

A large, thin, light-brown arc curves from the top right towards the bottom right. A horizontal line and a vertical line intersect at the bottom right, with a small yellow square at the intersection point. A green rectangle is in the top left corner, with a small yellow square at its bottom right corner.

# **Oklahoma Prescription Drugs: A Survey of AARP Members**

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**Report Prepared by Joanne Binette and Anita Stowell-Ritter**

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## Background

AARP Oklahoma is concerned about the impact of prescription drug costs on its members and on the state. For the 50+ population, prescription drugs are an essential part of therapeutic medicine. Yet, many persons find it difficult to afford the medications they need. The *AARP Oklahoma Prescription Drug Survey* report assesses members' concerns about and experiences with prescription drug affordability, particularly their out of pocket costs and financial hardships associated with paying for prescriptions.

In addition, this report examines members' opinions on several tools that could assist them in lowering their prescription drug costs by helping them make informed decisions when purchasing their medications. These tools include the creation of a centralized source of information, publicizing prescription drug prices, and giving consumers information that compares drugs for their safety and effectiveness.

This report is part of a larger mail survey of 1,146 Oklahoma AARP members conducted between October and November 2004. The full questionnaire is contained in the appendix to this report. Throughout the report, statistics representing member responses are reported in percentages.<sup>1</sup> In some instances, percentages are small and may not seem to represent a significant proportion of members, yet when projected to the total Oklahoma membership the actual number of people may be substantial. As of November 2004, the number of AARP members in Oklahoma was 401,714.

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<sup>1</sup> Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

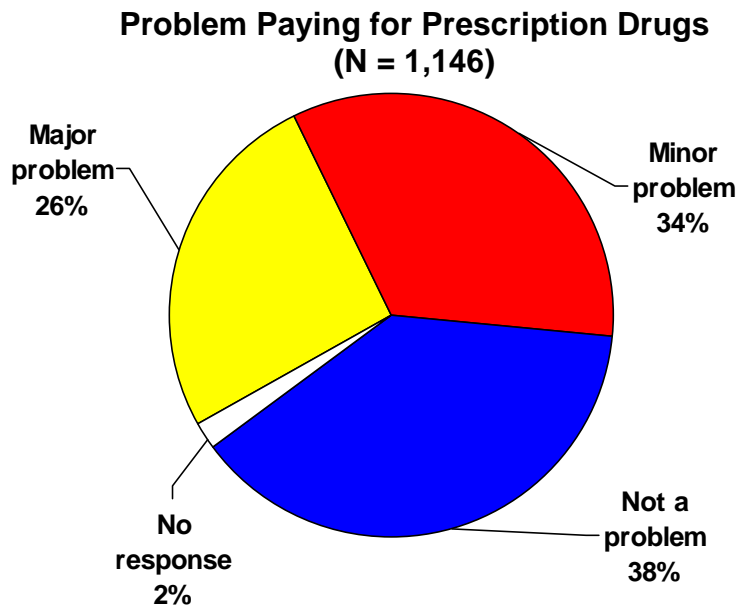
## Highlights

- Six in ten members report that paying for their prescription drugs has been a major (26%) or minor problem (34%) for them. More than half (55%) report they have taken one or more actions to reduce the cost of their medications in the past 12 months such as ordering prescriptions via mail or the internet, taking less medicine than prescribed, not filling or delaying filling a prescription, or cutting back on food, fuel, or electricity.
- With nearly half (47%) of Oklahoma members paying \$100 or more per month on prescription medications, more than seven in ten are very (42%) or somewhat concerned (29%) about their ability to pay for prescription drugs in the future.
- Oklahoma members believe several strategies would be valuable to help them make informed decisions about their medications: creating a centralized information source on prescription drugs (very, 58% or somewhat important, 28%); publicizing prescription drug prices (strongly, 70% or somewhat support, 20%); and expanding consumer access to information that compares the safety and effectiveness of prescription drugs (very, 82% or somewhat important, 13%).

