



Compilation and Analysis of Data from  
2010 North Dakota State Plan on Aging  
Public Input Hearing Surveys

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## INTRODUCTION

Thirteen public hearings were held throughout North Dakota beginning March 30, 2010 and ending May 4, 2010. Each participant was asked to complete a three-page survey about supportive services for North Dakota’s older individuals and persons with physical disabilities. A copy of the survey appears at the end of this document. The intent of the survey was to solicit feedback to be used in developing the 2011-2014 State Plan on Aging.

## METHODOLOGY

### Distribution of Surveys and Response Rate

7,492 surveys were distributed through three sources:

1. 1,073 (14%) Aging Public Input Hearing Participants (Table 1)
2. 2,974 (40%) Home Delivered Meals Providers (Table 2)
3. 3,445 (46%) County Social Services (Table 3)

The following three tables show the individual counts for each distribution source.

Table 1 shows the number of participants at each hearing site. Each participant received a survey. At each hearing site, 25 to 50 additional surveys were distributed for a total of about 500. The number of surveys distributed through the Public Input Hearing venues totaled 1,073.

The response rate for the surveys distributed at hearings is 74 percent (791 completed surveys).

Table 1. Number of Participants at Hearings (each received a survey)

Region	Location	#	Region	Location	#
I	Williston	37	IV	Grand Forks	27
I	Trenton	10	V	Fargo	45
II	Kenmare	105	VI	Valley City	30
II	New Town	15	VII	Bismarck	69
III	Langdon	67	VII	Fort Yates	21
III	Spirit Lake	88	VIII	Dickinson	36
III	Belcourt	23	Total		573

Meal providers were given enough surveys to distribute to everyone participating in home-delivered meals. Table 2 shows the number of surveys given to each provider.

Table 2. Number of Surveys Distributed by Providers of Home-Delivered Meals

Region	Provider	#	
I	Williston	Williston (119)	119
II	Minot	Kenmare (25), Minot (213), Tri-County (53)	291
III	Rolla	Nutrition United (53), Cavalier (29), Devils Lake (98)	180
IV	Grand Forks	Grand Forks (78), Pembina (42), Walsh (83)	203
V	Fargo	Fargo (393), Other (73)	466
VI	Valley City	Dickey (60), James River (124), South Central (272)	456
VII	Bismarck	Burleigh (165), Grant (25), Kidder/Emmons (70), Mandan (100), Mercer/McLean (113)	473
VIII	Dickinson	Dickinson (202)	202
R	Belcourt	Belcourt (100)	100
R	New Town	Four Bears (75)	75
R	Spirit Lake	Spirit Lake (200)	200
R	Standing Rock	Standing Rock (159)	159
R	Trenton	Trenton (50)	50
Total			2,974

The response rate for the surveys distributed by providers of home-delivered meals is 16 percent (469 completed surveys).

Table 3. shows the number of surveys given to County Social Services' Case Managers to deliver to their clients.

Table 3. Number of Surveys Distributed by County Social Services' Case Managers

REGION I		REGION II		REGION III		REGION IV		REGION V		REGION VI		REGION VII		REGION VIII	
Divide	32	Bottineau	42	Benson	84	G.F.	251	Cass	548	Barnes	48	Burleigh	282	Adams	45
McKenzie	54	Burke	9	Cavalier	21	Nelson	28	Ransom	48	Dickey	58	Emmons	24	Billings	2
Williams	97	McHenry	33	Eddy	15	Pembina	33	Richland	116	Foster	29	Grant	29	Bowman	19
		Morton	103	Ramsey	139	Walsh	52	Sargent	32	Griggs	14	Kidder	2	Dunn	24
		Pierce	65	Rolette	133		364	Steele	26	LaMoure	31	McLean	47	G.Valley	10
		Renville	9	Towner	14			Trail	93	Logan	27	Mercer	50	Hettinger	35
		Ward	160							McIntosh	10	Mountrail	87	Slope	2
										Stutsman	119	Oliver	14	Stark	131
										Wells	50	Sheridan	11		
												Sioux	8		
													554		268
totals	183		421		406		364		863		386		554		268

The response rate for surveys distributed by county social services' case managers was 29 percent (997 completed surveys).

A total of 7,492 surveys were distributed through the sources identified above. Completed surveys numbered 2,256 for a response rate of 30%.

Of the 2,256, 12 percent (268) were completed by individuals living on an Indian Reservation. In the analysis that follows, Reservation data may be analyzed in addition to the statewide (excluding Reservation) data. This will demonstrate some differences between the two populations.

## DEMOGRAPHICS OF RESPONDENTS

### Completed By

Four response categories included (1) consumer, (2) provider, (3) advocate, and (4) consumer/advocate. For the purposes of analysis, the first and fourth categories are combined into an overall consumer category. Providers and advocates are combined into an 'other' category (Table 4).

Table 4. Statewide and Reservation Number and Percent of Responses by Relationship Category

	Statewide (excludes Reservations)		Reservations	
	#	%	#	%
Consumer	1,741	87.6	229	85.4
Provider	70	3.5	18	6.7
Advocate	35	1.8	8	3.0
Consumer/Advocate	142	7.1	13	4.9
Total	1,988	100.0	268	100.0
Consumer	1,883	95%	242	90%
Other	105	5%	26	10%

The vast majority of respondents were consumers. Over 95 percent of statewide and 90 percent of Reservation respondents identified themselves as consumers or consumer/advocates.

