

HARVARD
SCHOOL OF
PUBLIC HEALTH

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Kaiser Family Foundation/Harvard School of Public Health

Medicare Prescription Drug Survey

Methodology

The Kaiser Family Foundation/Harvard School of Public Health *Medicare Prescription Drug Survey* was designed and analyzed by researchers at the Kaiser Family Foundation and Harvard School of Public Health. The Kaiser/Harvard survey research team included Mollyann Brodie, Ph.D., Tricia Neuman, Ph.D., Kristina Hanson, Ph.D., and Liz Hamel from the Kaiser Family Foundation; and Professor Robert Blendon, Sc.D., and John Benson, M.A. of the Harvard School of Public Health. Fieldwork was conducted by telephone by ICR/International Communications Research between August 6 and August 12, 2003, among a nationally representative random sample of 2,043 respondents 18 years of age and older, including 1,608 adults ages 18-64 and 376 adults ages 65 and older.

The margin of sampling error for the survey is plus or minus 3 percentage points for total respondents; for respondents ages 18-64 it is plus or minus 3 percentage points; and for respondents ages 65 and older it is plus or minus 5 percentage points. For results based on smaller subsets of respondents the margin of error is higher. Note that sampling error is only one of many potential sources of error in this or any other public opinion poll.

Values less than 0.5% are indicated by an asterisk (*). "Vol." indicates that a response was volunteered by respondent, not an explicitly offered choice.

Next, I have a few questions about Medicare, the program that provides health insurance primarily to people age 65 and older.

Q1. As you may know, Medicare does not currently pay for most prescription drugs. How familiar are you with the various proposals being discussed in Congress that would help seniors pay for prescription drugs? Would you say you are very familiar, somewhat familiar, not too familiar, or not at all familiar with these proposals?

	-----FAMILIAR-----			-----NOT FAMILIAR-----			Don't know	Refused
	NET	Very	Somewhat	NET	Not too	Not at all		
Total	40	7	33	60	30	30	*	--
18-64	37	6	31	62	30	32	*	--
65+	56	15	41	44	28	16	*	--

(Asked of total who are very, somewhat, or not too familiar with Medicare prescription drug proposals; n = 1496; 18-64 n = 1117; 65+ n = 330)

Q2. In general, do you have a favorable or unfavorable impression of these Medicare prescription drug proposals? (GET ANSWER THEN ASK: Is that very or somewhat [favorable/unfavorable]?)

Q1/Q2. Combo Table

	-----Very, somewhat, or not too familiar with proposals-----							Don't know	Not at all familiar with proposals	Don't know	Refused
	NET	Have favorable impression			Have unfavorable impression						
		NET	Very	Somewhat	NET	Very	Somewhat				
Total	70	34	11	23	26	15	11	11	30	*	--
18-64	67	33	11	23	23	14	9	10	32	*	--
65+	84	34	10	25	37	19	18	12	16	*	--

Q3. Taking into account everything you've heard about the legislation currently being discussed, do you think Congress should enact legislation this year to add a prescription drug benefit to Medicare, or do you think there are too many problems with this legislation and it should NOT be enacted this year?

	Congress should enact legislation this year	Legislation should NOT be enacted this year	Don't know	Refused
Total	60	24	16	*
18-64	62	22	16	*
65+	54	33	13	*

(Asked of total who think Congress should enact legislation this year; n = 1166;
18-64 n = 946; 65+ n = 190)

Q4. If such legislation passes this year, who do you think deserves the most credit?

	President Bush	The Republicans in Congress	The Democrats in Congress	None (Vol.)	All equally (Vol.)	Don't know	Refused
Total	23	18	35	5	4	15	*
18-64	23	18	33	6	4	15	*
65+	22	14	43	4	5	11	1

Q3/Q4. Combo Table

	-----Congress should enact legislation this year-----						Congress should not enact legislation this year	Don't know	Refused
	NET	President Bush deserves most credit	Republicans in Congress deserve most credit	Democrats in Congress deserve most credit	None deserve most credit (Vol.)	All equally deserve most credit (Vol.)			
Total	60	14	11	21	3	3	24	16	*
18-64	62	14	11	20	3	3	22	16	*
65+	54	12	7	23	2	3	33	13	*

Q5. If a candidate were to take a stand on Medicare prescription drugs that was different from your own, how likely would this be to make you vote against that candidate?
Very likely, somewhat likely, not too likely, or not at all likely?

