

# As America ages, new national poll will track key health issues for those over 50

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Nearly a third of U.S. adults have celebrated their 50th birthday - a sign of an aging nation. Now, a new poll based at the University of Michigan will take the pulse of this population on a wide range of health issues, and provide data and insights to inform healthcare policy, clinical practice, and future research.

Later this month, the U-M Institute for Healthcare Policy and Innovation (IHPI) will release the first results from the National Poll on Healthy Aging (NPHA), with data on prescription drug use for people between the ages of 50 and 80.

Directed by IHPI and sponsored by AARP and Michigan Medicine, U-M's academic medical center, the poll will issue new data 10 times a year focusing on key health-related issues facing older Americans.

IHPI's poll team, led by Preeti Malani, M.D., will tap into the perspectives of older adults and their caregivers using a national sample. The overall goal of the poll is to inform the public, [health care providers](#), policymakers, and aging advocates on issues related to health, health care and health policy.

"In medicine, sometimes we focus so much on the latest research findings that we lose the individual patient voice. Yet there are gaps in our understanding of [health](#) that cannot be filled with traditional medical research," says Malani, a professor of internal medicine at the U-M Medical School who specializes in infectious disease and geriatric medicine. "Some research studies can take years to complete. One of the most valuable aspects of this poll is that the results are available quickly and can provide timely insight into current issues."

Adds Alison Bryant, AARP Senior Vice President of Research, "We know research drives insights that affect our ability to impact behavior change.

Our hope is that these polls will provide new information that will ultimately help older Americans adopt and maintain healthy behaviors."

The poll grew out of a strong interest in aging-related issues and policies among IHPI researchers, who include 510 members of the U-M faculty from a wide range of fields. The [poll](#) is modeled on U-M's highly successful C.S. Mott Children's Hospital National Poll on Children's Health, which for 10 years has provided new data every month on issues facing children, teens and parents.

**More information:** [www.healthyagingpoll.org/](http://www.healthyagingpoll.org/)

Provided by University of Michigan

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