



Prescription Drugs: A Survey of Mississippi AARP Members



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Prescription Drugs: A Survey of Mississippi AARP Members

**Data Collected by Alan Newman Research, Inc.
Report Prepared by Joanne Binette**

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Background

The high cost of prescription drugs poses a serious obstacle to the health and well-being of the people of Mississippi. Unlike 39 other states, Mississippi has no state pharmaceutical assistance program for its citizens, other than those eligible for Medicaid benefits. Those who pay out-of-pocket the full retail cost of their prescription drugs pay the highest prices for their medications.

Currently, there is no centralized source of information to help Mississippians get information on the most effective and least expensive drugs for their conditions or to assist them in comparison shopping among pharmacies. Retail costs of prescription drugs vary tremendously depending on where the drug is purchased.

This report is part of a larger telephone survey of 800 AARP members in Mississippi conducted between November 9 and November 23, 2004. The full annotated questionnaire is contained in the appendix to this report. This report focuses on members' opinions about the affordability of prescription drugs and the importance of having access to information on prescription drugs including safety, effectiveness, and price.

Highlights

- Nine in ten (90%) Mississippi members bought a prescription drug in the last 12 months.
 - About six in ten of these members report that paying for prescription drugs has been a major problem (30%) or a minor problem (28%).
- About four in five of all Mississippi members are very (54%) or somewhat (24%) concerned about being able to afford the cost of prescription drugs for themselves or a family member over the next two years.
- Almost nine in ten Mississippi members think it is very (68%) or somewhat important (19%) that Mississippi create a centralized source that residents can use to get information on prescription drugs.
- More than nine in ten Mississippi members strongly (74%) or somewhat support (19%) Mississippi publicizing prescription drug prices in a centralized source so that consumers can comparison shop to get the best drug at the best price.
- More than four in five (82%) Mississippi members think it is very important for consumers to have access to information that compares the safety and effectiveness of prescription drug, and another one in ten (10%) think it is somewhat important.

Findings

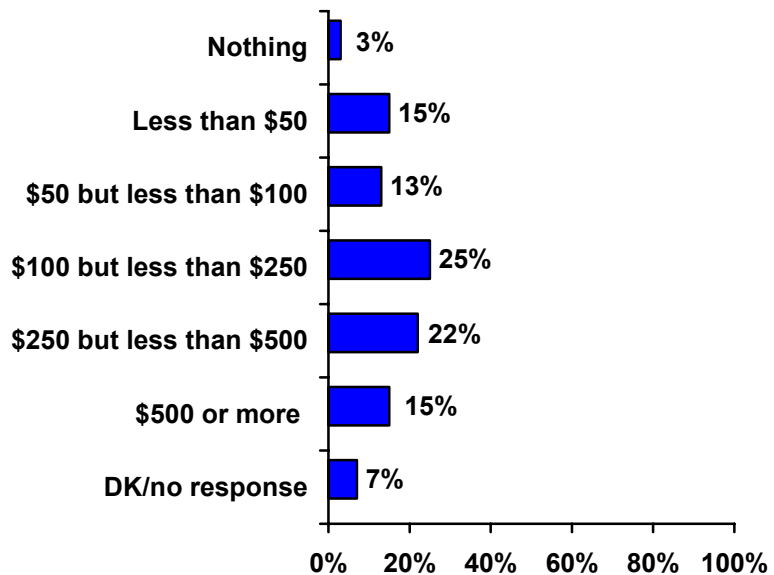
Nine in ten Mississippi members have purchased a prescription drug in the past twelve months.

Within the 12 months prior to the survey, nine in ten (90%) Mississippi members have bought a prescription drug. Only one in ten (10%) have not.

Out-of-pocket expenses for prescriptions vary considerably among Mississippi members.

