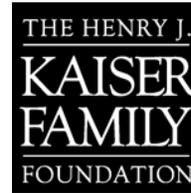


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Supplemental Chartpack



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The Kaiser Family Foundation/Harvard School of Public Health

# **Views of the New Medicare Drug Law: A Survey of People on Medicare**

## ***Opinions and Experiences of Non-Elderly People with Disabilities on Medicare***

October 2004

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## Methodology

The Kaiser Family Foundation/Harvard School of Public Health *Views of the New Medicare Drug Law: A Survey of People on Medicare* 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., Elizabeth Hamel, and Michelle Kitchman 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 June 16 and July 21, 2004, among a sample of 1,223 total respondents. The survey included a nationally representative random sample of 973 respondents 65 years of age and older, including an oversample of African American respondents in this age group (a total of 203 African American respondents ages 65 and older were interviewed). A separate sample of 250 respondents ages 18-64 with physical and/or mental disabilities who receive Medicare was also interviewed. The disabled sample was drawn from a nationally representative survey of households contacted between June 2002 and January 2003 that was screened to identify households with an adult, aged 18-64, who receives disability payments through the SSI or SSDI program and/or considers him or herself disabled. This sample was then re-screened to include those people with disabilities who are covered by Medicare. Results for all groups have been weighted to reflect the actual distribution in the nation.

The margin of sampling error for non-elderly respondents with disabilities in the survey is plus or minus 10 percentage points; for respondents age 65 and older it is plus or minus 4 percentage points. For results based on 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.

“Vol.” indicates that a response was volunteered by respondent, not an explicitly offered choice. Percentages may not always add up to 100% due to rounding.

Full question wording and results are available separately at [www.kff.org](http://www.kff.org)

## BACKGROUND

In addition to providing health insurance for seniors, Medicare is a critical source of health coverage for about six million non-elderly people with disabilities. People under age 65 who receive Social Security cash payments due to a disability generally become eligible for Medicare after a two-year waiting period. They rely heavily on prescription drugs, and are more likely than the elderly to live in poverty, to be in poor health, and to experience difficulties living independently and performing basic daily tasks.

The Kaiser Family Foundation/Harvard School of Public Health *Views of the New Medicare Drug Law: A Survey of People on Medicare* was conducted in June and July 2004, and overall survey results were released in August 2004. The August release focused on reactions to the new law, as well as political and policy implications, based on findings from the Medicare population in general (the chartpack and summary are available separately at [www.kff.org](http://www.kff.org)). This supplemental release focuses on findings related to non-elderly people with disabilities who receive Medicare. For the most part, opinions and experiences of this group are similar to those of seniors on Medicare; however, where difference exist, they are noted in this summary and in the charts.

## SURVEY FINDINGS

***Among non-elderly people with disabilities on Medicare, more have an unfavorable than a favorable impression of the new Medicare law, which contrasts with their overall positive view of the Medicare program itself. While a majority thinks the new law will be helpful for most people on Medicare, they don't think the law will be very helpful for them personally.***

- More than four in ten (44%) non-elderly people with disabilities on Medicare say they have an unfavorable impression of the new Medicare law, while about a quarter (24%) say they have a favorable impression, and about three in ten (31%) say they don't know enough about the law to offer an opinion (Chart 1).
- The negative views toward the new Medicare law are in sharp contrast to how people view the Medicare program itself. While about a quarter (24%) say they have a favorable impression of the law, about six in ten (61%) say they have a favorable opinion of Medicare (Chart 1).
- Two-thirds (67%) say the new Medicare law will be very or somewhat helpful for people on Medicare with no current drug coverage, and more than half say it will be very or somewhat helpful for “a typical person on Medicare” (57%), low-income people on Medicare (56%), and people on Medicare with very high prescription costs (51%). A much smaller share – four in ten (40%) – say the new law will be very or somewhat helpful for them personally (Chart 2).

***Despite their unfavorable impressions, few people with disabilities on Medicare say they are angry or enthusiastic about the new law, and most say lawmakers should work to fix problems in the law, rather than leaving it as is or repealing it.***

- When asked which comes closest to how they feel about the new law, 2% of people under age 65 with disabilities on Medicare say they are enthusiastic, about three in ten (29%) say they are satisfied but not enthusiastic, four in ten (41%) say they are dissatisfied but not angry, and one in ten (10%) say they are angry about the new law (Chart 3).
- When asked what they think lawmakers should do with the new Medicare law, two-thirds (67%) say they should work to fix problems in the law, while about one in eight (13%) say they should leave the law as is, and just seven percent say they should repeal it (Chart 3).

***People ages 18 to 64 with disabilities on Medicare don't feel they understand the new Medicare law very well. While nearly three in ten say they are confused by the new law, most say that they haven't heard enough to say whether it's confusing.***

- Just over one in ten (12%) say they have heard or read “a lot” about the new Medicare law, more than four in ten (43%) say they have heard or read “some,” and more than four in ten (44%) say they have heard or read “not much” or “nothing at all” about the new law.
- Nearly two-thirds (64%) of non-elderly people with disabilities on Medicare say they don't have enough information about the new law to understand how it will impact them personally, and about six in ten (61%) say they understand the new law “not too well” or “not well at all” (Chart 4).
- Nearly three in ten (28%) say they are confused by the new law, while 14% say they are not confused, and a majority (55%) say they haven't heard enough to say whether it's confusing.

***Nearly half of people with disabilities on Medicare say they have seen television advertisements about the new Medicare law in the previous month, and about a third say they have seen news coverage of the law. Most of those who saw ads say that they were mixed or positive towards the law, and most of those who saw coverage say it was mixed.***

- Nearly half (48%) say they saw any television advertisements about the Medicare law in the previous month. Among those who say they saw ads, just over half (53%) say the ads were mixed, while more than a third (36%) of this group say the ads were generally positive towards the law, and six percent say they were generally negative towards the law (Chart 5).
- About a third (34%) say they saw any news coverage about the new Medicare law in the previous month. Seven in ten (71%) of those who saw they saw coverage say the coverage was mixed, while 18% of this group say coverage was generally positive towards the law, and eight percent say it was generally negative (Chart 6).

