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**The Kaiser Family Foundation**

# **National Survey of Physicians**

**May 2002**

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## Methodology

The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation *National Survey of Physicians*, conducted by mail from March 26 through October 11, 2001, is based on a nationally representative random sample of 2,608 physicians whose major professional activity is direct patient care. The sample frame was developed from two sources, the American Medical Association's Physician Masterfile and a related file developed by the Association of American Medical Colleges that included additional information on the race and ethnicity of physicians. These two files are linked by a common identifier and were merged for the purposes of selecting this sample. African American, Latino, and Asian physicians were oversampled to increase the number of responses from these physicians. Results were then weighted by race and other factors to reflect the actual distribution of physicians in the nation. Foundation staff designed and analyzed the survey, and fieldwork was conducted by the Research Triangle Institute. The margin of sampling error is +/-3 percent, for results based on subsets of respondents the margin of error is higher. Note that in addition to sampling error there are other possible sources of measurement error, though every effort was undertaken to minimize these other known sources.

Note: Values less than 0.5 percent are indicated by an asterisk (\*). (VOL) means response was volunteered by respondent, not an explicitly offered choice.

*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.*

1. In the last 5 years, has each of the following gone up, gone down, or stayed about the same?

	<u>Gone Up in last 5 years</u>	<u>Gone Down in last 5 years</u>	<u>Stayed the Same in last 5 years</u>	<u>No answer</u>
a. Overall morale of physicians	1	87	11	1
b. Your enthusiasm for practicing medicine	9	58	30	3

2. Would you recommend the practice of medicine as a profession to a young person today?

Yes	53
No	45
No answer	2

**(Includes only of physicians who responded “no” to question 2)**

2a. What is the main reason you would not recommend the practice of medicine? (multiple answers accepted)

Paperwork/red tape/administrative hassles	57
Loss of autonomy	46
Excessive professional demands	31
There is less respect for the medical profession	31
Inadequate financial rewards	31
Difficult to start/operate a practice	22
Educational process is too long/difficult/expensive	16
Not personally satisfying	15
Liability/too many lawsuits (VOL)	1
Other reason	8

3. How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with each of the following aspects of your practice?

	<u>Very satisfied</u>	<u>Somewhat Satisfied</u>	<u>Somewhat Dissatisfied</u>	<u>Very Dissatisfied</u>	<u>No answer</u>
a. The continuity of your relationship with your patients	42	42	10	3	4
b. Your current income	16	41	29	12	2
c. Potential income over the next 5 years	11	34	36	17	2
d. Professional challenges	30	49	15	3	3
e. The time it allows you to devote to nonprofessional interests, family, and friends	12	31	34	22	2
f. Having enough professional autonomy in the clinical decisions you make for patients	13	31	34	20	2
g. Work hours spent on administrative activities compared with patient care	6	18	42	32	3

4. How important do you think each of the following health care issues should be for Congress to address this year.

	<u>Very Important</u>	<u>Somewhat Important</u>	<u>Not too Important</u>	<u>Not at All Important</u>	<u>No answer</u>
a. Protecting patients' rights in health plans	55	33	6	1	4
b. Helping people aged 65 and over to pay for medications	49	37	9	2	3
c. Making Medicare financially sound for future generations	59	32	4	1	4

*Question 4 continued...*

4. How important do you think each of the following health care issues should be for Congress to address this year.

	<u>Very Important</u>	<u>Somewhat Important</u>	<u>Not too Important</u>	<u>Not at All Important</u>	<u>No answer</u>
d. Increasing the number of Americans with health insurance	57	30	7	1	5
e. Regulating the costs of medications	33	40	17	7	3
f. Help families with the cost of caring for elderly, disabled family members	33	49	13	2	3
g. Encouraging medical savings accounts (tax-payments for out-of-pocket medical costs in conjunction with catastrophic medical insurance)	33	38	19	5	5

Also, please check the one that is the most important issue.

	<u>Most Important</u>
Increasing the number of Americans with health insurance	16
Making Medicare financially sound for future generations	12
Protecting patients' rights in health plans	11
Helping people aged 65 and over to pay for medications	6
Encouraging medical savings accounts (tax-payments for out-of-pocket medical costs in conjunction with catastrophic medical insurance)	8
Regulating the costs of medications	4
Help families with the cost of caring for elderly, disabled family members	2
Multiple responses	2
No answer	39

5. Overall, do you think managed care has had a mostly positive, somewhat positive, neutral, somewhat negative, or mostly negative impact on...

