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Circles of Care Factsheet: Why Focus on Older Adults?

On March 6, the Centers for Disease Control advised that anyone over age 60 should stay in their homes to avoid exposure to the coronavirus. This advice came before Gov. Kate Brown's Stay Home directive on March 23. The "stay home, stay safe" advice for seniors is likely to stay in place after the rest of Oregon opens up.

Staying at home can be especially hard on older Oregonians.

According to the medical journal *Lancet*, "Most reviewed studies reported negative psychological effects [of quarantines] including post-traumatic stress symptoms, confusion, and anger. Stressors included longer quarantine duration, infection fears, frustration, boredom, inadequate supplies, inadequate information, financial loss, and stigma." Many effects appear to be long-lasting.

Many Older Oregonians are Already Isolated

- 28% of older persons in the U.S live alone
- 45% of women 75+ live alone
- About half of Oregon residents 65+ reside in rural areas
- 29% of adults with household incomes less than \$30,000 a year don't own a smartphone, while 44% don't have broadband or a "traditional" computer
- About half of Oregonians 65+ depend on Social Security benefits alone as a source of income (on average \$1,256/month)
- 37% of Oregonians 60-79 years have a disability and among Oregon adults age 80+, 47% have a disability
- 45% of persons with disability have a household income of less than \$35,000
- 57% of Americans say they know only *some* of their neighbors; far fewer (26%) say they know *most* of them

Sources:

<https://acl.gov/sites/default/files/Aging%20and%20Disability%20in%20America/2017OlderAmericansProfile.pdf>

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<https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/05/07/digital-divide-persists-even-as-lower-income-americans-make-gains-in-tech-adoption/>

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