*Non-elderly people with disabilities on Medicare have mixed views of the discount card program. Many say the discount cards aren't worth the trouble, though a majority thinks they will be at least somewhat helpful for people on Medicare. Thirty-six percent report that they have either already signed up for a Medicare-approved drug discount card, or they plan to sign up for a card this year. Among those who don't plan to sign up, most say the reasons are that they already have other discount cards or coverage for prescription drugs, or that they don't think the cards will save them money.*

- When asked their opinion of the new Medicare-approved discount cards, four in ten (39%) non-elderly people with disabilities on Medicare agree the cards are “worthwhile because they give people on Medicare immediate help before the full drug benefit is available, and provide another way to cut their drug costs,” and a similar share (41%) say the cards “aren’t worth the trouble because they don’t do enough to help people with their drug costs and are too confusing to use” (Chart 7).
- About three-quarters (76%) say the new cards will be very (17%) or somewhat (59%) helpful for people on Medicare in general, while 11% say they will be not too helpful, and just five percent say they will not be helpful at all (Chart 7).
- Nine percent of non-elderly people with disabilities on Medicare say they currently have or have signed up for a Medicare-approved discount card, and another 27% say they plan to sign up for a card this year. While a similar share (9%) of seniors say they have signed up for a card already, a smaller share of seniors (15%) say they plan to sign up for a card this year (Chart 8).
- Among the 43% of non-elderly people with disabilities on Medicare who don’t have a card and don’t plan to sign up for one, the main reasons cited were already having other drug discount cards or coverage (63%), and not thinking the card will save them money (42%). Fewer people say they didn’t sign up because it was too difficult to choose among the variety of cards offered (20%), and because they were worried about how the cards would affect other prescription drug coverage they have (17%). About one in five who do not plan to sign up (19%) say the reason is that they did not know about the cards (Chart 9).

***Most people with disabilities on Medicare have heard of 1-800-MEDICARE, though just one in six have called the number. About a third are online, and one in ten has visited Medicare.gov. The non-elderly disabled population on Medicare is more likely than seniors to have used both of these resources.***

- Six in ten (60%) people ages 18 to 64 with disabilities on Medicare say they have heard of 1-800-MEDICARE, and one in six (16%) say they have called the toll-free number. This is higher than the share of seniors (9%) who say they have called 1-800-MEDICARE (Chart 10).
- A third (33%) of non-elderly people with disabilities on Medicare say they have ever been online to use the Internet or e-mail, compared with about a quarter (24%) of seniors. Among the non-elderly disabled population, more than one in five (22%) say they have heard of the Medicare.gov website, and ten percent say they have ever visited the site (compared with 13% of seniors who have heard of, and 4% who have visited Medicare.gov) (Chart 11).

***Compared with seniors, the cost of prescription drugs represents a particularly difficult burden for non-elderly people with disabilities on Medicare.***

- Nearly half (48%) of people ages 18 to 64 with physical and/or mental disabilities who receive Medicare say it is very difficult for them and their family to pay prescription drug costs, and another 21% say it is somewhat difficult. By comparison, 17% of seniors say it is very difficult, and 26% say it is somewhat difficult (Chart 12).
- Among non-elderly people with disabilities on Medicare, more than four in ten say that in the past year, they have not filled a prescription because of the cost (42%, compared with 16% of seniors), and nearly half say that they have cut pills in half or skipped doses of a prescription medicine in order to make it last longer (46%, compared with 17% of seniors) (Chart 13).

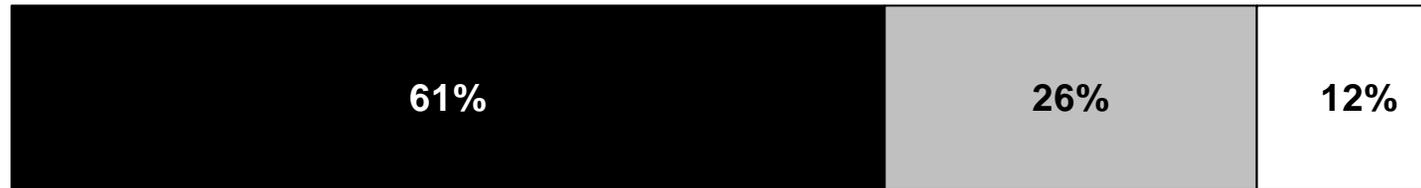
# Impressions of Medicare and New Medicare Law

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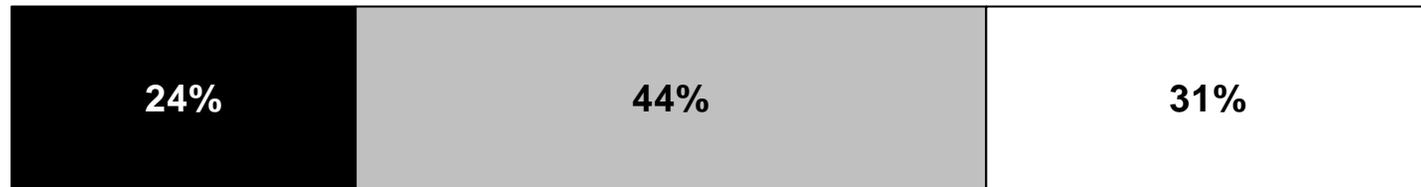
Among non-elderly people with disabilities on Medicare...

Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of Medicare?

■ Favorable      ■ Unfavorable      □ Don't know/Refused



Given what you know about it, in general, do you have a favorable or unfavorable impression of the new Medicare law?

