



# Trusted, In-Person Help: The Preferred Form of Support for Older Americans

A Consumer Survey

2024

## Introduction

In the age of artificial intelligence and digital intervention, new survey data show that human help in health care is not only preferred by many older adults, but may also be a more effective strategy to reduce over-utilization of emergency services and encourage follow-through on preventive care and health-related recommendations.

### About the Data

This survey was conducted online within the United States by The Harris Poll on behalf of Papa from February 15-20, 2024, among 521 adults ages 65 and older with health insurance.

The sampling precision of Harris online polls is measured by using a Bayesian credible interval. For this study, the sample data is accurate to within +/- 4.8 percentage points using a 95% confidence level.

## Finding 1

# Older adults prefer human help to digital help when it comes to managing their health – and it’s also the most effective way to support action.

Among Americans aged 65+ with health insurance, **85%** would be likely to follow up on a health-related referral if it required them to get support from someone who would help them in person, while only **35%** would be likely to do the same if it required them to do so via a virtual care coordinator and only **16%** if it required them to do so via a chatbot.

Exhibit 1 **Likely to follow up on health-related referral if required to get support via...**

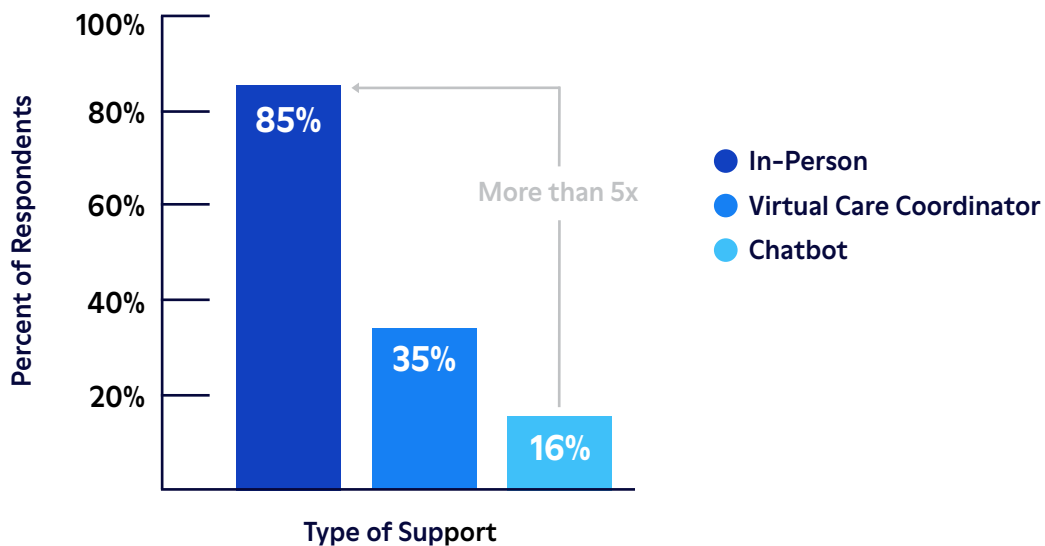
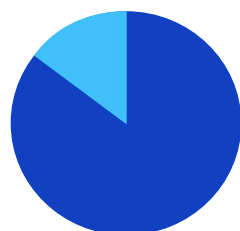


Exhibit 2

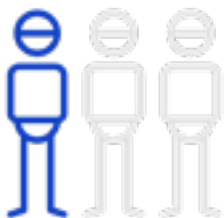


**85% of respondents prefer human help over digital help** (e.g., apps, websites) when managing health-related needs that they couldn't easily do on their own, or haven't been prioritizing (e.g., getting to doctor appointments, signing up for food stamps, getting to the gym).

## Finding 2

# Companion care can significantly decrease emergency health incidents and go a long way in accelerating the shift from reactive to proactive care.

Exhibit 3



One third of older adults who experienced a recent emergency (e.g., hospital visit, ambulance call) say they would have been less likely to experience that event if they had someone they could rely on to help them manage their health concerns and needs (e.g., getting to medical appointments, accessing preventive care).



### Did you know?

It's been estimated overuse of the emergency department for preventable or non-urgent cases costs the U.S. healthcare system **\$32 billion annually**.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [UnitedHealth Group. The High Cost of Avoidable Hospital Emergency Department Visits. Published July 22, 2019. Accessed October 22, 2022.](#)

## Finding 3

# Health care is complex – and this impacts people’s ability to follow through on preventative screenings and care management.

Health plans are increasingly investing in new strategies to engage historically hard-to-reach members, those with open gaps in care, and/or those with a high number of unmet needs, who are more likely to drive up costs. The data demonstrates trusted, in-home help may be an effective method to engaging these individuals.

Exhibit 4

**34%**

of respondents said they often find it challenging to follow through on all of the preventive screenings and/or doctor’s visits and tests to manage their health conditions on their own.

**39%**

of respondents said they would find it easier to follow through on preventive screenings if they had support making appointments and transportation.

**40%**

of respondents said they would be more likely to follow through with health-related recommendations or referrals (e.g., signing up for a health plan benefit, enrolling in a food stamp program, making appointments) if there was someone they trusted who could come to their home to help them navigate everything.



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