



**STRATHCONA  
COUNTY**

## **2020 Seniors Health and Wellness Survey**



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## **I. Introduction and Purpose of the Survey**

In June 2020, the Strathcona County Seniors Advisory Committee conducted the first of a series of online survey of seniors in order to obtain perceptions toward a variety of topics that potentially could impact seniors either now or in the future. The purpose of this survey was to gain an understanding of how seniors perceive their overall health and personal wellness. "Wellness" components are more than just physical health - it is the overall engagement of the individual, their lifestyle, their perception of their overall health, how they live within the community as well as how they and if they engage with others. The more engaged an individual is with others the less likely they will feel isolated which can lead to physical and mental challenges.

The purpose of the Seniors Advisory committee is to provide advice and recommendations to Council on issues and opportunities related to the physical, emotional and social wellbeing of seniors in Strathcona County. Obtaining primary data directly from residents provides the Seniors Advisory Committee information in order to make recommendations to Council of what seniors require from the County based on the perspectives and attitudes of residents.

It should be noted that a number of participants and valuable input were not represented in the survey, with no input provided by seniors in assisted living or long-term care facilities. Access and familiarity with technology is a barrier for many seniors and with COVID-19 protocols in place at the time, providing paper surveys and collecting them was not a viable option. While the survey only represents a fraction of all seniors living within the County the participation level was consistent with other SCOOP surveys. This report provides a comprehensive-review of all steps undertaken in the development and implementation of the survey, as well as a detailed summary of the results.

A review of the methodology associated in the development and implementation of the survey can be found in the next section of this report.

## **II. Methodology**

### **A. The questionnaire**

The questionnaire used in this study was newly created specifically for this study. In addition to demographics, a series of questions (pre-COVID) were asked in this survey pertaining to:

- Assessment of general health and physical activity;
- Recreation facility and program use (pre-COVID);
- Strathcona County health care facilities and related programs;
- Leaving the residence to visit others, shop, etc.;
- Getting assistance for accessing various services (pre-COVID);
- Access to Volunteer Strathcona; and
- Interest in additional information.

### **B. Sampling design and data collection procedure**

The survey was made available through the Strathcona County Online Opinion Panel (SCOOP). It was tailored specifically to be answered by residents aged 55 or older (age 55 was established as the benchmark for identifying seniors in Strathcona County).

The online survey ran between June 9 and June 28, 2020, during which 346 people took part in the survey. Although poll based data is based on people who decide to participate and were not randomly selected, and have access to the online poll, the margin of error for a comparable probability-based random sample of the same size is  $\pm 5.2\%$ , 19 times out of 20. The data was analyzed by Strathcona County's Communications using SPSS for Windows.

### III. RESULTS

This section of the report presents a summary of the results associated with the perceptions and awareness of residents. Socio-demographic comparisons, where significant, will also be highlighted.

#### A. Demographic overview

This section of the report presents an overview of the type of seniors who completed the survey. In terms of gender, 39.8% were male (♂) and 57.1% were female (♀). The remaining 3.2% either preferred to self-identify or didn't provide an answer.

A breakdown by age is as follows:

- 40.5% were in the 55 – 64 age group;
- 43.9% were in the 65-74 age group;
- 14.7% were in the 75-84 age group; and
- 0.9% were 85 or older.

The final urban/rural split was fairly close to the actual proportions, with 74.6% of the respondents being from Sherwood Park, 24.2% living in rural Strathcona County and the remaining 1.2% residing outside of the County (but working here).