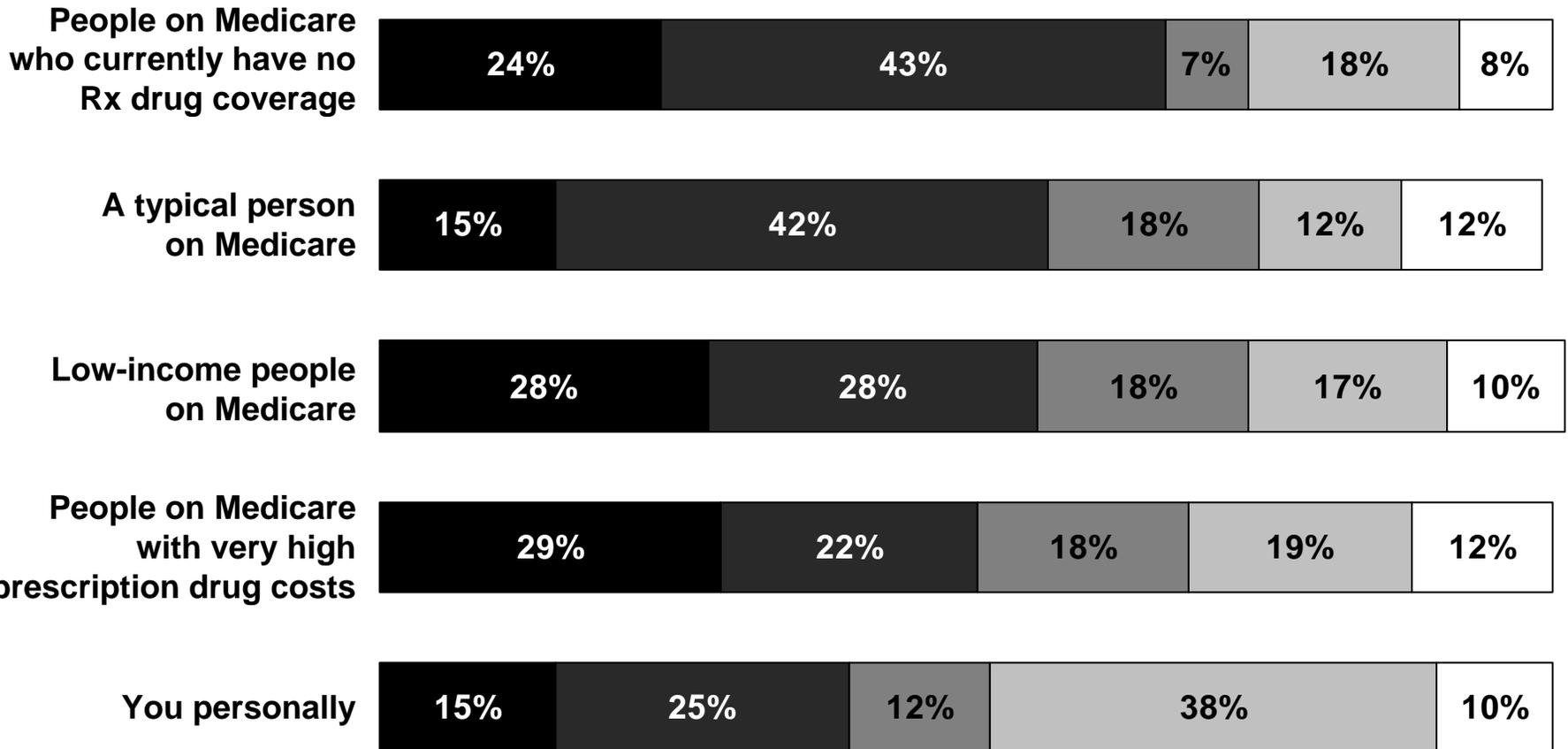


# Perceived Helpfulness of New Medicare Law

Among non-elderly people with disabilities on Medicare...

How helpful do you think the new Medicare law will be for...

Very helpful
  Somewhat helpful
  Not too helpful
  Not at all helpful
  Don't know/Refused

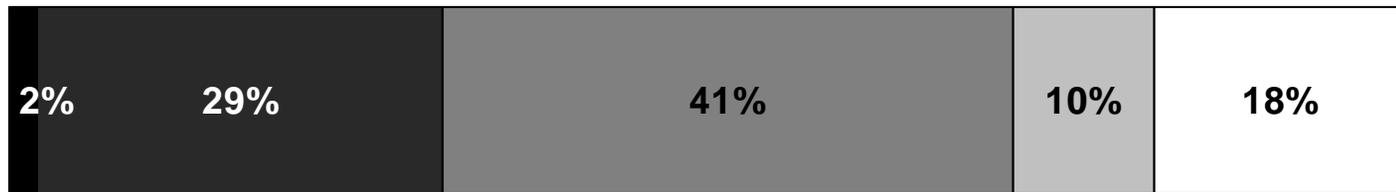


# Strength of Feelings About New Medicare Law

Among non-elderly people with disabilities on Medicare...

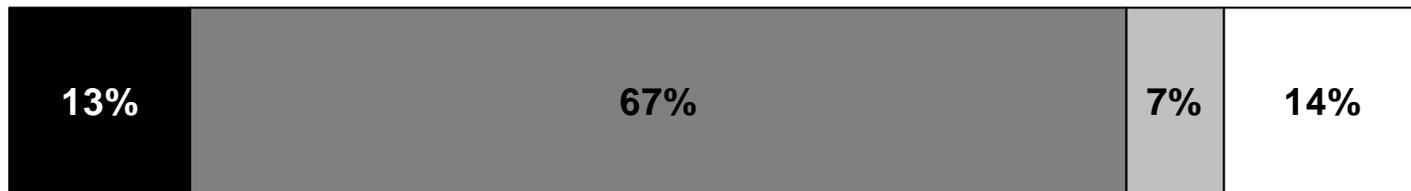
Which of the following comes closest to how you personally feel about the new Medicare law?

Enthusiastic    
  Satisfied, but not enthusiastic    
  Dissatisfied, but not angry    
  Angry    
  Don't know/Refused



Which of the following comes closest to your view of what lawmakers in Washington should do with the new Medicare law?