	<u>Mostly Positive</u>	<u>Somewhat Positive</u>	<u>Neutral</u>	<u>Somewhat Negative</u>	<u>Mostly Negative</u>	<u>No answer</u>
a. the way you practice medicine?	2	6	16	35	41	1
b. the medical care services available to your patients?	2	5	18	39	36	1

6. During the last 5 years, do you think HMOs and other managed care plans have increased, decreased, or had no effect on...

	<u>Increased</u>	<u>Decreased</u>	<u>No effect</u>	<u>No answer</u>
a. the quality of health care for people who are sick?	7	73	18	1
b. the amount of time doctors spend with their patients?	3	88	8	1
c. the likelihood that patients will get preventive services such as immunizations, health screenings, and physical exams?	42	26	31	2
d. the use of practice guidelines and disease management protocols in patient care?	63	11	24	2
e. overall health care costs?	41	23	34	3
f. on the amount of administrative paperwork for providers and patients?	95	2	2	1
g. the amount of inappropriate health care services that are provided to patients?	26	29	44	2
h. the ability of patients to see medical specialists?	4	83	13	1
i. the ability of patients to get the specific prescription drugs they need?	6	78	14	2
j. overhead costs for physicians' practices?	83	5	11	2

7. In general, when a patient does not have insurance that covers drugs, do you tend to prescribe the same drugs or less expensive drugs as you would for a patient who has drug coverage?

Same Drugs	33
Less expensive drugs	64
No answer	3

8. How useful is information you learn from drug industry representatives about diseases or treatments?

Very useful	15
Somewhat useful	59
Not very useful	20
Not at all useful	5
No answer	2

9. In general, how accurate is the information that drug industry representatives provide about diseases and treatment options?

Very accurate	9
Somewhat accurate	72
Not very accurate	13
Not at all accurate	1
No answer	4

10. Do drug company representatives receive information about how often you prescribe certain drugs?

Yes	60
No	34
No answer	6

11. Suppose that drug company representatives do receive this information, which of the following statements comes closest to your opinion of this practice?

It is unacceptable for them to collect and use this information	31
It bothers me, but I understand why they do it	43
I have no problem with them collecting and using this information	22
No answer	4

12. Have you ever accepted any of the following from a drug industry representative?

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>No answer</u>
a. Free drug samples	92	6	2
b. Meals, tickets to entertainment or sports events, or free travel	61	37	2
c. Financial incentives to participate in drug trials	12	86	2
d. Financial or other in-kind benefits	13	85	2

13. Have you ever talked with a low-income patient about obtaining prescription drugs through...

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>No answer</u>
a. a drug subsidy program sponsored by a pharmaceutical company?	61	36	3
b. a state-sponsored drug subsidy program?	40	57	3

14. How often do your patients talk with you about specific diseases or treatments that they heard about from...

	<u>Very Often</u>	<u>Somewhat Often</u>	<u>Rarely</u>	<u>Never</u>	<u>No answer</u>
a. the general news media?	27	53	17	1	3
b. advertisements for prescription drugs?	17	46	31	4	3
c. friends or family members?	27	53	16	1	3
d. entertainment shows like the medical show "ER"?	4	16	51	26	3
e. the Internet?	19	41	31	6	3



15. Generally speaking, how often do you think our health care system treats people unfairly based on...

	<u>Very Often</u>	<u>Somewhat Often</u>	<u>Rarely</u>	<u>Never</u>	<u>No answer</u>
a. whether or not they have health insurance?	31	41	24	3	2
b. whether they are male or female?	2	13	57	27	1
c. how well they speak English?	9	34	44	11	1
d. whether or not they are physically disabled?)	3	20	57	19	1
e. how well educated they are?	8	31	48	12	2
f. how much money they have	14	33	42	10	2
g. their sexual orientation-that is, if they are gay or lesbian?	4	19	59	16	2
h. what their race or ethnic background is?	6	23	55	14	1

**(Includes only of those who said “very often” or “somewhat often” to question 15h)**

16. Would you say the following statement is a major reason, a minor reason, or not a reason for why the health care system treats people unfairly based on their race or ethnic background?

	<u>Major Reason</u>	<u>Minor Reason</u>	<u>Not a Reason</u>	<u>No answer</u>
a. Many doctors are not skilled in communicating with people from different racial/ethnic backgrounds	52	38	6	4
b. Most doctors assume that African Americans, Latinos and other minority groups do not have enough insurance or money to pay for the care they get	31	42	23	3
c. Most doctors do not think African Americans, Latinos and other minority groups do enough to take care of their own health	25	42	28	4

Question 16 continued...

16. Would you say the following statement is a major reason, a minor reason, or not a reason for why the health care system treats people unfairly based on their race or ethnic background?

