Life in Hampton Roads Survey Press Release #4

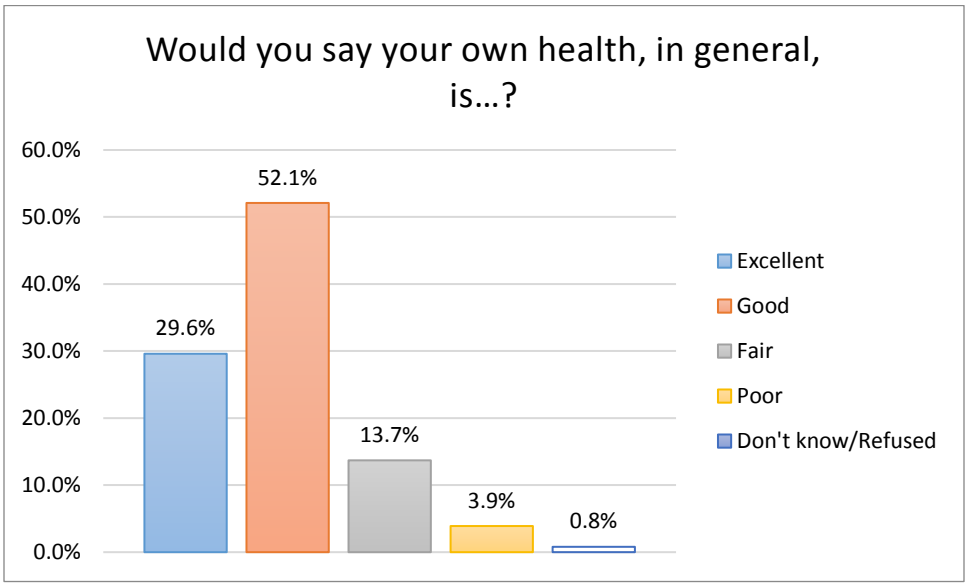
Health, Health Care, and other Health Related Issues

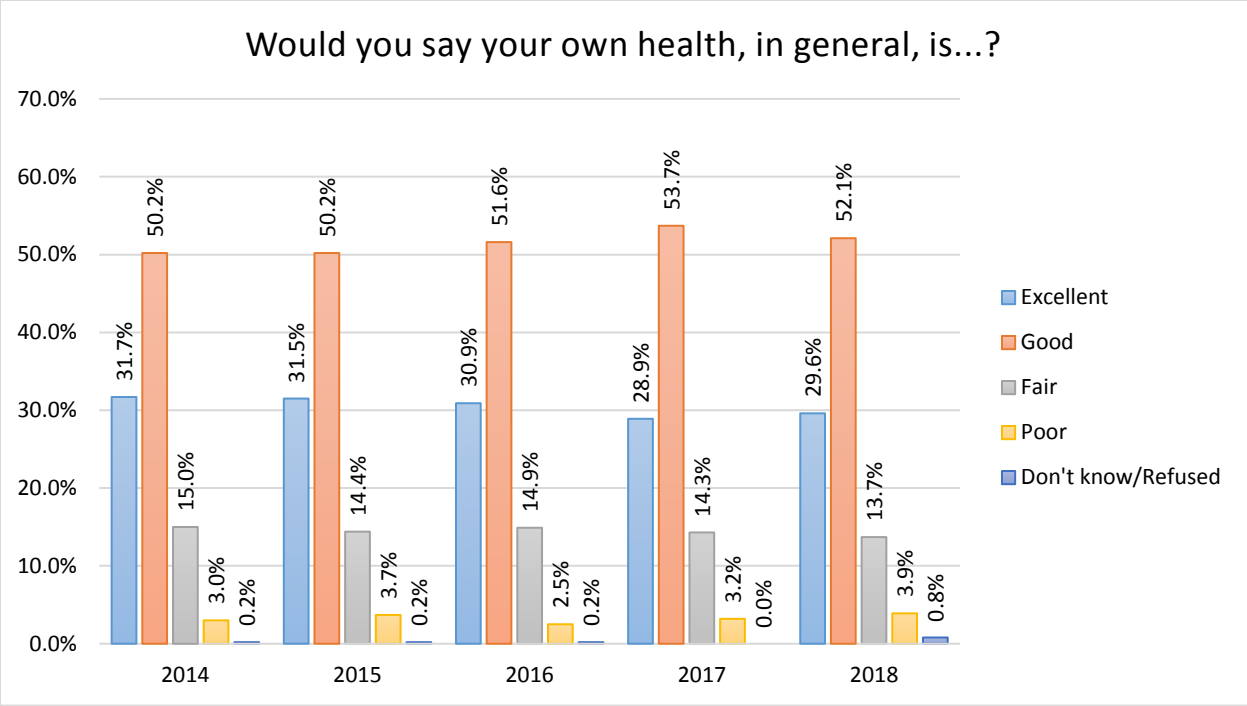
This report examines regional and sub-regional measures of health and health related issues from the 2018 Life In Hampton Roads survey (LIHR 2018) conducted by the Old Dominion University Social Science Research Center. Data from prior years is also provided when available to show comparisons in responses over time. Responses were weighted by city population, race, age, gender, and phone usage (cell versus land-line) to be representative of the Hampton Roads region. For additional information on survey methodology, and analyses of other issues, please see the SSRC website at www.odu.edu/ssrc.

The health of Hampton Roads residents is vital to ensuring that the community thrives. The 2018 Life in Hampton Roads survey asked residents of the Hampton Roads area about their general health, certain health conditions, health insurance, and other health related questions. Many of these questions were developed by the Virginia Beach Department of Public Health and their partners.

