

# California Department of Aging's Approach to Bridging the Digital Divide

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# CDA Digital Divide: Background

Governor Newsom issued Executive Order N-73-20 on August 14, 2020

- “The California Broadband Council is requested to create a new State Broadband Action Plan”
- “The California Department of Aging, in partnership with CDT and CPUC, is directed to analyze the needs of people ages 60 and older for access to affordable, reliable, high-speed broadband, and to identify program and partnership opportunities to close the digital divide among older Californians.”

## **CDA Digital Divide: Background (1 of 5)**

The Humana Foundation, in partnership with Older Adults Technology Services (OATS), released a report in January 2021 finding that nearly 22 million older Americans still lack wireline broadband access at home, representing 42 percent of the nation's over-65 population.

<https://agingconnected.org/report>

# **CDA Digital Divide: Background (2 of 5)**

## **Other Key Findings from the Humana/OATS Report:**

### **Lack of Internet Access and Income**

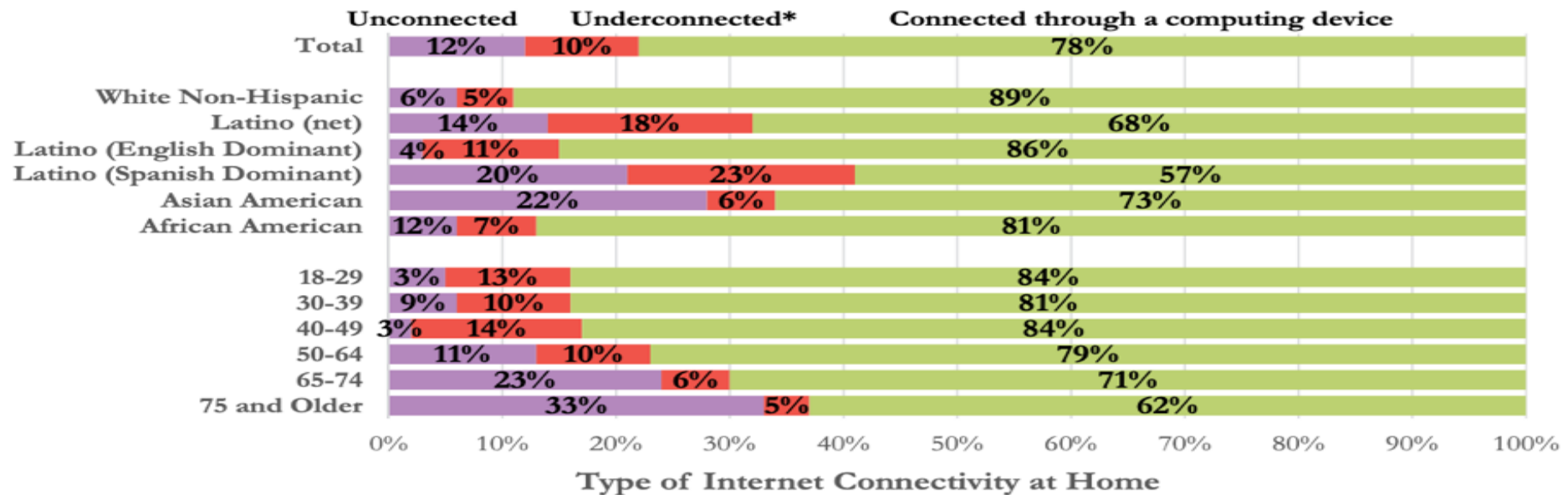
- Medicaid enrollees are 2.7 times more likely to be offline
- Older adults with less than a high school diploma or incomes below \$25K are 10 times more likely to be offline

### **Lack of Internet Access and Equity**

- Those with functional impairments are twice as likely to be offline.
- Black and Latino seniors are 2.5 and 3.3 times, respectively, to be offline.

# CDA Digital Divide: Background (3 of 5)

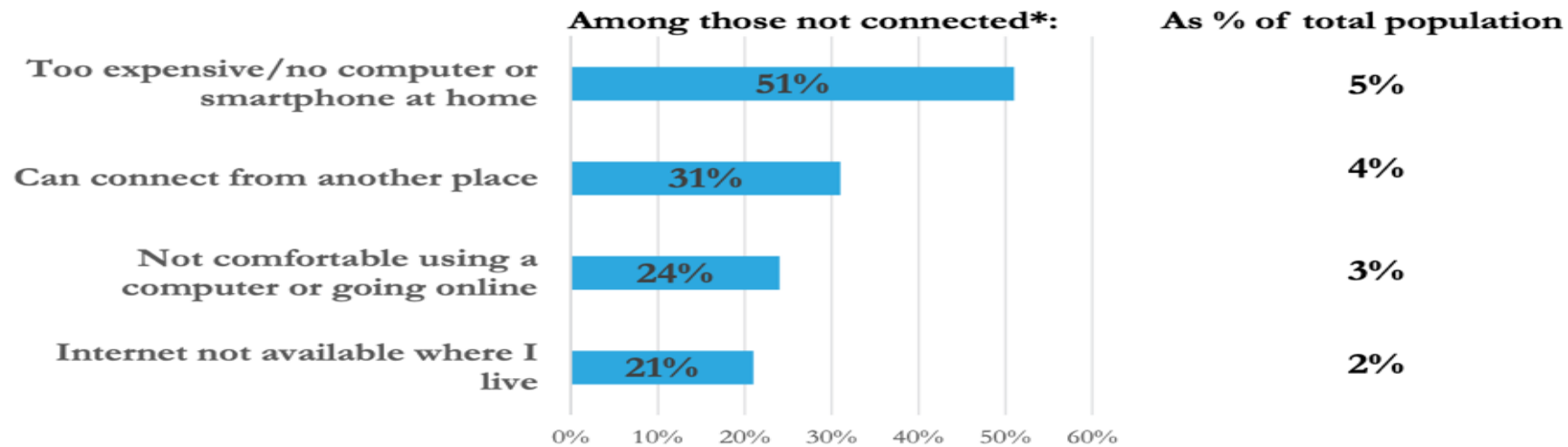
Table 4a  
**Type of Internet Connectivity within California Households across Demographic Subgroups: (1) Age and Race/Ethnicity**



