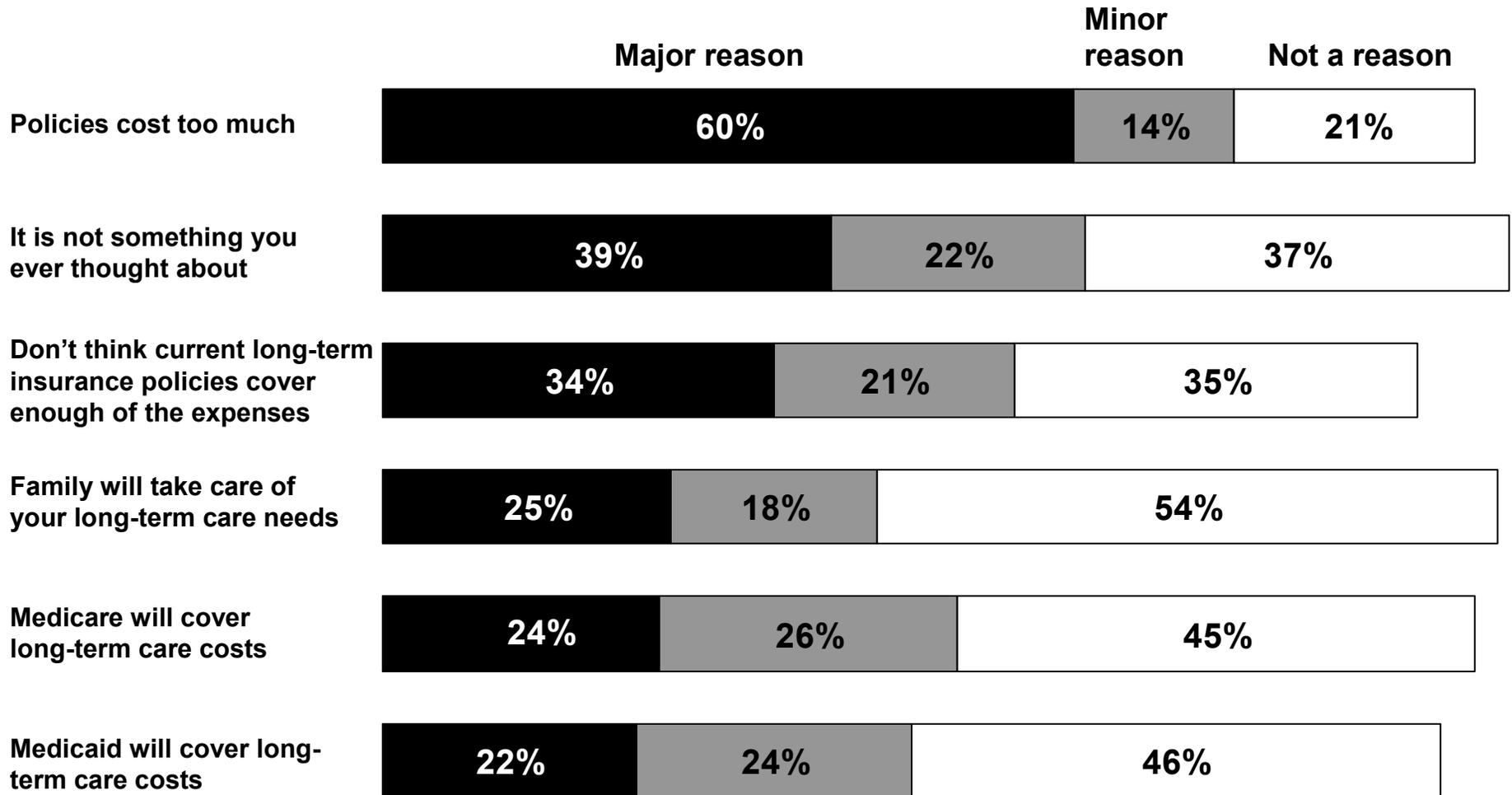
48%	1-5 years
23%	6-10 years
12%	11-20 years
8%	21 or more years
4%	Less than 1 year
5%	Don't know

Fact: In 2000, there were 6 million long-term care insurance policies⁷ out of 209 million American adults⁸, or approximately 3%, suggesting that Americans may be confused about what is covered by their insurance.

Chart 27

Reasons For Not Purchasing Long-Term Care Insurance

Of those without long-term care insurance, percent who say...