	-----LIKELY-----			-----NOT LIKELY-----			Don't know	Refused
	NET	Very	Somewhat	NET	Not too	Not at all		
Total	49	18	31	45	23	22	5	*
18-64	49	18	32	46	24	22	5	*
65+	48	21	27	44	20	24	7	1

Q6. As you may know, the Senate and the House have each passed separate versions of a bill that would add a prescription drug benefit to Medicare. Based on your general impressions of the bills, do you think there are big differences, small differences, or no differences between the House and Senate bills, or don't you know enough to say?

	Big differences	Small differences	No differences	Don't know enough to say	Refused
Total	11	12	2	75	*
18-64	10	11	2	77	*
65+	15	13	3	68	--

Q7. Now thinking about some of the specific aspects of these House and Senate bills, do you think there are big differences, small differences, or no differences in (INSERT ITEM), or don't you know enough to say?

	Big differences	Small differences	No differences	Don't know enough to say	Refused
Total					
a. The role of private health plans, such as PPOs and HMOs	24	11	4	61	*
b. The role of traditional Medicare in providing back-up prescription drug coverage in areas where no private plans are available	19	7	4	70	*
c. How much each would help seniors with their drug costs	22	14	3	60	*
d. How the proposals would affect low-income seniors	27	11	3	59	*
e. The level of prescription drug benefits available to higher-income seniors	17	11	6	66	*
f. How the proposals would affect the affordability and availability of Medicare over the long-term	20	11	3	66	*

	Big differences	Small differences	No differences	Don't know enough to say	Refused
18-64 years					
a. The role of private health plans, such as PPOs and HMOs	24	12	3	61	*
b. The role of traditional Medicare in providing back-up prescription drug coverage in areas where no private plans are available	19	7	4	70	*
c. How much each would help seniors with their drug costs	22	14	3	61	*
d. How the proposals would affect low-income seniors	26	11	3	60	*
e. The level of prescription drug benefits available to higher-income seniors	17	12	6	65	*
f. How the proposals would affect the affordability and availability of Medicare over the long-term	19	12	3	67	*

65+ years	Big differences	Small differences	No differences	Don't know enough to say	Refused
a. The role of private health plans, such as PPOs and HMOs	22	8	6	64	*
b. The role of traditional Medicare in providing back-up prescription drug coverage in areas where no private plans are available	15	9	4	73	--
c. How much each would help seniors with their drug costs	22	15	5	58	--
d. How the proposals would affect low-income seniors	30	11	4	55	--
e. The level of prescription drug benefits available to higher-income seniors	16	9	7	67	1
f. How the proposals would affect the affordability and availability of Medicare over the long-term	24	9	4	62	--

Q8. Do you think the House and Senate will work out their differences, and Congress will enact a bill this year to add a prescription drug benefit to Medicare, or do you think that they will be unable to work out their differences and no bill will pass?

	Will be able to work out differences	Will be unable to work out differences	Don't know	Refused
Total	32	60	8	*
18-64	32	60	7	*
65+	29	60	11	1

Q9. If Congress passes a Medicare prescription drug bill, how worried would you be about each of the following? How about (INSERT ITEM)? Would you be very worried, somewhat worried, not too worried, or not at all worried?

a. It would change Medicare too much

	-----WORRIED-----			-----NOT WORRIED-----			Don't know	Refused
	NET	Very	Somewhat	NET	Not too	Not at all		
Total	50	17	32	45	24	21	5	*
18-64	47	14	33	48	26	22	5	--
65+	63	34	29	30	16	15	7	--

b. It would rely too much on private health plans, such as PPOs and HMOs

	-----WORRIED-----			-----NOT WORRIED-----			Don't know	Refused
	NET	Very	Somewhat	NET	Not too	Not at all		
Total	55	22	33	38	20	18	7	*
18-64	55	20	34	38	21	18	7	*
65+	57	32	26	35	15	20	8	--

c. Seniors would still have to pay too large a share of their prescription drug bills