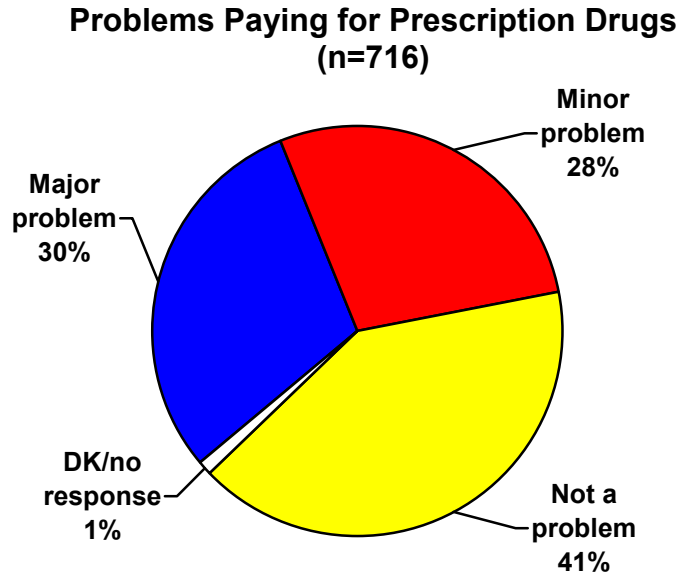
Of those members who bought a prescription drug in the last year, 37 percent spent \$250 or more in the past three months, and another 25 percent spent over \$100 but less than \$250. In contrast, only three percent say they spent nothing on prescription drugs in the past three months, and 28 percent spent under \$100.

Out of Pocket Costs for Prescription Drugs in the Last Three Months (n=716)



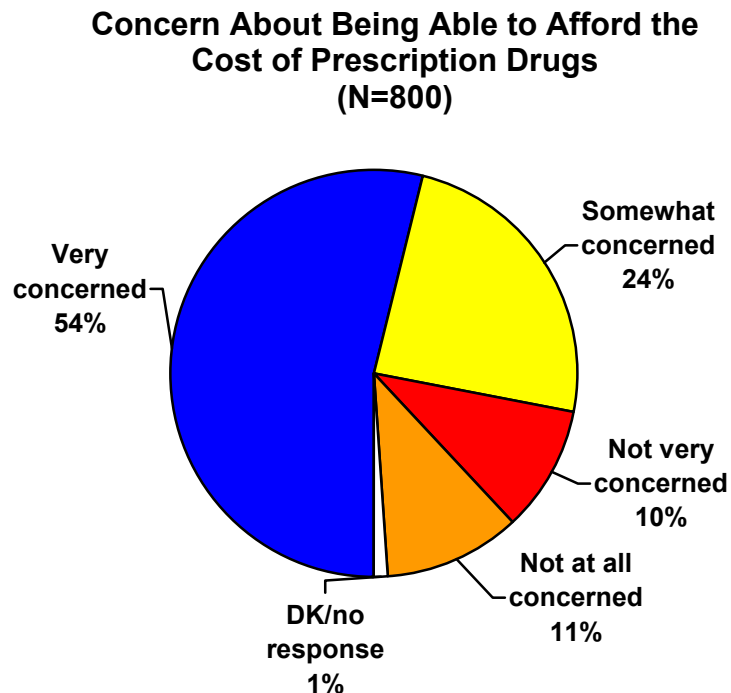
Nearly six in ten Mississippi members experience problems paying for their prescription drugs.

Of those members who bought a prescription drug in the last 12 months, three in ten Mississippi members (30%) report that paying for prescription drugs has been a major problem over the last three months, and another 28 percent say paying is a minor problem. About four in ten (41%) report no problem paying.



Almost four in five Mississippi members are concerned about being able to afford the cost of prescription drugs.

Nearly four in five members in Mississippi are very (54%) or somewhat concerned (24%) about being able to afford the cost of prescription drugs for themselves or a family member over the next two years.