## Findings

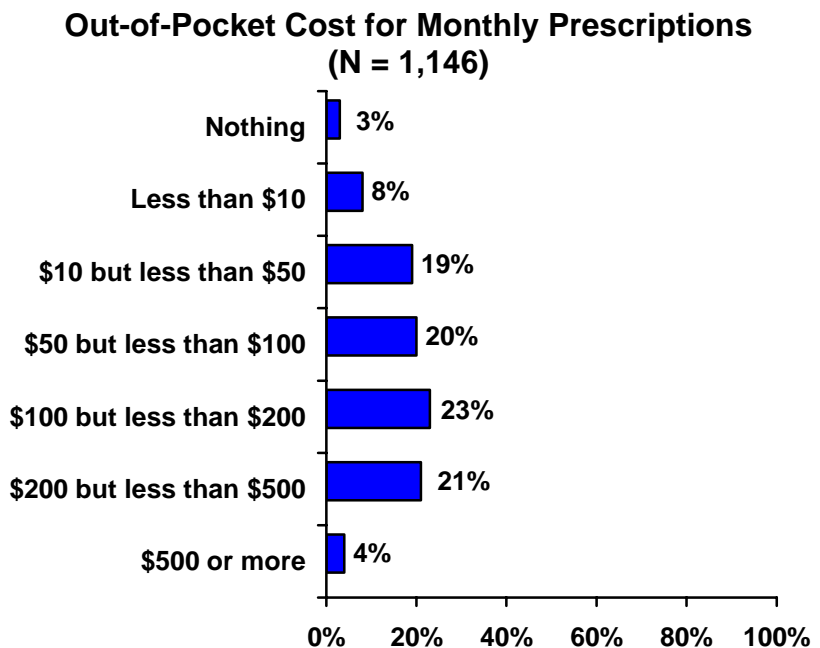
### Six in ten Oklahoma members experience problems paying for their prescription drugs.

Within the 12 months prior to the survey, almost all (97%) Oklahoma members or one of their family members have bought a prescription drug. More than one in four Oklahoma members (26%) report that paying for prescription drugs has been a major problem over the last 12 months, while another third (34%) say paying has been a minor problem. Thirty-eight percent report no problem paying.



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

The amount of out-of-pocket expense for prescriptions varies among members. In the last year, nearly half (47%)<sup>2</sup> of members paid \$100 or more per month; one in five (20%) paid between \$50 and \$100; and slightly more than one in four (27%) paid under \$50 per month. Very few (3%) members say they had not purchased a prescription.

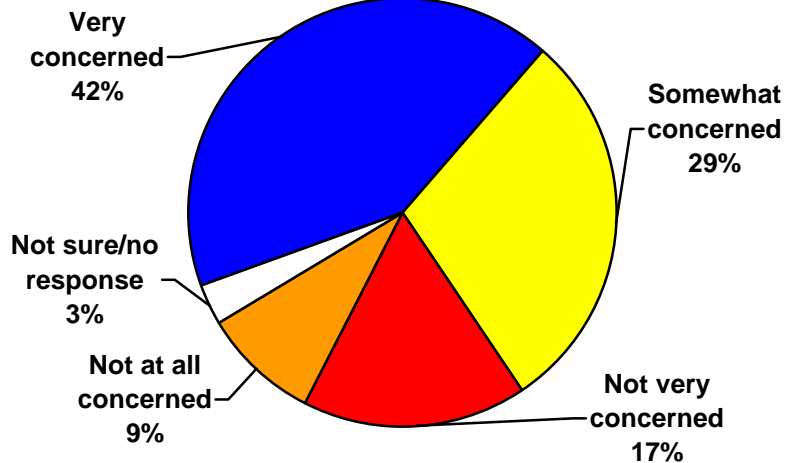


<sup>2</sup> Percentages in text differ slightly from graph due to rounding.

## Over seven in ten Oklahoma members are concerned about their ability to pay for prescription drugs in the future.

Member concern about affording prescription drugs over the next two years is high: Over seven in ten are either very (42%) or somewhat concerned (29%).