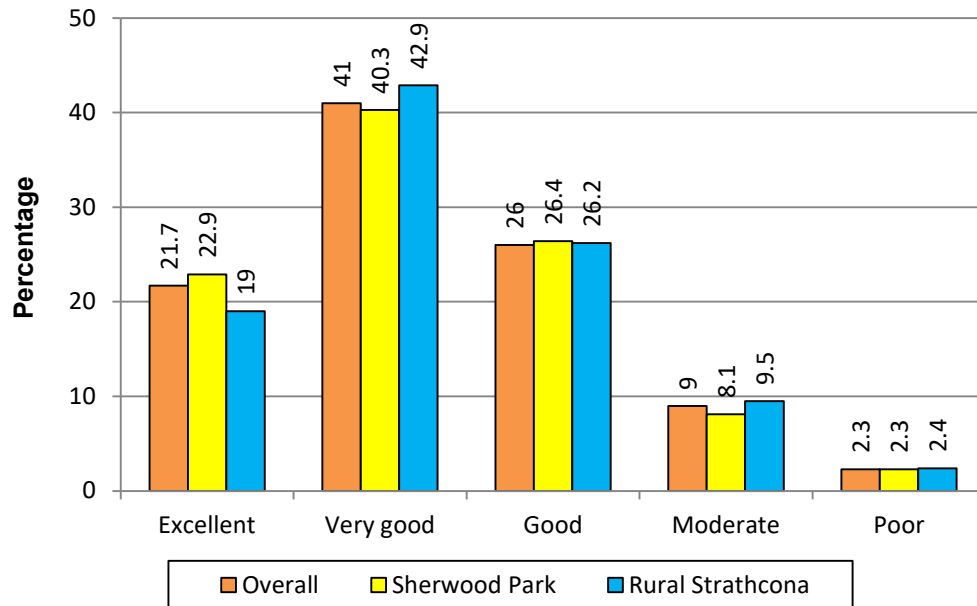
With respect to how long respondents have lived in the County, the breakdown is as follows:

- 0.9% have lived in the County for less than one year;
- 2.9% have lived in the County for 1-4 years;
- 5.2% have lived in the County for 5-9 years;
- 15% have lived in the County for 10-19 years; and
- 76% have lived in the County for 20 or more years.

**B. Health assessment**

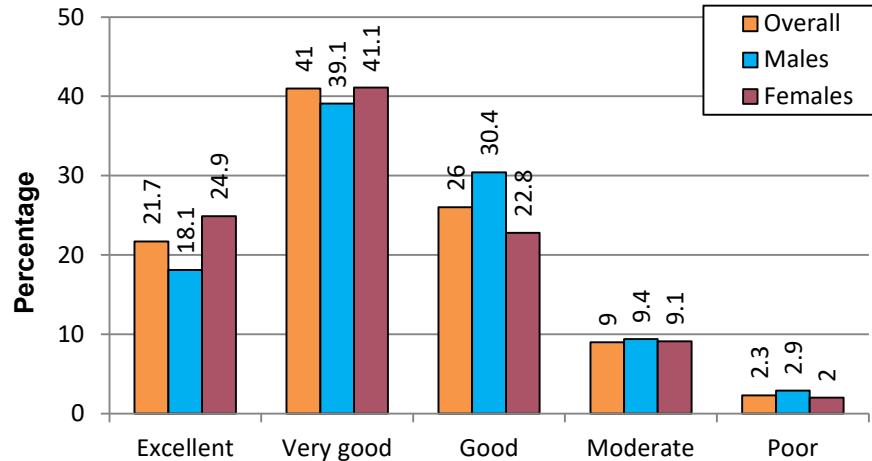
The initial question asked respondents to indicate their current state of general health. The overall results are shown in Figure 1. It can be seen that the majority of respondents perceive that they are in good (or better) health at the present time. A further examination revealed that there was no significant variations in perceptions of general health based on where they lived in the County.