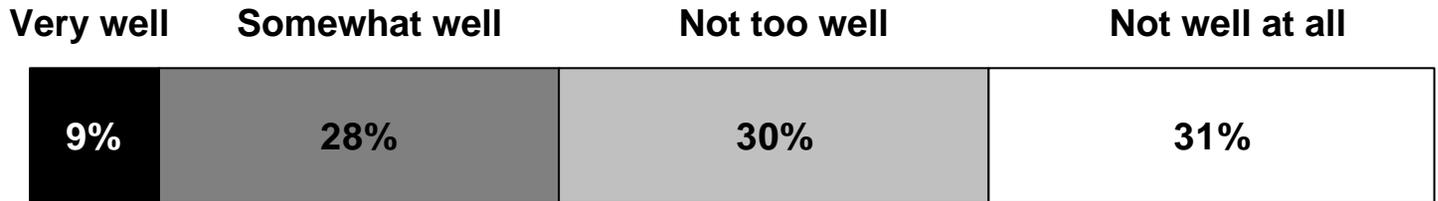
They should leave the law as it is    
  They should work to fix problems in the law    
  They should repeal the law    
  Don't know/Refused



# Familiarity With and Understanding of New Law

Among non-elderly people with disabilities on Medicare...

How well would you say you understand this new law?



Do you feel you have enough information about the law to understand how it will impact you personally, or not?



Would you say you are...?



Note: Don't know responses not shown

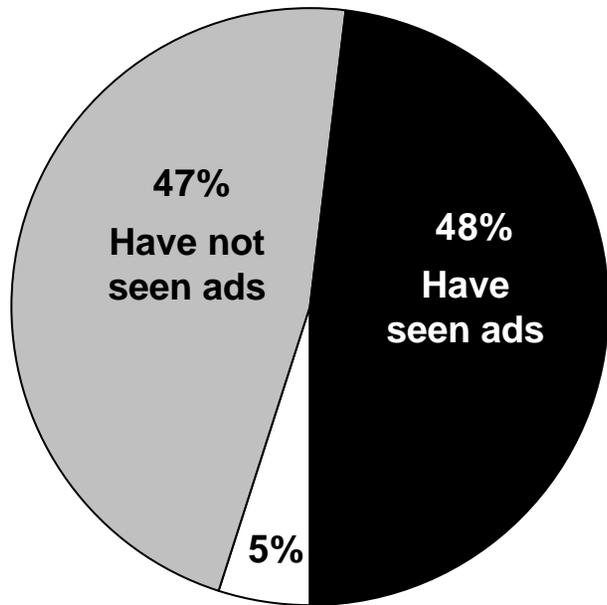
Source: Kaiser Family Foundation/Harvard School of Public Health *Views of the New Medicare Drug Law: A Survey of People on Medicare* (6/16-7/21/2004)

# Attention to and Perceptions of TV Ads About Law

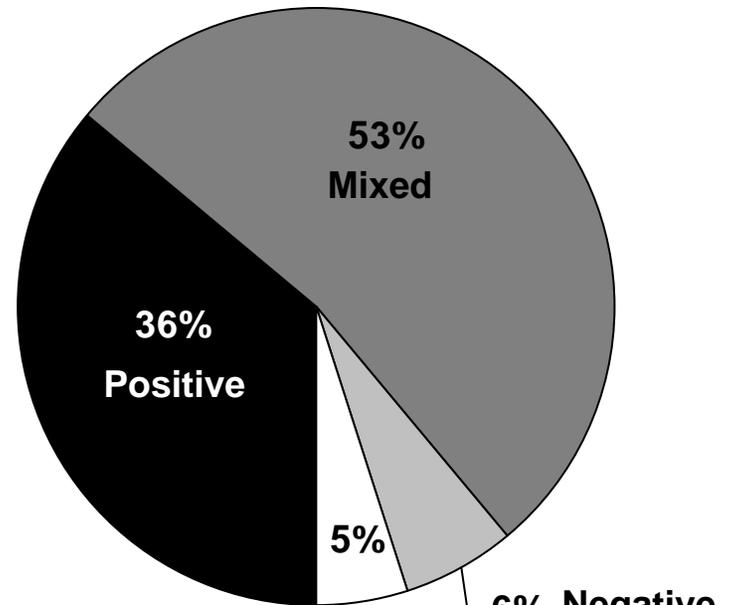
Among non-elderly people with disabilities on Medicare...

In the past month, have you seen any television advertisements about the new Medicare law, or not?

AMONG THOSE WHO HAVE SEEN ADS:  
Overall would you say these ads were generally positive or negative towards the law, or were they mixed?



Don't know



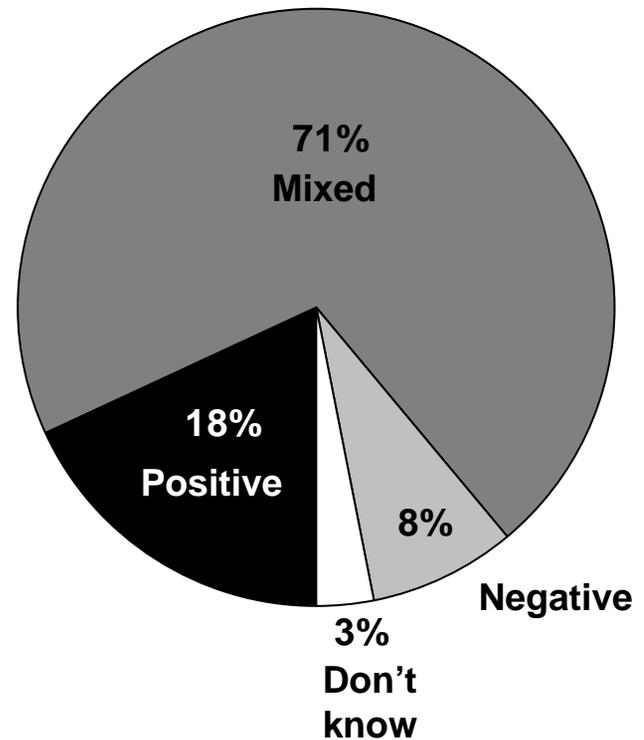
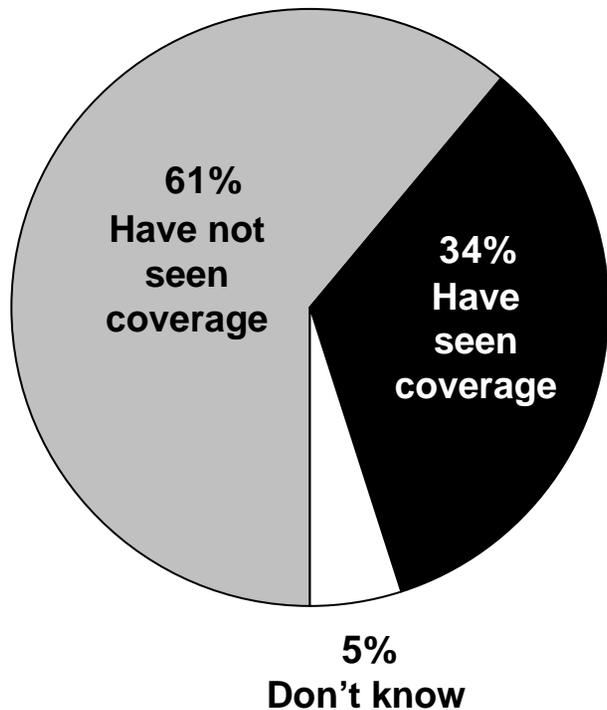
Don't know