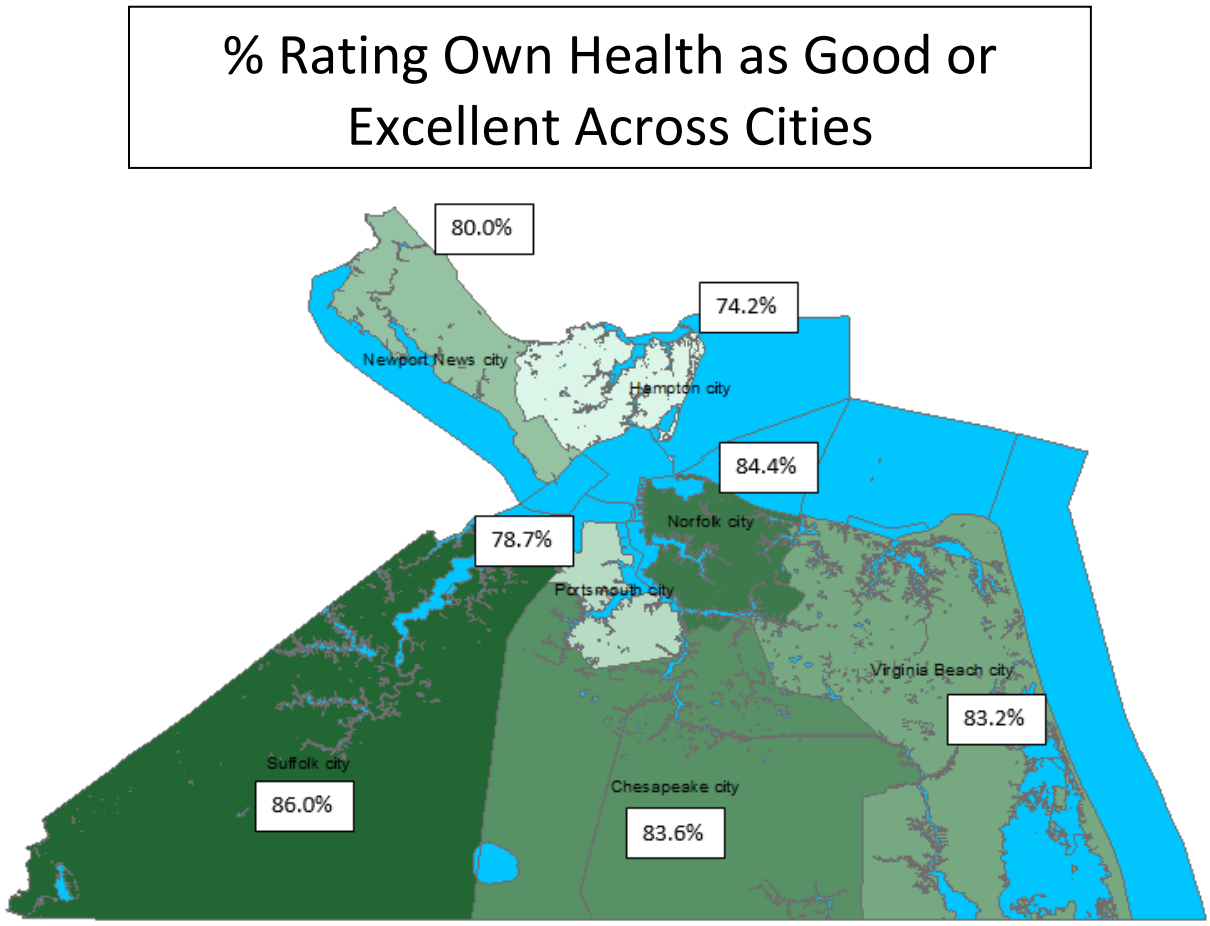
General Health

Less than thirty percent (29.6%) of Hampton Roads residents rated their own general health as excellent. The majority of the respondents reported themselves to be in good health (52.1%). Less than fifteen percent (13.7%) of respondents stated that they are in fair health. There was a very slight increase in respondents reporting that they have poor general health. The 2018 survey indicated 3.9 percent of people were in poor health, while the 2017 survey reported 3.2 percent for poor general health. This is the highest percentage of respondents reporting being in poor health in the past five years.



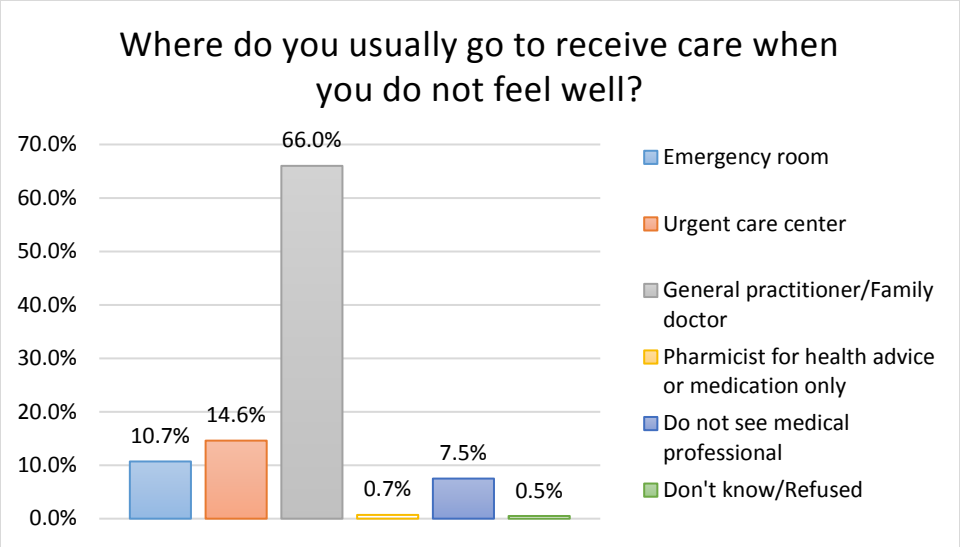


Across the cities of Hampton Roads, Suffolk and Norfolk residents reported the highest ratings of overall health with 86.0 percent and 84.4 percent reporting their health good or excellent respectively. Alternatively, Portsmouth (78.7%) and Hampton (74.2%) had lower percentages of residents who rated their overall health excellent or good.