### Age

The 'other' group, consisting of providers and advocates are a younger group than the consumers (Table 4). The statewide data (excluding Reservations) have over 57 percent (1,062) of the consumer group in the age group, 65-84, compared to 13 percent (13) of the 'other' respondents. Over 32 percent (591) of the statewide consumer group is age 85 and older. None of the 'other' group is 85 and older. Almost three-fourths of the respondents in the statewide 'other' category are younger than age 60.

Table 5. Statewide and Reservation Numbers of Responses by Age Category

	Statewide (excludes Reservations)		Reservations	
	Consumer	Other	Consumer	Other
18 to 54	47	53	16	13
55 to 59	38	20	47	6
60 to 64	116	13	43	4
65 to 84	1,062	13	118	2
85 and older	591	0	18	0
	1,854	99	242	25

The Reservation consumer group, on the other hand, is much younger than the statewide consumer group. Over 26 percent of the Reservation consumers are younger than age 60 (Figure 1).

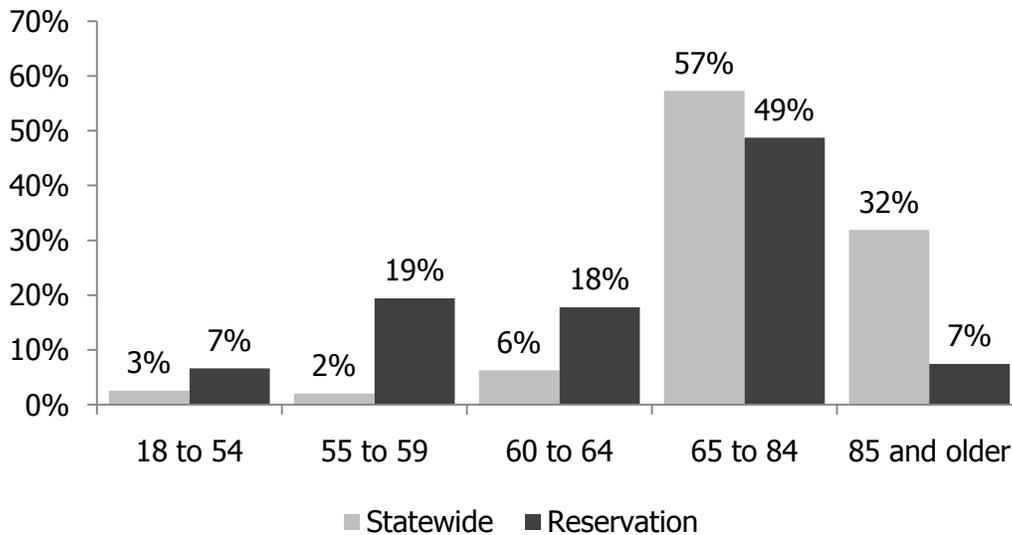


Figure 1. Percent of Statewide and Reservation Consumer Responses by Age Category

### Responses by Counties, Regions, and Reservations

The responses are well distributed across the state. All counties have at least one response. The average number of responses for counties is 38, and the median is 25. Barnes, Burleigh, Cass, Richland, and Ward counties each had over 100 responses.

Table 6. Number of Responses by Region and Reservations

	#
I	78
II	313
III	166
IV	123
V	517
VI	377
VII	286
VIII	128
Reservations	268
TOTAL	2,256

Table 6 and Figure 2 show the distribution by number and by percent of the responses by region and Reservation.

The percent distribution of responses by region roughly corresponds to the percent distribution of total population by region, which suggests a good statewide representation. The percent distribution of responses by individuals on Reservations is an over representation based on percent of American Indian population to total State population.

The U.S. Census estimated 35,666 American Indians in North Dakota in 2008. Of those, 2,694 (7.5%) were ages 60 and older. The number of consumer respondents on Reservations ages 60 and older is 179 (6.6%).

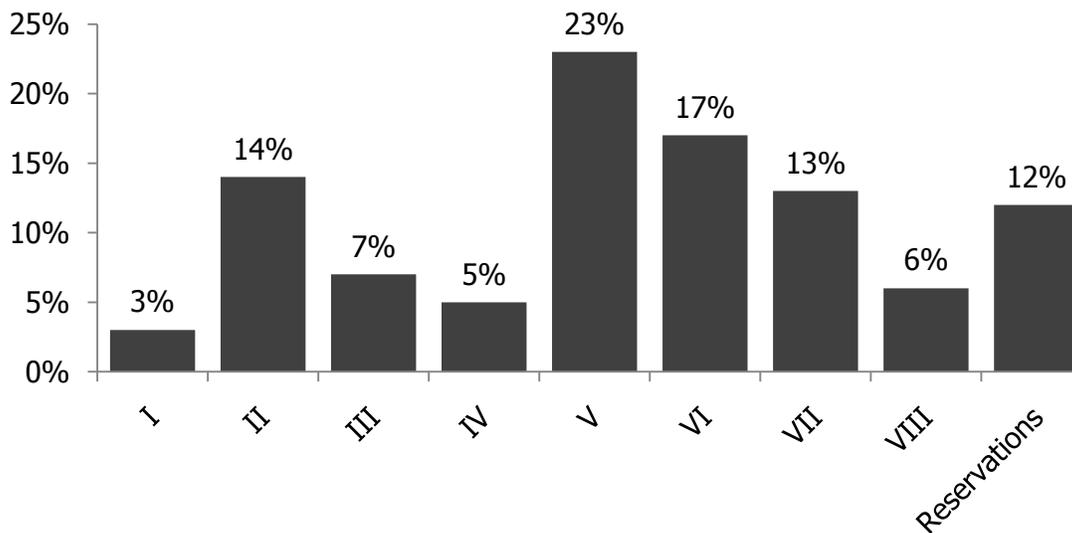


Figure 2. The Percent of Responses by Region and Reservations

## HEALTHY AGING

### Educating Older Individuals and Persons with Disabilities

“Does North Dakota need to educate older individuals and persons with physical disabilities on the importance of:

- Exercise (how-to, education)
- Nutrition (healthy eating, food choices, etc.)
- Diabetes education
- Preventing falls
- Other

About half or more statewide respondents (49% to 56%) feel that more education is needed in exercise, nutrition, diabetes, and preventing falls (Table 7). A greater need for such education is indicated by over 60 percent of the Reservation respondents (62% to 71%).