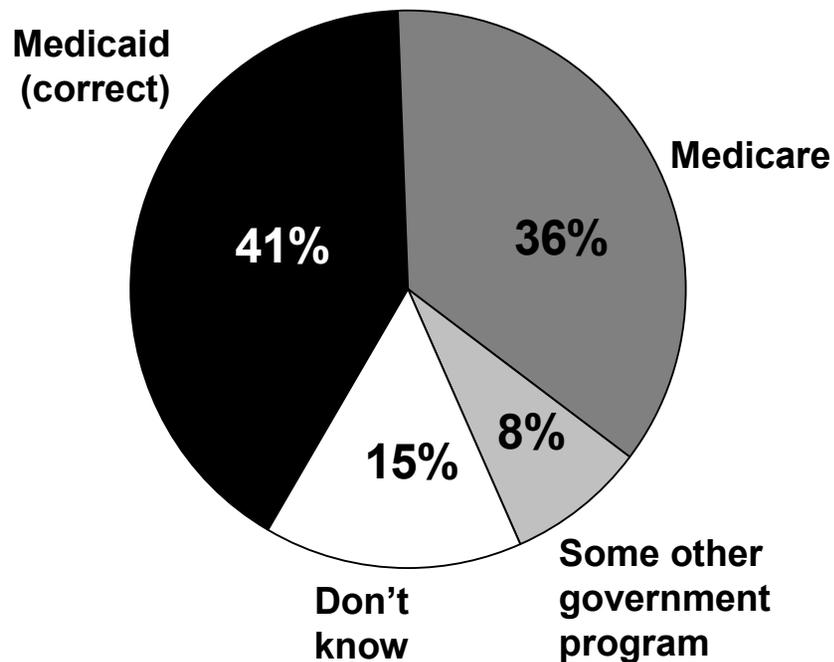


Note: Don't know not shown

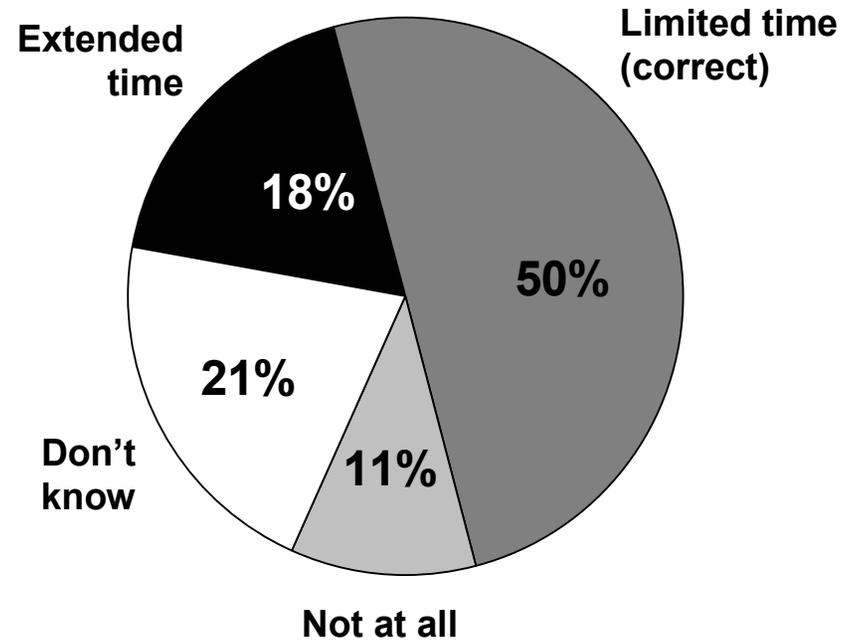
Source: *The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer*/ Kaiser Family Foundation/ Harvard School of Public Health *National Survey on Nursing Homes*, September 2001 (conducted April-June 2001)

Knowledge About the Role of Medicare and Medicaid

To the best of your knowledge, which government program provides health insurance for low-income people who need nursing home care or home care over a long period of time?



To the best of your knowledge, does Medicare currently pay for nursing home care for an extended time, limited time, or not at all?