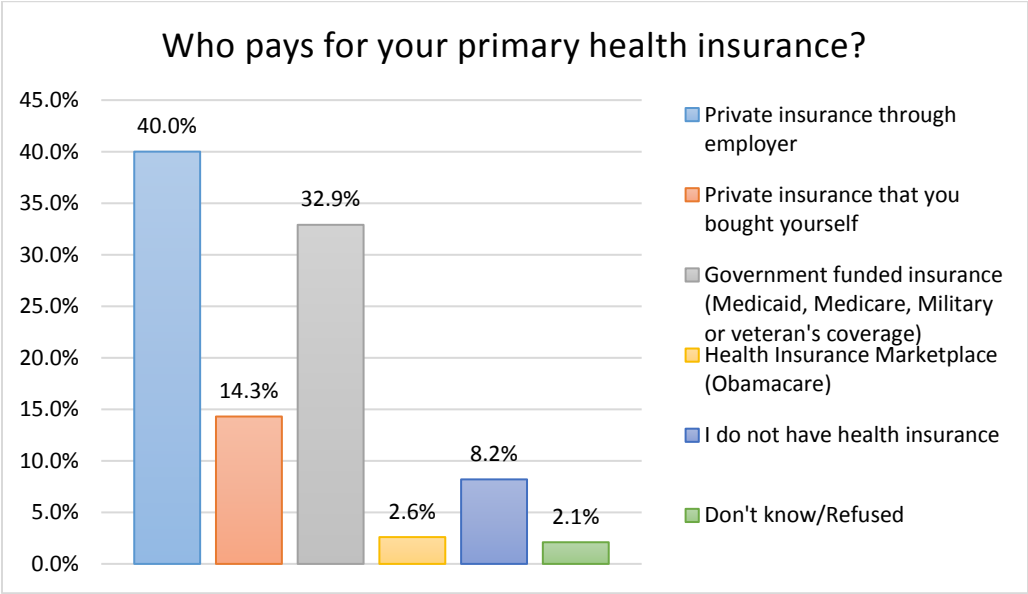


Health Care Visits & Health Insurance

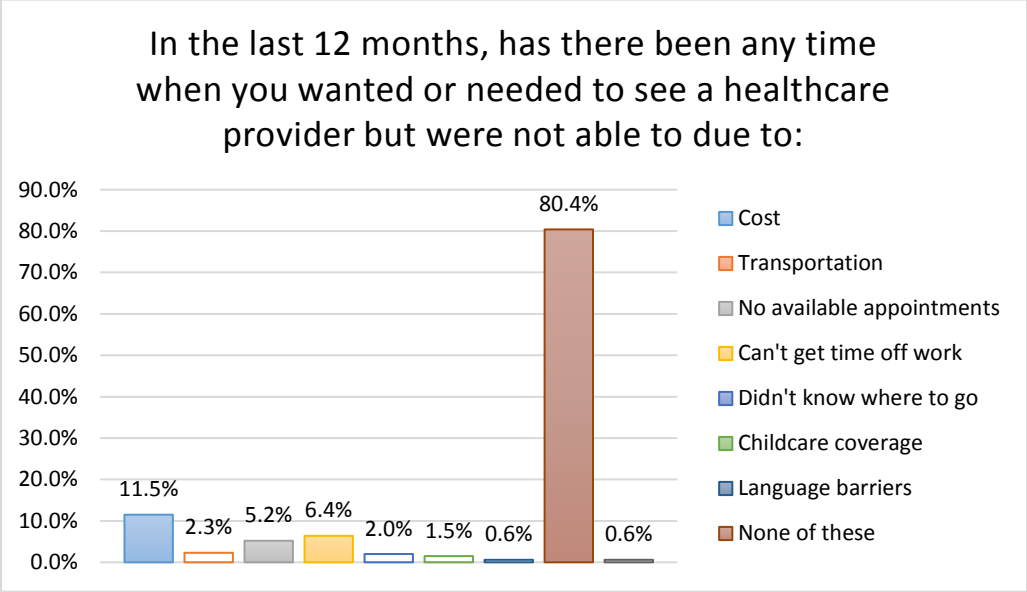
Respondents were asked where they go to receive care when they do not feel well. The majority of respondents (66.0%) said they visit a general practitioner or family doctor for medical care when they do not feel well. Additionally, 14.6 percent said they go to an urgent care center and 10.7 percent go to the emergency room when they do not feel well. A small percentage of respondents (7.5%) said they do not see a medical professional.



Respondents were also asked to identify who pays for their primary health insurance. The majority of respondents reported that their primary health insurance is either funded by private insurance through their employer (40.0%) or through government funded insurance, such as Medicaid, Medicare, or Military or veteran's coverage (32.9%). Another 14.3 percent said their primary health insurance in paid by private insurance that they bought themselves. A small percentage of respondents (8.2%) said they do not have health insurance.

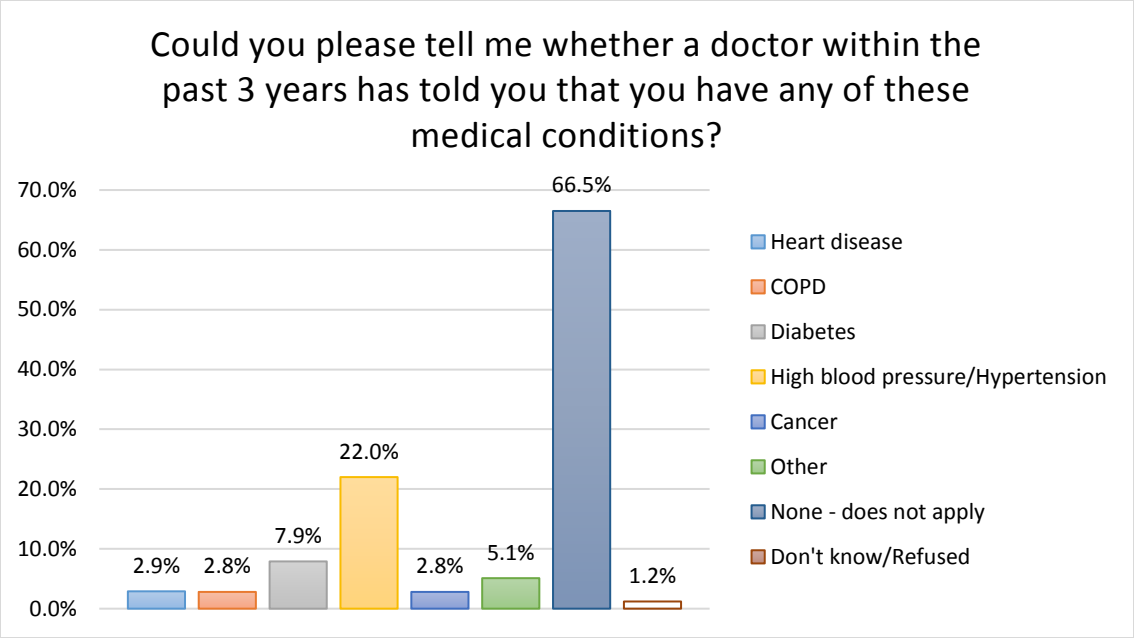


The 2018 Life in Hampton Roads survey also included questions about barriers to healthcare including if respondents were unable to see a healthcare provider when they wanted to for various reasons. The majority of respondents (80.4%) reported that none of these reasons applied to them. Of the reasons reported for not being able to see a healthcare provider, the three most common reasons given were cost (11.5%), unable to get time off work (6.4%), and no available appointments (5.2%).

