

Return to State of the Union Report

Loneliness of the Elderly

Information Retrieved from AI – To Be Verified

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Section 1 Top 35 Countries Where the Elderly are the Least Lonely

Rank	Country	Loneliness Specification
1	Danmark (Denmark)	~7% report frequent loneliness
2	Norge (Norway)	~8%
3	Sverige (Sweden)	~8%
4	Nederland (Netherlands)	~9%
5	Suomi (Finland)	~9%
6	Suisse or Schweiz (Switzerland)	~10%
7	New Zealand	~10%
8	Australia	~11%
9	Canada	~11%
10	Éire (Ireland)	~11%
11	Deutschland (Germany)	~12%
12	Österreich (Austria)	~12%
13	Belgique (Belgium)	~12%
14	République française (France)	~13%
15	United Kingdom	~13%
16	日本 Nippon (Japan)	~14%
17	한국 Hanguk (South Korea)	~14%
18	España (Spain)	~14%
19	Portugal	~14%
20	Italia (Italy)	~15%
21	Singapore	~15%
22	ישראל Yisra'el (Israel)	~15%
23	Česko (Czech Republic)	~15%
24	Polska (Poland)	~16%
25	Estonia	~16%
26	Slovenia	~16%

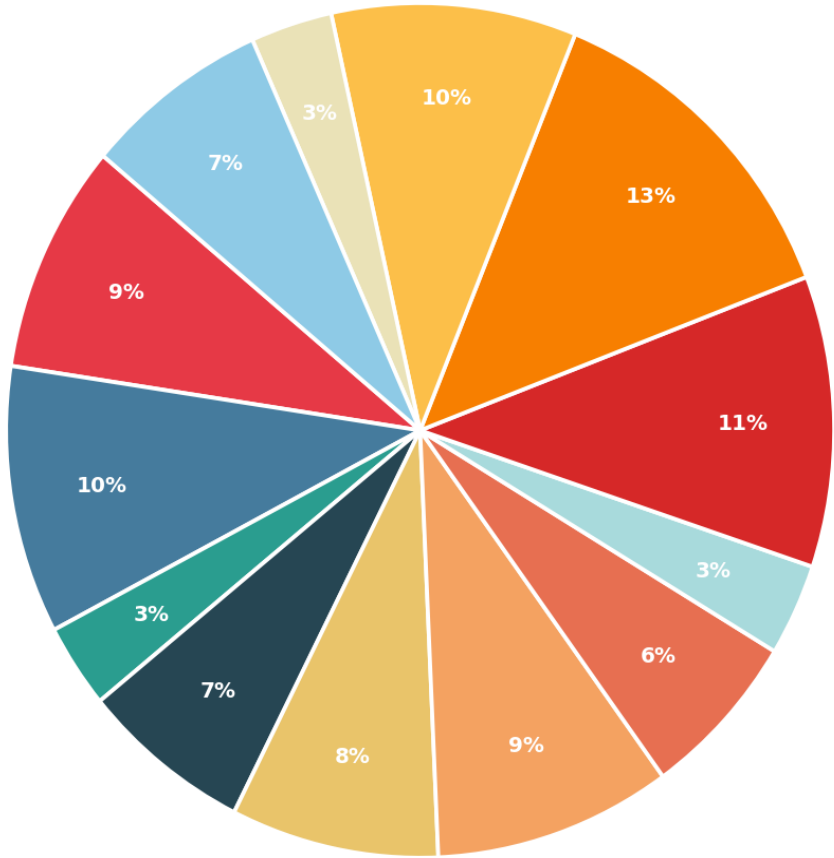
Rank	Country	Loneliness Specification
27	Latvia	~16%
28	Lithuania	~17%
29	Ελλάδα Elláda (Greece)	~17%
30	Chile	~17%
31	Uruguay	~17%
32	Costa Rica	~18%
33	Panamá	~18%
34	Argentina	~18%
35	Brasil (Brazil)	~18%

Source: Gallup Global Emotions Survey 2023–2024

The United States typically ranks below many Northern European countries in measures of elderly social connectedness. Recent U.S. survey estimates suggest roughly 22–24 percent of adults aged 65 and older report persistent loneliness or social isolation. Contributing factors include transportation barriers, reduced family proximity, limited social infrastructure in suburban environments, and fragmented social services.

Sources: Gallup <https://www.gallup.com> OECD <https://www.oecd.org> World Health Organization <https://www.who.int>

**Percentage of Elderly Reporting Loneliness by World Region
(Estimated – AI-Generated, To Be Verified)**



China (~30%)	Central America (~32%)	Africa (~45%)
Russia (~35%)	South America (~22%)	Asia (excl. China) (~33%)
Canada (~11%)	Western Europe (excl. Russia) (~12%)	Australia (~11%)
United States (~23%)	Middle East (~38%)	Other (~25%)
Mexico (~28%)		

Section 2. What Other Countries Have Done to Minimize Elderly Loneliness

Danmark (Denmark)

Danmark has implemented one of the world's most comprehensive approaches to reducing elderly loneliness. The Danish government established the "Quality in Elder Care" program in 2019, which mandates that every municipality provide a minimum of two weekly social visits to lonely seniors.

