
Toplines



Kaiser Family Foundation *National Survey of Physicians*

Findings on Medicare Part D

September 2006

Methodology

The Kaiser Family Foundation *National Survey of Physicians*, conducted April 25 through July 8, 2006, is based on a nationally representative random sample of 834 office-based physicians involved in direct patient care with adults. Once the sample was drawn, selected physicians were given the option of completing the questionnaire by telephone or online (373 physicians were interviewed by telephone and 461 completed the survey online). The sample frame was developed using the American Medical Association's Physician Masterfile. This list contains over 800,000 physicians and is considered the most thorough source available for physician lists and statistics. Excluded from the sample frame were: 1) hospital-based physicians; 2) pediatrics and related specialties; and 3) specialties not involved in direct patient care (mostly anesthesiology, radiology, pathology and related specialties).

Kaiser Family Foundation staff designed and analyzed the survey. Data were collected by Princeton Survey Research Associates International. The margin of sampling error for the full sample is plus or minus 3 percentage points. Some results are reported based on a subset of 657 physicians who say at least a few of their patients have enrolled in Medicare drug plans; the margin of sampling error for this group is plus or minus 4 percentage points. For results based on other subsets of respondents the margin of sampling error may be higher. Note that sampling error is only one of many potential sources of error in this or any other public opinion poll.

Note: Percentages may not always add up to 100% due to rounding. Values less than 0.5 percent are indicated by an asterisk (*). "VOL." indicates that a response was volunteered by the respondent, and not offered as an explicit choice.

1. I'm going to start with a few questions about the medical profession... In the last five years, please tell me if you think each of the following has gone up, gone down, or stayed about the same. (First,)... (READ AND ROTATE)?

READ FOR FIRST ITEM AND THEN AS NECESSARY: Has this gone up, gone down, or stayed about the same (in the last five years)?

| | <u>Gone up</u> | <u>Gone down</u> | <u>About the same</u> | <u>DK/Ref.</u> |
|--|----------------|------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| a. The overall morale of physicians | 3 | 80 | 16 | 1 |
| b. Your enthusiasm for practicing medicine | 13 | 47 | 40 | 1 |

2. Would you recommend the practice of medicine as a profession to a young person today, or not?

59 Yes
 38 No
 3 Don't know/Refused

3. What is the main reason you would not recommend the practice of medicine? (OPEN-END – DO NOT READ PRECODES)

Based on those who would not recommend the practice of medicine (n=314)

19 Government and insurance interference/regulations
 14 Medical malpractice/liability
 11 Excessive professional demands
 9 Loss of autonomy
 9 Diminishing reimbursements/No control of costs/Financial pressure
 7 Paperwork/red tape/administrative hassles
 6 You don't make enough money
 4 There is less respect for the medical profession
 4 Deterioration of doctor-patient relationship
 3 Not personally satisfying
 3 Educational process is too long/difficult/expensive
 2 Difficult to start/operate a practice
 9 Some other reason (VOL.)
 2 Don't know/Refused

QUESTIONS 4 THROUGH 6 REPORTED SEPARATELY.

Now on another subject...

7. How well would you say you understand the new Medicare prescription drug benefit that went into effect in January 2006? Would you say you understand it very well, somewhat well, not too well, or not well at all?

7 Very well
29 Somewhat well
37 Not too well
27 Not well at all
* Don't know/Refused

8. Given what you know about it, in general, do you have a favorable or unfavorable impression of this new Medicare prescription drug benefit?

28 Favorable
56 Unfavorable
9 Neither/Neutral (VOL.)
7 Don't know/Refused

9. Are your views of the Medicare drug benefit based mainly on your experiences with your patients, experiences with friends and family members, what you've heard from other doctors and health care providers, what you've heard in the news media, or from some other source?