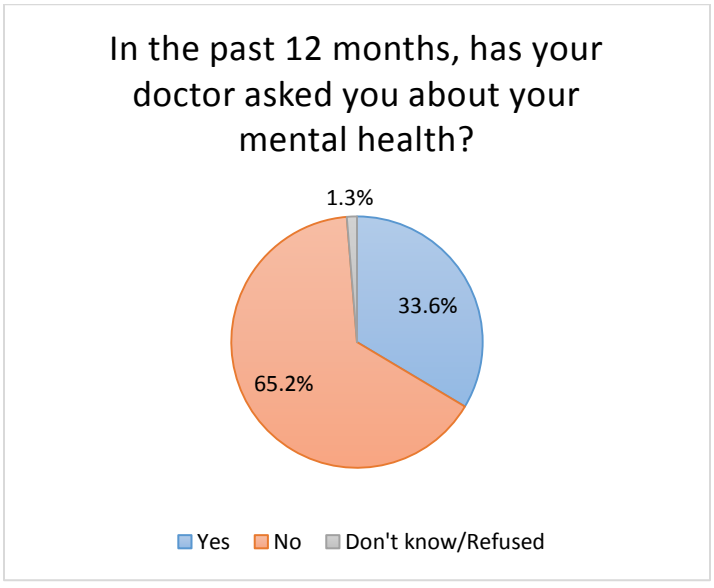


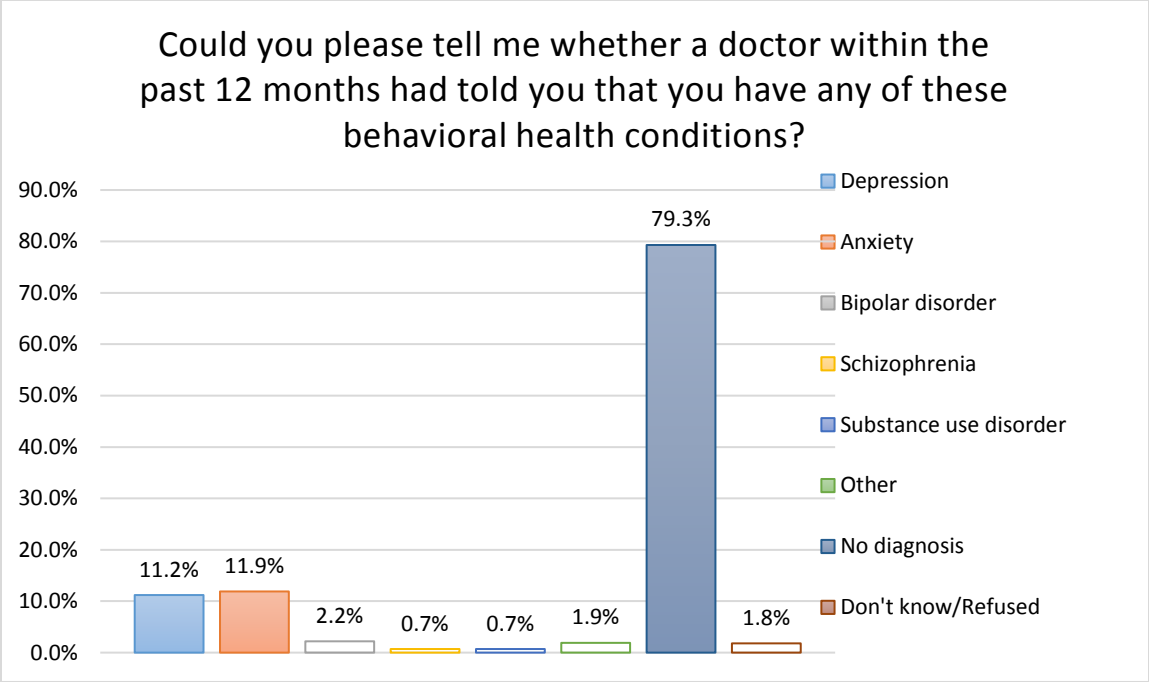
Chronic Conditions

Respondents were asked whether or not a doctor had told them they had certain medical conditions within the past three years. The most commonly reported medical condition was high blood pressure or hypertension (22.0%). After that, there was a substantial drop off in percentage with only 7.9 percent of respondents saying they had been told by a doctor in the past three years that they had diabetes and only 5.1 percent being told they had some other medical condition. The majority of respondents (66.5%) reported that a doctor had not told them they had any medical conditions within the past 3 years.



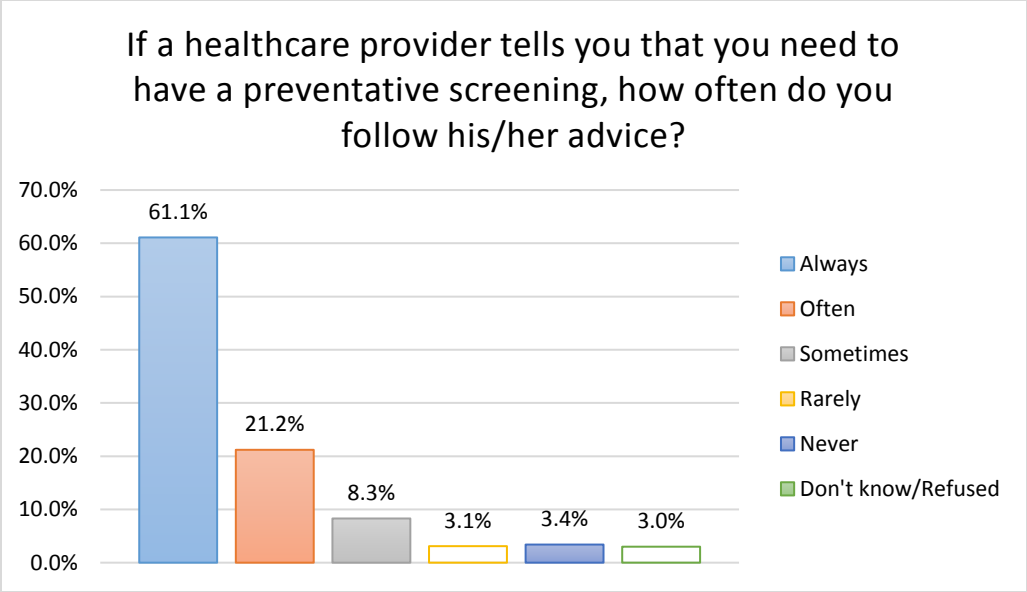
About one-third (33.6%) of respondents reported that their doctor has asked about their mental health in the past 12 months. Additionally, respondents were asked whether a doctor had told them they had certain behavioral health conditions within the past 12 months. The two most commonly reported behavioral health conditions were anxiety (11.9%) and depression (11.2%). Again, the majority of respondents (79.3%) reported that a doctor had not told them they had any behavioral health conditions within the past 12 months.