The Danmark Health Authority (Sundhedsstyrelsen – www.sst.dk) oversees national loneliness prevention initiatives.

The "Elder Ambassadors" (Ældrementorer) program trains volunteers to serve as companions and social connectors for isolated seniors.

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing (Socialministeriet – www.sim.dk) funds community centers (aktivitetscentre) in every municipality.

Danmark's Housing Act was amended to require that all new senior housing developments include mandatory communal spaces.

The national "Loneliness Campaign" (Ensomhedskampagnen) runs annually with government and private funding.

Municipalities are legally required to conduct loneliness assessments during home care visits.

Danmark private corporations, led by TrygFonden (www.trygfonden.dk), have contributed over 50 million Danish Krone annually to loneliness research and intervention programs.

The "Chat with a Senior" (Snak med en Ældre) telephone program connects isolated elderly citizens with trained volunteers seven days per week.

Danmark funds municipal senior activity centers nationwide through the Danish Ministry of Social Affairs <https://sm.dk>. Municipal governments operate neighborhood activity centers where seniors participate in meals, hobbies, fitness and social programs.

The organization DaneAge Association <https://www.aeldresagen.dk> operates one of the world's largest volunteer visiting programs, pairing volunteers with isolated elderly individuals for weekly visits.

The Danmark government funds transportation services allowing seniors free or reduced travel to social centers.

Public housing developments include shared communal spaces designed specifically for older adults to encourage daily interaction.

Norge (Norway)

The Norwegian Ministry of Health and Care Services <https://www.regjeringen.no> created a National Strategy Against Loneliness providing grants to municipalities.

Municipalities operate 'Senior Houses' where elderly residents gather daily for meals, lectures and exercise programs.

The Norge Red Cross <https://www.rodekors.no> operates extensive visiting programs connecting volunteers with isolated seniors.

Local governments fund cultural programs including music events, walking groups and community meals.

Norge's government launched the National Plan Against Loneliness (Nasjonal plan mot ensomhet) in 2020, with targeted funding of 500 million Norwegian Krone over five years.

The Norge Directorate of Health (Helsedirektoratet – www.helsedirektoratet.no) coordinates national loneliness reduction strategies.

Norge municipalities are required under the Health and Care Services Act to include loneliness assessment in all elder care planning.

The "Generations Together" (Generasjoner Sammen) program pairs elderly residents with school children for structured weekly interactions and has been expanded to all 356 municipalities.

The Norge Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV – www.nav.no) provides funding to organizations that facilitate elderly social integration through employment and volunteer opportunities.

Norge's Directorate of Integration and Diversity funds intergenerational community centers where elderly immigrants receive special outreach.

The government-funded Norwegian Centre for Aging and Health (Nasjonal kompetansetjeneste for aldring og helse – www.aldringoghelse.no) provides free resources to municipalities.

Private organizations such as the Pensioners' Association (Pensjonistforbundet – www.pensjonistforbundet.no) operate social clubs in every county.

The Fjord Companion Network pairs isolated rural elderly with weekly transportation assistance and social visits.

Norge's national broadcasting company (NRK – www.nrk.no) airs dedicated programming for elderly audiences that encourages telephone community participation.

Sverige (Sweden)

Sverige enacted the National Strategy for Elderly Care in 2022, which explicitly names loneliness reduction as a priority objective.

Municipalities operate elder social meeting places financed by the Sverige National Board of Health and Welfare <https://www.socialstyrelsen.se>.

Volunteer organizations including SPF Seniorerna <https://www.spfseniorerna.se> coordinate clubs, travel groups and education programs.

Sverige funds digital training programs teaching seniors how to communicate online and access social services.

Community housing designs integrate mixed age housing to encourage interaction between generations.

The Sverige Agency for Health and Care Services Analysis (Myndigheten för vård- och omsorgsanalys – www.vardanalys.se) monitors and reports on elderly social isolation nationwide.

Sverige municipalities are legally required under the Social Services Act (Socialtjänstlagen) to assess and address social isolation needs of elderly residents.

The "Fixartjänst" (Fixing Service) program sends trained workers to elderly homes not only for physical tasks but as mandated social contact agents.

Sverige Post (PostNord) implemented a program whereby mail carriers perform wellness checks on isolated elderly customers along their routes.

The Sverige Red Cross (Röda Korset – www.redcross.se) manages a nationwide befriending service with over 12,000 trained volunteers.

The Sverige government introduced tax incentives for businesses that employ elderly workers part-time to maintain social engagement.

Regional eldercare authorities are required by law to provide a minimum of 15 hours per month of structured social activities for each isolated senior.

Karolinska Institutet (www.ki.se) conducts government-funded research on loneliness prevention interventions among the elderly.

The Digital Companion program provides subsidized tablets and training to seniors to facilitate video calling and social media participation.