46 Experiences with patients
25 Heard in the news media
10 Heard from other doctors and health care providers
7 Experiences with friends and family members
3 All of the above
6 Some other source
2 Don't know/Refused

10. Overall, what grade would you give the implementation of the new Medicare drug benefit so far? A for excellent, B for good, C for average, D for poor, or F for failing?

2 A – Excellent
12 B – Good
43 C – Average
33 D – Poor
8 F – Failing
3 Don't know/Refused

11. Based on your own experience, would you say that the administrative burden of dealing with prescriptions for patients covered by the new Medicare drug plans is better, worse, or about the same as the administrative burden under typical commercial insurance plans?

Total Physicians

- 7 Better
- 44 Worse
- 41 About the same
- 9 Don't know/Refused

Those who say at least a few of their patients are enrolled in Medicare drug plans (n=657)

- 8 Better
- 46 Worse
- 42 About the same
- 4 Don't know/Refused

12. How well do you think most of your Medicare patients understand the new drug benefit? Would you say that most understand it very well, somewhat well, not too well, or not well at all?

- 1 Very well
- 13 Somewhat well
- 49 Not too well
- 34 Not well at all
- 3 Don't know/Refused

13. Do you think people on Medicare have (too many), (too few), or about the right amount of drug plans to choose from? (ROTATE ITEMS IN PARENTHESES)

- 55 Too many
- 16 Too few
- 21 About the right amount
- 9 Don't know/Refused

THERE IS NO QUESTION 14.

15. I'm going to read you some things some people have said about the Medicare prescription drug benefit, and I'd like you to tell me how much you agree or disagree with each. (First/Next)... (READ AND RANDOMIZE)?

READ FOR FIRST ITEM AND REPEAT AS NECESSARY: Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree?

| | <u>Strongly agree</u> | <u>Somewhat agree</u> | <u>Somewhat disagree</u> | <u>Strongly disagree</u> | <u>DK/Ref.</u> |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|----------------|
| a. It helps people on Medicare save money on their prescriptions | 15 | 56 | 19 | 6 | 5 |
| b. It is especially helpful for low-income people on Medicare | 17 | 44 | 23 | 10 | 6 |
| c. It is too complicated | 62 | 30 | 4 | 2 | 2 |
| d. It benefits private health plans and pharmaceutical companies too much | 31 | 33 | 23 | 3 | 10 |

16. Would you say you have all the information you need to help your Medicare patients understand how the new drug benefit will impact them, most of the information you need, just some of the information you need, or do you not have enough information about the drug benefit to help your patients understand how it will impact them?

6 All the information you need
 15 Most of the information you need
 33 Just some of the information you need
 45 Not enough information
 2 Don't know/Refused

17. How helpful have/has (READ & RANDOMIZE) been to you as a source of information about the Medicare prescription drug benefit?

READ FOR FIRST ITEM AND THEN AS NECESSARY: Has this been very helpful, somewhat helpful, not too helpful, not at all helpful, or haven't you used it (as a source of information about the Medicare drug benefit)?

| | <u>Very helpful</u> | <u>Somewhat helpful</u> | <u>Not too helpful</u> | <u>Not at all helpful</u> | <u>Have not used</u> | <u>DK/Ref.</u> |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|----------------|
| a. Medicare telephone hotlines | 3 | 12 | 10 | 9 | 65 | 1 |
| b. The website Medicare.gov | 5 | 23 | 10 | 4 | 58 | 1 |

18. How much responsibility, if any, do you think you have to advise your patients about Medicare drug plans? Would you say you have a lot of responsibility, some responsibility, not much, or none?

- 15 A lot
- 42 Some
- 28 Not much
- 14 No responsibility
- 1 Don't know/Refused

19. Have any of your patients asked you for help or advice about the Medicare drug plans, or not?

- 54 Yes
- 45 No
- 1 Don't know/Refused

20. Would you say that most, some, or just a few of your Medicare patients have asked you for help or advice about the new Medicare drug plans?