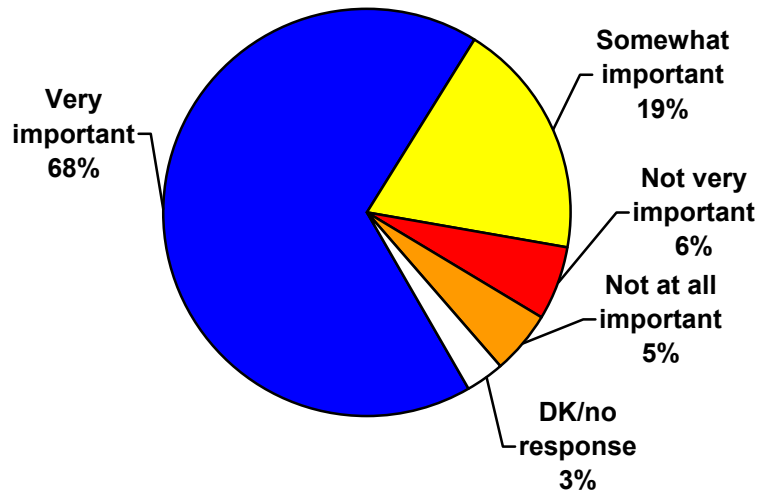


Nearly nine in ten Mississippi members believe it is important for the state to create a centralized source for residents to get information on prescription drugs.

Currently, there is not a centralized source that Mississippi residents can use to get information on prescription drugs, such as how to lower their costs and get the best drug for their illnesses.

Almost nine in ten members think it is very (68%) or somewhat important (19%) that Mississippi create a centralized source that residents can use to get information on prescription drugs.

Importance of Creating a Centralized Source for Information on Prescription Drugs* (N=800)

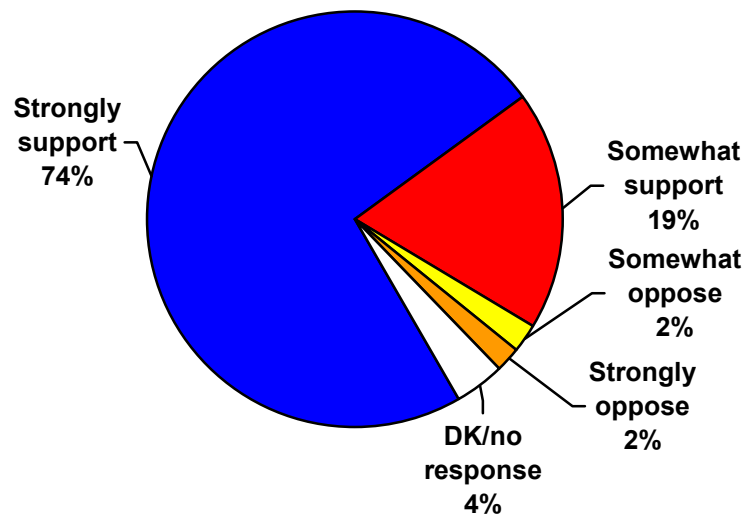


*Percentages do not add up to 100 due to rounding.

More than nine in ten Mississippi members support the state publicizing prescription drug prices in a centralized source to allow consumers to comparison shop for their prescription drugs.

Over nine in ten members strongly (74%) or somewhat support (19%) Mississippi publicizing prescription drug prices in a centralized source so that consumers can comparison shop to get the best drug at the best price.

Support for Making Prescription Drug Prices Available to the Public in a Centralized Source* (N=800)



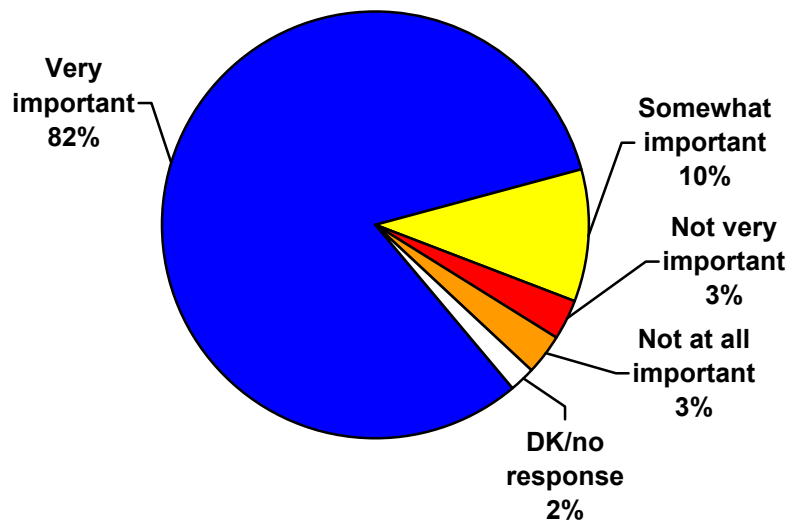
*Percentages do not add up to 100 due to rounding.