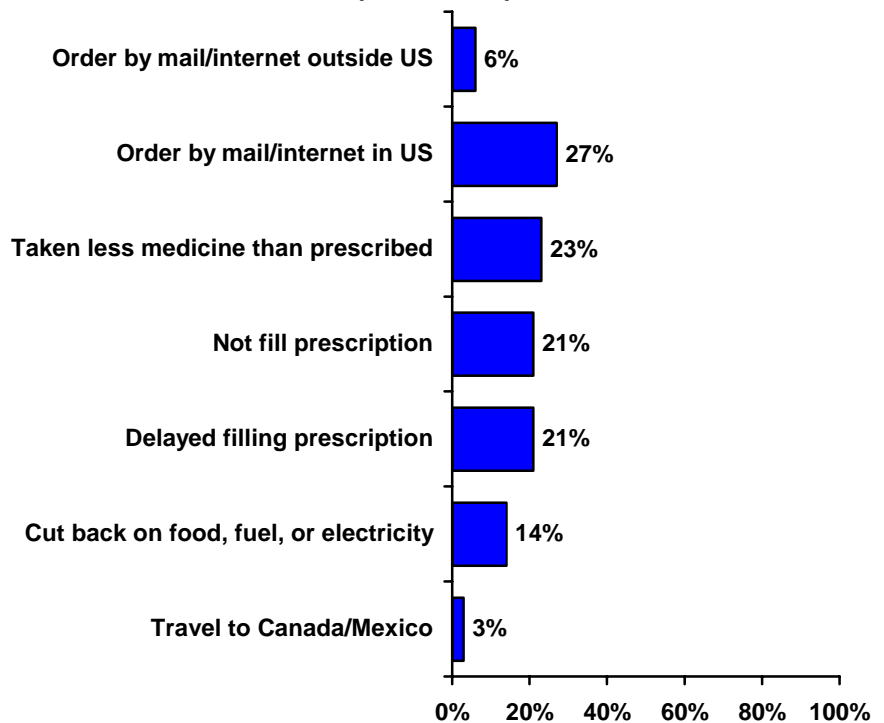
**Concern About Being Able to Afford Prescription Drugs Over the Next Two Years**  
(N = 1,146)



## More than half of Oklahoma members have taken measures to reduce their prescription drug expenses.

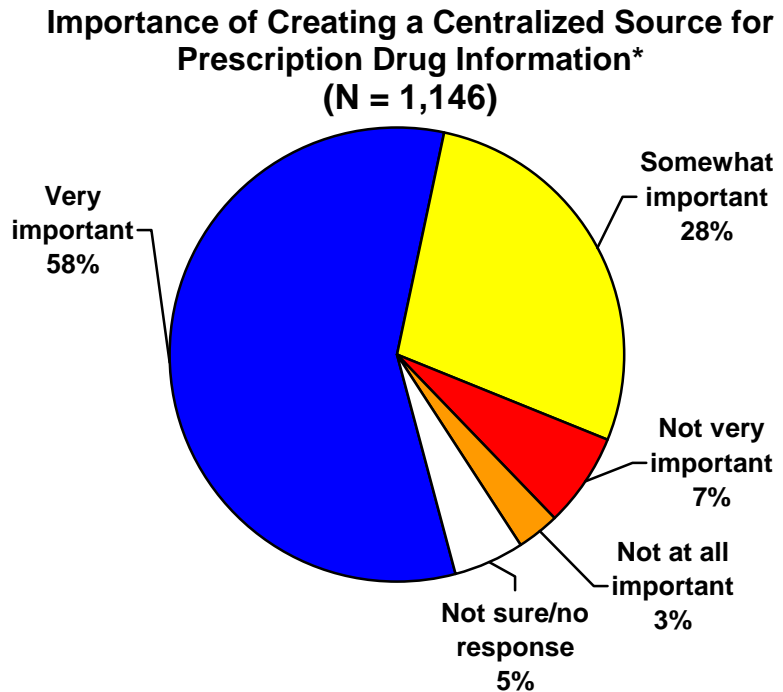
Oklahoma members and their families have taken actions to control their out-of-pocket spending on prescription drugs. A third have purchased prescription drugs via mail or the Internet both inside and outside the US. Some members have taken more serious steps to control spending on prescription drugs. Nearly a quarter (23%) have taken less medicine than the doctor prescribed to make the drug last longer. About one in five did not fill (21%) or delayed filling a prescription (21%) because of the cost. Over half (55%) of members have taken one or more actions to reduce the cost of their prescription drugs.