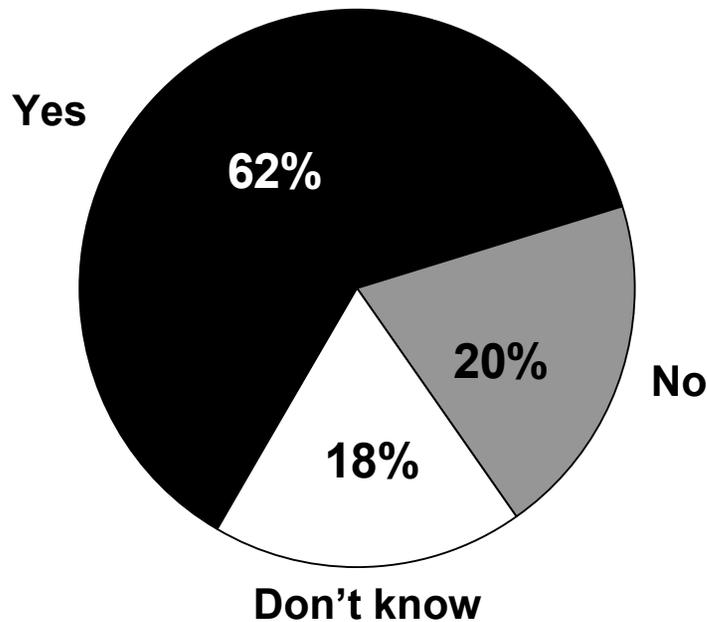


Section IV:
Policy Options

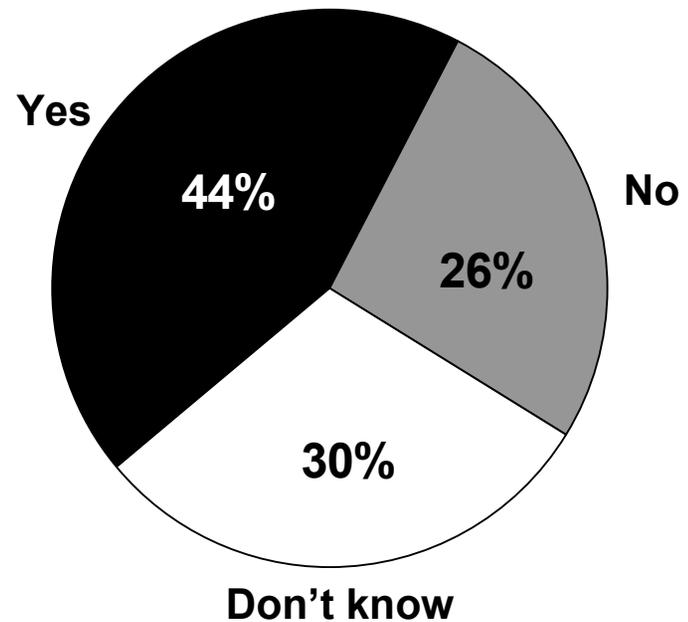
Chart 29

To the best of your knowledge, are nursing homes or assisted living facilities currently regulated by the government, or not?