	-----WORRIED-----			-----NOT WORRIED-----			Don't know	Refused
	NET	Very	Somewhat	NET	Not too	Not at all		
Total	75	39	35	22	12	10	3	*
18-64	75	37	38	23	13	10	3	*
65+	76	52	24	18	7	11	6	--

d. It would not go far enough in reforming Medicare

	-----WORRIED-----			-----NOT WORRIED-----			Don't know	Refused
	NET	Very	Somewhat	NET	Not too	Not at all		
Total	65	25	40	30	17	14	5	*
18-64	64	24	40	31	18	14	4	*
65+	68	29	39	26	13	14	5	--

e. It would expand the role of government too much

	-----WORRIED-----			-----NOT WORRIED-----			Don't know	Refused
	NET	Very	Somewhat	NET	Not too	Not at all		
Total	48	18	30	48	22	26	4	*
18-64	48	17	30	49	22	26	4	--
65+	55	25	30	41	18	23	5	*

f. It would be too costly to the government and taxpayers

	-----WORRIED-----			-----NOT WORRIED-----			Don't know	Refused
	NET	Very	Somewhat	NET	Not too	Not at all		
Total	59	21	38	38	19	19	3	*
18-64	58	20	38	39	20	19	3	1
65+	64	27	37	32	13	19	4	--

Q10. The proposals being debated would spend \$400 billion over ten years to help seniors pay for prescription drugs, but many seniors would still pay more than half of their total drug bills themselves. Which of the following statements comes closer to your view of what Congress should do?

	Something is better than nothing. Congress should pass this bill now, even though it would leave many seniors paying a substantial share of their prescription drugs costs, then work to improve benefits in the future	Seniors deserve a better drug benefit. Congress should vote against this bill and work to pass one that provides more help to seniors, even if it might take years to get done and cost the government more	Don't know	Refused
Total	37	57	5	1
18-64	37	58	4	1
65+	33	56	10	2

Q11. As you may know, under the drug benefit proposals that are being debated in Congress, seniors would pay a premium for their drug coverage of about \$35 per month when the program goes into effect in 2006, in addition to their regular monthly Medicare premium of \$72 in that year. Would you say that the proposed prescription drug premium is about right, too much, too little, or don't you know enough to say?

	About right	Too much	Too little	Don't know enough to say	Refused
Total	22	27	5	45	*
18-64	23	26	5	46	*
65+	17	34	6	43	*

(Asked of one half of total respondents; n = 1028; 18-64 n = 813; 65+ n = 182)

Q12a. Who do you think is doing a better job handling the Medicare prescription drug issue today?

	President Bush	Democrats in Congress	Neither (Vol.)	Both (Vol.)	Don't know	Refused
Total	32	40	7	1	20	*
18-64	33	39	7	1	20	*
65+	24	43	9	1	23	1

(Asked of one half of total respondents; n = 1015; 18-64 n = 795; 65+ n = 194)

Q12b. Who do you think is doing a better job handling the Medicare prescription drug issue today?

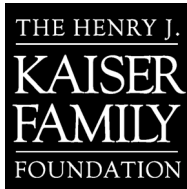
	Republicans in Congress	Democrats in Congress	Neither (Vol.)	Both (Vol.)	Don't know	Refused
Total	24	34	13	2	27	1
18-64	24	33	11	2	28	1
65+	21	37	18	2	23	--

Q13. Do you favor or oppose the federal government making it easier for people to buy prescription drugs from Canada?

	Favor	Oppose	Don't know	Refused
Total	68	23	9	*
18-64	69	23	8	*
65+	65	23	12	*

Q14. Proponents of this proposal say that it will enable many people to purchase prescription drugs at lower prices. Opponents say that it could lead to unsafe drugs being imported into the country. After hearing these arguments, do you now favor or oppose the federal government making it easier for people to buy prescription drugs from Canada?

	Favor	Oppose	Don't know	Refused
Total	63	31	5	*
18-64	64	31	4	*
65+	57	33	9	*



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