	<u>Major Reason</u>	<u>Minor Reason</u>	<u>Not a Reason</u>	<u>No answer</u>
d. Many African Americans, Latinos and other minority groups live in areas where there are fewer doctors or other health providers	58	29	9	4
e. African Americans, Latinos and other minority groups prefer different health care treatments than whites	7	37	52	4
f. Medical researchers do not pay enough attention to how health conditions affect racial or ethnic minority groups	31	42	23	3

17. Please tell me whether you think each of the following statements is true or false.

	<u>True</u>	<u>False</u>	<u>No answer</u>
a. African Americans with heart disease are just as likely as whites who have heart disease to get specialized medical procedures and surgery	30	65	5
b. Whites with HIV or AIDS are more likely than African Americans with HIV or AIDS to get the newest medicines and treatments	57	35	8

18. About what percentage of your patients are: **(open-ended)**

	<u>10% or less</u>	<u>11%-25%</u>	<u>26%-50%</u>	<u>More than 50%</u>	<u>No answer</u>
a. African American	53	21	16	5	6
b. Hispanic/Latino	61	19	10	4	7
c. Native American	72	1	1	*	26
d. Asian American	77	7	2	1	13
e. White	4	5	23	63	4
f. Other	37	1	*	*	61

19. How comfortable would you be treating a patient who was openly gay or lesbian?

Very comfortable	73
Somewhat comfortable	19
Somewhat uncomfortable	5
Very uncomfortable	1
No answer	2

20. About how many patients did you care for in each of the following settings in most recent typical week of practice? **(open-ended)**

	<u>0 patients</u>	<u>1-10 patients</u>	<u>11-20 patients</u>	<u>More than 20 patients</u>	<u>No answer</u>
a. Hospital	17	38	13	21	12

	<u>0 patients</u>	<u>1-10 patients</u>	<u>11-20 patients</u>	<u>More than 20 patients</u>	<u>No answer</u>
b. Office or clinic	32	12	22	22	12

	<u>0 patients</u>	<u>1-10 patients</u>	<u>More than 10 patients</u>	<u>No answer</u>
c. Outpatient or day treatment facility	42	14	9	34

	<u>0 patients</u>	<u>1 or more patients</u>	<u>No answer</u>
d. Home	57	8	35

	<u>0 patients</u>	<u>1 or more patients</u>	<u>No answer</u>
e. Long term care facility	50	17	33

21. During a typical week of practice, how much time do you spend on average, with each of your patients in your office or clinic? **(open-ended)**

Mean: 19 minutes

22. Is your primary medical practice or employment setting primarily associated with a single HMO or other type of managed care health plan where more than 75% of patients are covered by one plan?

Yes	12
No	86
No answer	3

23. To the best of your knowledge, about how many contracts do you, or does your practice, have with managed care plans? Please include both discount and capitation-based contracts. **(open-ended)**

	<u>0</u>	<u>1-10</u>	<u>11-50</u>	<u>More than 50</u>	<u>No answer</u>
Managed care contracts	10	48	28	2	11

24. Do you charge your uninsured patients more, less, or about the same for care compared to what you are paid by insurers for the same service?

More	9
Less	24
Same amount	57
Do not have any uninsured patients	5
No answer	4

25. Do you provide any care where you do not charge anything and then write it off as an expense (i.e. charity care)?

Yes	46
No	49
No answer	5

**(Includes only those respondents who answered “yes” to question 25)**

25a. Do you provide more, less, or about the same amount of charity care as you did 5 years ago?

More	29
Less	18
About the same	52
No answer	2

26. What percent of your patients are primarily in each of the following insurance categories? **(open-ended)**

	<u>0-15%</u>	<u>16-30%</u>	<u>31-50%</u>	<u>More than 50%</u>	<u>No answer</u>
a. Medicare beneficiaries	26	24	23	18	9
	<u>0-5%</u>	<u>6-10%</u>	<u>11-20%</u>	<u>More than 20%</u>	<u>No answer</u>
b. Medicaid beneficiaries (including Medicaid patients who are in HMOs or managed care plans you contract with and children covered by other public programs such as the Children's Health Insurance Program)	35	17	16	22	10
	<u>0-20%</u>	<u>21-40%</u>	<u>41-60%</u>	<u>More than 60%</u>	<u>No answer</u>
c. Private insurance	24	26	21	20	9
	<u>0%</u>	<u>1-5%</u>	<u>6-10%</u>	<u>More than 11%</u>	<u>No answer</u>
d. Have no insurance	5	42	22	16	15
	<u>0%</u>	<u>1-5%</u>	<u>More than 5%</u>	<u>No answer</u>	
e. CHAMPUS or other government programs	22	31	10	36	

**(Includes only those respondents who said they had Medicaid patients in question 26b)**

26ba How does this compare to 5 years ago?