Nursing Homes



Assisted Living Facilities

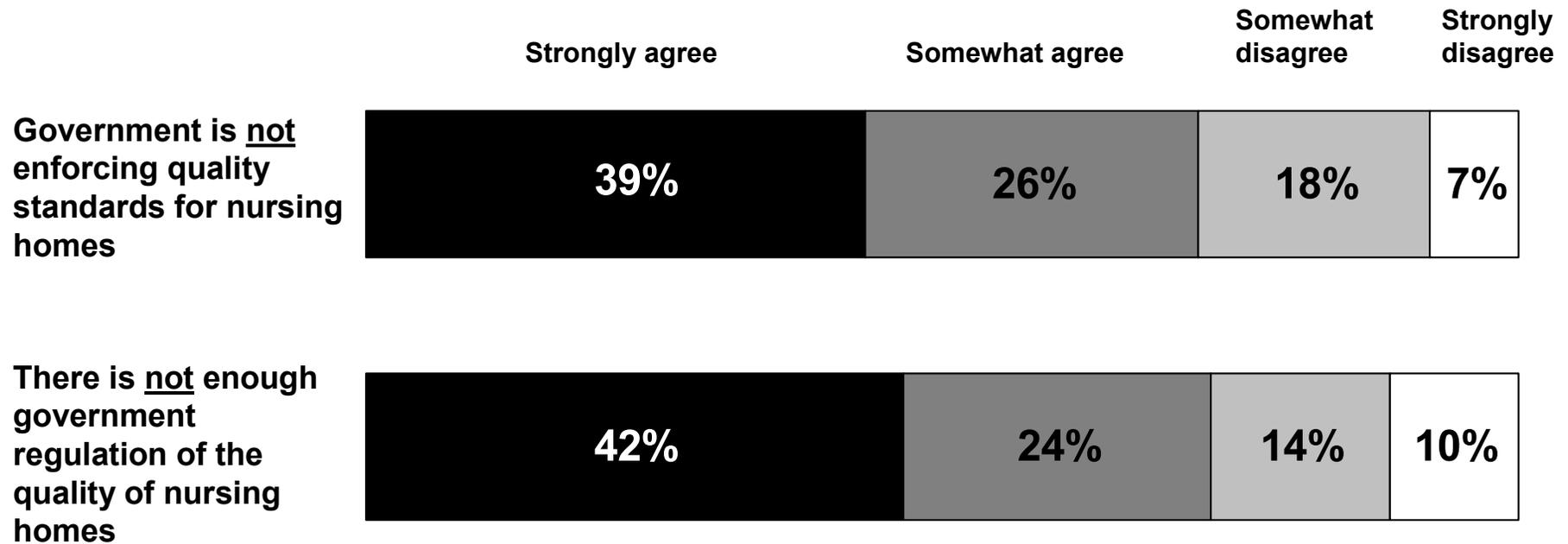


Fact: The federal government currently regulates nursing homes but not assisted living facilities. However, 29 states and the District of Columbia regulate assisted living facilities in some capacity.⁹

Chart 30

Public Perception of Government Enforcement and Regulation of the Quality of Nursing Homes

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements...