Nederland (Netherlands)

The Dutch Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport (Ministerie van Volksgezondheid, Welzijn en Sport – www.rijksoverheid.nl/ministeries/ministerie-van-volksgezondheid-welzijn-en-sport) funds a national loneliness action plan 'One Against Loneliness' with 100 million Euros committed through 2027.

Over 200 municipalities operate local coalitions involving businesses, churches and nonprofits. Programs include neighborhood host volunteers who regularly check on elderly residents. Health systems screen patients for loneliness and refer them to social activities.

The Nederland established the National Coalition Against Loneliness (Coalitie Erbij – www.erbij.nl) which includes government agencies, private corporations, and civil society organizations.

The Nederland passed the "Connecting the Elderly Act" in 2021 requiring that all home care providers include weekly social engagement activities.

Humanitas (www.humanitas.nl), a major Dutch welfare organization, operates an innovative program where university students live rent-free in elderly care homes in exchange for 30 hours per month of social interaction with residents.

The "Buurtteams" (Neighborhood Teams) system deploys social workers to proactively identify and support lonely elderly residents in all major cities.

The Dutch National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (RIVM – www.rivm.nl) conducts annual assessments of elderly loneliness levels. KPN Telecom and Vodafone Nederland participate in the government's program to provide subsidized phones and digital training to isolated elderly citizens.

Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and The Hague operate dedicated "Loneliness Helplines" staffed around the clock for elderly residents.

The Alzheimer's Nederland association (Alzheimer Nederland – www.alzheimer-nederland.nl) has expanded its mandate to address social isolation in cognitively healthy elderly.

The Nederland introduced an elderly loneliness tax credit for families who maintain regular contact with elderly relatives.

Suomi (Finland)

The Suomi Institute for Health and Welfare (Terveyden ja hyvinvoinnin laitos – www.thl.fi) operates the national loneliness monitoring system, distributes evidence-based intervention guides to all municipalities and coordinates national research and programs addressing social isolation.

The Social Welfare Act was amended in 2021 to include loneliness as a recognized welfare need requiring government intervention.

Suomi's Act on Social Welfare Services mandates that elderly persons identified as lonely receive a formal individual social plan within 30 days.

Municipal libraries and cultural centers offer daily programming for seniors.

The Suomi government funds lifelong education programs encouraging seniors to participate in universities of the third age.

Community volunteer networks regularly contact isolated individuals.

Suomi implemented the National Programme on Ageing Workers and the Act on the Status and Rights of Social Welfare Clients to specifically address elderly social needs.

The "Friend Services" (Ystäväpalvelu) program, operated by the Suomi Red Cross (Suomen Punainen Risti – www.punainenristi.fi), provides trained volunteer companions to isolated elderly citizens throughout the country.

Suomi pioneered the use of "Loneliness Coordinators" – social workers specifically dedicated to elderly social connection – in all hospitals and health centers.

The Care Alliance Suomi (Hoivaviesti – www.hoivaviesti.fi) connects elderly individuals with digital communication tools.

The Suomi government provides direct grants to local libraries to host weekly senior social events.

Nokia, Wärtsilä, and other major Finnish corporations participate in the "Senior Volunteer Hour" program where employees spend paid time volunteering with elderly in care centers.

The government sponsored "Let's Call Grandma" (Soitetaan mummille) initiative provides free telephone connection services to isolated elderly Finns.

Schweiz (Switzerland)

The nonprofit Pro Senectute <https://www.prosenectute.ch> operates nationwide senior social support programs.

Transportation assistance allows elderly residents to attend social events.

Schweiz's Federal Commission for Senior Issues (Eidgenössische Kommission für Altersfragen – www.eka-cfv.ch) issued landmark recommendations in 2021 mandating cantonal governments to develop loneliness prevention strategies.

The Pro Senectute organization (www.prosenectute.ch), Schweiz's largest eldercare NGO, operates social programs in every canton funded jointly by the federal government and private donations.

Schweiz cantons are required under the Adult Protection Law (Erwachsenenschutzrecht) to appoint official guardians for isolated elderly persons who have no family support.

Cantonal governments fund neighborhood social clubs and exercise programs.

The "Together Across Generations" (Gemeinsam über Generationen) program pairs isolated elderly with young families in 22 cantons.

Schweiz Post implemented mandatory wellness checks for postal customers aged 80 and over.

The Schweiz Federal Office of Public Health (Bundesamt für Gesundheit – www.bag.admin.ch) funds research into loneliness interventions through grants to Swiss universities.

Major Schweiz employers including Nestlé, Novartis, and UBS participate in the "Silver Volunteers" program, providing paid volunteer time for employees to spend with lonely elderly residents.

Schweiz municipalities with populations over 10,000 are required to operate at least one dedicated senior social center.

The Schweiz Broadcasting Corporation (SRG SSR) produces multilingual programming specifically designed to create virtual community for isolated elderly viewers.

The Migros cooperative (www.migros.ch) operates "Cooking Together" events in their community centers specifically targeting elderly isolation.

Volunteer networks provide home visits and companionship services.

New Zealand

The Office for Seniors <https://www.superseniors.ms.govt.nz> administers the Positive Ageing Strategy.