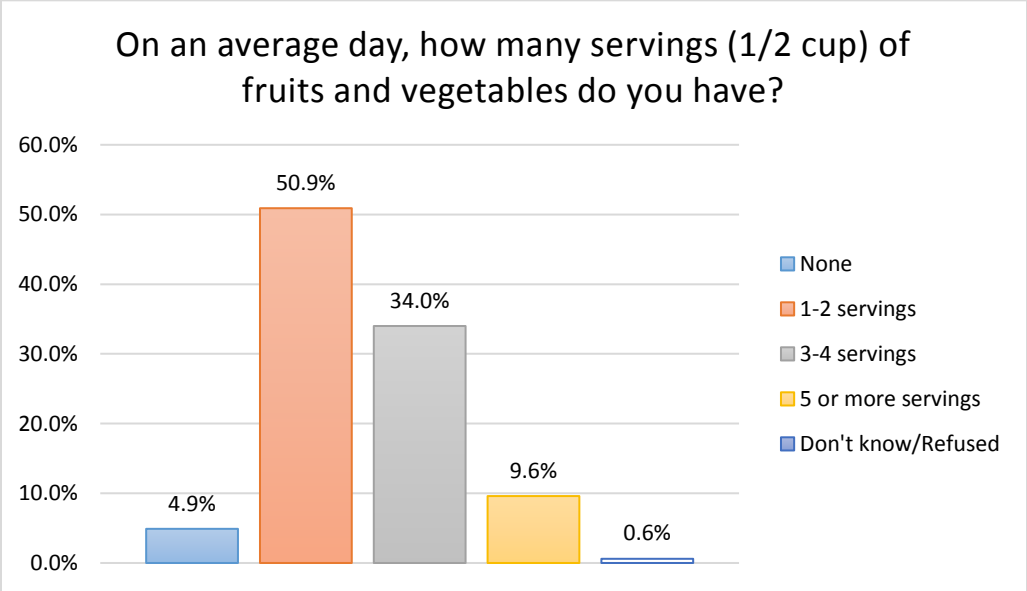


Healthy Habits

Respondents were asked how often they follow the advice of a healthcare provider if they are told they need to have a preventative screening, such as a mammogram, colonoscopy, or other procedure. The vast majority reported that they either always (61.1%) or often (21.2%) follow the advice of their healthcare provider when told they need to have a preventative screening. Only 6.5 percent stated they either rarely (3.1%) or never (3.4%) follow the advice of their healthcare provider when told they need a preventative screening.

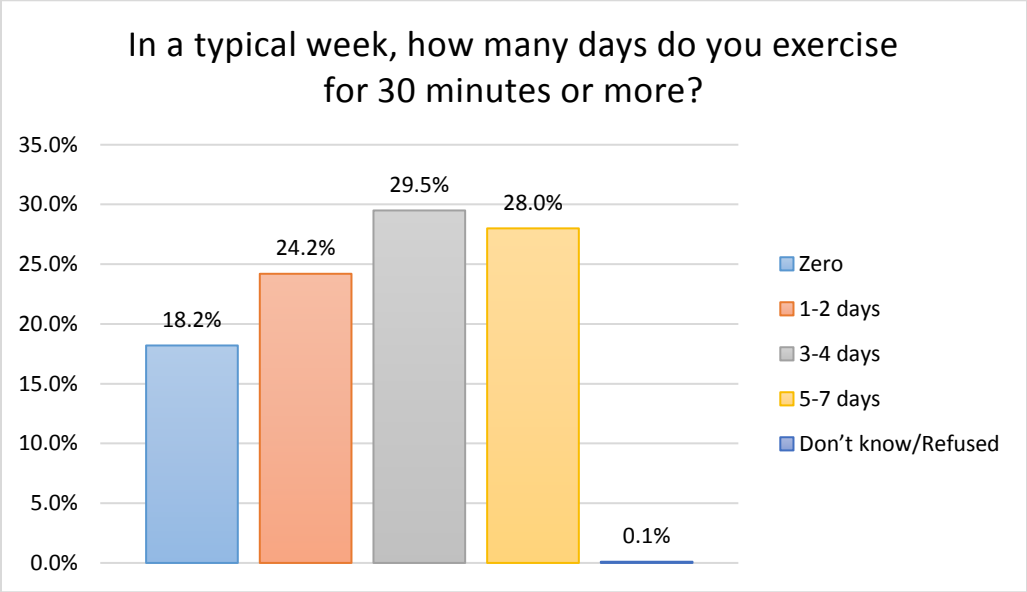


When asked how many servings (1/2 cup) of fruits and vegetables they have on an average day, the majority of respondents said they have either 1-2 servings (50.9%) or 3-4 servings (34.0%). Another 9.6 percent said they have 5 or more servings of fruits and vegetables on an average day and only 4.9 percent said they have no servings of fruits and vegetables on an average day.



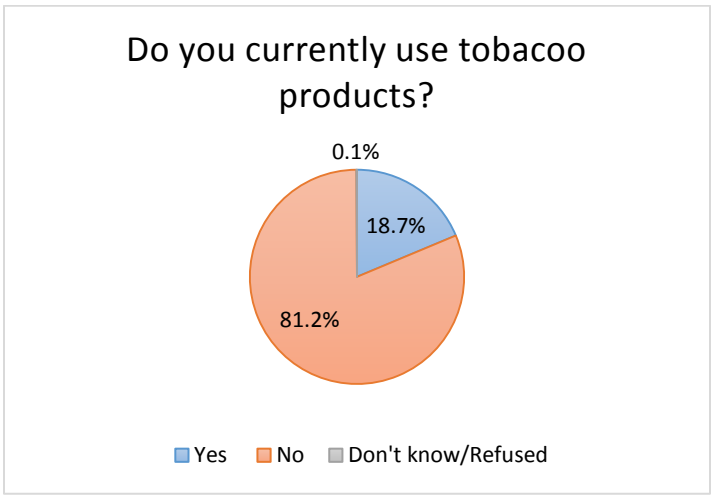
The majority of respondents exercise for 30 minutes or more at least one day a week (81.7%) with 24.2 percent exercising 1-2 days a week, 29.5 percent exercising 3-4 days a week, and 28.0 percent

exercising 5-7 days a week. Only 18.2 percent of respondents said they do not exercise for 30 minutes or more during the week.