**Actions by Members or Their Families When Buying Prescription Drugs**  
(N = 1,146)



**Almost seven in eight Oklahoma members believe it is important for the state to create a centralized source that residents can use to get information on prescription drugs.**

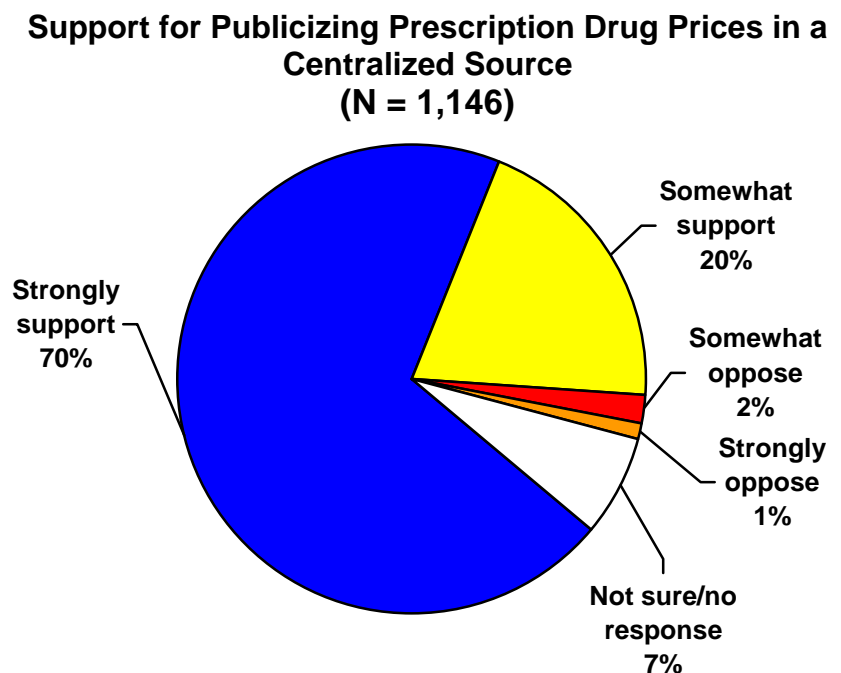
Currently, there is not a centralized source that Oklahoma residents can use to get information on prescription drugs, such as how to lower their costs and get the best drug for their illnesses. Almost seven in eight Oklahoma members think it is very (58%) or somewhat important (28%) for the state of Oklahoma to create a centralized source that residents can use to get information on prescription drugs.



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

**Nine in ten Oklahoma members support Oklahoma publicizing prescription drug prices in a centralized source to allow consumers to comparison shop.**

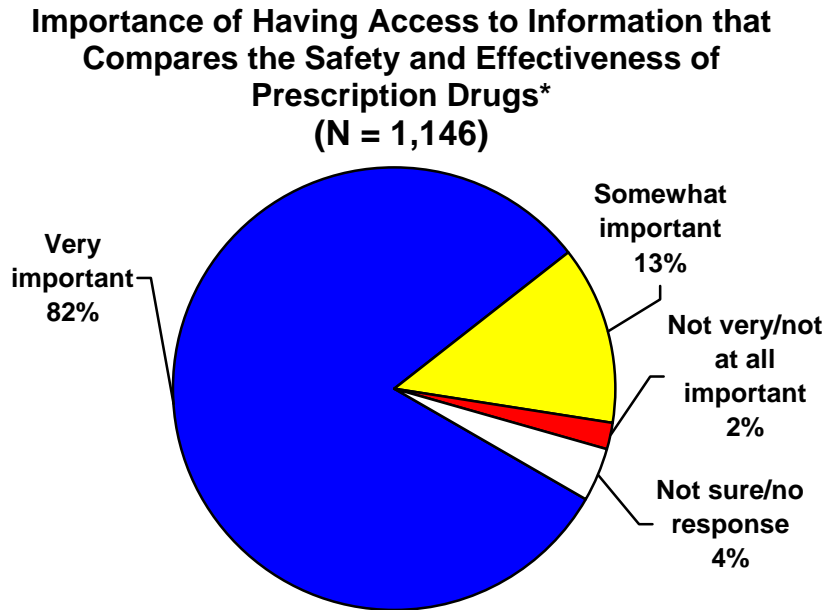
Nine in ten Oklahoma members strongly (70%) or somewhat support (20%) the state of Oklahoma publicizing prescription drug prices in a centralized source in order to give consumers the opportunity to comparison shop.