Based on those whose patients have asked for help about Medicare drug plans (n=452)

- 23 Most
- 51 Some
- 26 Just a few
- Don't know/Refused

Q19/20 Combination Table based on total physicians

- 54 Yes, patients asked for help
 - 12 Most
 - 28 Some
 - 14 Just a few
 - Don't know/Refused
- 45 No patients asked for help
- 1 Don't know/Refused

21. As part of these conversations with patients about the new Medicare drug plans, have you done each of the following, or not? Have you (READ AND RANDOMIZE), or not?

Based on those whose patients have asked for help about Medicare drug plans (n=452)

| | <u>Yes</u> | <u>No</u> | <u>DK/Ref.</u> |
|--|------------|-----------|----------------|
| a. Helped a patient decide whether or not to enroll in a Medicare drug plan | 56 | 43 | 1 |
| b. Helped a patient decide which Medicare drug plan they should enroll in | 34 | 65 | * |
| c. Talked to a patient about concerns related to their out-of-pocket costs under the Medicare drug plan | 82 | 18 | * |
| d. Talked to a patient about switching from a brand-name to a generic drug to save them money under their Medicare drug plan | 85 | 15 | -- |
| e. Helped a patient figure out if a specific drug is covered by a Medicare drug plan | 61 | 38 | 1 |

Q19/20 Combination Table based on total physicians

| | <u>Yes</u> | <u>No</u> | <u>DK/Ref.</u> |
|--|------------|-----------|----------------|
| a. Helped a patient decide whether or not to enroll in a Medicare drug plan | 30 | 68 | 1 |
| b. Helped a patient decide which Medicare drug plan they should enroll in | 19 | 80 | 1 |
| c. Talked to a patient about concerns related to their out-of-pocket costs under the Medicare drug plan | 44 | 55 | 1 |
| d. Talked to a patient about switching from a brand-name to a generic drug to save them money under their Medicare drug plan | 46 | 53 | 1 |
| e. Helped a patient figure out if a specific drug is covered by a Medicare drug plan | 33 | 66 | 1 |

Next I'd like to ask you some questions about your patients' experiences with the new Medicare drug benefit. If you don't feel you know enough to answer one of these questions, please tell me and I'll move on to the next one.

22. How well would you say the new Medicare drug benefit works for your patients in each of the following areas. (First,) how about... (READ AND ROTATE) - very well, somewhat well, not too well, or not well at all?

| | Very <u>well</u> | Somewhat <u>well</u> | Not <u>too well</u> | Not at <u>all well</u> | DK/ <u>Ref.</u> |
|--|---------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|
| <i>Total Physicians</i> | | | | | |
| a. Lowering their out-of-pocket costs | 6 | 36 | 21 | 5 | 31 |
| b. Getting them access to the prescription drugs they need | 6 | 37 | 20 | 6 | 30 |
| <i>Those who say at least a few of their patients are enrolled in Medicare drug plans (n=657)</i> | | | | | |
| a. Lowering their out-of-pocket costs | 8 | 41 | 25 | 5 | 21 |
| b. Getting them access to the prescription drugs they need | 8 | 43 | 24 | 7 | 19 |

23. To the best of your knowledge, about how many of your Medicare patients have enrolled in a Medicare drug plan? Would you say nearly all, many, just a few, or none?

13 Nearly all
 40 Many
 26 Just a few
 3 None
 19 Don't know/Refused

24. How familiar are you with the drug formularies for the Medicare drug plans that your patients are enrolled in - very familiar, somewhat familiar, not too familiar, or not at all familiar?

Based on those who say at least a few patients have enrolled in a Medicare drug plan (n=657)

- 3 Very familiar
- 28 Somewhat familiar
- 44 Not too familiar
- 25 Not at all familiar
- 1 Don't know/Refused

25. When prescribing a medication for a Medicare patient, how often do you check the formulary for their drug plan? Would you say you do this frequently, sometimes, rarely, or never?