Bigger part of practice now than 5 years ago	21
Smaller part of practice now than 5 years ago	10
Same now as 5 years ago	32
No answer	37

**(Includes only those respondents who said they had Medicaid patients in question 26b)**

27. Thinking only about your Medicaid patients, would you say that the majority of them, some of them, or none of them are cared for under each of the following payment arrangements?

	<u>Majority</u>	<u>Some</u>	<u>None</u>	<u>No answer</u>
a. Fee-for-service	31	30	27	12
b. Primary Care Management	10	40	34	16
c. Managed Care (e.g. HMOs)	29	40	21	11

**(Includes only those respondents who said they had Medicaid patients in question 26b)**

28. Approximately what percentage of your practice revenue from patient care would you say comes from Medicaid? **(open-ended)**

	<u>0-5%</u>	<u>6-10%</u>	<u>11-25%</u>	<u>More than 25%</u>	<u>No answer</u>
Practice revenue from patient care that comes from Medicaid	39	22	17	17	6

**(Includes only those respondents who said they had Medicaid patients in question 26b)**

29. Would you say on average your per-service payment for Medicaid is a lot less, a little less, about the same, a little more, or a lot more than per-service payments from...

	<u>A lot less</u>	<u>A little less</u>	<u>About the same</u>	<u>A little more</u>	<u>A lot more</u>	<u>No answer</u>
a. Medicare?	43	27	13	4	1	12
b. from private insurers (including HMOs and PPOs)?	62	19	9	2	1	7

**(Includes only those respondents who said they had Medicaid patients in question 26b)**

30. How many Medicaid managed care contracts do you have?

	<u>0</u>	<u>1-5</u>	<u>6-10</u>	<u>More than 10</u>	<u>No answer</u>
Number of Medicaid managed care contracts	30	46	4	2	18

**(Includes only those respondents who said they had Medicaid patients in question 26b)**

30a. How does this compare to 5 years ago?

More contracts now than 5 years ago	24
Less contracts now than 5 years ago	11
Same number of contracts now as 5 years ago	44
No answer	21

**(Includes only those respondents who said they had Medicaid patients in question 26b)**

31. Compared to each of the following, does Medicaid require a lot less, a little less, about the same, a little more, or a lot more administrative time and resources in order to contract with or receive payments?

	<u>Medicaid requires a lot less</u>	<u>Medicaid requires a little less</u>	<u>About the same</u>	<u>Medicaid requires a little more</u>	<u>Medicaid requires a lot more</u>	<u>No answer</u>
a. Medicare	2	7	40	21	16	14
b. private insurers (including HMOs and PPOs)	4	10	35	23	19	10

32. Are you currently limiting the number of new patients you accept...

	<u>Yes, limiting</u>	<u>No, not limiting</u>	<u>No Current Managed Care Patients</u>
a. through Managed Care plans (eg, HMOs)	17	69	14
b. through Medicare	10	77	13
c. through Medicaid	22	62	16



**Q33 BASED ON THOSE LIMITING THE NUMBER OF NEW MEDICAID PATIENTS**

**(Includes only those respondents who said they were limiting the number of new Medicaid patients they accept in question 32c)**

33. Would you say each of the following is a major reason, a minor reason, or is not a reason for limiting the number of new patients you accept who are insured through Medicaid?

	<u>Major Reason</u>	<u>Minor Reason</u>	<u>Not a Reason</u>	<u>No answer</u>
a. Low payment rates	63	15	8	14
b. Payment delays	44	29	19	9
c. Administrative problems	47	29	15	10
d. No Medicaid patients presenting themselves or being referred to me	6	13	71	10
e. Difficulties in providing treatment to Medicaid patients	19	35	36	9
f. Missed appointments (or other noncompliance) by Medicaid patients	28	39	25	8
g. Difficulties making referrals to specialists for Medicaid patients	33	32	26	9
h. Other reason	3	2	3	92
(VOL) limiting all new patients/practice full	6	0	N/A	N/A
(VOL) high potential for lawsuits	1	0	N/A	N/A
(VOL) group/hospital does not accept Medicaid patients	1	0	N/A	N/A
(VOL) difficult patients	1	0	N/A	N/A

**(Includes only those respondents who said they were limiting the number of new Medicaid patients they accept in question 32c)**

Also, please check the one that is the most important reason.