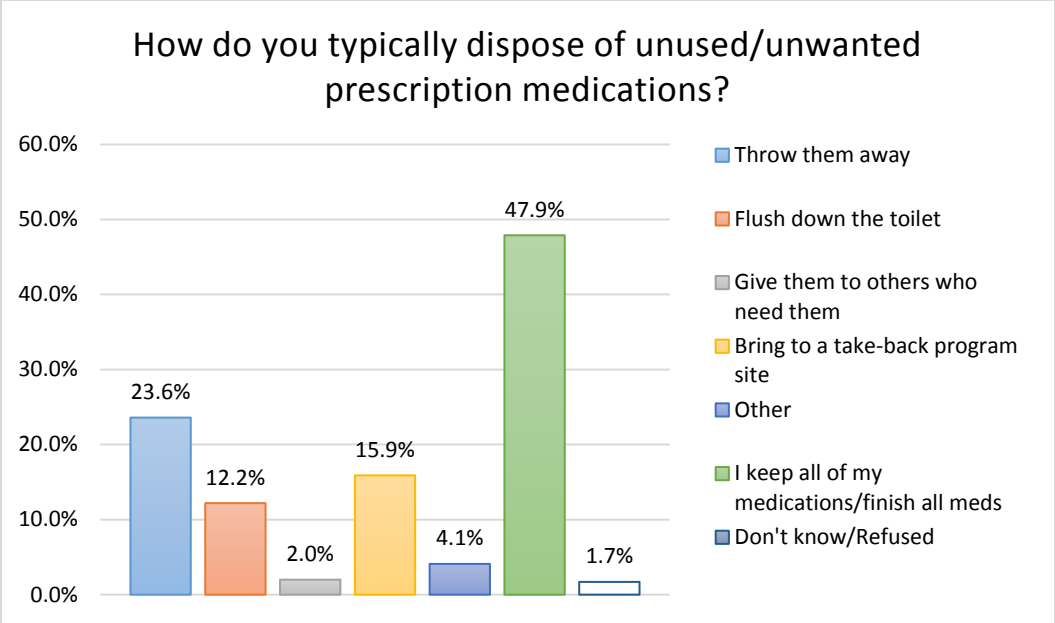


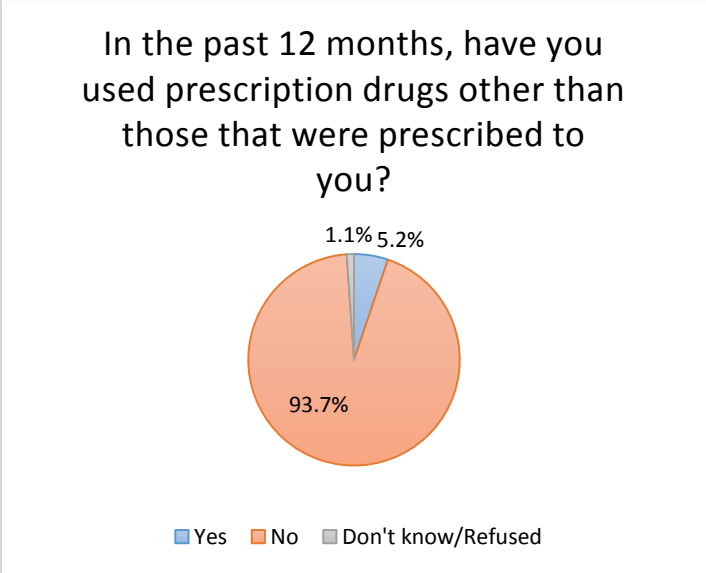
Tobacco, Alcohol, and Prescription Drugs

The majority of respondents stated they do not currently use tobacco products (81.2%). Additionally, 93.0 percent said they have never failed to do what was normally expected from them because of drinking alcohol. A small percentage (4.2%) said they had failed to do what was normally expected from them because of drinking alcohol less than monthly (2.7%) or monthly (1.5%).



Respondents were also asked how they typically dispose of unused or unwanted prescription medications. Almost half (47.9%) said they keep all medications or finish all of their medications. Another 23.6 percent reported they throw their unused or unwanted prescription medications away. Additionally, 15.9 percent take the unused or unwanted prescription medications to a take-back program and 12.2 percent flush the medications down the toilet. The vast majority of respondents also stated that they have not used prescription drugs other than those that were prescribed to them in the past 12 months (93.7%).

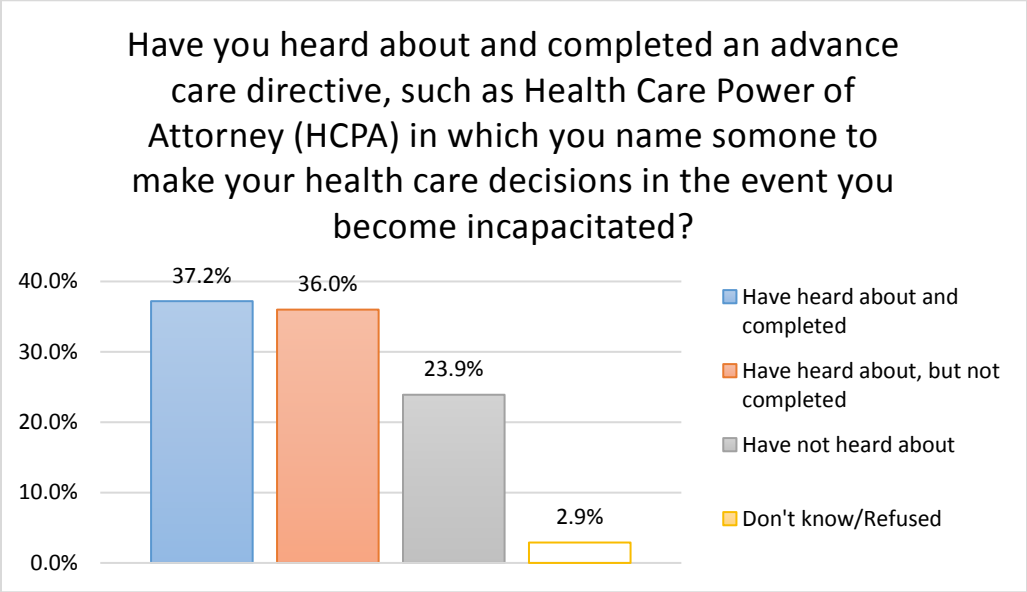


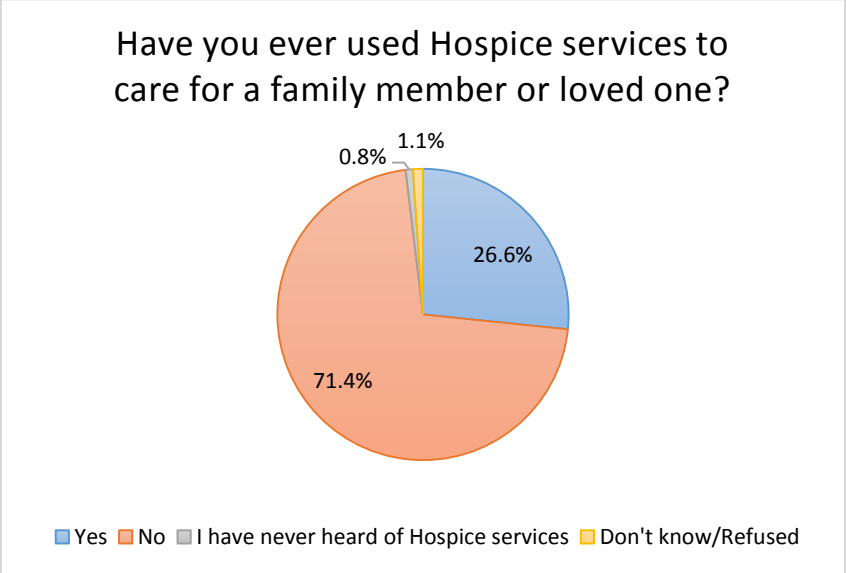


Advanced Health Care Planning and Aging

Respondents were asked if they have heard about and completed an advance care directive, such as Health Care Power of Attorney (HPCA) in which they name someone to make their health care decisions in the event they become incapacitated. The majority (73.2%) reported that they have heard of an advanced care directive, with 37.2 percent having completed one and 36.0 percent having heard about, but not completed an advance care directive. Almost one in five respondents (23.9%) said they have not