**Almost all Oklahoma members believe it is important for consumers to have access to information that compares the safety and effectiveness of prescription drugs.**

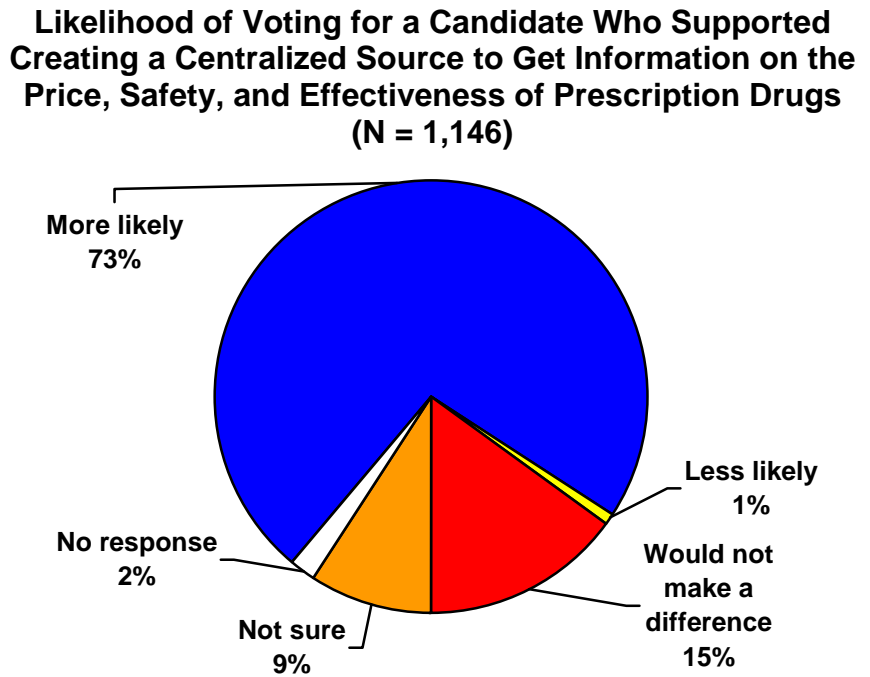
Nearly all Oklahoma members think it is very (82%) or somewhat important (13%) for consumers to have access to information that compares the safety and effectiveness of prescription drugs.



