

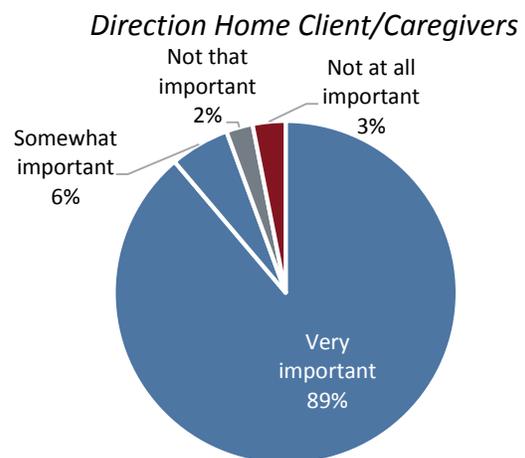
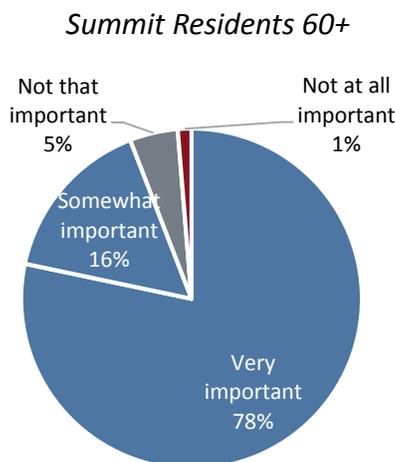


*Summit County Older Adults Needs Assessment and Long Term Care Cost Analysis:  
Executive Summary  
April, 2018*

Through the generous support of The Akron Community Foundation, Direction Home Akron Canton Area Agency on Aging and Disabilities contracted with The Center for Community Solutions to produce a report analyzing the current state of Summit County older adults, their expected needs in the future, and the financial impact of providing long term care to this population. Currently, older adults make up 22 percent of the Summit County population, with large growth in this age group expected over the next 10 to 20 years. Older adults are projected to be 30 percent of the county population by 2030. As the population ratios shift, will Summit County be able to provide the supports and services that will enable older adults to maintain independence for as long as desirable, and thrive as active members of the community? The needs assessment, and analysis of financial impact of the cost of long term care, provided answers to the questions leaders in the aging community continually ask as they are adjusting to increased demand for community-based, aging-related programming and services.

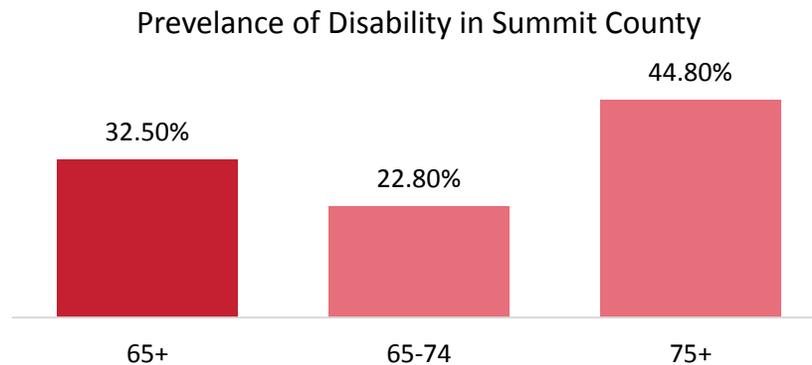
***Where do Summit County older adults intend to grow older?***

Summit County consists of both urban and suburban municipalities, with some variations in income, race and education among Akron proper, and suburban communities. One thing that remains constant among all older adult populations surveyed for this assessment is the desire to remain in their homes for as long as possible. Clients and caregivers associated with Direction Home, randomly selected residents of Summit County age 60 and older and general public callers to Direction Home and Metro Transit were all asked to identify the level of importance they place on remaining in their home as they age. Among all groups, 94 to 100 percent said it is very important or somewhat important to remain in their homes.



### ***Are there any concerns specific to older adults in Summit County?***

Older adults in Summit County have some unique health needs that should be considered as programs and services are developed to serve this population. One third of older adults in Summit County have some disability with higher rates among the seventy five and older population. These include hearing, vision, cognitive, ambulatory, self-care and independent living. As one would expect, the rates are higher among the older cohort of residents.



With some exceptions, the rates for leading causes of death were similar in the county and the state. One of the exceptions of particular note is the suicide rate among older adults, which is 30 percent higher in Summit County than in the state as a whole. The death rate in Summit county was also more than 10 percent higher than the state's rate for Alzheimer's, hypertension and pneumonitis; while the county's rate was more than 10 percent lower for accidents, nephritis and chronic liver disease.