# Attention to and Perceptions of News Coverage of Law

Among non-elderly people with disabilities on Medicare...

In the past month, have you seen, heard, or read any news coverage about the new Medicare law, or not?

**AMONG THOSE WHO HAVE SEEN COVERAGE:** Overall would you say this coverage was generally positive or negative towards the law, or was it mixed?



# Impressions of Medicare-Approved Discount Cards

Among non-elderly people with disabilities on Medicare...

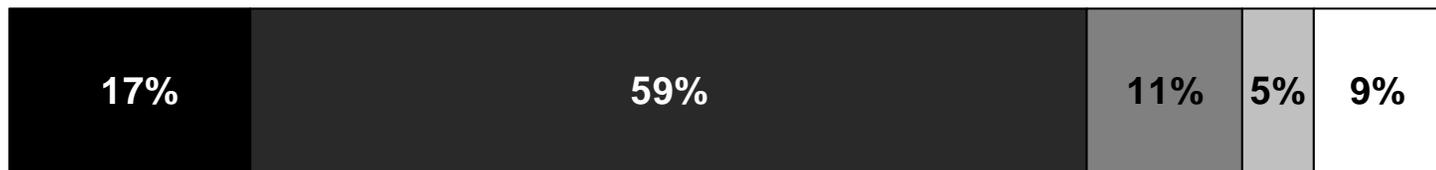
Which comes closer to your view?

- The new cards are **WORTHWHILE** because they give people on Medicare immediate help before the full prescription drug benefit is available in 2006, and they provide another way to cut their drug costs
- The new cards **AREN'T WORTH THE TROUBLE** because they don't do enough to help people with their drug costs, and they are too confusing to use
- Don't know/  
Refused



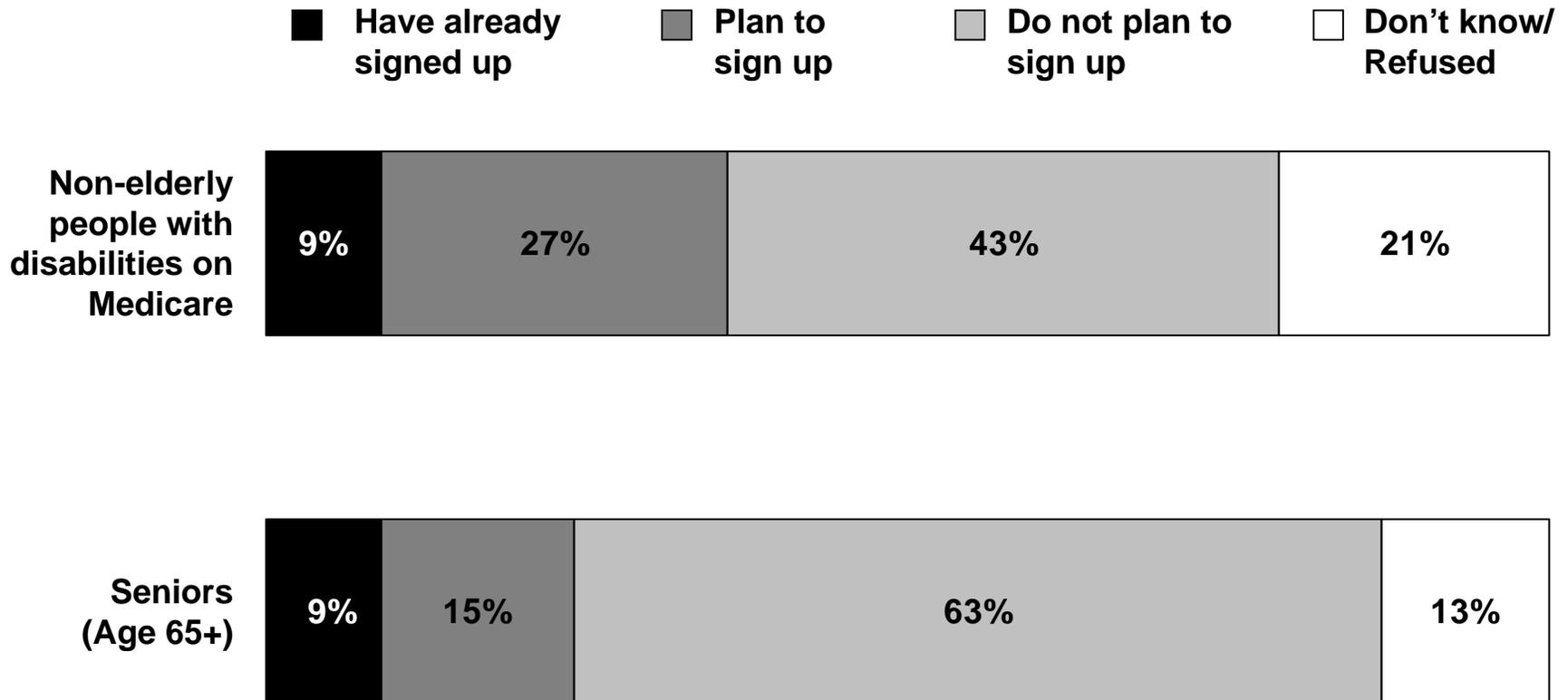
How helpful do you think the Medicare-approved drug discount cards will be for people on Medicare in general?