Table 7. "Does North Dakota Need to Educate Older Individuals and Persons with Physical Disabilities on the Importance of Exercise, Nutrition, Diabetes, and Preventing Falls?"

	Statewide (excludes Reservations)		Reservations	
	# "Yes"	% "Yes"	# "Yes"	% "Yes"
Exercise	973	49%	172	64%
Nutrition	1,120	56%	191	71%
Diabetes	806	41%	176	66%
Preventing Falls	1,025	51%	165	62%

Respondents listed a number of other topics as well. The most often cited topic is education on what services are available and how to access them. Next, respondents indicated an interest in education programs on a variety of medical health issues, including Alzheimers, cancer, celiac disease, COPD, heart and lung, injuries, and multiple sclerosis. Financial management was cited often including topics of estate planning and money management. Abuse and neglect issues listed included education on adult protective services, exploitation of seniors, fraud, scams, identity theft, and personal safety. Two final topics that are listed by many respondents are medication management and mental health issues including depression, emotional health, and attitudes.

Other topics include: transportation options; vision and hearing issues; affordable, safe, and senior housing, as well as retrofitting and repair; alert systems; driving safely, educating family members, employment, foot care, health care reform, legal aid, and traveling safely.

## NUTRITION

### Provided Meals

“Do you eat at a meal site or receive home-delivered meals?”

About 80 percent of the 2,256 respondents receive meals. Of the 1,564 statewide respondents who receive meals, 41 percent are at a meal site and 59 percent are home-delivered. Of the 217 Reservation respondents who receive meals, 40 percent are at a meal site and 60 percent are home-delivered (Table 8).

The respondents who did not eat at a meal site or receive home-delivered meals generally responded that they can still manage at home and/or they prefer their own cooking.

Table 8. "Do you Eat at a Meal Site or Receive Home-Delivered Meals?"

	Statewide (excludes Reservations)		Reservations	
	# "Yes"	% "Yes"	# "Yes"	% "Yes"
Meal Site	640	41%	87	40%
Home-Delivered	924	59%	130	60%

## CARE GIVING AND SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

### North Dakota Family Caregiver Support Program and Supportive Services that Help Individuals Remain in Their Own Home

“The North Dakota Family Caregiver Support Program provides services (information, assistance to access services, counseling, support groups, care giver training, and respite care) for individuals caring for someone at home.”

“Health Maintenance” (blood pressure/pulse/rapid inspection, foot care, medication set-up, home visits)

“Senior Companion” (periodic companionship and non-medical support by volunteers to adults that require assistance)

“Assistive Safety Devices” (adaptive and preventive health aids that assist individuals in their activities of daily living)

“Outreach” (identifies needs, and links individuals to existing services and benefits)”

The least used support service by both statewide and Reservation respondents is the Senior Companion Program with 13 and 19 percent, respectively (Table 9). Among statewide respondents, health maintenance and assistive safety devices are the most used support services, both at 38 percent. Among the Reservation respondents health maintenance topped the list of most supportive services at 50 percent. A higher percent of Reservation respondents than statewide respondents use each supportive service except for assistive safety devices.

Table 9. Statewide and Reservation Respondents Who Use Family Care Giving and Other Supportive Services that Help Them Remain in Their Own Home

	Statewide (excludes Reservations)		Reservations	
	# Used	% Used	# Used	% Used
Family Caregiver Support Program	372	20%	75	31%
Health Maintenance Services	720	38%	121	50%
Senior Companion Program	250	13%	45	19%
Assistive Safety Devices	711	38%	85	35%
Outreach Services	637	34%	92	38%

The percent of statewide consumer respondents who report being unaware of supportive services is much lower than Reservation consumer respondents (Table 10 and Figure 3). For instance, 26 percent of Reservation consumer respondents report being unaware of the Senior Companion Program, which is double the percent by statewide consumer respondents (13%). Similarly, 24 percent of Reservation consumer respondents report being unaware of the assistive safety devices, which is double the percent of statewide consumer respondents (12%).

Table 10. Number and Percent of Statewide and Reservation Respondents Who Are Unaware of Supportive Services

	Statewide (excludes Reservations)		Reservations	
	# Not Aware	% Not Aware	# Not Aware	% Not Aware
Family Caregiver Support Program	300	16%	65	27%
Health Maintenance Services	202	11%	47	19%
Senior Companion Program	252	13%	63	26%
Assistive Safety Devices	230	12%	57	24%
Outreach Services	282	15%	54	22%