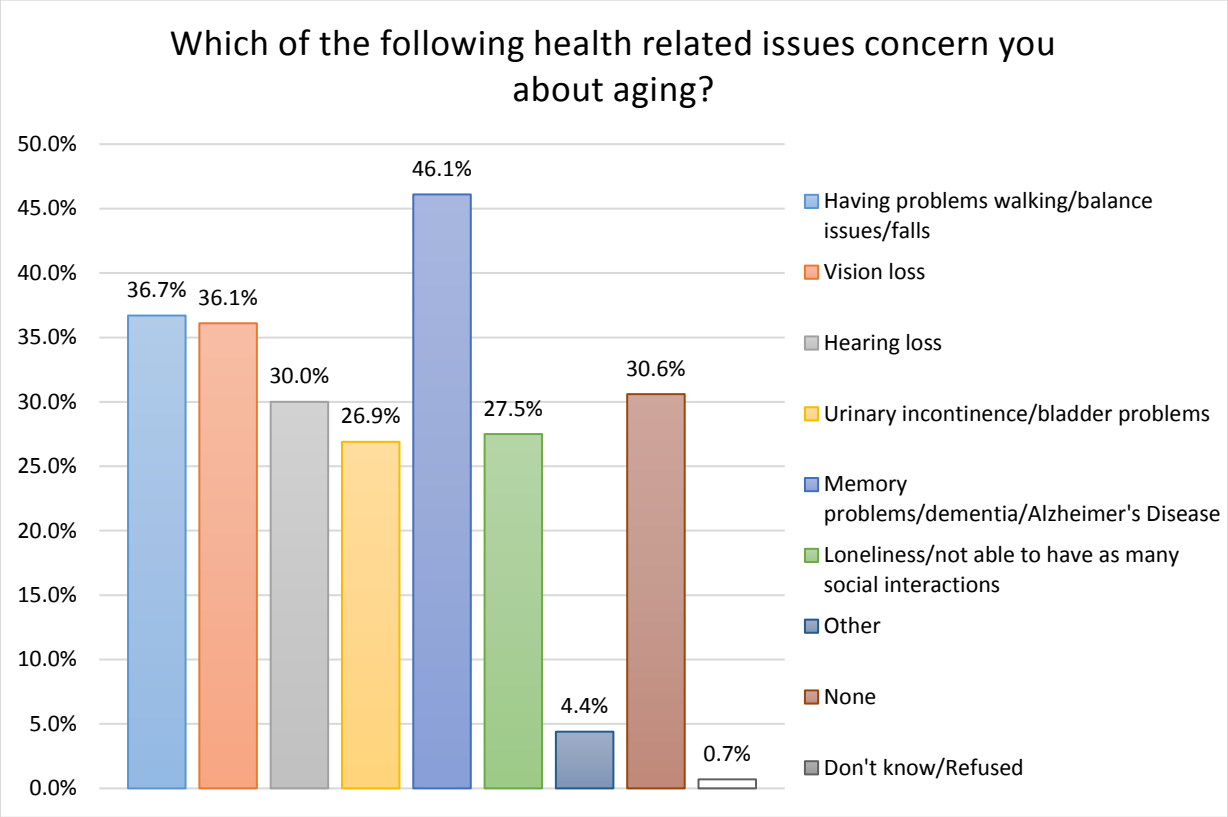
heard about an advance care directive. Additionally, 26.6 percent of respondents said they have used Hospice services to care for a family member or loved one.





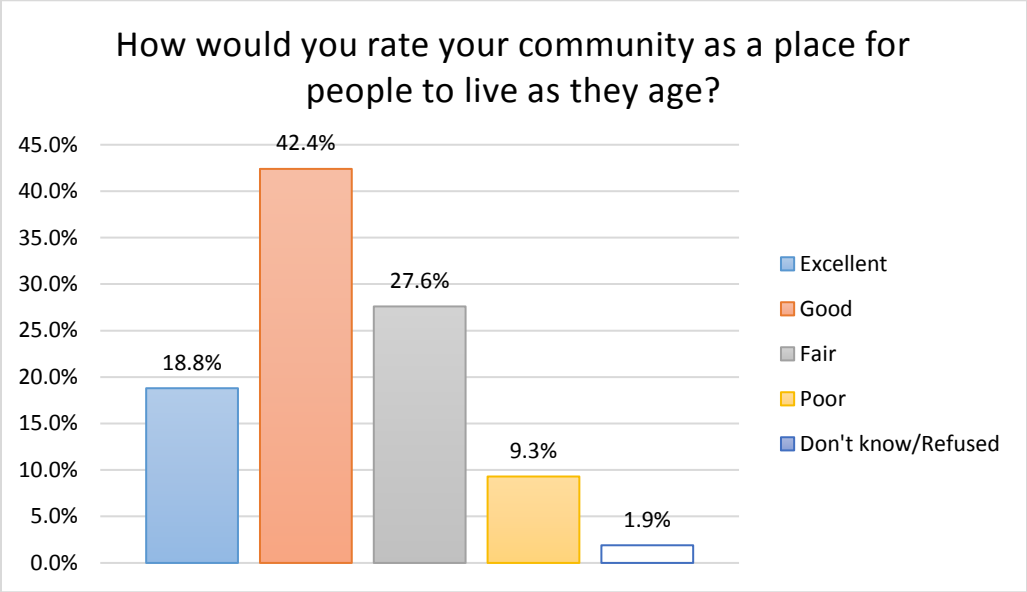
Respondents were asked to identify some health related issues that concern them about aging. The most common response was memory problems, dementia, and Alzheimer's disease (46.1%). More than a third of respondents said they were concerned about having problems walking and balance issues/falls (36.7%) and vision loss (36.1%). A slightly smaller percentage of respondents were concerned

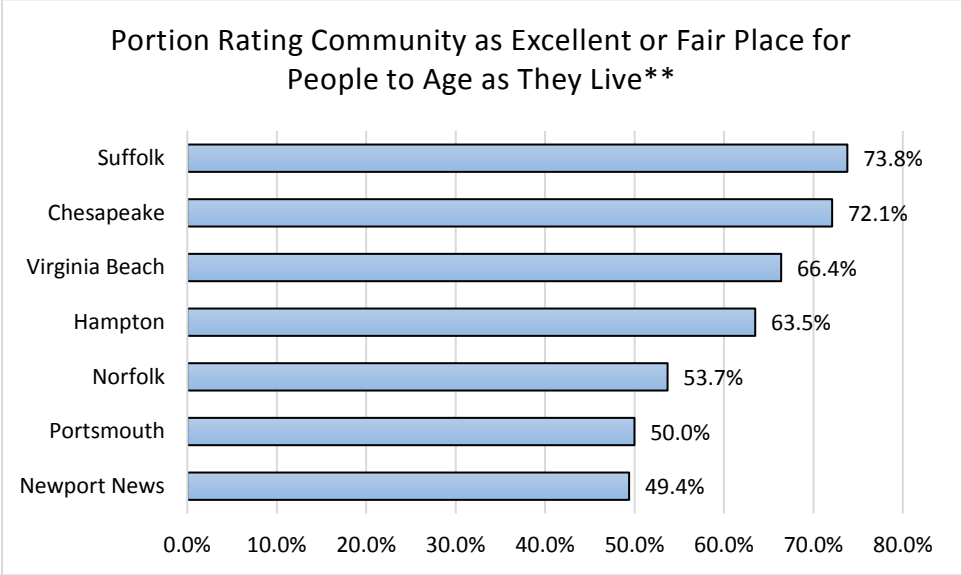
about hearing loss (30.0%), loneliness and not being able to have as many social interactions (27.5%), and urinary incontinence and bladder problems (26.9%). Just under one-third of respondents (30.6%) said they did not have any health related concerns about aging.