Digital literacy programs help seniors remain socially connected.

Local councils maintain senior recreation centers and community transport.

New Zealand launched the Social Wellbeing Strategy in 2019, which explicitly identifies elderly loneliness as a national health priority.

The Ministry of Social Development (www.ms.govt.nz) and the Ministry of Health (www.health.govt.nz) jointly fund the national Aged Care Strategy that includes mandatory loneliness screening for all New Zealanders aged 65 and over.

The Age Concern New Zealand organization (www.ageconcern.org.nz) operates a nationwide befriending program with government funding.

The "Navigators" program trains community health workers to identify and support isolated elderly Māori, Pasifika, and Asian community members in their cultural context.

New Zealand's Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC – www.acc.govt.nz) covers social isolation interventions as preventive health measures.

The government provides direct subsidies to libraries, community halls, and faith organizations that host weekly senior social programs. Government grants support community groups that host social gatherings for seniors.

Te Whatu Ora (Health New Zealand – www.tewhatauora.govt.nz) requires that GP practices conduct annual loneliness assessments for patients over 65.

New Zealand Post implemented a "Rural Connections" program where postal workers in rural areas conduct official wellness checks on isolated elderly residents.

Telecom New Zealand (Spark – www.spark.co.nz) provides free broadband and device training to elderly citizens identified as socially isolated.

The New Zealand Superannuation Fund includes loneliness prevention programs in its community investment strategy.

Australia

The Department of Health and Aged Care <https://www.health.gov.au> funds the Community Visitors Scheme.

Volunteers regularly visit older people living alone or in residential care.

COTA Australia <https://www.cota.org.au> advocates for policies promoting social inclusion.

Local councils operate community centers offering educational classes and recreation activities.

Also Österreich (Austria) Has Taken Several Actions to Minimize Elderly Loneliness

Österreich's Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection (Bundesministerium für Soziales – www.sozialministerium.at) released the National Elderly Care Plan in 2022, which includes dedicated chapters on combating social isolation.

The Österreich Social Insurance Authority (Dachverband der Sozialversicherungsträger – www.sozialversicherung.at) funds community social programs for isolated elderly as part of preventive care.

Österreich's federal states (Bundesländer) are required to maintain publicly funded senior centers (Seniorenzentren) with daily social programming.

The "Visit Service" (Besuchsdienst) operated by Caritas Österreich (www.caritas.at) and Diakonie Österreich (www.diakonie.at) provides trained volunteers to isolated elderly citizens across all nine federal states.

Vienna's "5-Minute Cafe" (5-Minuten-Cafe) initiative places social workers in pharmacies and medical offices to identify isolated elderly patients.

Österreich's largest supermarket chains (Spar, Rewe, Hofer) participate in the government's "Friendly Checkout" program where cashiers receive training to identify and provide referrals for isolated elderly shoppers.

The Österreich Broadcasting Corporation (ORF – www.orf.at) operates a senior-specific digital channel and interactive programming that creates virtual community.

The Hilfswerk Österreich (www.hilfswerk.at) coordinates elder companion programs across 600 municipalities.

Österreich passed legislation in 2023 requiring that apartment buildings with more than 50 units provide a designated common social space for elderly residents.

The government provides direct payments to families who serve as primary social companions for elderly relatives who would otherwise be isolated.

Section 3 What the U.S. Can Do to Reduce Loneliness of the Elderly

1. Establish a National Strategy on Elder Social Connection led by the Department of Health and Human Services.
2. Expand federal funding for senior centers through the Administration for Community Living.
3. Provide transportation grants through the Department of Transportation for community access.
4. Encourage local governments to create neighborhood senior hubs.
5. Require healthcare providers to screen for loneliness during annual wellness visits.
6. Expand volunteer visiting programs supported by AmeriCorps.
7. Fund digital literacy training programs for seniors.
8. Support intergenerational housing programs.
9. Create tax incentives for businesses supporting senior volunteer programs.
10. Expand Meals on Wheels social visitation services.
11. Fund telephone reassurance programs.
12. Encourage libraries to host senior activity programming.
13. Support community walking groups and wellness clubs.
14. Create grants for nonprofit companionship services.
15. Expand broadband access for older adults.
16. Provide funding for senior transportation ride services.
17. Establish national loneliness measurement surveys.
18. Encourage universities to create lifelong learning programs.
19. Promote age friendly city planning initiatives.
20. Support caregiver respite services.
21. Provide tax credits for families supporting elderly relatives.
22. Encourage corporate volunteer programs.
23. Establish community dining programs.
24. Support faith based outreach initiatives.
25. Provide housing grants for senior communal living.
26. Fund mental health services for isolated seniors.
27. Develop digital platforms connecting seniors with volunteers.
28. Expand rural outreach programs.
29. Establish public awareness campaigns on loneliness.
30. Create national recognition programs for volunteer caregivers.

