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## Three Out of Four Americans Want to Spend their Final Years at Home

Nursing homes allow for an economy of scale. Feeding, washing, and otherwise seeing to the needs of elderly and disabled residents all at once is more efficient than addressing those needs on an individual basis. But this efficiency comes at the expense of human dignity. Ari Ne’eman, a senior research associate at the Harvard Law School Project on Disability, points out, “From Grandpa Simpson to Junior Soprano, popular culture constantly acknowledges our society’s worst-kept secret: Nursing homes are awful places to live. Unfortunately, we’ve set up our health care and human services systems to send vast numbers of seniors and people with disabilities there anyway.”

Nursing homes are relatively new. Before the 20th century, all kinds of care—elder care and even surgery—were performed at home. The wealthy could hire servants to tend to the needs of their elderly relatives. Among those less well-off, women were expected to take on the bulk of the caregiving, uncompensated. And for those who were poor and without families

capable of caring for them, there were almshouses.

Even though three out of four people over the age of 50 want to remain in their homes, according to a 2018 AARP survey, the system remains weighted toward nursing homes and other forms of institutional care. Despite scandal after scandal and reform cycle after reform cycle, federal spending on nursing homes was \$57 billion in 2016.

Technically, all seniors who meet the financial criteria should have access to home care through Medicaid. But despite legal requirements, seniors and families are rarely informed of this option. Jennifer Goldberg, the deputy director of Justice in Aging, pointed out that “far too often, hospitals and nursing homes don’t tell older adults how they can get the care they need in their homes and communities.”

*This is an abridged edited feature published in “The Nation”. For the full article please visit:*

<https://www.thenation.com/article/society/abolish-nursing-homes/>

## **COVID-19 Section Updates**

We have added numerous sections to the COVID-19 portion of our website. These new sections focus on Florida policy, the cultural impact of COVID-19, public health policy, global dimensions, and COVID-19's impact on vulnerable populations. Within each section you can find curated articles and commentaries that go into greater detail about the various effects COVID-19 is having on our nation and the world. We will be posting information daily and modifying previous posts as more information becomes available.

<https://fla.st/3cwB0Ks>

## **COVID-19 Surges Back into Nursing Homes**

The novel coronavirus is surging back into U.S. nursing homes, where it killed tens of thousands at the start of the pandemic and now once again threatens some of the people most vulnerable to covid-19, the disease caused by the virus.

The development is a discouraging result of widespread community transmission of the virus in many parts of the country and in hot spots where it is even less controlled. With staff — and in some cases patients and visitors — entering and leaving facilities, the community-acquired infection almost inevitably finds its way inside.

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis (R) spoke directly to that issue, warning that more covid-19 deaths at nursing homes and assisted-living facilities may be on the way, even as total caseloads have begun to decline. Florida has suffered a huge outbreak of coronavirus cases in recent months and has a sizable population of elderly residents.

“Over the next couple weeks, I’m concerned of seeing kind of a tail where we start to see some of these long-term-care deaths,” DeSantis said Thursday at a forum in Tallahassee.

*This is an abridged edited feature published in “The Washington Post”. For the full article visit: <https://wapo.st/2EgaYzP>*