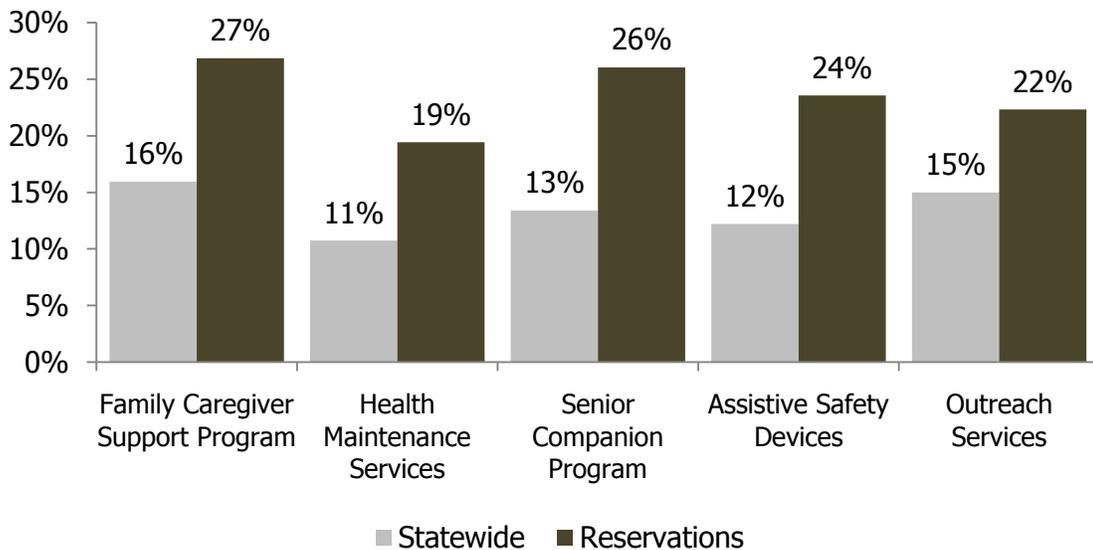


Figure 3. Percent of Statewide and Reservation Respondents Who are Unaware of Supportive Services

## CONSUMER INFORMATION

### Being Aware of, and Receiving Needed Services

“Do you have difficulty obtaining needed services?”

Of the 1,564 statewide respondents, 170 (11%) checked that they had difficulty obtaining needed services, compared to 76 (36%) of the 217 Reservation respondents.

Table 11. “Do You Have Difficulty Obtaining Needed Services?”

	Statewide (excludes Reservations)	Reservations
# difficulty obtaining needed services	170	76
% difficulty obtaining needed services	11%	36%

“How do you learn about new programs and services available for North Dakota’s older individuals and persons with physical disabilities?”

Word of mouth ranked first with each consumer respondent group (Table 12).

While statewide respondents listed the North Dakota Aging & Disability Resource – LINK second, it was ranked sixth with Reservation respondents.

Radio, ranked second with Reservation respondents, was much further down the list at eighth for statewide respondents.

The internet ranked last for both consumer respondent groups.

Consumers learn about new programs and services through all of the venues listed. They are least likely to learn from Centers for Independent Living and the internet. Reaching the largest number of consumers will likely mean creating awareness through multiple venue campaigns.

Table 12. Ranks and Number of Statewide and Reservation Respondents to How They Learn About New Programs and Services Available for North Dakota's Older Individuals and Persons with Physical Disabilities

Reservations		
1	Word of Mouth	146
2	Radio	100
3	Newspaper	95
4	Doctors/Health Care Providers	93
5	Television	86
6	North Dakota Aging & Disability Resource-LINK	82
7	Newsletters	70
8	Senior Centers	66
9	County Social Services Offices	31
10	Church Bulletins	26
11	Centers for Independent Living	20
12	Internet	17
Statewide (excludes Reservations)		
1	Word of Mouth	978
2	North Dakota Aging & Disability Resource-LINK	854
3	Newspaper	746
4	Senior Centers	720
5	Television	626
6	Doctors/Health Care Providers	572
7	Newsletters	455
8	Radio	395
9	Church Bulletins	249
10	County Social Services Offices	119
11	Centers for Independent Living	71
12	Internet	63

## CONSUMER CHOICE

### Choosing, Directing, and Paying for Services

“Would you want to have more say in choosing and directing services you need to help you stay in your own home?”

“Would you want to receive a coupon/voucher so that you could choose and pay for the service(s) you need to help you stay in your own home?”

A much higher percent of Reservation consumer respondents want to participate in choosing, directing, and paying for supportive services that will help them remain in their own home (Tables 13).

Table 13. Number and Percent of Respondents Who Want to Participate in Choosing, Directing, and Paying for Supportive Services That Will Help Them Remain in Their Own Home

	# of responses	# "Yes"	% "Yes"
<b>Statewide (excludes Reservations)</b>			
Would you want to have more say in choosing and directing services you need to help you stay in your own home?	1,686	935	56%
Would you want to receive a coupon/voucher so that you could choose and pay for the services(s) you need to help you stay in your own home?	1,555	757	49%
<b>Reservations</b>			
Would you want to have more say in choosing and directing services you need to help you stay in your own home?	231	174	75%
Would you want to receive a coupon/voucher so that you could choose and pay for the services(s) you need to help you stay in your own home?	213	150	70%

## EMPLOYMENT

### The Senior Community Service Employment Program (Experience Works)

“The Senior Community Service Employment Program helps low income older individuals find training assignments in local areas with the goal of transitioning into permanent employment.”

“Are you currently employed?”

“If you are not currently employed, do you want or need training to obtain a job?”

At the same time a higher percent of Reservation consumers checked that they use the Community Service Employment Program (17%), a higher percent also checked that they were unaware of the program (23%) (Table 14). The percents for being currently employed (25%) and wanting or needing training to obtain a job (14%) were also higher for Reservation consumer respondents. These data may reflect a younger population among Reservation consumers.