\*Connected through a smartphone only

# CDA Digital Divide: Background (4 of 5)

**Table 6**  
**Self-Reported Reasons for Lack of Internet Connectivity at Home**

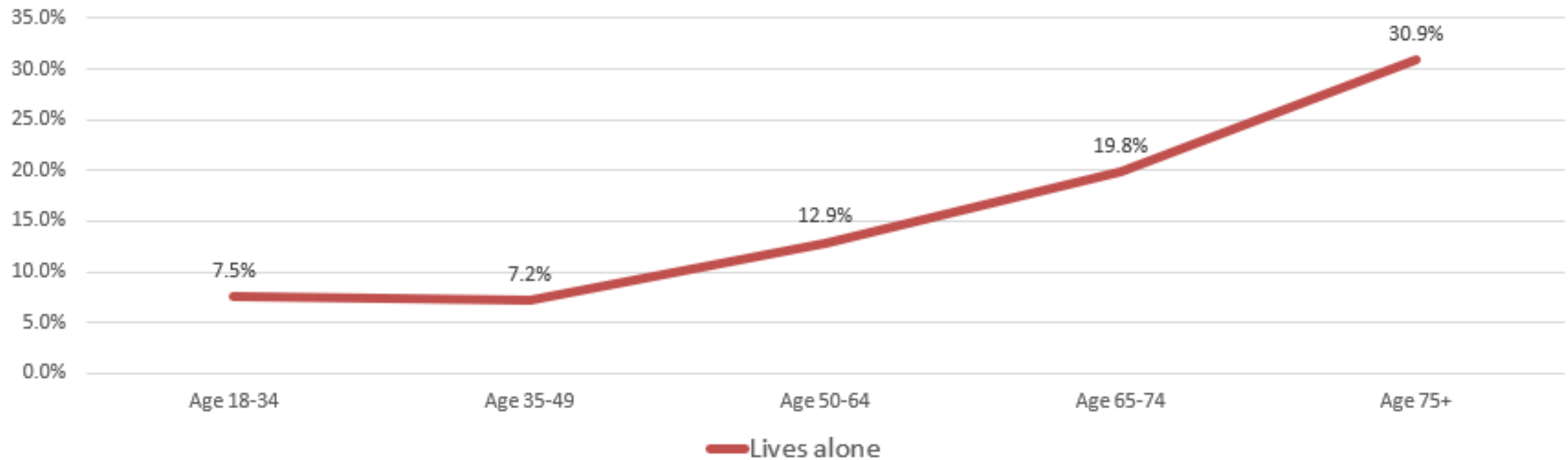


*\*Percentages add to more than 100% due to multiple mentions*

# CDA Digital Divide: Background (5 of 5)

Percent of CA Adults Who Live Alone, by Age Group

Source: California Health Interview Survey, 2018



# CDA Digital Divide Project #1: Google Smart Speakers

- Google donate 8,573 smart speaker devices to CDA
- Devices distributed to local Area Agencies on Aging and Multipurpose Senior Services Sites
- Devices will be distributed to low income older adults
- Devices will help with phone calls, calendaring, reminders, music and more
- Evaluations will measure success of project in reducing feelings of loneliness and isolation and providing assistance with daily tasks



# CDA Digital Divide Project #2: iPad Tablet Pilot

4,000 iPads purchased from AT&T using CARES Act Funding

Includes:

- 2 year data plans
- Dedicated AT&T training and technical support to device recipients

Tablets Distributed to low income older adults who live alone and do not own a device.

CDA partnering with USC Graduate School of Gerontology to measure isolation reduction through readiness assessment, pre and post evaluations

## CDA Digital Divide: Service Delivery Transition (1 of 2)

- March 2020 - CDA services rapidly pivoted from congregate settings to remote options
- April 2020 – CDA worked with our local service providers to provide information and trainings to providers and families to assist older adults and caregivers to get online
- Information and resources are available on CDA's Digital Divide Page: [https://aging.ca.gov/covid19/Digital\\_Divide/](https://aging.ca.gov/covid19/Digital_Divide/)

## CDA Digital Divide: Service Delivery Transition (2 of 2)

- Services transitioned from in-person to virtual delivery for two of the programs CDA oversees: Community Based Adult Services (CBAS) (Adult Day Health Centers) and Multipurpose Senior Services Program (MSSP) (In-Home Health Support).
- The federal government allowed health services for these programs to be delivered via telehealth, with exceptions, during the COVID pandemic.
- The federal government also allowed social and physical activities related to CBAS centers to be delivered virtually via online audio and web conferencing platforms.
- This model has proven to be effective and CDA and DHCS are requesting that the federal government allow for a hybrid service delivery model post the COVID pandemic.

## Other Projects/Partnerships to Bridge the Digital Divide

- Partnering with a foundation on a digital education/literacy project
- Continuing to seek additional philanthropic opportunities for device donations
- Exploring low-cost data plans and plan subsidies for low-income older adults
- Exploring other technology and partnerships such as electronic pets, fall detection devices, and partnerships with local access tv stations to produce more age-friendly content.



**Thank you!**

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