- Very helpful
- Somewhat helpful
- Not too helpful
- Not helpful at all
- Don't know/Refused



# Signing Up For Discount Cards – Seniors Compared With Non-Elderly People With Disabilities

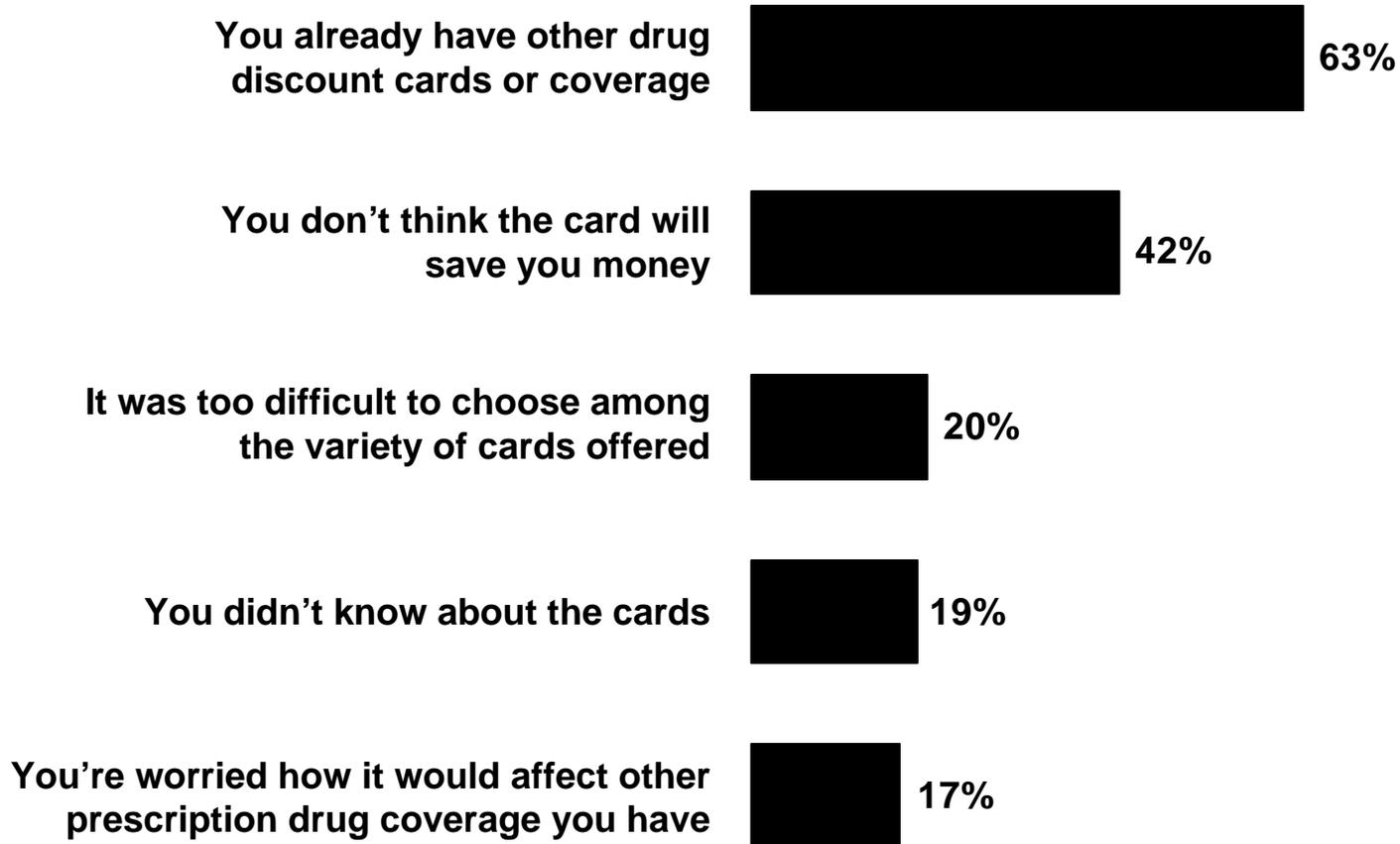
Percent saying they already have or plan to sign up for a Medicare-approved drug discount card...



# Reasons for Not Signing Up For Discount Cards

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Among the 43% of non-elderly people with disabilities on Medicare who say they don't plan to sign up for the discount card, percent citing as reasons...