More than four in five Mississippi members believe it is very important for consumers to have access to information that compares the safety and effectiveness of prescription drugs.

Several states are developing information comparing the safety and effectiveness of prescription drugs in order to help consumers, doctors, and pharmacists choose the right drug at the best cost.

More than four in five (82%) Mississippi members think it is very important for consumers to have access to information that compares the safety and effectiveness of prescription drug, and another one in ten (10%) think it is somewhat important.

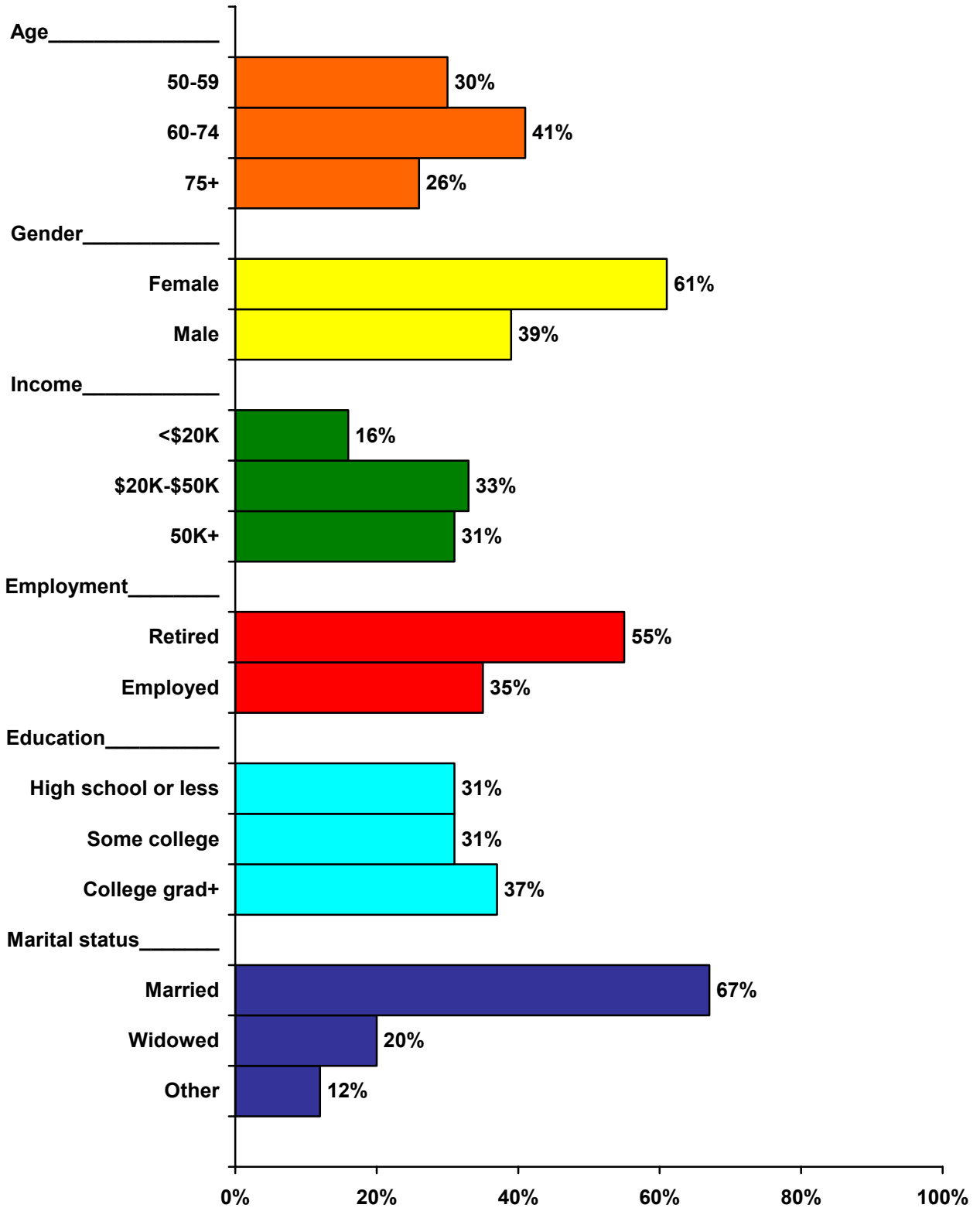
Importance of Having Access to Information on the Safety and Effectiveness of Prescription Drugs (N=800)