**FIGURE 1**  
**Overall perceptions of general health**



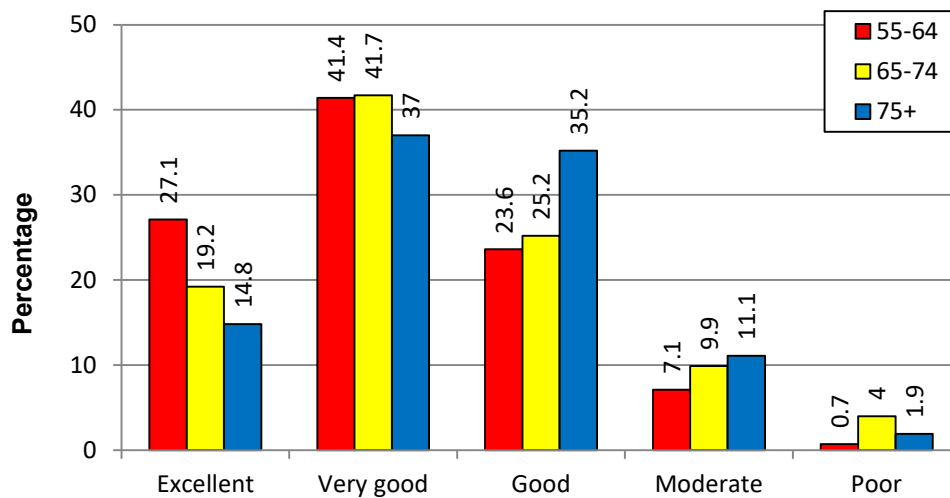
Health assessment based on gender is shown in Figure 2. It can be seen that a slightly higher percentage of females perceived that they are in excellent health compared to males. Other than that, there were only minor variations in health perceptions.

**FIGURE 2**  
Overall perceptions of general health by gender



Health assessment based on age is shown in Figure 3. It can be seen that perceptions of excellent health decreases as age increases.

**FIGURE 3**  
Overall perceptions of general health by age



Respondents were also asked to report on their level of weekly physical activity. Overall, the majority of respondents were physically active 4-7 days a week (56.1%) or 2-3 days a week (26.6%), with 9.1% being active once a week. A small percentage of respondents (7%) were less active than that. There was no significant variation in this pattern between men and women or between age groups.

When asked about existing County healthcare facilities/related support programs, just over half (51%) indicated that these met their current needs. About 1 in 4 (24.2%) don't use any health care facilities or programs. Overall, 9.3% thought these did not, while the remaining 15.5% were not sure. It can be speculated that those who did not use County healthcare facilities/support programs probably went elsewhere (such as Edmonton) for medical appointments.

Respondents who either felt existing healthcare facilities /support programs did not meet their needs or were not sure were asked a series of questions as to what would be required to better meet their needs. It can be seen in Table 1 below that *improving health subsidy programs for seniors* and *programs and seminars on how seniors can improve their own health* was at the top of the list.

**TABLE 1**  
**What do you require to better meet your health related needs?**

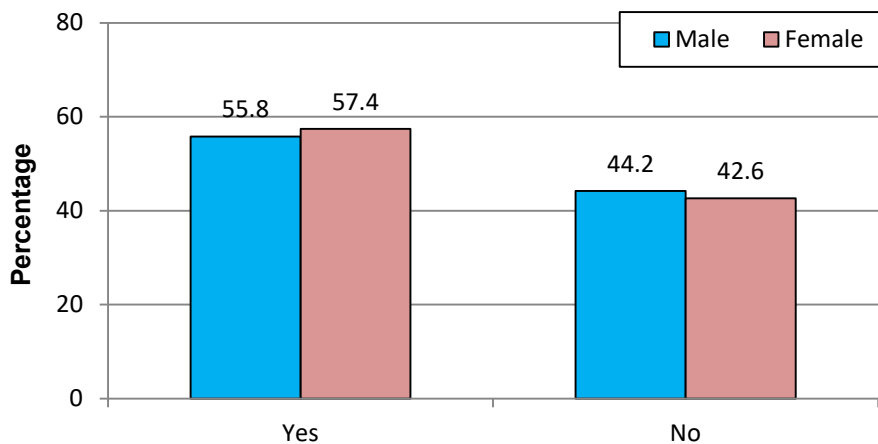
	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Improved health subsidy programs for seniors from government	38	44.7%
Programs and seminars on how seniors can improve their own health	34	40.0%
Senior specific health support (in-home support, etc.)	30	35.3%
More assisted living and long term health care facilities	30	35.3%
Health care facilities focused on seniors (assisted living/long term care facilities)	29	34.1%
Local walk-in clinics that are open until 10pm every day	24	28.2%
Other	24	28.2%
Total N	85	100.0%