Table 14. Number and Percent of Respondents Who Use the Community Service Employment Program, Are Unaware of the Program, Are Currently Employed, or Want or Need Training to Obtain a Job

	# of responses	# Yes"	% "Yes"	# unaware	% unaware
<b>Statewide (excludes Reservations)</b>					
Use Community Service Employment Program	1,634	116	7%	251	15%
Currently Employed	1,712	146	9%		
Want or Need Training	1,537	51	3%		
<b>Reservations</b>					
Use Community Service Employment Program	229	38	17%	53	23%
Currently Employed	226	57	25%		
Want or Need Training	177	24	14%		

## LEGAL SERVICES (LEGAL ASSISTANCE)

### Legal Services of North Dakota

“Legal Services of North Dakota provides legal advice and representation to low income older individuals.”

About one-fifth (21%, 22%) of all consumer respondents report being unaware of legal services. The percent of use of legal services by Reservation consumer respondents (27%) was well over double that of statewide respondents (11%).

Table 15. Number and Percent of Respondents Who Have Used Legal Services and Those Who are Unaware of the Service

	# of responses	# used	% used	# unaware	% unaware
Statewide (excludes Reservations)	1,787	204	11%	370	21%
Reservations	235	65	27%	51	22%

## OMBUDSMAN

### The North Dakota Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program

The North Dakota Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program identifies, investigates and resolves complaints made by, or on behalf of, residents of nursing homes, basic care, swing bed, and assisted living.”

Although the percent of Reservation consumer respondents was three times that of statewide respondents for having used Ombudsman services, 55 percent of Reservation respondents report being unaware of the program, compared to 22 percent of the statewide respondents.

Table 16. Number and Percent of Respondents Who Have Used the Ombudsman Program and Those Who Are Unaware of the Program

	# of responses	# used	% used	# unaware	% unaware
Statewide (excludes Reservations)	1,734	77	4%	374	22%
Reservations	232	29	12%	75	55%

## ABUSE/NEGLECT

### Reporting Abuse and/or Neglect

“Do you know how or where to report suspected abuse and/or neglect of adults?”

Not knowing how or where to report suspected abuse and/or neglect of adults is high among all consumer respondents. Two out of five respondents (42%, 40%) do not know.

Table 17. Number and Percent of Respondents Who Do Not Know How or Where to Report Suspected Abuse and/or Neglect of Adults

	# of responses	# Do Not Know	% Do Not Know
Statewide (excludes Reservations)	1,708	724	42%
Reservations	219	89	40%

## RESPONDENTS AGES 85 AND OLDER

### Responses

Table 18.  
Respondents Ages 85 and Older by Region

Region	#
I	12
II	92
III	36
IV	35
V	167
VI	120
VII	101
VIII	28
Reservations	18
TOTAL	609

About one-third of the consumer respondents are ages 85 and older. With the oldest age group, one might expect that they used more services and have a higher awareness of what services are available.

The respondents ages 85 and older are well distributed across the state by region and by Reservations (Table 18 and Figure 4).

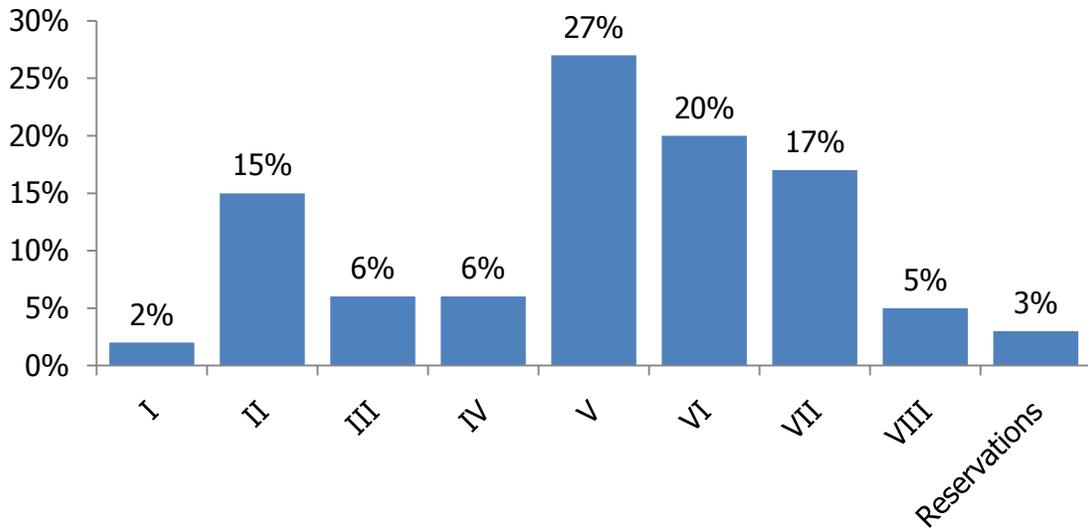


Figure 4. Percent of Respondents 85 and Older by Region

### Meals

The percent of respondents ages 85 and older receiving meals at a meal site (43%) (Table 19) is similar to all consumer respondents (Table 8). Home-delivered meals increase significantly among respondents ages 85 and older. All consumer respondents reported about 60 percent receiving home-delivered meals (Table 8). Over 80 percent of those ages 85 and older receive home-delivered meals.

Table 19. Number and Percent of Respondents Ages 85 and Older Who Eat at a Meal Site or Receive Home-Delivered Meals

	# responses	# using meal site	% using meal site
Meal Site	384	164	43%
Home-delivered	500	407	81%

## Supportive Services

Previous tables (10, 15, 16) show percent of statewide and Reservation respondents use of supportive services and also show the number and percent of respondents who are unaware of the particular services. In general, respondents ages 85 and older have used more of the services and have higher awareness of them. There remain, however, anywhere from one in ten to one in five respondents ages 85 and older who report being unaware of particular services (Table 20).