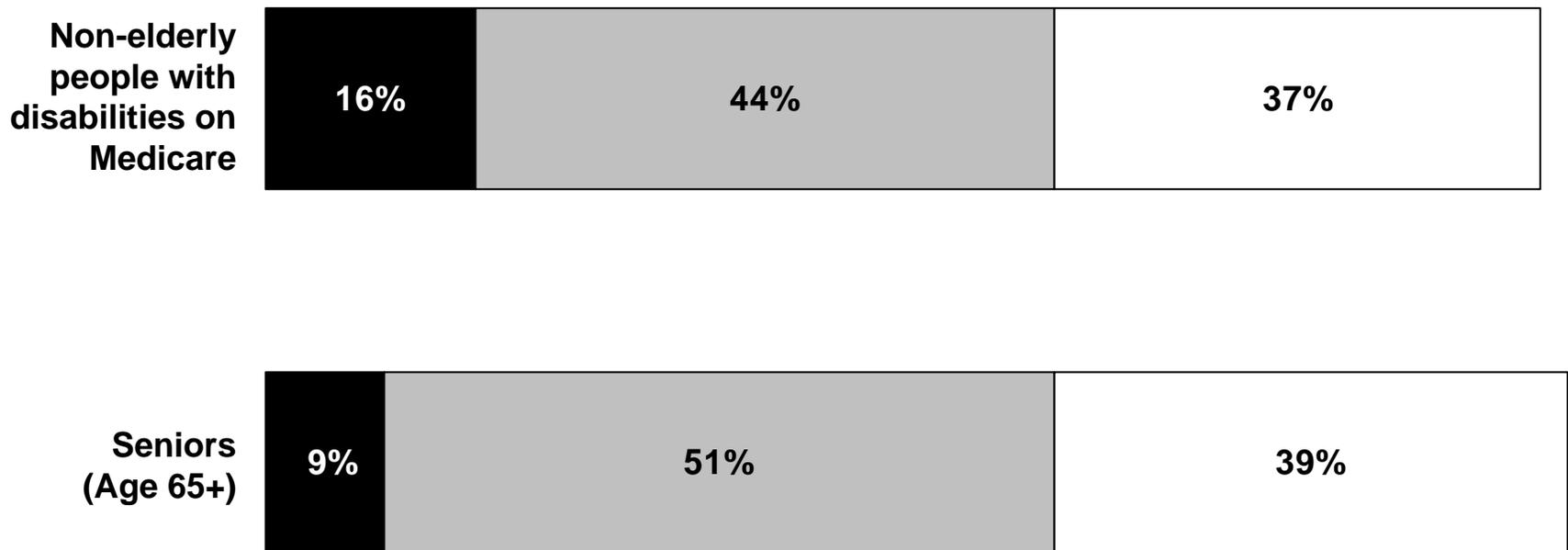
# Reported Awareness and Use of 1-800-MEDICARE Seniors Compared With Non-Elderly Disabled

Percent who say they have heard of/called 1-800-MEDICARE...

■ Have called  
1-800-MEDICARE

■ Have heard of 1-800-MEDICARE,  
but have not called

□ Have not heard of  
1-800-MEDICARE



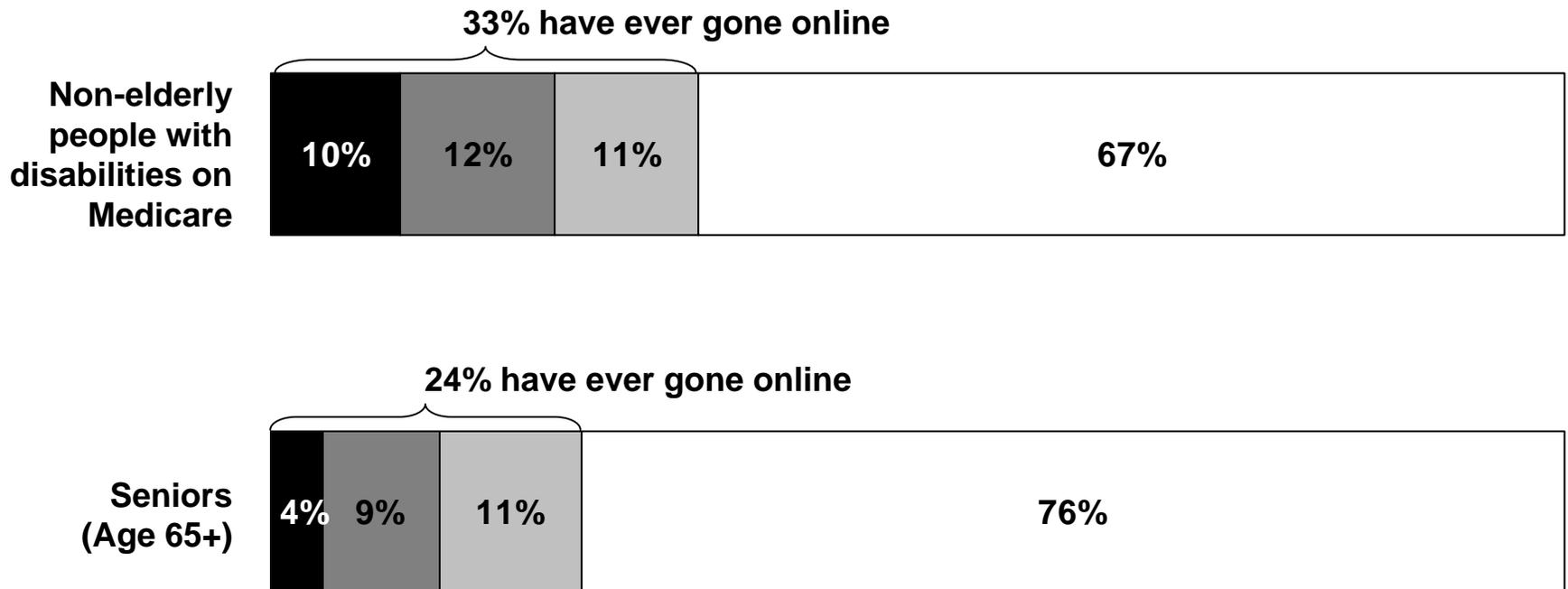
Note: Don't know responses not shown

Source: Kaiser Family Foundation/Harvard School of Public Health *Views of the New Medicare Drug Law: A Survey of People on Medicare* (6/16-7/21/2004)

# Reported Awareness and Use of Medicare.gov Seniors Compared With Non-Elderly Disabled

Percent who say they have gone online/heard of/visited Medicare.gov...