A Profile of Mississippi Members

Eight hundred AARP members in Mississippi participated in the survey. Eighty-five percent of those surveyed report they *always vote*, while another 10 percent say they *sometimes miss one vote*. Three percent say they *rarely or never vote*.

Demographic Characteristics (N=800)



Conclusions

Members in Mississippi are concerned about being able to afford the cost of prescription drugs. Over half have some problems at this point, perhaps not surprising when you consider that 37 percent who have purchased prescriptions in the past year paid over \$250 in the past three months for their prescriptions. Moreover, over three-quarters are concerned about being able to afford costs of prescription drugs. Clearly, this issue is an important one for AARP's membership.

One way that consumers can begin to deal with prescription drug costs is to have access to information, including cost information, on drugs that they take. It allows them to discuss cost-effective options with the physician and pharmacist. Almost nine ten say it is important for Mississippi to create a centralized source where residents can get information on prescription drugs such as how to lower their costs and get the best drug at the best price. Furthermore, over nine in ten support Mississippi publicizing prescription drug prices in a centralized source so that consumers can comparison to get the best drug at the most affordable price. Members also want information that compares the safety and effectiveness of prescription drugs. More than four in five say it is very important for consumers to have access to this type of information.

Methodology

AARP commissioned Alan Newman Research, Inc. to conduct a telephone survey from a list of randomly selected AARP members in Mississippi. A total of 800 interviews were completed. The survey was conducted between November 9 and November 23, 2004.¹ The survey has a sampling error of plus or minus 3.5 percent. This means that in 95 out of 100 samples of this size, the results obtained in the sample would fall in a range of 3.5 percentage points of what would have been obtained if every AARP member in Mississippi had been surveyed. Survey responses were weighted to reflect the distribution of the age segments in the member population of Mississippi. As of November 2004, the number of AARP members in Mississippi was 259,261. Weighted responses to all survey questions are in the attached annotated questionnaire.

¹ The response rate is 38 percent and the cooperation rate is 53 percent. The response rate is Response Rate 3 and the cooperation rate is Cooperation Rate 3 from the following publication: The American Association for Public Opinion Research. 2000. *Standard Definitions: Final Dispositions of Case Codes and Outcome Rates for Surveys*. Ann Arbor, Michigan: AAPOR.

Annotated Questionnaire

2004 Mississippi Legislative Issues Survey: Health and Long-Term Care and Prescription Drugs

Weighted N = 800; Sampling Error = 3.5%; Response Rate = 38%
(Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.)

Screener

(ASK TO SPEAK WITH NAME LISTED IN SAMPLE FILE)

Hello, my name is _____. I'm calling on behalf of the AARP (American Association of Retired Persons) from **Alan Newman Research, a national research firm**. We are conducting a survey with AARP members in Mississippi to find out about members' opinions on some important issues. Your views are important, and we would greatly appreciate your participation. **This is not a sales call, and you will not be asked to buy anything either now or later. We are not telemarketers.** Of course, as with all **Alan Newman Research** opinion surveys, your responses are kept entirely confidential.