Based on those who say at least a few patients have enrolled in a Medicare drug plan (n=657)

- 12 Frequently
- 27 Sometimes
- 28 Rarely
- 31 Never
- 2 Don't know/Refused

THERE IS NO QUESTION 26.

27. Do you think the plans that most of your Medicare patients are enrolled in have formularies sufficient for your patients' needs, or do the formularies lack coverage for drugs your patients need?

Based on those who say at least a few patients have enrolled in a Medicare drug plan (n=657)

- 36 Formularies are sufficient for patients' needs
- 53 Formularies lack coverage
- 11 Don't know/Refused

28. To the best of your knowledge, have any of your Medicare patients experienced problems getting their prescriptions filled since joining a new Medicare drug plan, or not?

Based on those who say at least a few patients have enrolled in a Medicare drug plan (n=657)

- 59 Yes, experienced problems
- 33 No, have not experienced problems
- 7 Don't know/Refused

29. Would you say that most, some, or just a few of your patients who joined Medicare drug plans have had problems filling prescriptions?

Based on those who say their patients had problems getting prescriptions filled under Medicare drug plans (n=389)

- 25 Most
- 62 Some
- 13 Just a few
- * Don't know/Refused

Q28/29 Combination Table based on those who say at least a few patients have enrolled in a Medicare drug plan (n=657)

- 59 Yes, patients have experienced problems
 - 15 Most
 - 37 Some
 - 8 Just a few
 - * Don't know/Refused
- 33 No, patients have not experienced problems
- 7 Don't know/Refused

THERE IS NO QUESTION 30.

31. Have any of your patients who had problems filling prescriptions since joining a Medicare drug plan experienced serious medical consequences due to these problems, or not?

Based on those who say their patients had problems getting prescriptions filled under Medicare drug plans (n=389)

- 17 Yes
- 77 No
- 6 Don't know/Refused

Q28/31 Combination Table based on those who say at least a few patients have enrolled in a Medicare drug plan (n=657)

- 59 Yes, patients have experienced problems
 - 10 Yes, any patient has experienced serious medical consequences
 - 45 No patient has experienced serious medical consequences
 - 4 Don't know/Refused
- 33 No, patients have not experienced problems
- 7 Don't know/Refused

32. Have you been asked by a pharmacy or by a Medicare patient to change a prescription to a different drug so that it would be covered by their Medicare drug plan, or not?

Based on those who say at least a few patients have enrolled in a Medicare drug plan (n=657)

- 74 Yes
- 26 No
- 1 Don't know/Refused

33. Have you been asked by a pharmacy or by a Medicare drug plan to document reasons why your patient should get the specific drug you prescribed, or not?

Based on those who say at least a few patients have enrolled in a Medicare drug plan (n=657)

- 59 Yes
- 40 No
- 1 Don't know/Refused

34. Have you been asked by a patient to assist with filing an appeal or getting an exception from their Medicare drug plan to get coverage for a specific drug you prescribed, or not?

Based on those who say at least a few patients have enrolled in a Medicare drug plan (n=657)

- 45 Yes
- 54 No
- 1 Don't know/Refused

35. Overall, would you say that helping patients make decisions about the new Medicare drug plans and helping them get their drugs under the plans has placed a lot of burden on you and your staff, some burden, not too much, or no burden at all?

- 27 A lot of burden
- 37 Some burden
- 21 Not too much burden
- 12 No burden
- 3 Don't know/Refused

THERE IS NO QUESTION 36.

QUESTIONS 37 THROUGH 49 REPORTED SEPARATELY.

And now I just have a few more questions so we can describe the people who took part in our survey...

50. About what share of your patients would you say are ages 65 and older? Would you say it's none, about one in ten, about two in ten, or more than that?