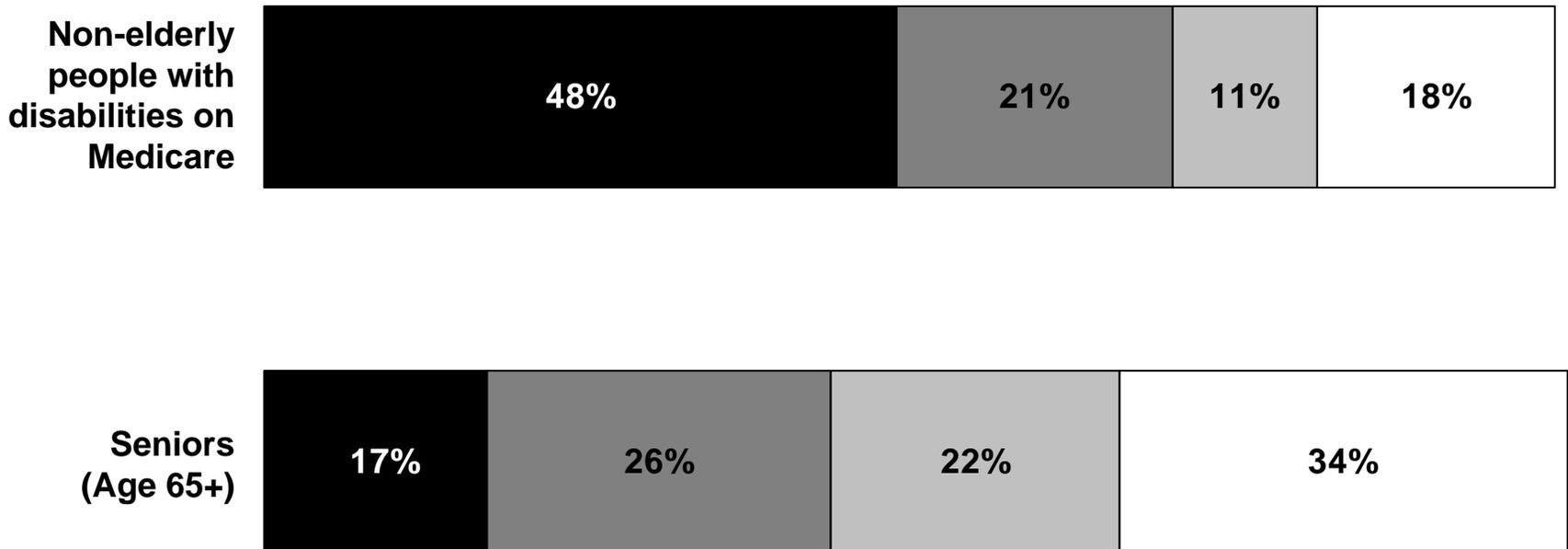
- Have visited Medicare.gov
- Have heard of Medicare.gov, but have not visited
- Have not heard of Medicare.gov
- Have never gone online



# Difficulty Affording Prescription Medicines Seniors Compared With Non-Elderly Disabled

How much of a problem is it for you and your family to pay prescription drug costs?

**Very difficult**
 **Somewhat difficult**
 **Not too difficult**
 **Not at all difficult**



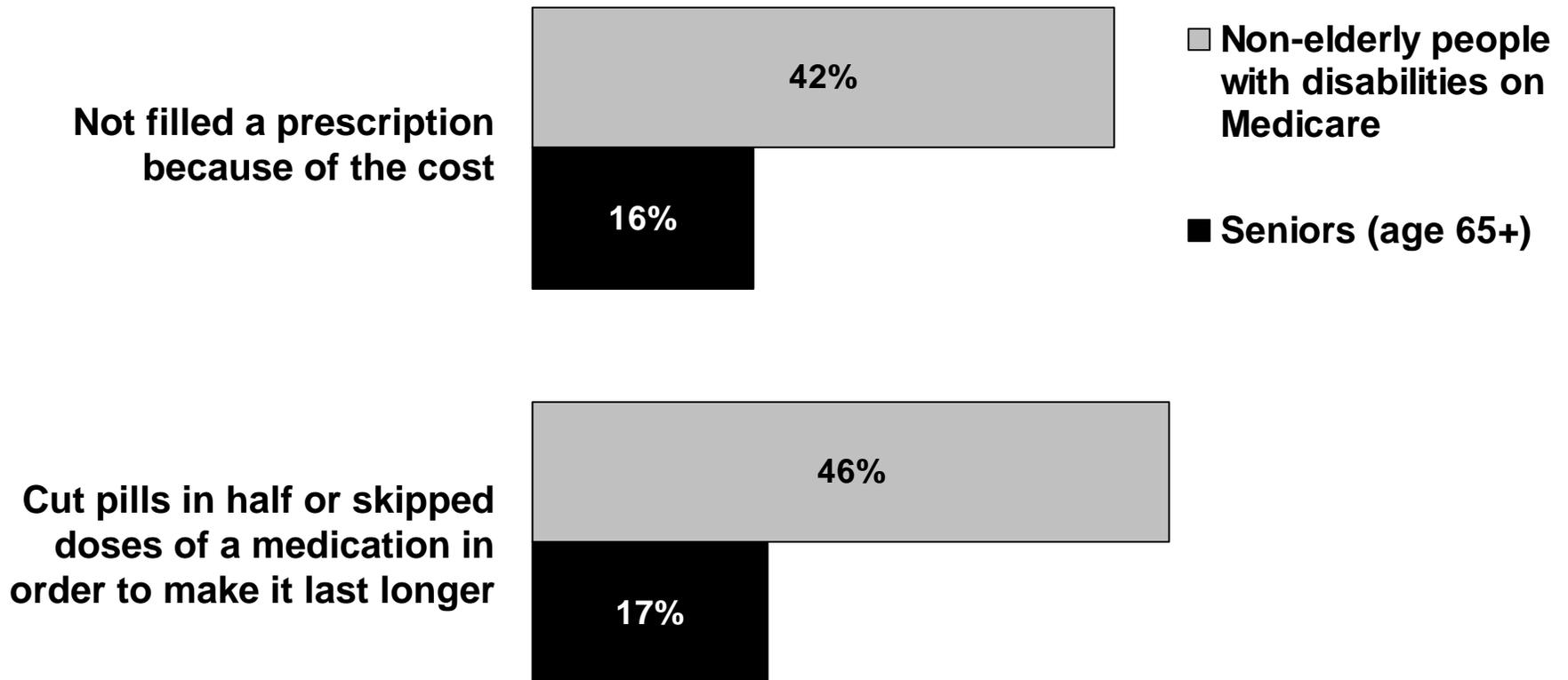
Note: Don't know responses not shown

Source: Kaiser Family Foundation/Harvard School of Public Health *Views of the New Medicare Drug Law: A Survey of People on Medicare* (6/16-7/21/2004)

# Problems With Prescription Medicines – Seniors Compared With Non-Elderly People With Disabilities

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Percent saying in the past year they have...





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