The United States can substantially reduce elderly loneliness through a multi-pronged national strategy that addresses structural, social, technological, community, and legislative dimensions of the problem. Currently, the U.S. lacks a coordinated national loneliness strategy. The following recommendations draw from successful international models:

A National Loneliness Strategy must be adopted at the federal level, similar to the United Kingdom's appointment of a Minister for Loneliness. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) should establish a dedicated Office on Elderly Loneliness with a mandate to coordinate across all relevant federal agencies. The Administration for Community Living (ACL) should receive a dedicated budget line for loneliness prevention programs.

Community Infrastructure must be rebuilt by investing in senior centers, libraries, faith organizations, and neighborhood hubs that provide daily social programming. Federal grants through the Community Development Block Grant program should prioritize loneliness reduction as a qualifying use of funds. Public transportation must be expanded to ensure elderly citizens can access social venues without needing a driver's license.

Intergenerational Programs should be established through federal incentives that bring together young people and elderly citizens in meaningful, sustained relationships. The Corporation for National and Community Service (AmeriCorps) should create an Elder Companion Corps with full-time positions for young adults who provide companionship and assistance to isolated seniors.

Healthcare Integration requires that Medicare and Medicaid programs cover loneliness screening as a preventive service. Primary care physicians should be mandated to assess elderly patients for social isolation using validated instruments such as the UCLA Loneliness Scale. Social prescribing – the practice of prescribing community-based activities as medical treatment – should be formalized within the U.S. healthcare system.

Technology Access must be equalized. The Federal Communications Commission should expand broadband subsidies to ensure that all elderly Americans have affordable, reliable internet access. The U.S. Department of Labor should fund digital literacy training centers in all communities with elderly populations. Publicly subsidized tablets and smartphones should be provided to income-eligible elderly Americans.

Corporate Responsibility should be formalized through federal incentives and requirements. Employers with federal contracts should be required to allow employees paid volunteer time to visit lonely elderly in their communities. The IRS should create tax credits for private businesses that implement verified elder companionship programs.

Housing Policy must evolve to prevent isolation. New federally funded housing developments should be required to include common social spaces. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development should promote co-housing and intergenerational housing models. Zoning laws should be reformed at the federal incentive level to encourage accessory dwelling units that keep elderly family members close to their families.

Caregiver Support is essential. The federal government should establish a paid family leave program that allows family members to provide social care for elderly relatives without financial penalty. The National Family Caregiver Support Program should be significantly expanded.

Data and Accountability require that a national longitudinal survey of elderly loneliness be conducted every two years and that federal agencies report annually on progress toward

loneliness reduction targets. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) should include elderly loneliness in its Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System.

Section 4. References

World Health Organization <https://www.who.int>

OECD <https://www.oecd.org>

National Institute on Aging <https://www.nia.nih.gov>

AARP Research <https://www.aarp.org>

Administration for Community Living <https://acl.gov>

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services – ACL: <https://acl.gov>

Administration for Community Living: <https://acl.gov/programs/aging-and-disability-networks>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – Loneliness and Social Isolation:
<https://www.cdc.gov/emotional-wellbeing/social-connectedness/loneliness.htm>

Federal Communications Commission – Broadband Access:
<https://www.fcc.gov/consumers/guides/broadband-subsidies>

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development: <https://www.hud.gov>

National Institute on Aging – Social Isolation and Loneliness:
<https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/loneliness-and-social-isolation-tips-staying-connected>

AmeriCorps – National Service: <https://www.americorps.gov>

Campaign to End Loneliness (UK) – Evidence and Guidance:
<https://www.campaigntoendloneliness.org/evidence>

WHO – Decade of Healthy Ageing: <https://www.who.int/initiatives/decade-of-healthy-ageing>

AARP Public Policy Institute – Caregiving Research: <https://www.aarp.org/ppi/issues/caregiving/>

National Family Caregiver Support Program: <https://acl.gov/programs/support-caregivers/national-family-caregiver-support-program>

UCLA Loneliness Scale Documentation: <https://www.uclahealth.org/programs/semel/loneliness-scale>

Section 5 Draft of a House Bill

119TH CONGRESS

1ST SESSION

H.R. ____

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

A BILL

To establish a national strategy to reduce loneliness and social isolation among elderly Americans, to require federal agencies to take specified actions, and for other purposes.

SHORT TITLE. – This Act may be cited as the "Elderly Loneliness Prevention and Community Connection Act of 2025" or the "ELPCCA".

SECTION 1. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

- (1) **ELDERLY INDIVIDUAL.** – The term "elderly individual" means any person who is 65 years of age or older.
- (2) **LONELINESS.** – The term "loneliness" means a subjective, unwelcome feeling of lack or loss of companionship that results from a discrepancy between the quality and quantity of social relationships that a person has and those that the person desires.
- (3) **SOCIAL ISOLATION.** – The term "social isolation" means an objective lack of social contact with others, including family members, friends, or community members, regardless of whether the individual experiences subjective loneliness.
- (4) **COVERED AGENCY.** – The term "covered agency" means any Executive Branch department, agency, or office of the Federal Government that administers programs serving elderly individuals.
- (5) **ELIGIBLE ENTITY.** – The term "eligible entity" means a State, local government, nonprofit organization, faith-based organization, institution of higher education, or a consortium thereof.
- (6) **NATIONAL LONELINESS COORDINATOR.** – The term "National Loneliness Coordinator" means the federal official designated pursuant to Section 3(a)(1) of this Act.
- (7) **SOCIAL PRESCRIBING.** – The term "social prescribing" means a mechanism that enables health care professionals to refer patients to a range of non-clinical services provided by community organizations and other public or private entities for the purpose of addressing social determinants of health, including loneliness and social isolation.