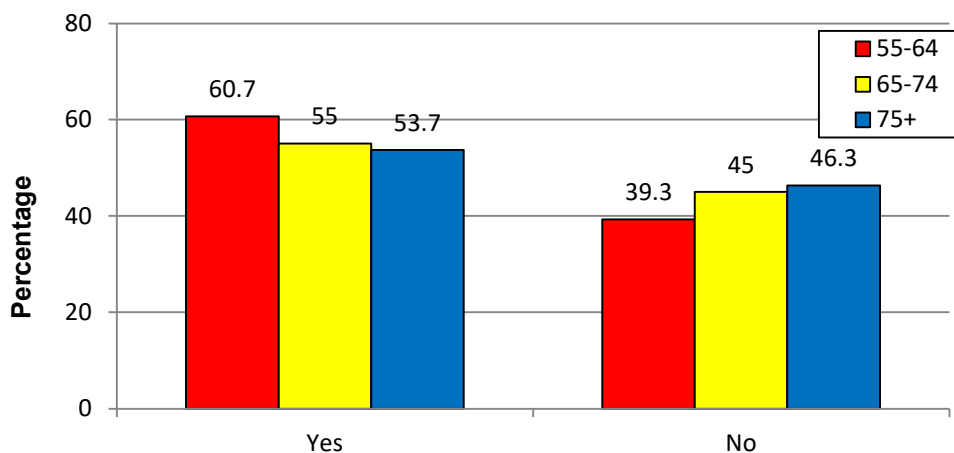
**C. Use of County recreation facilities and programs**

Respondents were asked to determine what if any, County run recreation facilities and programs seniors have used at least once during the past year. Overall, it was found that prior to COVID-19, a slight majority of respondents (57.2%) had made use of one or more of the County run recreation facilities or programs. As seen in Figure 4, there were no differences seen between men and women with respect to use, but it can be seen in Figure 5 that use decreased as the age of the respondent increased.

**FIGURE 4**  
**Use of recreation facilities/programs by gender**



**FIGURE 5**  
**Use of recreation facilities/programs by age**

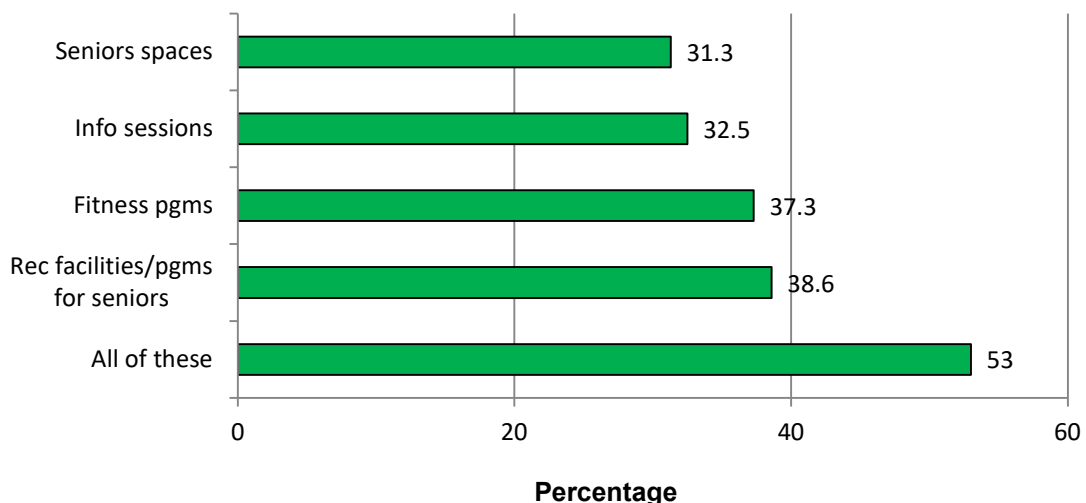


A follow up question asked whether the existing County run recreation facilities and programs met the respondents' current needs. Overall, 23.1% did not use any County related recreation facilities or programs. Of the ones who currently used the facilities, the majority (52.9%) said their current needs were met. Of the remaining participants, 11% said their needs were not met, while the remaining 13% were not sure. As such, just slightly over half of the facilities and programs are currently meeting needs of seniors.