### ***Are there differences between older adults in Akron compared to older adults in the suburbs?***

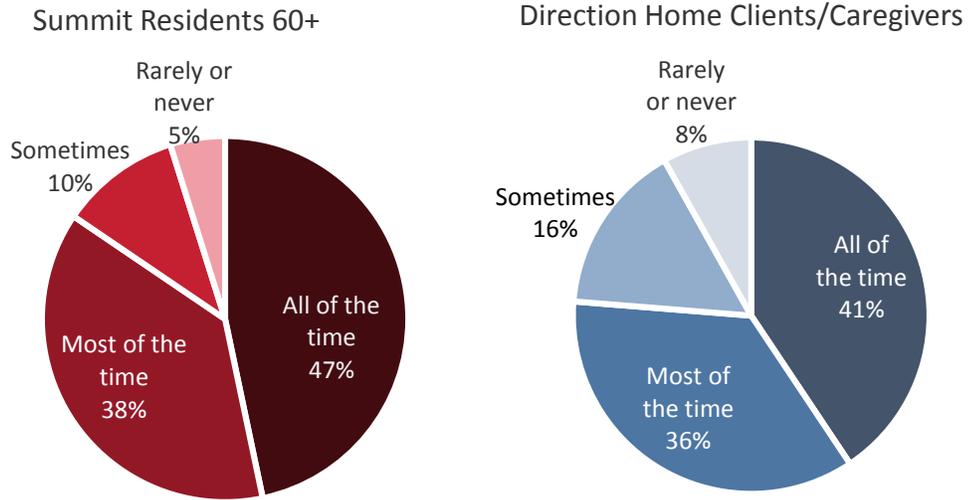
The demographic profile of older adults living in Akron, the urban center of Summit County, looks different than the profile of older adults living in suburban communities.

- Akron is a more racially diverse community, with more than 30 percent of older adults identifying as African-American, Hispanic/Latino, Asian or Other. In contrast, 95 percent of suburban older adults identify as white.
- Ten percent more adults live alone in Akron (51%) than in the suburbs (40%)
- The median household income for suburban older adults in Summit County is nearly \$8,000 more than older adults who live in Akron.
- More than half of senior renters in Akron, and almost two-thirds of senior renters in the suburbs, are cost-burdened with more than 30 percent of income spent on housing.

### ***Do older adults in the community know how to access aging supports and services?***

Older adults obtain information about the services they need, and education about aging, in a variety of ways, with various levels of success. When access to information and education is high, older adults gain the ability to find and connect with the services they need in a way that is sustainable over time. When asked if, in general, they were able to find information on the services that they need, there were slight

variations between the level of access in the general population of older adults residents and in those already familiar with Direction Home.

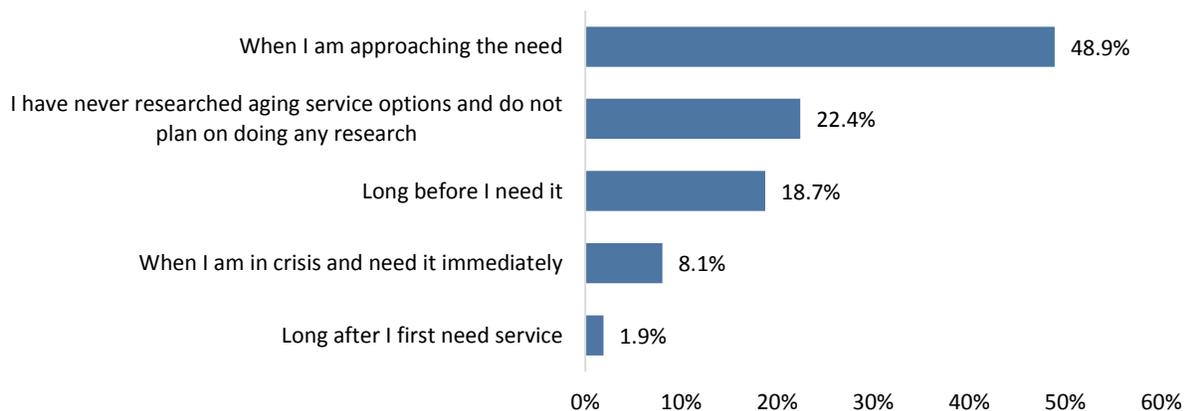


The most common information access point for Summit County older adults is telephone, followed by 'word-of-mouth.' The internet is used more often by the general older adult population than by current Direction Home consumers. Sixty-three percent of those associated with Direction Home are able to access information delivered in person, compared to 40 percent of all older Summit county residents having access to in person information delivery. A higher percentage of those currently associated with Direction Home reported being able to find information by phone, through one central source, than the general older adult population.

***What are older adults doing to prepare for growing older?***

There is a perception that older adults and their caregivers do not prepare for needs related to aging until they have reached a state of crisis. When asked, nearly half of Summit older adults surveyed said they plan to research options for aging services when they are approaching the need. Yet, fewer than

**When do you plan to research your options for aging services?**



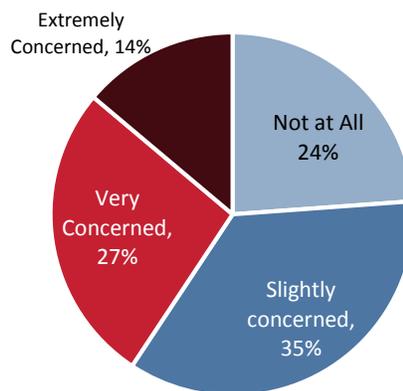
half of those surveyed feel confident they could find alternative housing if their needs changed, and just 42 percent have prepared an advanced directive.