- (8) BEFRIENDING PROGRAM.** – The term "befriending program" means a structured volunteer program that pairs isolated or lonely elderly individuals with trained volunteer companions who provide regular social contact.
- (9) TELEHEALTH.** – The term "telehealth" means the use of electronic information and telecommunications technologies to support and promote long-distance clinical health care, patient and professional health-related education, public health, and health administration.
- (10) SECRETARY.** – The term "Secretary" means the Secretary of Health and Human Services.

SECTION 2. ENACTING CLAUSE.

- (a) FINDINGS.** – The Congress finds the following:
 - (1)** Loneliness and social isolation among elderly Americans have reached epidemic proportions, with more than one-third of adults aged 65 and older reporting significant loneliness.
 - (2)** Chronic loneliness among the elderly is associated with a 26 percent increased risk of premature death, a 29 percent increased risk of heart disease, a 32 percent increased risk of stroke, and significantly elevated rates of dementia, depression, and anxiety.
 - (3)** The United States lacks a comprehensive, coordinated national strategy to address elderly loneliness, unlike many peer nations that have implemented such strategies with measurable success.
 - (4)** The economic cost of loneliness and social isolation among older adults exceeds \$6.7 billion annually in additional federal Medicare and Medicaid spending.
 - (5)** International evidence from Denmark, Sverige, Norge, Suomi, the Nederland, Schweiz, New Zealand, and Österreich demonstrates that government action can meaningfully reduce elderly loneliness rates.
- (b) PURPOSE.** – The purposes of this Act are to –
 - (1)** establish a national strategy to systematically address loneliness and social isolation among elderly Americans;
 - (2)** require covered agencies to prioritize elderly loneliness prevention in the administration of their programs;
 - (3)** promote research, data collection, and evidence-based interventions related to elderly loneliness;
 - (4)** support community-based programs that provide social connection opportunities for elderly individuals; and
 - (5)** foster public-private partnerships to leverage resources and expertise for loneliness reduction.

SECTION 3. REQUIREMENTS BY GOVERNMENT AGENCIES.

- (a) DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES.** –
 - (1)** The Secretary shall, within 180 days of enactment, designate a National Loneliness Coordinator within the Department of Health and Human Services who shall be responsible for coordinating all federal activities related to elderly loneliness prevention.

- (2) The Administration for Community Living (ACL) shall develop and distribute evidence-based loneliness screening tools to all Area Agencies on Aging within one year of enactment.
 - (3) The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) shall, within two years of enactment, add loneliness and social isolation screening to the annual wellness visit benefit under Medicare Part B.
 - (4) The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) shall add validated loneliness measurement questions to the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System and publish biennial reports on elderly loneliness trends.
 - (5) The National Institute on Aging shall increase grant funding for loneliness prevention research by not less than \$50,000,000 annually for five years following enactment.
 - (6) The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) shall develop and disseminate evidence-based mental health treatment protocols that address the psychological consequences of chronic elderly loneliness.
- (b) DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT. –**
- (1) The Secretary of Housing and Urban Development shall require that all federally funded senior housing developments constructed after the date of enactment include dedicated communal social spaces occupying not less than 5 percent of total building floor area.
 - (2) HUD shall establish and administer a grant program to fund intergenerational housing pilots in not fewer than 20 metropolitan areas within three years of enactment.
 - (3) HUD shall revise its Consolidated Plan requirements to require that participating jurisdictions address elderly loneliness in their housing needs assessments.
- (c) DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION. –**
- (1) The Secretary of Transportation shall require that any State or local entity receiving federal transit funding develop a transportation plan for elderly individuals that specifically addresses transportation barriers to social participation.
 - (2) The Federal Transit Administration shall prioritize grant funding to rural and suburban transit systems that serve isolated elderly populations.
- (d) FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION. –**
- (1) The Commission shall ensure that the Affordable Connectivity Program gives priority eligibility to elderly individuals living alone and shall increase the benefit amount for such individuals by not less than \$10 per month.
 - (2) The Commission shall promulgate rules requiring broadband service providers to offer a basic connectivity package to elderly individuals below the poverty line at no cost.
- (e) CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE. –**
- (1) AmeriCorps shall establish the Elder Connection Corps, a program through which AmeriCorps members serve in placement sites focused on elderly companionship and social engagement.
 - (2) The Elder Connection Corps shall serve not fewer than 10,000 isolated elderly individuals in its first year of operation and scale to 100,000 individuals within five years.

SECTION 4. REQUIREMENTS BY GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS.