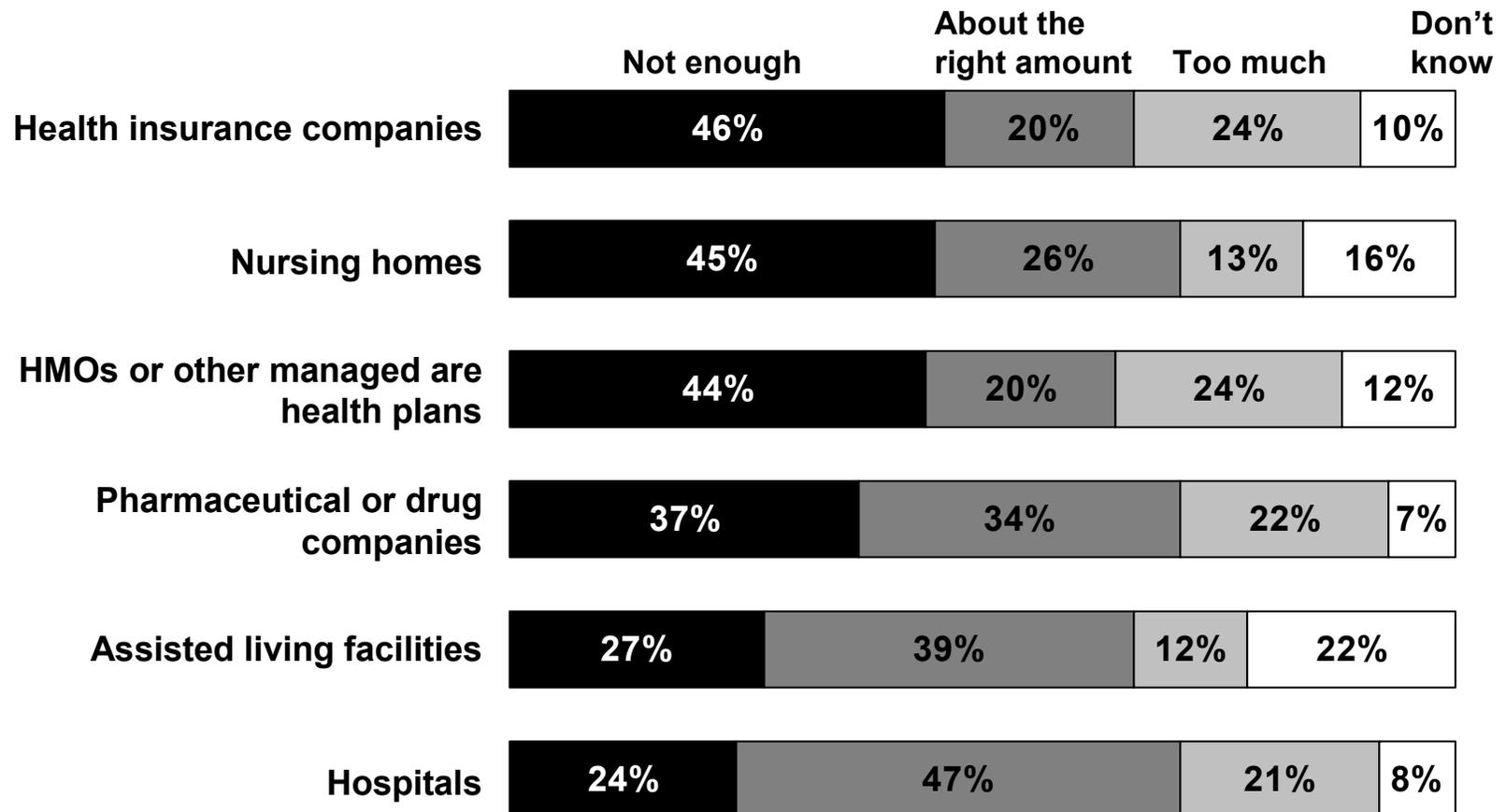
Note: Don't know not shown

Source: *The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer*/ Kaiser Family Foundation/ Harvard School of Public Health *National Survey on Nursing Homes*, September 2001 (conducted April-June 2001)

Chart 31

Government Regulation of Health Care Institutions

Do you think there is too much government regulation, not enough government regulation, or about the right amount for each of these groups...?



Source: *The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer*/ Kaiser Family Foundation/ Harvard School