News Release

For immediate release
19 August 2026

Manulife Asia Care Survey 2026: Malaysians Define Independence as Their New Legacy

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia— As Malaysians prepare for longer lives, many are placing greater importance on maintaining their independence as they age, according to the latest findings from the **Manulife Asia Care Survey 2026: Independence as the New Legacy**. The study found that Malaysians increasingly view self-reliance, good health, financial security, and avoiding becoming a burden on loved ones as the legacy they can leave their families.

The survey, which gathered insights from more than 9,000 respondents across Asia, including 1,000 in Malaysia, explores attitudes toward longevity, health, caregiving, retirement preparedness, and financial well-being.

Independence as the New Legacy

The findings reflect a shift in how Malaysians are defining what it means to live well in later life. Rather than focusing solely on longevity, many are placing greater importance on maintaining the freedom, confidence, and resources needed to live life on their own terms for as long as possible.

Nearly nine in ten respondents identified preserving independence and self-reliance as their primary longevity goal. For many, independence extends beyond financial means. It is about retaining the ability to make personal decisions, having access to quality care when needed, and avoiding dependence on others.

This evolving mindset is also reshaping traditional views of legacy. Four in five respondents believe that maintaining their own independence and financial security is one of the most meaningful legacies they can leave their families, a sentiment that is particularly strong among younger adults aged 25 to 34. Reflecting this priority, respondents indicated they would allocate more than two-thirds (68%) of their assets to supporting their own long-term health and financial well-being, compared with 32% earmarked as a financial inheritance for their children.

Among those who view independence as a legacy, health and quality of life are seen as key priorities. Seven in ten respondents are actively focused on maintaining their well-being, while more than half (56%) express concern about the potential financial impact of unexpected expenses in later life. Together, these findings highlight a growing recognition that health, wealth, and independence are deeply interconnected, and that preparing for a longer life requires planning across all three.

“These insights reinforce an important reality. As Malaysians live longer, planning for later life is not just about what they leave behind for their families. It is also about living healthier and staying financially secure, so that they can maintain their independence for longer,” said **Vibha Coburn, Chief Executive Officer, Manulife Malaysia**.

Vibha added, “At Manulife, we are focused on helping customers prepare for longer lives with greater confidence. Through our ONE Manulife approach, we are combining the strengths of Manulife Insurance and Manulife Investment Management to deliver more holistic solutions across protection, health, wealth, retirement, and legacy planning, helping customers protect their health, grow their wealth, and build a better future for themselves and their families.”

Health: The Foundation of Independence

For many Malaysians, staying independent for longer starts with taking care of their health today. The survey found that 85% of respondents believe preventive healthcare and positive self-care habits can help preserve their autonomy as they age, reflecting a growing view that good health is one of life's most valuable assets.

Respondents identified staying physically active (44%), eating well (42%), engaging in hobbies (41%), and spending time with loved ones and pets (37%) as the self-care habits they most commonly practice to support their well-being.

Yet, opportunities remain for Malaysians to strengthen their readiness for later life. While many understand the importance of healthy ageing, only 27% have taken up preventive screenings to reduce the risk of chronic illness, and just 26% actively invest in building social connections. Encouraging Malaysians to take preventive health steps earlier, strengthen social connections, and plan for future care needs could help more Malaysians enjoy greater independence in the years ahead.

Sandwich Generation Pressures Challenge Independence

As family caregiving and financial responsibilities increase, many individuals are finding it more difficult to focus on their own long-term security and well-being. Two-thirds of respondents care for family members and provide financial support, spending an average of 41% of their monthly income on family needs, while many report challenges in planning for the future, managing finances and maintaining their well-being.

These pressures are particularly evident among the sandwich generation, who support both ageing parents and dependent children. As a result, 68% say family financial commitments limit their ability to build long-term self-reliance, while 60% have delayed seeking medical care due to family commitments. With Malaysians expecting to require around 17 years of care later in life, compared with the regional average of 14 years, the findings highlight the importance of accessible planning solutions that help individuals balance family responsibilities while preparing for a longer future.

“Many Malaysians are working hard to support the people who matter most to them, often at the expense of their own future preparedness,” **said Jason Chong, Chief Executive Officer of Manulife Investment Management**. “No one should have to choose between caring for their loved ones and investing in their own well-being. By making planning simpler, more accessible, and better aligned to real-life needs, we can help individuals navigate these responsibilities while building greater confidence and security for the years ahead,” Jason added.

Planning for the Cost of Independence

Financial preparedness remains a key concern, with 70% of Malaysians worried about their ability to fund future care needs, above the Asia regional average of 66%. Respondents estimate they will need RM4,760 per month to cover future care costs, with younger adults aged 18 to 24 anticipating the highest expected monthly amount, at RM5,595 per month. Despite these concerns, most respondents plan to fund their later years through personal savings (83%), investments (52%), and insurance (40%), while only 23% expect to rely on financial support from their children, underscoring a strong preference for self-reliance.

To support longer, more independent lives, Malaysians are adapting their financial strategies. Among those already saving and investing, 57% plan to shift toward income-generating investments, primarily to secure steady income, support a longer retirement, and maintain financial independence. Others plan to diversify their portfolios (33%), seek professional financial advice (24%), or adopt more conservative investment approaches focused on preserving capital (19%).

The report and white paper can be downloaded here: www.manulife.com.my/ACS2026 . The insights from this year’s survey align with the work of the **Manulife Longevity Institute**, which brings together research, thought leadership, innovation, advocacy, and community investment to help people live longer, healthier, and more financially secure lives.

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About Manulife Malaysia

Manulife Holdings Berhad is part of Canada-based Manulife Financial Corporation. Through its subsidiary companies, Manulife Malaysia offers an innovative range of financial protection, health, and wealth management products and services to meet different customer needs. Manulife Malaysia currently serves the needs of over 300,000 policyholders and wealth management customers. Manulife Holdings Berhad has been listed on the Main Board of Bursa Malaysia since 1984. As of 31 December 2025, its assets under management were over RM16.5 billion. To learn more about Manulife Malaysia, visit www.manulife.com.my.

About Manulife Longevity Institute

The Manulife Longevity Institute is a global research, thought leadership, innovation, advocacy, and community investment platform to drive action that can help people live longer, healthier, and more financially secure lives. Underpinned by a $350 million signature commitment, its focus is on helping people extend their healthy years, promoting greater financial resilience for all. As a global insurer, retirement plan provider, and asset manager, Manulife is uniquely placed to help lead this change. The Institute's work will support Manulife's Impact Agenda strategy by investing in organizations that are growing the longevity economy, convening research collaborations with leading academic institutions and think tanks, and producing thought leadership to advance awareness and action on the issues impacting populations as they age. The Institute will be known as the John Hancock Longevity Institute in the United States. The actions of the Institute will be guided by a Steering Committee of members of Manulife's Executive and Global Leadership Teams and in partnership with a robust ecosystem of partners and experts who champion longevity across Canada, Asia, and the US.

For more information, please visit manulife.com/longevity.

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