- (a) NATIONAL LONELINESS COORDINATOR DUTIES.** – The National Loneliness Coordinator shall –
- (1)** develop a National Strategy on Elderly Loneliness within 18 months of designation, with measurable goals, timelines, and accountability metrics;
 - (2)** convene an interagency task force consisting of the heads of covered agencies to coordinate federal activities;
 - (3)** submit to Congress an annual report detailing progress, program outcomes, and expenditures related to elderly loneliness reduction;
 - (4)** establish a public-private advisory council consisting of representatives from healthcare, technology, housing, transportation, faith communities, and elderly advocacy organizations; and
 - (5)** coordinate with State and local governments to align federal programs with existing State and local loneliness reduction efforts.
- (b) STATE OFFICIALS.** –
- (1)** States receiving federal funds under this Act shall designate a State Loneliness Coordinator who shall develop and implement a State Elderly Loneliness Action Plan.
 - (2)** State Medicaid directors shall, within 24 months of enactment, implement social prescribing protocols within Medicaid managed care organizations.
 - (3)** State health officers shall ensure that loneliness data is collected and reported to the National Loneliness Coordinator on an annual basis.
- (c) LOCAL OFFICIALS.** –
- (1)** Mayors and local executives of cities with populations over 100,000 that receive federal elderly care funding shall include an elderly loneliness reduction strategy in their annual community health assessments.
 - (2)** Area Agencies on Aging directors shall implement loneliness screening for all clients served and connect those identified as isolated to local social programs within 30 days of identification.

SECTION 5. REQUIREMENTS BY CORPORATIONS.

- (a) FEDERAL CONTRACTORS.** –
- (1)** Any corporation with an annual federal contract value exceeding \$10,000,000 shall, as a condition of contract renewal, demonstrate that it has implemented a verified elder volunteer or companionship program providing not less than 2,000 volunteer hours annually.
 - (2)** The Office of Federal Procurement Policy shall issue guidance implementing this subsection within 12 months of enactment.
- (b) TAX INCENTIVES FOR CORPORATIONS.** –
- (1)** Any corporation that establishes a qualified elder companionship program shall be eligible for a tax credit equal to 25 percent of the corporation's verified costs of operating such program, not to exceed \$500,000 per taxable year.

(2) A "qualified elder companionship program" means a program in which company employees are provided paid time, during work hours, to serve as companions or provide assistance to isolated elderly individuals in partnership with a certified nonprofit organization.

(c) TECHNOLOGY COMPANIES. –

(1) Technology companies with annual revenues exceeding \$1,000,000,000 shall develop and offer, at no cost, simplified technology interfaces and dedicated customer support lines for elderly users.

(2) Social media platform operators with more than 10,000,000 U.S. users shall implement features specifically designed to help elderly users build and maintain social connections.

(d) HEALTHCARE CORPORATIONS. –

(1) Hospital systems that receive Medicare or Medicaid reimbursements shall implement a post-discharge social connection protocol for elderly patients that includes a 72-hour follow-up contact and referral to community social resources.

(2) Pharmacy chains with more than 1,000 locations shall train pharmacists to identify signs of social isolation in elderly customers and make referrals to community programs.

(e) HOUSING CORPORATIONS. –

(1) Real estate developers receiving federal housing subsidies who develop senior living communities with 50 or more units shall provide not less than one full-time social engagement coordinator for every 100 residents.

SECTION 6. REQUIREMENTS BY PRIVATE CITIZENS.

(a) FAMILY CAREGIVER OBLIGATIONS. –

(1) Nothing in this Act shall be construed to impose legal obligations upon private citizens with respect to the care of their elderly relatives, except as provided in subsection (b).

(b) PARTICIPATION INCENTIVES. –

(1) The Secretary shall establish a "Social Connection Credit" program through which private individuals who commit to a verified elder befriending program of not less than 4 hours per month shall receive an annual tax credit of \$500.

(2) The Secretary shall establish a National Volunteer Registry for individuals who commit to serving as elder companions, and shall develop a standard certification and training program for registered volunteers.

(c) COMMUNITY RESPONSIBILITY. –

(1) The Secretary shall develop and implement a national public awareness campaign, in partnership with the Ad Council, to encourage private citizens to regularly check on elderly neighbors, friends, and family members.

(2) The campaign shall include a toll-free hotline and a website to connect willing volunteers with isolated elderly individuals in their communities.

(d) INTERNATIONAL BEST PRACTICE INTEGRATION. –

(1) Consistent with programs in Canada, Australia, England, Norge, Sverige, Suomi, Deutschland, République française, Zhongguo, and Nippon, the Secretary shall

encourage community-level social commitment programs in which residents of communities with high elderly populations formally commit to checking on elderly neighbors on a regular schedule.

- (2) Such programs shall be implemented through community organizations, faith institutions, and neighborhood associations with federal support but without mandated individual participation.

SECTION 7. PENALTY CLAUSES.

(a) AGENCY NON-COMPLIANCE. –

- (1) Any covered agency that fails to comply with the requirements of this Act within the specified timeframes shall be subject to a reduction of not more than 5 percent of its discretionary administrative budget for the following fiscal year, as determined by the Office of Management and Budget.
- (2) The head of any covered agency that fails to submit required reports under this Act shall be required to appear before the relevant congressional oversight committee to explain the failure.

