



News Release

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EMBARGOED FOR RELEASE UNTIL:
TUESDAY, MAY 7, 2002, 5:00 p.m. EDT

NEW NATIONAL SURVEY FINDS SIGNIFICANT MINORITY OF WOMEN REPORT DELAYING OR GOING WITHOUT CARE DUE TO COSTS

Women More Likely Than Men to Report Problems with Health Care

WASHINGTON, DC – A new national survey by the Kaiser Family Foundation finds most women report generally positive experiences with the health care system, but a sizable share faced problems. One in four (24%) nonelderly women reported delaying or going without care in the past year due to costs, compared to 16% of men. One in five (21%) nonelderly women did not fill a prescription because they could not afford it. This compares with 13% of men. Women are also more likely than men to express concerns about the quality of health care they received.

Women's Health in the United States: Health Coverage and Access to Care presents the findings from a nationally representative survey of nearly 4,000 women ages 18 to 64. A smaller survey of 700 men was conducted for comparison purposes. The survey provides an in-depth look at nonelderly women's experiences with the health care system. It will be presented tomorrow at a Capitol Hill briefing with consumer, provider and industry representatives.

One-third (32%) of women ages 18 to 64 had a health condition that required ongoing treatment, such as arthritis, asthma or depression, compared to 24% of men. Even though a majority of women (87%) reported having a visit with a health care provider in the past year, their connection to the health care system is complicated by their lower incomes, their lifelong reproductive health concerns, and their primary responsibility for managing their families' health needs.

"This survey shows that health care costs and prescription drugs are women's issues. It illustrates why women are more likely to vote based on a candidate's position on health care issues; they have a greater stake in the outcome," said Drew Altman, Ph.D., president of the Kaiser Family Foundation.

Additional key findings from the Kaiser survey include:

- **Many women worry about the quality of care they are getting from their doctors.** Although most women report satisfaction with the quality of care they receive from their physicians or health care providers, more than one in five (22%) expressed concerns, compared to 17% of men. This issue was a particular problem for 40% of women in fair or poor health. Reflecting this concern, almost one in five women (18%) changed providers in the past five years due to dissatisfaction with care, twice the rate of men (9%).

(more)

- **Cost of care was an especially significant problem for key groups of women.** Fifty-nine percent of uninsured women, 42% of women in fair or poor health, and 31% of Latinas delayed or went without care they thought they needed because they could not afford it. Of the 35% of women who were low-income, 39% delayed or went without care.
- **Affordability of prescription drugs is a primary concern for a sizable share of nonelderly women.** Half of nonelderly women used prescription drugs on a regular basis, compared to 31% of men. Paying for prescription drugs was particularly challenging for many women. Forty percent of uninsured women, 27% of women with Medicaid, and even 15% of privately insured women said that in the past year they had not filled a prescription because of cost.

“Women’s health is about more than Pap smears and mammograms,” said Alina Salganicoff, Ph.D., vice president of the Kaiser Family Foundation and the lead author of the survey report. “These findings document the complex and broad nature of women’s health and emphasize the importance of addressing health costs, access, and quality in improving women’s health and well-being.”

A webcast of the briefing will be available by 3 p.m. EDT tomorrow and will be found on <http://www.kaisernetwork.org>. Copies of the survey report, *Women’s Health in the United States: Health Coverage and Access to Care* (publication #6027) will be available online at <http://www.kff.org/women>.

Survey Methods

The *Kaiser Women's Health Survey* reports findings from a national telephone survey of 3,966 women ages 18 to 64 in the United States. A disproportionate stratified random sample was used to over-sample African American women, Latinas, those in low-income households (defined as having incomes below 200% of the federal poverty level), and those who were medically uninsured or Medicaid beneficiaries, so that sample sizes would be adequate to allow for subanalysis of these populations. The sample was then weighted using Census data to provide nationally representative statistics. Interviews were conducted in either English or Spanish. A shorter survey of 700 men was conducted for the purposes of gender comparison. Foundation staff designed the survey in collaboration with Princeton Survey Research Associates (PSRA) and analyzed it with researchers from UCLA. Fieldwork was conducted by PSRA between March 28 and July 29, 2001. The margin of sampling error is +/-2 percentage points for the total women sample, +/-4 percentage points for the men, and is larger for subgroups. Note that in addition to sampling error, there are other possible sources of measurement error, though every effort was undertaken to minimize these other sources. A copy of the survey instrument is available upon request.

The Kaiser Family Foundation is an independent, national health philanthropy dedicated to providing information and analysis on health issues to policymakers, the media, and the general public. The Foundation is not associated with Kaiser Permanente or Kaiser Industries.

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