Table 20. Number and Percent of Respondents Ages 85 and Older Who Use Supportive Services to Help Them Remain in Their Own Homes and Those Who Are Unaware of the Service

	# responses	# used	% used	# unaware	% unaware
Family Caregiver Support Program	551	129	23%	105	19%
Health Maintenance	566	272	48%	61	11%
Senior Companion	565	85	15%	81	14%
Assistive Safety Devices	554	267	48%	69	13%
Outreach	518	199	38%	94	18%
Legal Services	564	47	8%	120	21%
Ombudsman Program	540	15	3%	116	22%

## Reporting Abuse and Neglect

A slightly higher percent (45%) of respondents ages 85 and older do not know how or where to report abuse and/or neglect of adults, compared to about 40 percent of all consumer respondents (Table 17).

Table 21. Number and Percent of Respondents Ages 85 and Older Who Do Not Know How or Where to Report Abuse and/or Neglect of Adults

	# of responses	# Do Not Know	% Do Not Know
Statewide (includes Reservations)	528	239	45%

## Overall Comments on Aging Public Hearings Survey

Of the 2,256 responses, 292 consumers and consumer/advocates included additional comments. There were 68 additional comments from providers and 30 from advocates.

Responses were found to be clustered around several themes that include: wanting more information and providing contact information or follow-up; home health care; activities they need help with; meals programs; costs of services; family involvement, oversight of programs; staying in own home; need for socializing; outreach issues; and positive experiences. Only three respondents indicated any difficulty with understanding the survey and completing it.

### Wanting More Information and Providing Contact Information

Individual survey respondents were not identifiable. The only systematic information that could pinpoint a response was an age category and residence. This allowed for analysis by age group and by county, Reservation, and region. Many respondents voluntarily included their names on comments and often included address and phone number. About half a dozen requested follow-up and provided contact information. Those surveys will be turned over to staff in the Division of Aging Services to conduct the follow-up.

### Home Health Care

More than a dozen respondents commented on home health care and shortage of qualified service providers (QSPs). Some verbatim responses are:

- *"Have used Home Health services several times as needed after hospitalization."*
- *"Home health care needed in Burke County. Have been told we are outside the area Minot serves, for post-surgical and terminally ill patients."*
- *"Need home health program in McHenry County."*
- *"Home care by RNs, PT, OT for rural areas – closed what we had due to poor reimbursement agencies couldn't make it – ND lowest paid in U.S. and the rural even given less. We need it back in the very rural areas."*

*These services allow people to remain safely in home and need skilled services."*

- *"We need a better program for home health. You can't get help and it is too difficult to pay. The system just don't work."*[age 85 or older, Ward County, uses home-delivered meals and ND Family Caregiver Support Program]
- *"We need more home care for elders."*[Turtle Mountain Reservation]

### Activities Consumers Need Help With

Almost 100 respondents shared information on ways in which they need help. The most common was help with **cleaning in the home** (15), from light housekeeping to major housecleaning, vacuuming, washing windows, and cleaning carpets. In addition to cleaning, several (5) indicated help needed with **home repairs** (i.e., plumbing, painting, roofing, sewer work) or renovations to keep the home safe (ramp, renovate bathroom, rails in bathroom). In addition, many (8) indicated a need for **lawn care** (mowing) and **snow removal**.

**Special housing needs** were listed by a dozen respondents. This included more affordable housing, wheelchair accessible, senior friendly, soundproof, and smoke free housing (apartments).

**Transportation** had a dozen respondents identifying it as a special need. Transportation needs ran the gamut from more affordable transportation, to wheelchair accessible transportation, and extended hours and routes. Respondents listed needs for transportation to doctors and clinics, church, grocery shopping, and other shopping.

Foot care was identified by a few respondents (4), seemingly not knowing how or where to access the service. One, in fact, wanted foot care in her home because her chronic illnesses kept her housebound.

Additional needs include:

- Access to case management for vulnerable adults
- Air conditioning in patient rooms
- Bigger retirement home to accommodate more elders
- Boredom relief, senior companion to play dominos or cards
- Caregiver for extended periods (overnight)

- Someone to check up on people when they are sick and confined to bed (make sure they have water and nutrients).
- Help getting up and down stairs, and to navigate slippery (icy) sidewalks
- Help pay high price of Dr. bills
- Help with bath
- Information on hearing and sight disabilities
- Med management, allowing more time for repeat visits, for consulting with nurses and doctors
- Med management, education, and setup
- Medical alert, covering the cost of a telephone necessary for med alert to work
- Training care givers on working with clients with memory loss
- Help obtaining guardians
- Respite caregivers
- Scooter for getting around

When one considers the needs of older individuals, many seem so obvious. Others, on the other hand, may never occur to an onlooker. Following is an example:

- *"Delivery of mail – older people require door to door delivery. It is difficult for many to walk to mail delivery boxes ½ to 1 block from home. This is not needed only for mail delivery. People need to pay their bills & many do per mail service."*

### **Meals**

Specific references to home-delivered meals were made by 46 people. The majority (26) were either neutral in stating that they were provided the meals or that they were happy with the meals. Twenty indicated dissatisfaction with the meals program they participated in. Common complaints related to quality and quantity. Many cited food undercooked and meat, especially, "too tough to chew." Others wanted a better selection of healthier food options such as more fish, fewer white potatoes, and lower caloric desserts. Some thought the helpings were too large, others thought they were not large enough. Access to congregate meals was difficult for several respondents (due both to the location of the meal site and to a respondent's own difficulty with mobility).