(b) CONTRACTOR NON-COMPLIANCE. –

- (1) Any federal contractor that fails to comply with Section 5(a) of this Act shall be subject to a civil penalty of not more than \$50,000 per year of non-compliance.
- (2) Repeated or willful non-compliance may result in suspension or debarment from federal contracting for a period of not more than three years.

(c) GRANT RECIPIENT NON-COMPLIANCE. –

- (1) Grantees that misuse funds provided under this Act or fail to meet program requirements shall be required to repay all misused funds, and may be suspended from eligibility for future grants for a period determined by the awarding agency.

(d) ENFORCEMENT. –

- (1) The Secretary shall designate an Inspector General function within the Office of the National Loneliness Coordinator to monitor compliance and investigate complaints.
- (2) Any individual or organization may submit a complaint to the Inspector General alleging non-compliance with this Act.

SECTION 8. EFFECTIVE DATES AND IMPLEMENTATION.

- (a) **EFFECTIVE DATE.** – Except as otherwise provided in this Act, this Act shall take effect 30 days after the date of enactment.

- (b) **IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE.** –

- (1) Not later than 180 days after enactment, the Secretary shall designate the National Loneliness Coordinator.
- (2) Not later than 1 year after enactment, the National Loneliness Coordinator shall convene the interagency task force and public-private advisory council.
- (3) Not later than 18 months after enactment, the National Loneliness Coordinator shall publish the National Strategy on Elderly Loneliness in the Federal Register.

- (4) Not later than 2 years after enactment, all covered agencies shall have implemented their required loneliness prevention activities.
- (5) Not later than 3 years after enactment, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a comprehensive evaluation of program effectiveness.
- (c) RULEMAKING. – The Secretary and other agency heads shall promulgate such regulations as are necessary to implement this Act within 12 months of enactment.
- (d) TRANSITION PROVISIONS. – Existing programs administered by the Administration for Community Living, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, and AmeriCorps that address elderly social isolation shall be incorporated into the national strategy framework within 24 months of enactment without interruption of service.

SECTION 9. APPROPRIATIONS AND BUDGETARY NOTES.

- (a) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS. – There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this Act –
 - (1) \$200,000,000 for fiscal year 2026;
 - (2) \$250,000,000 for fiscal year 2027;
 - (3) \$300,000,000 for fiscal year 2028;
 - (4) \$300,000,000 for fiscal year 2029; and
 - (5) \$300,000,000 for fiscal year 2030.
- (b) ALLOCATION. – Amounts appropriated pursuant to subsection (a) shall be allocated as follows:
 - (1) Not less than 40 percent shall be provided as grants to eligible entities for community-based loneliness prevention programs.
 - (2) Not less than 20 percent shall be allocated to the Elder Connection Corps established under Section 3(e).
 - (3) Not less than 15 percent shall be allocated to research, data collection, and program evaluation.
 - (4) Not less than 10 percent shall be allocated to the national public awareness campaign under Section 6(c).
 - (5) Not more than 15 percent shall be used for federal administrative costs.
- (c) OFFSET. – The Congressional Budget Office shall, within 6 months of enactment, submit a report estimating the projected reduction in Medicare and Medicaid expenditures attributable to this Act for the 10-year period following enactment.
- (d) SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDING. – The Secretary may accept and use gifts, grants, and donations from private entities to supplement appropriated funds, provided that such acceptance does not create a conflict of interest.

ENDNOTES

1. Danmark – Elder Ambassador Program: Danish Health Authority, www.sst.dk/en
2. Sverige – Social Services Act requirements: Government of Sverige, www.government.se/laws-and-regulations
3. Norge – National Plan Against Loneliness: Norwegian Ministry of Health, www.regjeringen.no/en/topics/health-and-care-services
4. Suomi – Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare loneliness data: www.thl.fi/en/web/elderly-services
5. Nederland – Humanitas intergenerational housing: www.humanitas.nl/english
6. Schweiz – Federal Commission for Senior Issues: www.eka-cfv.ch/en
7. New Zealand – Age Concern Befriending Program: www.ageconcern.org.nz/services
8. Österreich – Hilfswerk companion program: www.hilfswerk.at/en
9. Canada – New Horizons for Seniors Program: www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/new-horizons-seniors.html
10. Australia – National Strategy for an Ageing Australia: www.health.gov.au/health-topics/aged-care
11. England – UK Strategy for Tackling Loneliness: www.gov.uk/government/publications/tackling-loneliness-annual-report
12. Deutschland – Federal Ministry for Family Affairs: www.bmfsfj.de/bmfsfj/themen/aeltere-menschen
13. République française – Silver Economy Plan: www.gouvernement.fr/action/la-silver-economie
14. Zhongguo – Law on the Protection of the Rights and Interests of the Elderly: www.npc.gov.cn
15. Nippon – Minister of State for Measures for Loneliness and Isolation: www.cao.go.jp/kodoku_koritsu/e