- 1 None
- 15 About one in ten
- 19 About two in ten
- 64 More than two in ten
- * Don't know/Refused

51. To the best of your knowledge, what percentage of your patients (READ IN ORDER)?

READ FOR FIRST ITEM AND REPEAT AS NECESSARY: Would you say it's none, about one in ten, about two in ten, or more than that?

| | <u>None</u> | <u>About one in ten</u> | <u>About two in ten</u> | <u>More</u> | <u>DK/Ref.</u> |
|---|-------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------|----------------|
| a. Have insurance coverage through Medicare | 2 | 14 | 21 | 62 | 2 |
| b. Have insurance coverage through Medicaid | 16 | 38 | 19 | 25 | 3 |
| c. Have insurance coverage through private health plans | 3 | 11 | 17 | 67 | 2 |
| d. Have no insurance | 16 | 55 | 15 | 11 | 3 |

QUESTIONS 52 THROUGH 55 REPORTED SEPARATELY.

56. Is your practice in an urban, suburban, small town, or rural setting?

- 43 Urban
- 32 Suburban
- 18 Small town
- 6 Rural setting
- 1 Don't know/Refused

57. Would you say your practice serves mostly low-income, medium income, or high-income patients, or are the patients served by your practice pretty mixed in terms of income?

- 16 Low-income
- 27 Medium income
- 3 High-income
- 53 Mixed incomes
- 1 Don't know/Refused

58. What is your specialty?

- 18 Internal Medicine
- 17 Family Medicine/practice
- 8 Obstetrics and Gynecology
- 7 Psychiatry
- 6 Emergency Medicine
- 5 Ophthalmology
- 4 Orthopedic Surgery
- 3 General Surgery
- 3 Dermatology
- 3 Cardiology/Cardiac Surgery
- 2 Otolaryngology
- 2 General Practice
- 2 Neurology
- 2 Gastroenterology
- 2 Urology
- 2 Nephrology
- 2 Radiation Oncology/Oncology
- 2 Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery
- 1 Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation
- 1 Hematology/oncology
- 1 Pulmonary Disease/Pulmonary and Critical Care
- 1 Endocrinology
- 1 Allergy
- 1 Rheumatology
- 1 Colon and Rectal Surgery
- * Infectious Disease
- 4 Other

59. For how many years have you been practicing medicine?

- 28 Less than 10 years
- 30 10 to less than 20 years
- 24 20 to less than 30 years
- 17 30 years or more
- * Don't know/Refused

D1. RECORD RESPONDENT'S SEX:

- 76 Male
- 24 Female
- * Refused

D2. What is your age?

- 25 Under 40
- 31 40-49
- 24 50-59
- 18 60+
- 2 Don't know/Refused

D3. Are you, yourself, of Hispanic or Latino background, such as Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, or some other Spanish background?

D4. What is your race? Are you white, black, Asian or some other race? (IF RESPONDENT SAYS HISPANIC ASK: Do you consider yourself a white Hispanic or a black Hispanic?)

D3/D4 Combination Table

- 70 White, non-Hispanic
- 4 Black, non-Hispanic
- 5 Hispanic
- 18 Asian
- 1 Other or mixed race
- 2 Undesignated

D5. In politics today, do you consider yourself a Republican, Democrat, or Independent?

- 30 Republican
- 25 Democrat
- 29 Independent
- 10 No preference/Not interested in politics (VOL.)
- 1 Other party (VOL.)
- * Don't know
- 4 Refused



The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation

2400 Sand Hill Road
Menlo Park, CA 94025
Phone: (650) 854-9400 Fax: (650) 854-4800

Washington Office:
1330 G Street, NW
Washington, DC 20005
Phone: (202) 347-5270 Fax: (202) 347-5274

www.kff.org

Additional copies of this publication (#7554) are available on the
Kaiser Family Foundation's website at www.kff.org.

The Kaiser Family Foundation is a non-profit, private operating foundation dedicated to providing information and analysis on health care issues to policymakers, the media, the health care community, and the general public. The Foundation is not associated with Kaiser Permanente or Kaiser Industries.