of Public Health *National Survey on Nursing Homes*, September 2001 (conducted April-June 2001)

Who do you think should have the MAIN responsibility for paying nursing home bills?

When people are admitted to nursing homes, who do you think should have the MAIN responsibility for paying the bill?

(Asked of the 44% who say patients and the families themselves should be responsible) If a patient and their family cannot pay the cost themselves, who then should have the MAIN responsibility for paying?

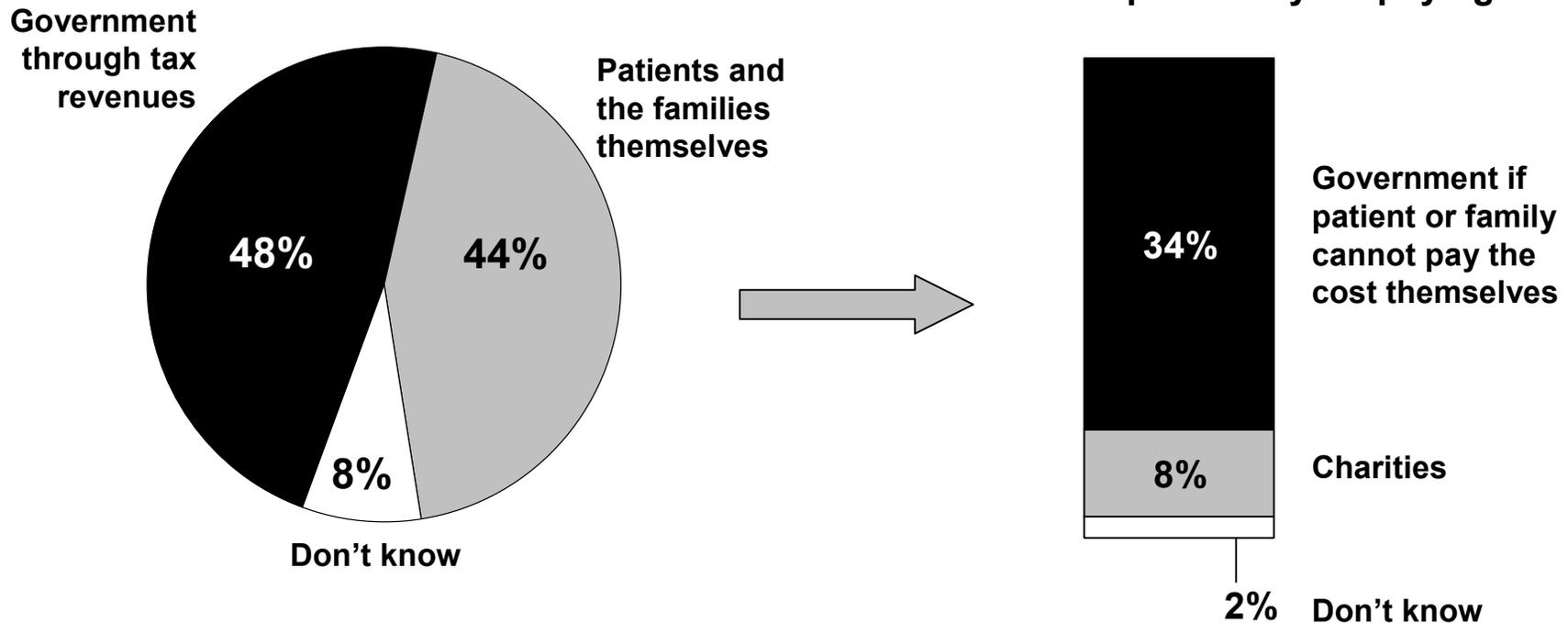
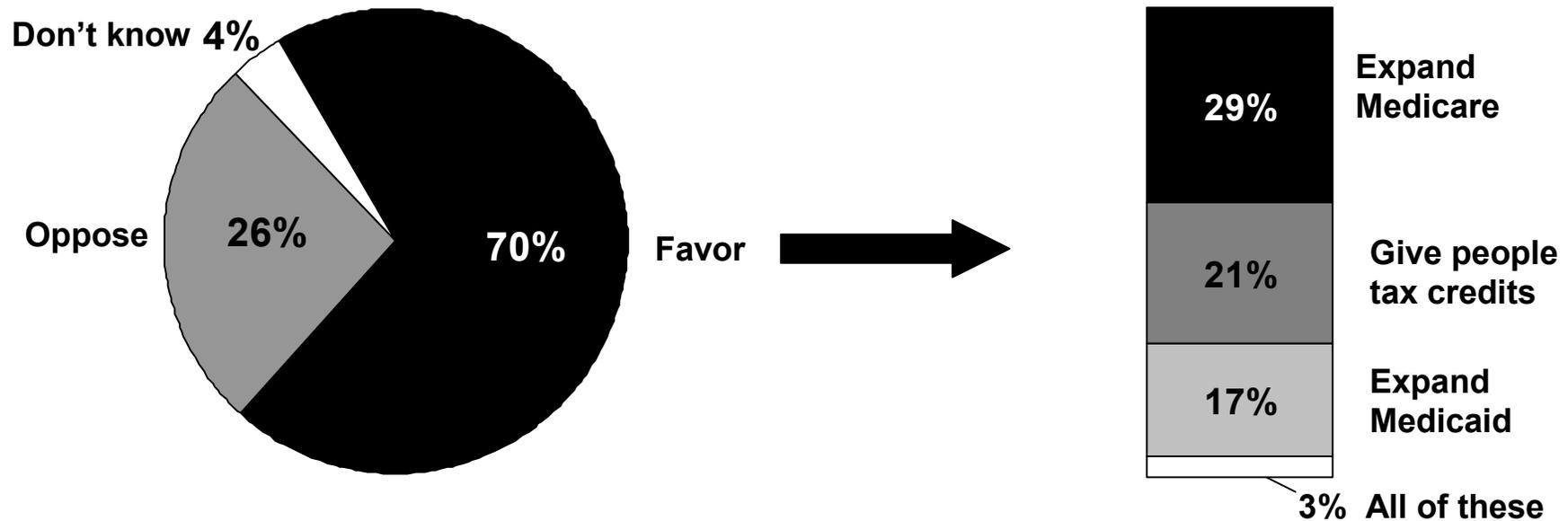