Nearly a quarter of Summit County older adults have done no research and do not plan on doing any research. One thing that may prevent people from researching services is fearing what they may learn. The top concerns older adults in Summit County have about accessing services are quality of care, cost, privacy and worry about being placed in a long term care facility. Based on these findings, it appears residents may have an association with accessing support services and entering a long term care facility. Summit County would benefit from education to raise community awareness of benefits associated with prevention, as well as early, and proper, intervention of aging supports in maintaining independence in the home.

### ***Are older adults financially ready?***

More than 75 percent of Summit County residents age 60 and older, and Direction Home client caregivers, report some level of concern about the cost of affording services and supports related aging. Overall, Summit County older adults are unsure how they will pay for long-term, in-home medical expenses should they need them in the future. A high proportion of older adults (40 percent) report that they would not be able to pay for long-term in-home medical expenses. Even fewer are able to afford long-term nursing home care, compared with long-term in-home care. Nearly half of older adults report that they would not be able to afford long-term nursing care, and another 29 percent stated they were unsure if they could afford it.

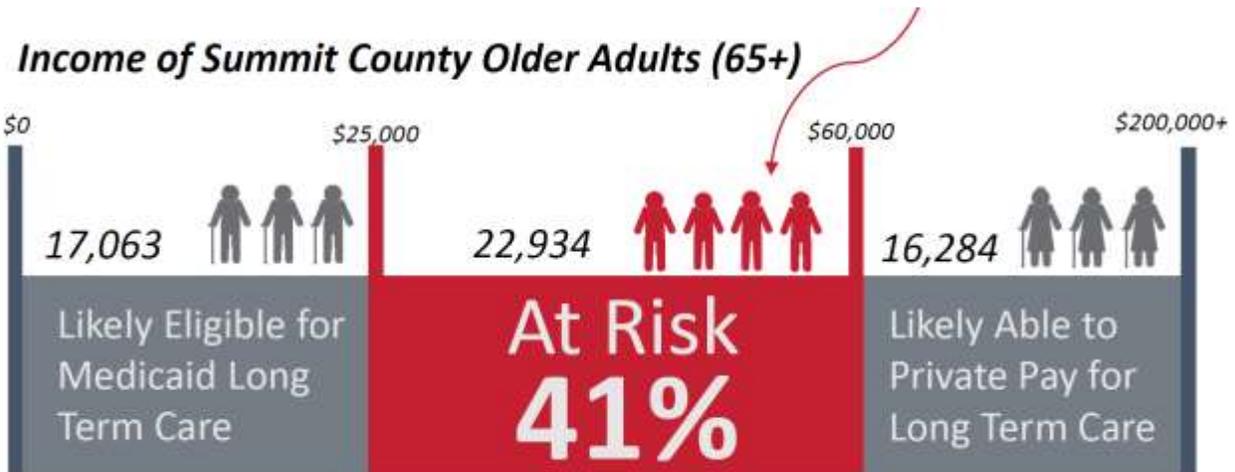
How concerned are you about being able to afford the services you may need as you age?



### ***Will older adults have the support they need?***

With the high costs of care, many older adults in Summit County are at risk of not being able to afford the care they need. The group that experiences the most financial struggle, is made up of those who make too much money to be eligible for Medicaid, but whose income is below a level that could support privately paying for services. Single older adults within an income range of \$27,310 to \$48,564 and couples with incomes between \$37,030 and \$65,844 will likely struggle to afford a safe level of care for

an individual who needs a skilled level of care and who wishes to remain in a home and community-based setting.



Maintaining the current, inadequate, level of funding for older adult services from the federal, state and local levels would have a negative impact on the financial stability of the individual, the individual and his or her caregivers and the entire community, compounding over time. Agencies that currently provide subsidized services for older adults will find it increasingly difficult to provide recommended levels of care for the number of older adults who are seeking that care. These agencies should consider engaging in advocacy at all levels of government, to request increased funding for current and future older adults.

***How can the community provide support?***

With an increasing number of older adults entering the sphere of needing home and community-based services, Summit County aging service providers, including Direction Home, will need to consider how they can raise additional funds to support community-based care for older adults and their caregivers. In focus groups, caregivers universally agreed more funding was needed for aging and caregiving support services, and three out of four older adults in Summit County think that more funding is needed for aging services. Caregivers, and the 75 percent of those older adults who identify the need for support, are also likely to become advocates for that funding, and, if presented the opportunity, would vote to direct tax dollars to support the growing needs of the aging community.