*"Choice will be a huge issue for baby boomers. Meals – pilot projects needed to address restaurant use of congregate meals (not a specific meal, but order their choice of meal), choice of food, meal mates, places to eat, when to eat."*

### **Costs of Services**

About a dozen respondents commented on the difficulty in receiving services due to income restrictions. Two included age as a restriction as well. They were both younger, disabled individuals who were denied reduced costs of services because they did not meet the age requirement.

- *"I am filling out this form for my brother who is now almost 49 years old. He suffered a stroke 18 years ago when he was 31 years old. He is paralyzed on the right side and cannot talk very much. He is unable to cook for himself so we have him signed up for home-delivered meals. Since he is not 60 years old we were told he does not qualify for the reduced price on the meals. This should be changed since he is on the same limited income social security that some older people rely on."*

The dozen respondents expressed sentiments about having to be 'dirt poor,' 'live like paupers,' and 'destitute.' They related being 'caught in the middle,' 'middleclass,' and 'owning their homes but having social security as their sole source of income.'

Others appealed for more funding for services and more options for paying for help so they could remain in their homes longer. Some felt transit fees were too high and did not feel there should be activity fees.

### **Family Involvement**

Several respondents (14) acknowledged, and were grateful for, the help they received from family, friends, and neighbors. A few mentioned difficulties in receiving help from children who lived far away. Two reported disappointment in their children's lack of interest and involvement with family. Others were expressions of gratitude.

*"I have it "great". I live with my daughter and also a son who lives in our same town who is always available."*

*"My son lives with me and acts as my caregiver, but was not accepted to be a paid caregiver – I don't understand that. He is very dependable and a wonderful cook. I want to thank you for all the help I received so from the Bottineau County Social Services. They have been very helpful."*

## Staying in Own Home

Part of the mission of the North Dakota Department of Human Services is to support provision of services and care as close to home as possible to maximize each person's independence while preserving the dignity of all individuals and respecting their constitutional and civil rights. A dozen respondents expressed feelings about staying in their own homes. Some verbatim responses include:

- *"I am 84 and live alone in an apartment. I am happy that so much is done to help older people who will be able to stay in their own home with assistance."*
- *"I'm 95 years old. Still in my own home. Not dependent on welfare or government to pay for my needs. Worked and saved to provide for myself. I'm not eligible for services because not in poverty level and do not have extra funds. Just lived frugal all my life and was taught to save and do without, but only what was necessary to take good care of what we had..."*
- *"As I am 94 years old, I do appreciate Home-delivered meals and a helper from Comfort Keepers and a cleaning lady so I am able to live in my home."*
- *"I would be willing to come to Mom and Dad's home to learn of the services available to allow them to continue to live in their own home."*
- *"I am very happy to be in my own home. There are services I can get in Rugby, but I have my girls. They cook, clean, bathe, take care of me and take me when I have to go."*
- *"The Richland County social services have been so helpful to me. I cannot give them enough credit! Being a very brittle diabetic for over 60 years, they have helped me be able to stay in my apartment! One of their nurses comes to check on me every month! I am 81 years old, and it means everything to me to be able to be at home."*
- *"I appreciate being able to be in my home. My husband passed away in Oct 2005 and I have lived alone since. I have very good friends and neighbors that check every day. I had a stroke on Feb 18. I worked really hard in therapy so that I could go home again. Am using my walker most of the time. Thanks for assistance I've received, especially Fuel Oil assistance."  
[female over age 85, Pierce County]*
- *"... I love being in my own home and this sort of service I do receive helps. And I do have a wonderful lady that helps me. Thank you. This winter from*

*3<sup>rd</sup> Friday in December to Easter Sunday, I never went out and I was content. Happy to stay in."*

- *"Thank you. I'm 92 and do appreciate any services I get. I'm in an apartment and surely hope, with your help, I can stay here."*

### **Socializing**

- *"Seniors need socialization, but not the sugary treats so common at gatherings in the Midwest."*
- *"For the introverted people more personal invitation needs to be given before people retire – through liaison churches or fraternal organizations so they are a part of the retired experience."*
- *"Husband died in April 2010. Would like Senior Companion to play dominos or cards – build puzzles – etc."*
- *"There needs to be changes to the Senior Companion program. Some seniors would like to volunteer but would like to volunteer less hours than required. I see a real need for people who need a senior companion. Many are lonely people."*

### **Outreach**

- *"I think we could use a lot more Outreach in Burke County."*
- *"More funding is needed for Outreach services. Outreach standards need to be expanded to allow Outreach workers to help seniors with more things."*
- *"Expand Outreach and what Outreach can do. Many counties don't really offer the services in the brochure so it is misleading – looks like things are available that really are not (no providers)." "Background checks on QSP's, more money for elder abuse services."*

### **Oversight**

- *"More older people will need home care as the expense of nursing homes becomes so high the clients can't afford it. We will need home care and protection from caregivers who will abuse us. So a certification program*

*should be started to train caregivers of the aged. Also, funding needs to be available to monitor certified caregivers."*