	<u>Most Important Reason</u>
a. Low payment rates	34
b. Payment delays	2
c. Administrative problems	6
d. No Medicaid patients presenting themselves or being referred to me	2
e. Difficulties in providing treatment to Medicaid patients	3
f. Missed appointments (or other noncompliance) by Medicaid patients	6
g. Difficulties making referrals to specialists for Medicaid patients	3
h. Other reason	3
(VOL) limiting all new patients/practice full	7
(VOL) high potential for lawsuits	1
(VOL) group/hospital does not accept Medicaid patients	1
(VOL) difficult patients	1
Multiple Responses	3
No answer	29

**Q33 BASED ON THOSE WITH NO MEDICAID PATIENTS**

**(Includes only those respondents who said they had no Medicaid patients in question 26b)**

33. Would you say each of the following is a major reason, a minor reason, or is not a reason for limiting the number of new patients you accept who are insured through Medicaid?

	<u>Major Reason</u>	<u>Minor Reason</u>	<u>Not a Reason</u>	<u>No answer</u>
a. Low payment rates	54	11	14	21
b. Payment delays	40	19	21	20
c. Administrative problems	45	17	17	21

*Question 33 continued...*

33. Would you say each of the following is a major reason, a minor reason, or is not a reason for limiting the number of new patients you accept who are insured through Medicaid?

	<u>Major Reason</u>	<u>Minor Reason</u>	<u>Not a Reason</u>	<u>No answer</u>
d. No Medicaid patients presenting themselves or being referred to me	21	16	38	24
e. Difficulties in providing treatment to Medicaid patients	18	28	36	18
f. Missed appointments (or other noncompliance) by Medicaid patients	16	25	40	20
g. Difficulties making referrals to specialists for Medicaid patients	23	25	35	18
h. Other reason	5	1	3	90
(VOL) not applicable to my practice	1	0	N/A	N/A
(VOL) group/hospital does not accept Medicaid patients	1	0	N/A	N/A

**(Includes only those respondents who said they had no Medicaid patients in question 26b)**

Also, please check the one that is the most important reason.

	<u>Most Important Reason</u>
a. Low payment rates	28
b. Payment delays	2
c. Administrative problems	12
d. No Medicaid patients presenting themselves or being referred to me	13
e. Difficulties in providing treatment to Medicaid patients	1
f. Missed appointments (or other noncompliance) by Medicaid patients	4
g. Difficulties making referrals to specialists for Medicaid patients	0
h. Other reason	5
(VOL) not applicable to my practice	1
(VOL) group/hospital does not accept Medicaid patients	1
Multiple Responses	3
No answer	30

34. Below is a list of things some people do in their communities. In the last 12 months, have you...

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>No answer</u>
a. attended a public meeting about school or town affairs?	45	53	3
b. you served as an officer of a group or civic organization (not including medical organizations)?	22	75	3
c. attended a meeting of a group or civic organization (not including medical organizations)?	49	47	3
d. worked informally on projects in the community?	45	52	3
e. served on a town or school board?	5	92	3
f. donated money to a public interest or issue group?	74	24	3
g. donated money to a political campaign?	38	59	3

35. Do you practice medicine in an urban, suburban, small town, or rural setting?

Urban	41
Suburban	29
Small town	20
Rural	6
No answer	4

36. What was your 2000 net income before taxes?

Less than \$50,000	4
\$50,000-\$99,999	15
\$100,000-\$199,999	43
\$200,000-\$299,999	19
\$300,000-\$399,999	6
\$400,000-\$499,999	3
\$500,000-\$599,999	3
No answer	7

37. Are you of Hispanic or Latino background, such as Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, or other Latin American background?

Yes	6
No	92
No answer	2

38. Do you consider yourself to be White, Black or African American, Asian American, or some other race?

White	79
Black or African-American	3
Asian American	11
Some other race	4
No answer	3

**SUMMARY TABLE**

37/38. Are you of Hispanic or Latino background, such as Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, or other Latin American background?/Do you consider yourself to be White, Black or African American, Asian American, or some other race?

White, non-Hispanic	74
Asian, non-Hispanic	11
Latino	6
Black, non-Hispanic	3
Some other race	4
No answer	3

Specialty Categories

Primary care Physicians (general and family practitioners, general internists, and pediatricians)	40
Specialists (medical specialists and surgeons)	37

Other (such as Psychiatry – 6%;  
Emergency Medicine – 4%; Radiology –  
4%; Pathology – 2%; Neurology – 2%;  
Physical Medicine/Rehabilitation – 1%)

23

Gender

Male	79
Female	21

Age

40 or less	22
41 to 50	34
51 to 59	22
60 or more	22

Region

Northeast	23
Midwest	22
South	33
West	21
Other	1



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