(IF ASKED, "Where did you get my name?" SAY: "AARP provided a list of members for us to call.")

- A. (DO NOT READ) RECORD CALL STATUS
- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1 Selected respondent available | CONTINUE |
| 2 No such person | THANK AND TERMINATE/TQ-A |
| 3 Selected respondent not available | SET UP CALLBACK |
| 4 Spouse offered instead | CONTINUE |
| R Refused | THANK AND TERMINATE/RQ-A |

[INTERVIEWERS -- IF NECESSARY USE ANY OF THE FOLLOWING:

My name is _____. I'm calling from Alan Newman Research, a national opinion research firm located in Richmond, Virginia. Let me assure you, this is NOT a sales call and you will NOT be asked to buy anything either now or later. We are NOT telemarketers. You will not be asked to buy anything either now or later. All of your responses are kept entirely confidential. Your views are important and we would greatly appreciate your participation. **The survey should only take a few minutes (10 minutes) of your time depending on your answers.]**

Respondent Selection

S1. RECORD GENDER OF PERSON WHO ANSWERED PHONE:

- 1) Male
- 2) Female

S2. Before I begin, can I just confirm that you are currently a member of AARP?

- 1) Yes → [SKIP TO Q1]
- 2) No
- 3) DON'T KNOW / NOT SURE
- 4) REFUSED → [TERMINATE]

S3. May I speak to the person who is a member of AARP?

- 1) Yes
- 2) No, Person not available right now → [SCHEDULE CALLBACK]
- 3) No, Person never available → [SCREENOUT]
- 4) No one in house hold is AARP member → [SCREENOUT]
- 5) DON'T KNOW / NOT SURE → [TERMINATE]
- 6) REFUSED → [TERMINATE]

Main Questionnaire

Q1. Which of the following best describes Mississippi’s current funding for health and long-term care services used by children, people with disabilities, and the elderly?

Do you think.... (READ LIST AND ROTATE ANSWER CATEGORIES. ENTER ONLY ONE RESPONSE.)

	<u>%</u>
There is <u>more than enough</u> money in the state budget to meet the need for health and long-term care services and ensure quality?	1
There is <u>enough</u> money in the state budget to meet the need for health and long-term care services and ensure quality?	15
There is <u>not enough</u> money in the state budget to meet the need for health and long-term care services and ensure quality?	65
Don't know (DO NOT READ)	19
Refused (DO NOT READ)	0

Q2. This year, Mississippi had a \$450 million shortfall in the budget. This resulted in large budget cuts across the board. \$65 million was cut from health and long-term care services. More cuts are expected in 2005.

How important is it to you for Mississippi to restore money that was cut from health and long-term care services for children, people with disabilities, and the elderly?

Would it be..... (READ EACH OPTION)

	<u>%</u>
Very important	75
Somewhat important	15
Not very important	5
Not at all important	3
Don't know (DO NOT READ)	3
Refused (DO NOT READ)	<.5

Q3. Mississippi is now considering increasing the state cigarette tax to generate money in order to replace funding cut this year and prevent cuts in 2005 for health and long-term care services under Medicaid used by children, people with disabilities, and the elderly.

At .18 cents per pack, Mississippi’s cigarette tax is the third lowest cigarette tax in the country. It was last increased in 1985. One proposal to generate money for health and long-term care services calls for an increase in the cigarette tax by \$1.00 per pack. This proposal would generate \$184 million dollars annually and bring in an additional \$552 million dollars annually in federal money.

Q3. (continued)

How strongly do you support or oppose increasing Mississippi's cigarette tax from .18 cents per pack to \$1.18 per pack to generate money for health and long-term care services for children, people with disabilities, and the elderly? Do you..... (READ EACH OPTION)

	<u>%</u>
Strongly support	59
Somewhat support	19
Somewhat oppose	5
Strongly oppose	15
Don't know (DO NOT READ)	2
Refused (DO NOT READ)	<.5

Q4. Another proposal to increase the cigarette tax calls for an increase of .50 cents per pack. This proposal would generate \$154 million dollars annually and bring in an additional \$462 million dollars annually in federal money.