- *"Background checks on QSP's, more money for elder abuse services."*
- *"Fraudulent financial abuse laws are inadequate in ND to prevent unscrupulous persons (attorneys, guardians, family members) from pilfering resources from elders unable to recognize the damage being done."*
- *"Everyone who takes care of an elderly persons should be checked up on notice once a month...for abuse."*
- *"There are no more vulnerable adult protective services in Stark County like there used to be. Not enough senior companions available for the need. Why has the service of checking out abuse and neglect of adults deteriorated in the last five years or so?..."*
- *"... What we see that is badly needed is training for people trying to serve these people [people with disabilities]. The help is just not here. Many grants have been written for these people and I can't see any improvement. I wonder if some of these people out to serve the disabled, if they can comprehend the problems."*
- *"I believe it should be mandated that elders have advocates present for these interviews [eligibility interviews]."*
- *"... Also want to spread the word to professionals and to the elder population what red flags exist for domestic violence, exploitation, and power and control."*
- *"I live at \_\_\_\_\_ which was considered independent living – a lot of people have some help. I have a homemaker. But we now have a "social worker" in the building who treats everyone as if they are a psych case. I have rhumatoid arthritis – other people are just old. They do fine. They aren't psych cases just old. Somebody needs to protect these people from this "social worker"."*
- *"Region I shares a Vulnerable Adult Protective Services worker and Ombudsman.... Driving time cuts into the actual work that can be done . There is going to be more financial exploitation going on with the oil leasing/royalties that some of the elderly are getting and with the economy many adult children and grandchildren are living off their elderly relatives. "*

## Positive Experiences

Positive experiences and outcomes are expressed in the following 11 verbatim responses by consumers.

- *"I think we are well served here in Beach [Golden Valley County] with our congregate meals, home delivered meals, social service workers and the Golden Valley Manor with assisted living. We also have a food pantry. Bus service for medical appointments."*
- *"Richland County provides great services and the people working for them are very good."*
- *"The Richland County social services have been so helpful to me. I cannot give them enough credit! ...they have helped me be able to stay in my apartment! .... I am 81 years old, and it means everything to me to be able to be at home."*
- *"We are so fortunate to have so many services available to us in Drayton [Pembina County]. So many opportunities are offered through the newspaper, individuals, both ??? and volunteers and the Senior Center."*
- *"I am 88 years old and appreciate all the things that are available. Thank you. The case workers go out of their way to be helpful." [Cass County]*
- *"Thank you. I'm 92 and do appreciate any services I get. I'm in an apartment and surely hope, with your help, I can stay here." "I cook my own food!" [Cass County, uses Health Maintenance, Senior Companion, Assistive Safety Devices, and Outreach]*
- *"Williston has a good source of networking re services. The providers are courteous and knowledgeable."*
- *"The Community Violence Intervention Center in Grand Forks partners with the Grand forks police department, Grand Forks SO, States Attorney's Office and local Adult Protective Services to help highlight and tackle abuse and financial exploitation against individuals in our community aged 50+. A lot more work has to be done in the State to increase both awareness of abuse and also where victims can go for help. In that respect, the project team based in Grand Forks would be happy to assist colleagues throughout the State with this mission."*

**2010 North Dakota State Plan on Aging  
Public Input Hearings**

Every four years, the North Dakota Department of Human Services, Aging Services Division seeks out public comments to update its State Plan on Aging. This plan will guide the delivery of Older Americans Act Services such as home delivered meals, congregate meals, supportive services, family caregiver support, ombudsman, and vulnerable adult protective services. With this in mind, the Division requests your input in the following survey.

**Completed by:**     Consumer                       Provider  
                           Advocate                       Consumer/Advocate

**Age:**                       Under Age 18                       18 to 59                       60 to 64  
                           65 to 84                       85 and older

County or Reservation/Indian Service Area where you live. \_\_\_\_\_

**HEALTHY AGING**

Does North Dakota need to educate older individuals and persons with physical disabilities on the importance of any of the following activities? Check all that apply.

Exercise (how-to, education)                       Preventing falls  
 Nutrition (healthy eating, food choices, diet)                      Other: (Specify) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Diabetes education

**NUTRITION**

Do you eat at a meal site or receive home-delivered meals?

Eat at a meal site?     Yes     No    Receive home-delivered meals?     Yes     No

If no, why don't you participate?

**CAREGIVING**

The North Dakota Family Caregiver Support Program that provides services (information, assistance to access services, counseling, support groups, caregiver training, and respite care) for individuals caring for someone at home.

Used     Not Used     Not aware of service

**SUPPORTIVE SERVICES**

The following supportive services that help individuals remain in their own home are currently provided with Older Americans Act funds.

**Health Maintenance** - blood pressure/pulse/rapid inspection; foot care; medication set-up; home visits

Used     Not Used     Not aware of service

**Senior Companion** - periodic companionship and non-medical support by volunteers to adults that require assistance

Used     Not used     Not aware of service

**Assistive Safety Devices** - adaptive and preventive health aids that assist individuals in their activities of safe daily living

Used     Not Used     Not aware of service

**Outreach** - identifies needs, and links individuals to existing services and benefits

Used     Not Used     Not aware of service

**CONSUMER INFORMATION**

Do you have difficulty obtaining needed services?     Yes     No

How do you learn about new programs, services, and activities available for North Dakota’s older individuals and persons with physical disabilities? Check all that apply.

- Newspaper                       Church Bulletins                       Newsletters
- Radio                               Centers for Independent Living                       Senior Centers
- Television                       Doctors/Health Care Providers                       Internet
- Word of Mouth                       County Social Services Offices
- North Dakota Aging & Disability Resource-LINK

Other: (Specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**CONSUMER CHOICE/CONSUMER DIRECTION**

Would you want to have more say in choosing and directing services you need to help you stay in your own home?     Yes     No

Would you want to receive a coupon/voucher so that you could choose and pay for the service(s) needed to stay in your own home?     Yes     No