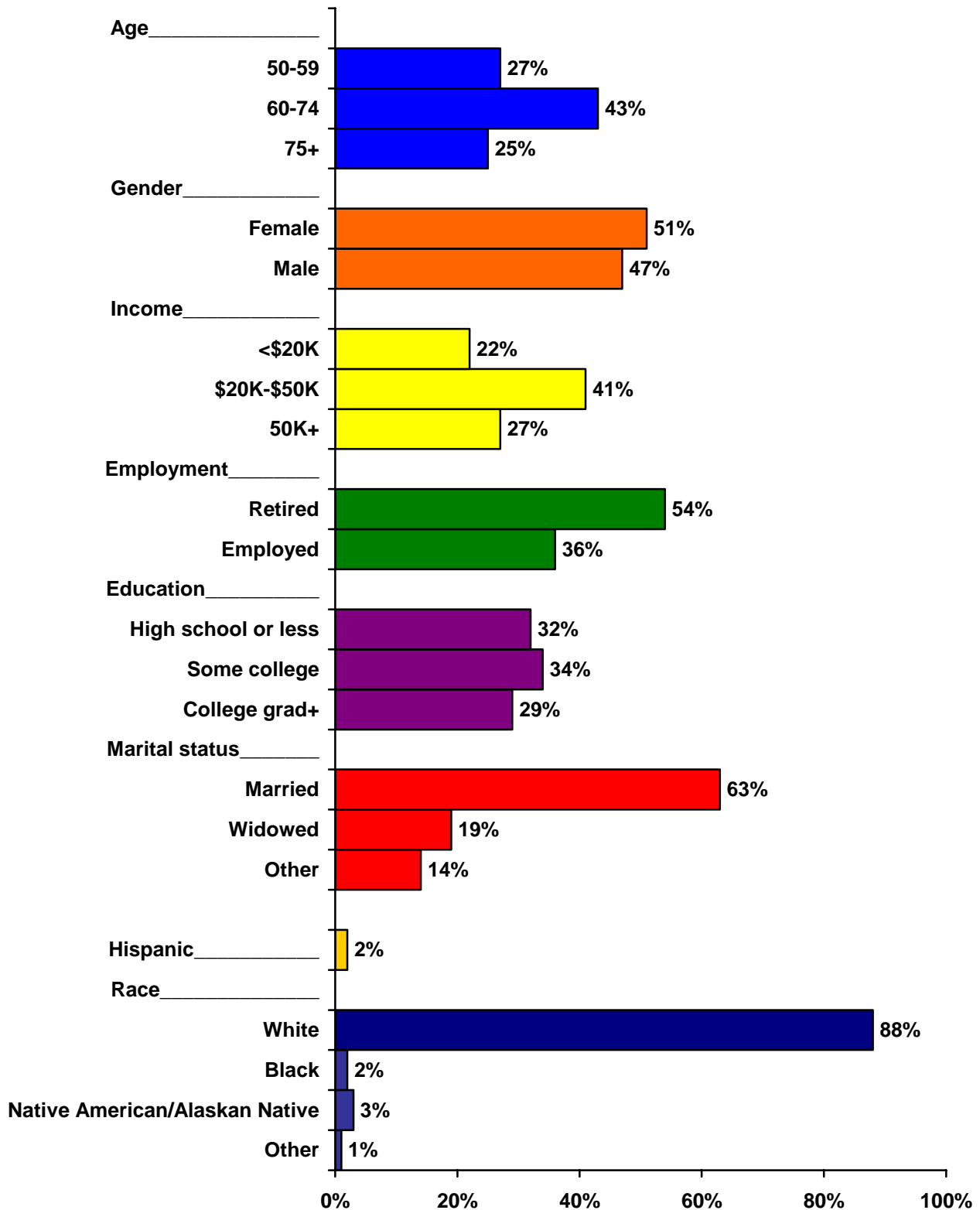
\*Percentages do not add up to 100 due to rounding.

**Almost three in four Oklahoma members say they would be more likely to vote for a candidate who supported creating a centralized source for information on the price, safety, and effectiveness of prescription drugs.**

Nearly three in four (73%) members say they would be more likely to vote for a candidate for state office who supported creating a centralized source that Oklahoma residents could use to get information on the price, safety, and effectiveness of prescription drugs. Only one percent say they would be less likely to vote for a candidate who supported this action. Only one in seven (15%) say it would not make a difference in their voting behavior.



## Demographic Characteristics (N = 1,146)



## Conclusions

The cost of prescription drugs is a major concern for Oklahoma members. Nearly all report that they have purchased a prescription drug in the past twelve months. Six in ten members indicate that paying for their medications has been a major or minor problem for them, and even more are concerned about their continuing ability to pay for medications. This is not surprising since almost half of members have spent \$100 per month or more out-of-pocket for their prescription drugs.