How strongly do you support or oppose increasing Mississippi's cigarette tax from .18 cents per pack to .68 cents per pack to generate money for health and long-term care services for children, people with disabilities, and the elderly? Do you..... (READ EACH OPTION)

	<u>%</u>
Strongly support	62
Somewhat support	17
Somewhat oppose	6
Strongly oppose	13
Don't know (DO NOT READ)	2
Refused (DO NOT READ)	<.5

**(NOTE TO INTERVIEWER:
IN Q.5 PLAD IS PRONOUNCED AS ONE WORD LIKE THE COLOR
PATTERN PLAID)**

Q5. The Governor signed legislation that terminated the Poverty-Level Aged and Disabled program known as PLAD. This program provides important health care coverage for about 65,000 low-income elderly and people with disabilities. While health care coverage was partially restored for about 17,000 of these people, about 50,000 people lost all of their coverage including prescription drugs and dental care. Mississippi has agreed to a court settlement and will temporarily restore these health care benefits through January 2005. If the state legislature does not take any further action, these individuals will again lose their health care coverage.

Q5. (continued)

How strongly do you support or oppose permanently restoring health care coverage for the low-income elderly and people with disabilities?

Do you..... (READ EACH OPTION)

	<u>%</u>
Strongly support	62
Somewhat support	22
Somewhat oppose	7
Strongly oppose	6
Don't know (DO NOT READ)	3
Refused (DO NOT READ)	<.5

(INTERVIEWER PROBE: IF SUPPORT IN Q. 5: Just to confirm your response, you support restoring health care coverage for the low-income elderly and people with disabilities. IF OPPOSE IN Q. 5: Just to confirm your response, you oppose restoring health care coverage for the low-income elderly and people with disabilities.)

Now, I would like to ask you a few questions about prescription drugs.

Q6. In the past 12 months, have you bought any prescription drugs?

	<u>%</u>
Yes	90
No (GO TO Q. 9)	10
Don't know (DO NOT READ) (GO TO Q. 9)	<.5
Refused (DO NOT READ) (GO TO Q. 9)	0

Q7. In the last three months or 90 days, approximately how much money did you spend out of your own pocket on prescription drugs? [DO NOT READ RESPONSES – USE FOR CODING] (n=716 Respondents who bought a prescription drug in the past 12 months)

	<u>%</u>
Nothing	3
Less than \$10	1
\$10 but less than \$25	5
\$25 but less than \$50	9
\$50 but less than \$75	6
\$75 but less than \$100	7
\$100 but less then \$250	25
\$250 but less than \$500	22
\$500 but less than \$750	7
\$750 but less than \$1,000	3
\$1,000 or more	5
Don't know (DO NOT READ)	6
Refused (DO NOT READ)	<.5

Q8. Would you say that *paying* for these prescription medications is a major financial problem, a minor financial problem, or not a financial problem for you? (n=716 Respondents who bought a prescription drug in the past 12 months)

	<u>%</u>
Major problem	30
Minor problem	28
Not a problem	41
Don't know (DO NOT READ)	1
Refused (DO NOT READ)	<.5

**Q9. How concerned are you about being able to afford the cost of prescription drugs for yourself or a family member over the next two years?
Would you say you are..... (READ EACH OPTION)**

	<u>%</u>
Very concerned	54
Somewhat concerned	24
Not very concerned	10
Not at all concerned	11
Don't know (DO NOT READ)	1
Refused (DO NOT READ)	<.5

Q10. Currently, there is not a centralized source that Mississippi residents can use to get information on prescription drugs, such as how to lower their costs and get the best drug for their illnesses.

How important would it be to you for the state of Mississippi to create a centralized source that residents can use to get information on prescription drugs?