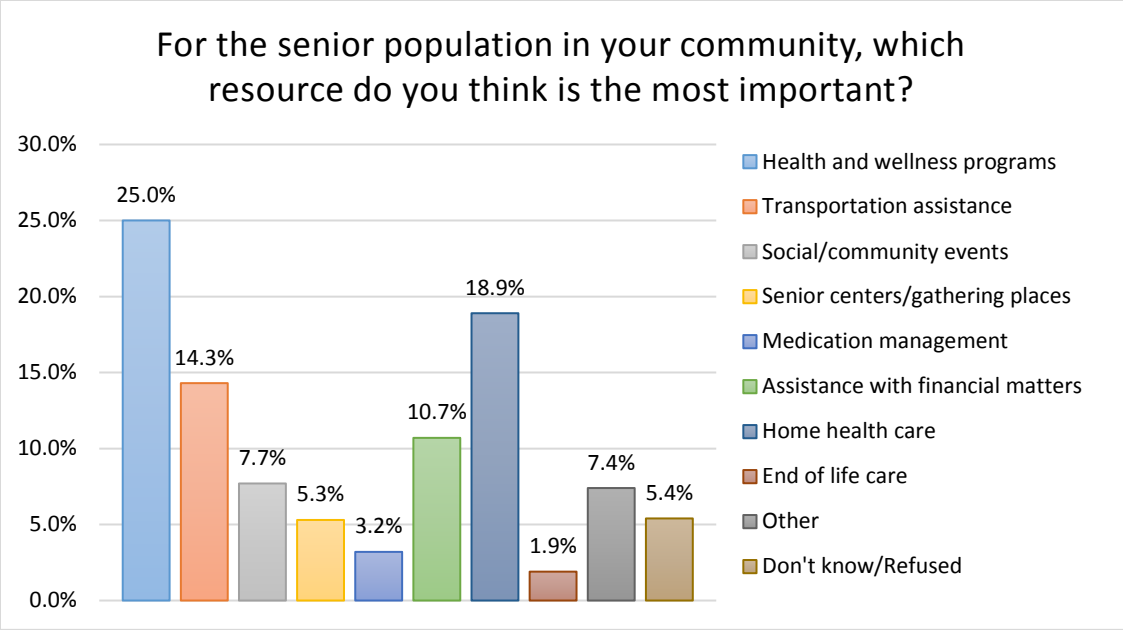
Hampton Roads residents were asked how they would rate their community as a place for people to live as they age. Almost half (42.4%) of respondents said their community was a good place for people to live as they age and another 18.8 percent said their community was an excellent place for people to live as they age. Additionally, 27.6% stated their community was a fair place for people to live as they age and 9.3% said their community was a poor place for people to live as they age. Responses to these questions varied significantly across cities with Suffolk having the highest percentage of respondents rating their community as an excellent or good place for people to live as they age (73.8%) and Newport News (49.4%) having the lowest. Respondents were also asked which resources they think are the most important for the senior population. The most common responses were health and wellness programs

(25.0%), medication management (18.9%), transportation assistance (14.3%) and assistance with financial matters (10.7%).

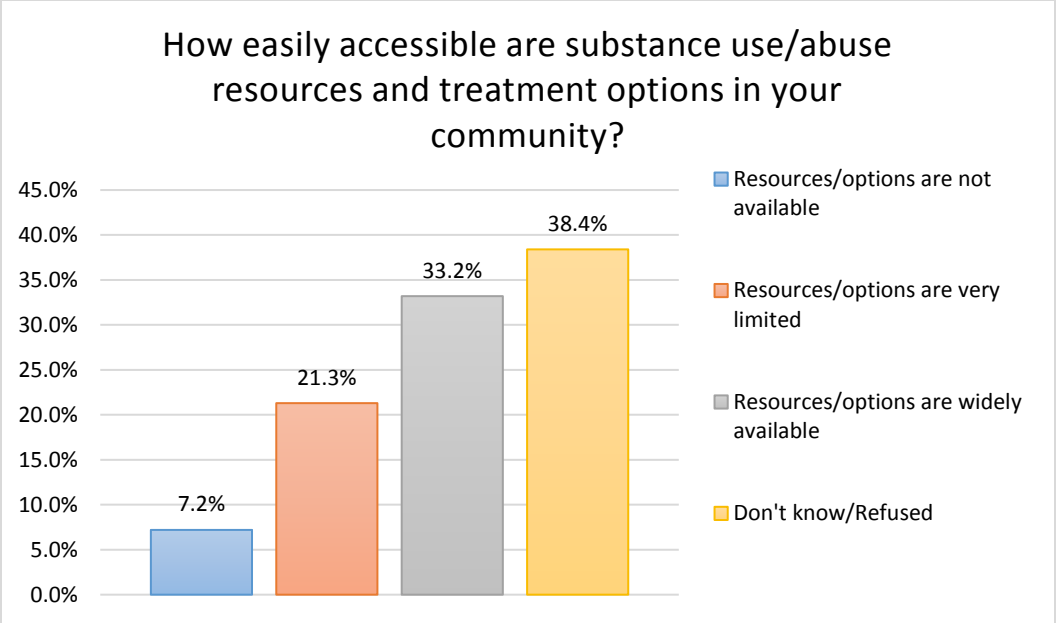




**p<.000 statistically significant, 2-tailed test



When asked how easily accessible substance use/abuse resources and treatment options are in their community, about one-third (33.2%) of respondents said that resources and treatment options are widely available. Another 21.3 percent said that resources and treatment options are very limited and 7.2 percent said that resources and treatment options are not available. More than one-third of respondents (38.4%) said they either did not know if resources and treatment options were available in their community or refused to answer.



Respondents' ratings of general health are consistent with previous years with over 80 percent rating as excellent or good. Less than 10 percent of respondents report not having health insurance and most report no barriers to receiving health care services. Only one-third recall being asked about their mental health and about one in five have not heard about advanced care directives. Almost 40 percent (38.4%) don't know how accessible substance use/abuse resources and treatment options are in their community.