Chart 33

Interest in the Federal Government Doing More To Help Pay the Cost of Nursing Home Care

Would you favor or oppose the federal government doing more to help pay the cost of nursing home care, even if it would require a substantial increase in taxes?

(Asked of the 70% who favor the federal government doing more)
Would you prefer to have the federal government...

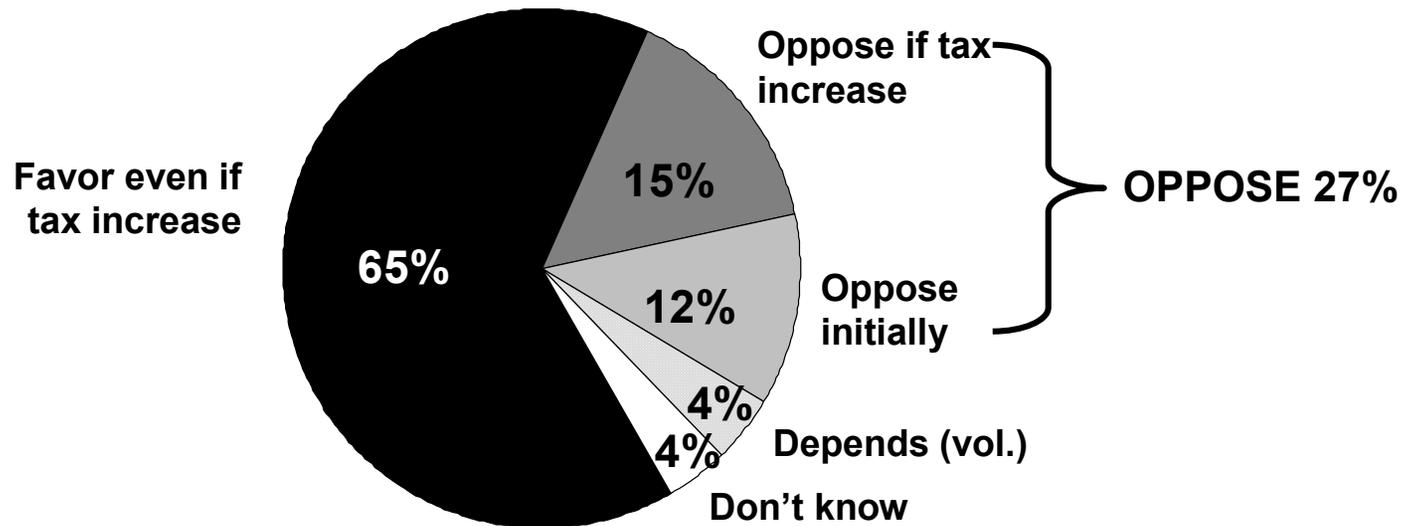


Source: *The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer*/ Kaiser Family Foundation/ Harvard School of Public Health *National Survey on Nursing Homes*, September 2001 (conducted April-June 2001)

Chart 34

Majority of Americans Favor Expanding Medicare to Cover Most of the Cost of Nursing Home Services for Those Who Need It

Would you favor or oppose the federal government expanding Medicare to cover most of the cost of nursing home services for those who need it? Would you still favor this if it could lead to a tax increase?



Source: *The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer*/ Kaiser Family Foundation/ Harvard School of Public Health *National Survey on Nursing Homes*, September 2001 (conducted April-June 2001)

Chart 35

In order to encourage more people to purchase a private long-term care insurance policy, would you...

... favor or oppose the federal government giving a substantial tax deduction or tax credit to people who purchase such policies? Would you still favor this if it could lead to a tax increase?