Would it be..... (READ EACH OPTION)

	<u>%</u>
Very important	68
Somewhat important	19
Not very important	6
Not at all important	5
Don't know (DO NOT READ)	2
Refused (DO NOT READ)	1

Q11. How strongly do you support or oppose the state of Mississippi publicizing prescription drug prices in a centralized source to allow consumers to comparison for their prescription drugs? Do you.....

**(IF RESPONDENT DOES NOT UNDERSTAND QUESTION 11
INTERVIEWER READ: We are asking if you support or oppose Mississippi making prescription drug prices available to the public in one source so that consumers can get the best drug for their illness at the best price.)**

Do you.....

(READ EACH OPTION)

	<u>%</u>
Strongly support	74
Somewhat support	19
Somewhat oppose	2
Strongly oppose	2
Don't know (DO NOT READ)	3
Refused (DO NOT READ)	1

Q12. Several states are developing information comparing the safety and effectiveness of prescription drugs in order to help consumers, doctors, and pharmacists choose the right drug at the best cost.

How important is it to you for consumers to have access to information that compares the safety and effectiveness of prescription drugs?

Would it be.....

(READ EACH OPTION)

	<u>%</u>
Very important	82
Somewhat important	10
Not very important	3
Not at all important	3
Don't know (DO NOT READ)	1
Refused (DO NOT READ)	<.5

And now I just have a few short questions to ask for statistical purposes only:

Demographics

D1. What is your age as of your last birthday? (IN YEARS) _____

	<u>%</u>
Under 50	1
50-59	30
60-74	41
75+	26
Don't know/refused	2

D2. What is your current marital status? Are you currently..... (READ LIST)

	<u>%</u>
Currently married,	67
Currently living with partner/significant other	<.5
Widowed	20
Divorced	7
Separated	1
Never married	3
Don't know/not sure (DO NOT READ)	<.5
Refused (DO NOT READ)	1

D3. Thinking about your state elections for Mississippi Governor and Legislators in the last ten years, which of the following best describes your voting behavior? Would you say you always vote, sometimes miss one, rarely vote, or never vote?

	<u>%</u>
Always vote	85
Sometimes miss one	10
Rarely vote	1
Never vote	2
Don't know/not sure (DO NOT READ)	1
Refused (DO NOT READ)	1
Depends (VOLUNTEERED)	<.5

D4. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

(READ ANSWER CATEGORIES)	<u>%</u>
Less than high school	6
High school graduate or equivalent	26
Some college or technical training beyond high school	31
College graduate	18
Post-graduate or professional degree	19
Don't know/not sure (DO NOT READ)	0
Refused (DO NOT READ)	1

D5. Which of the following best describes your current employment status?

<i>Are you currently....</i>	<u>%</u>
Retired and not working	55
Employed full-time	25
Employed part-time	7
Homemaker	4
Unemployed and looking for work	1
Self-employed	2
Disabled	4
Student	<.5
Something else [Specify: _____]	<.5
Don't know/not sure (DO NOT READ)	0
Refused (DO NOT READ)	1

D6. Now, for statistical purposes only, please stop me when I get to the category that includes your household's income before taxes in 2003. Was it...

<i>(READ ANSWER CATEGORIES)</i>	<u>%</u>
Less than \$10,000	5
\$10,000 but less than \$20,000	11
\$20,000 but less than \$30,000	12
\$30,000 but less than \$40,000	11
\$40,000 but less than \$50,000	11
\$50,000 but less than \$75,000	15
\$75,000 but less than \$100,000	8
Or was your income \$100,000 or more	7
Don't know (DO NOT READ)	3
Refused (DO NOT READ)	17

D7. Do you currently smoke cigarettes on a regular basis?

	<u>%</u>
Yes	9
No	89
Don't know (DO NOT READ)	0
Refused (DO NOT READ)	2

D8. What is your 5-digit zip code? _____

D9. And, finally, may I verify that I reached you at: (_____)_____

D10. RECORD RESPONDENT'S GENDER:	<u>%</u>
Male	39
Female	61

Thank you for participating! Your Opinion Counts.

AARP
Knowledge Management
For more information contact Joanne Binette (202) 434-6303