In terms of gender, it was found that slightly more males (55.1%) felt the County recreation facilities and programs were meeting their needs compared to females (50.8%). In terms of age, 57.9% of those aged 55-64 felt that the facilities and programs were meeting their needs compared to older seniors (48.7% of those aged 65-74 and 50.9% of those 75 or older).

The 24% (or N=83) of respondents who felt that the County recreation facilities and programs were not meeting their needs (or were not sure) were provided a list and asked to indicate what might help them meet their recreation needs. The results are shown in Figure 6.

**FIGURE 6**  
**Other ways to help meet recreation needs for seniors**  
**(based on 83 of the seniors who said that existing facilities and programs were not meeting their needs [or they were not sure])**



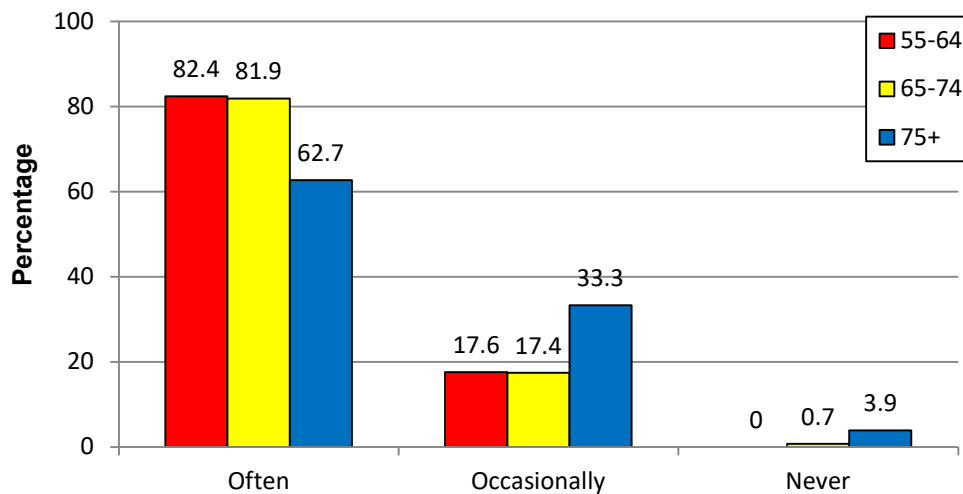
#### D. Other aspects of seniors well-being

Overall, it was found that prior to COVID-19, when asked how often they left their home to engage with others, such as visiting friends/family, going shopping, etc., it was found that:

- 79.2% did this often (more than twice a week).
- 19.9% did this occasionally (such as once or twice a week); and
- 0.9% never did this.

In terms of age, a drop from “often” to “occasionally” occurred with the 75 or older age group (as seen in Figure 7). No differences in participation were seen between males and females.

**FIGURE 7**  
**Leaving home to engage with others (by age groups)**



In addition, virtually none of the seniors who completed this survey required assistance to access basic services such as getting help with groceries, getting to medical appointments, etc. Only 4% either always or sometimes required assistance.

Overall, 41.1% of respondents were aware that one can call Volunteer Strathcona to get assistance accessing services for seniors. The remaining

58.9% were not aware. A further analysis of this question by gender revealed that only slightly more females (42%) were aware of Volunteer Strathcona compared to 40.3% of males. In terms of age, it was found that 30.9% of those aged 54-64 were aware of Volunteer Strathcona as a resource to get assistance accessing services for seniors. This awareness increased substantially among those aged 65-74 (44.7% aware) and even more among those aged 75 or older (56.9%).