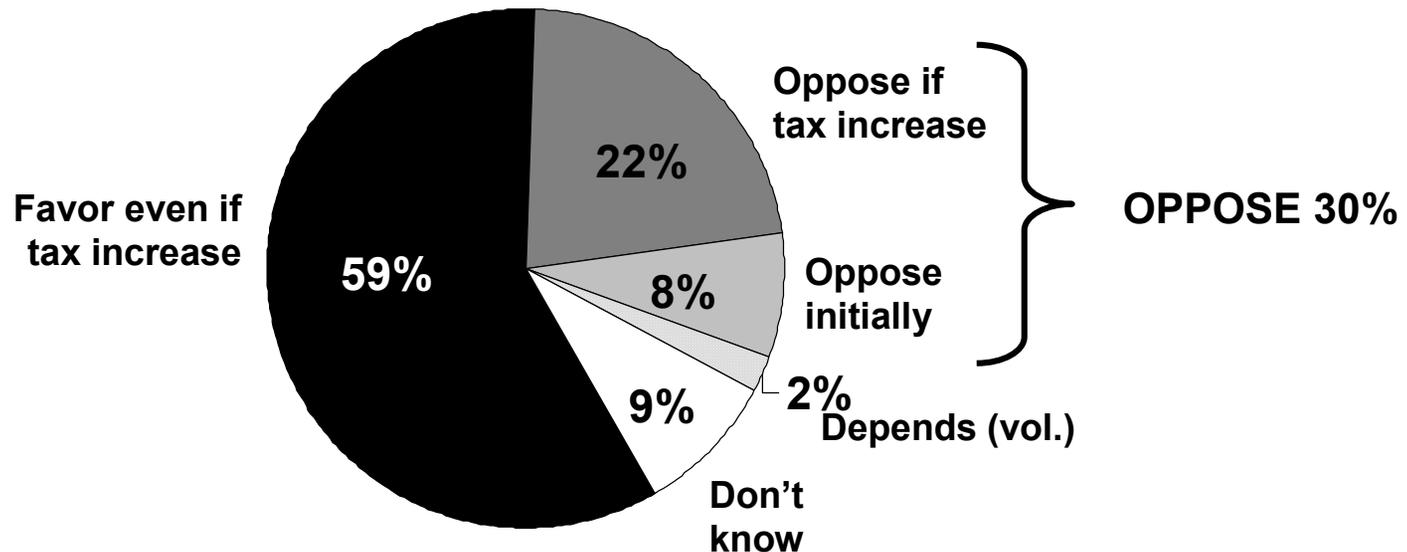
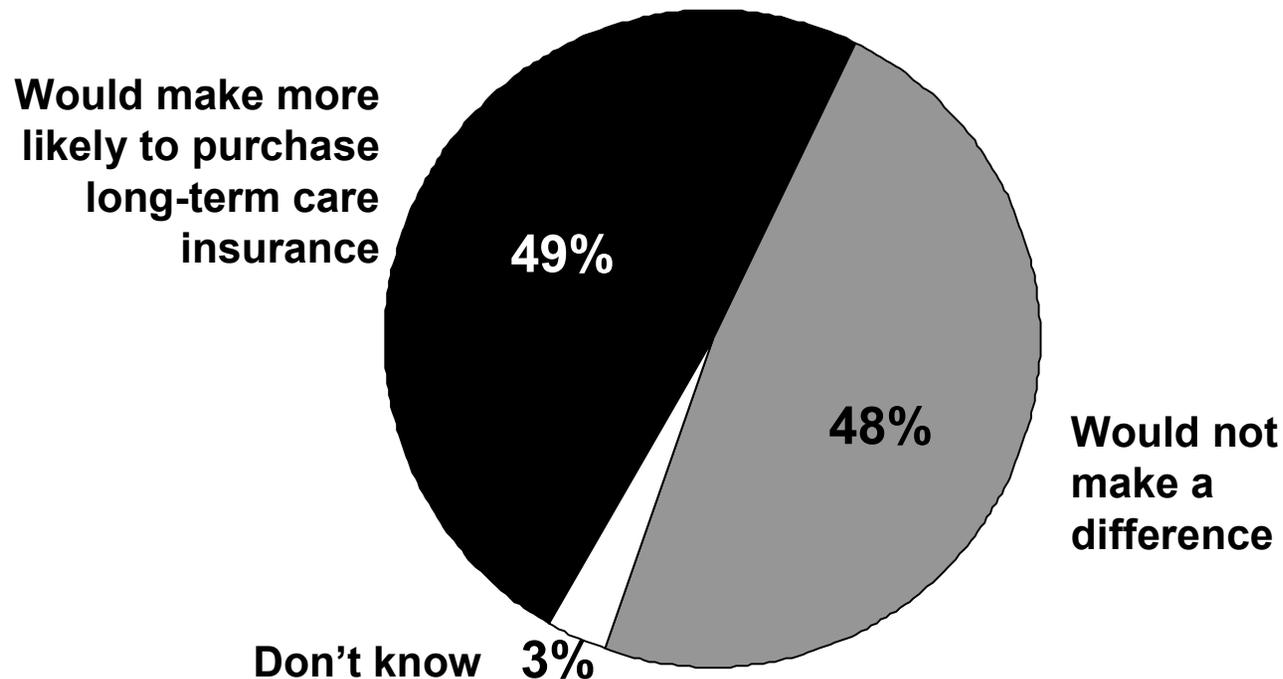


Chart 36

If the federal government were to give you a tax deduction or tax credit, would this make you more likely to purchase long-term care insurance, or wouldn't it make a difference?

(Among those who currently do not have long-term care insurance)



Source: *The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer*/ Kaiser Family Foundation/ Harvard School of Public Health *National Survey on Nursing Homes*, September 2001 (conducted April-June 2001)

References

- 1 Kemper P, Murtaugh CM. 1991. "Lifetime Use of Nursing Home Care." *NEJM, Feb 28*; 324:595-600.
- 2 Gabrel CS. 2000. "Characteristics of Elderly Nursing Home Current Residents and Discharges: Data from the 1997 National Nursing Home Survey." Advance data from vital and health statistics; no.312. Hyattsville, Maryland: National Center for Health Statistics.
- 3 Citizens for Long-Term Care. 2001. "Defining Common Ground: Long-Term Care Financing Reform in 2001."
- 4 AARP. June 2001. "Assisted Living in the United States, Fact Sheet #62R."
- 5 Weiner, Sullivan, and Skaggs. 1996. "Spending Down to Medicaid: New Data on the Role of Medicaid in Paying for Nursing Home Care."
- 6 HCFA. 2000. National Health Accounts.
- 7 HIAA. October 2000. "Who Buys Long-Term Care Insurance, 2000?"
- 8 U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000.
- 9 Mollica RL. 2000. State Assisted Living Policy: 2000." Prepared for the National Academy of State Health Policy, July 2000.



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