Over the past 12 months, more than half of members have taken one or more steps to control the costs of their medications. While some may represent appropriate cost saving actions such as seeking lower cost drugs by ordering on the Internet, others are potentially risky behaviors such as delaying filling a prescription, taking less medication than prescribed, or not filling a prescription at all.

Members are supportive of a range of strategies to aid them in making informed decisions about medications. Among the strategies members consider important are creating a centralized drug information source; publicizing prescription drug costs; and in particular having access to information that compares the safety and effectiveness of prescription drugs. Members report that they would be more likely to vote for candidates who support these measures.

## Methodology

AARP conducted the *Oklahoma Long-term Care and Prescription Drugs: A Survey of AARP Members* from October 22 through November 19, 2004. A random sample of 2,000 AARP members in Oklahoma, proportionally stratified by three age segments, 50 to 59, 60 to 74, and 75+, was selected from AARP's membership database. Each sampled member was contacted about the survey in four ways: a pre-notification postcard, the survey itself, a reminder postcard, and a second survey. Fifty-seven percent of the sampled Oklahoma members returned surveys by the cut-off date, providing 1,146 useable surveys for analysis. Thus, the survey has a sampling error of plus or minus 3.0 percent.<sup>3</sup> Survey responses were weighted to reflect the distribution of the age segments in the member population of Oklahoma. As of November 2004, the number of AARP members in Oklahoma was 401,714.

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<sup>3</sup> 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 percentage points of what would have been obtained if every AARP member in Oklahoma age 50 or older had been surveyed.

## **Annotated Questionnaire**

# 2004 AARP Oklahoma Long-Term Care and Prescription Drugs Survey

(AARP Members N = 1,146; Response Rate 57%; Sampling Error = 3.0± %)  
(Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding or multiple response.)

## Long-Term Care

**Long-term care** refers to care provided over an extended period of time at home, in a community setting, or in a nursing home. People of all ages who are frail, ill, or disabled who need assistance with regular daily activities, such as getting dressed, bathing, preparing meals, or eating may receive long-term care services. **Home and community-based services** refers to long-term services and support provided in individuals' homes or in home-like environments.

1. Have you or any member of your family -- such as grandparents, parents, children, or a sister or brother -- used long-term care services within the last five years?

	<u>%</u>
Yes	27
No	70
Not sure	1
No response	1

2. What is the likelihood that you or a family member may need long-term care services in the next five years?

	<u>%</u>
Very likely	18
Somewhat likely	31
Not very likely	28
Not at all likely	6
Not sure	16
No response	2

3. Some people age 50 and older express worry about being able to afford long-term care services for themselves and their family. How worried are you about it?

	<u>%</u>
Very worried	21
Somewhat worried	42
Not very worried	22
Not at all worried	10
Not sure	4
No response	1

4. Some people age 50 and older express worry about not having enough choices regarding the type of long-term care services available for themselves and their family. How worried are you about it?

	<u>%</u>
Very worried	16
Somewhat worried	40
Not very worried	28
Not at all worried	10
Not sure	5
No response	1

5. There are several long-term care options available for people who are disabled, ill, or elderly. If you or a family member needed long-term care services, how would you prefer to receive those services? (Please check only ONE)

	<u>%</u>
Have family and friends provide all the care at home	11
Be able to pay a nurse or a personal care aide to provide care at home	41
Have care provided in a residential facility, such as a care home or assisted living facility where housing, food, and personal care such as help with bathing and dressing are provided for those who live there	29
Have care provided in a nursing home	3
Not sure	14
No response	2

6. If you or any member of your family needed long-term care services, how important would it be to you to have services that would enable you or your family member to stay at home as long as possible?

	<u>%</u>
Very important	79
Somewhat important	15
Not very important	2
Not at all important	1
Not sure	2
No response	1

7. If a candidate for state office in Oklahoma supported maintaining or expanding the delivery of home and community-based health and long-term care services even if it means raising state taxes, would you be more likely to vote for that candidate, less likely to vote for him or her, or would it not make any difference?

	<u>%</u>
More likely	53
Less likely	10
Would not make a difference	18
Not sure	18
No response	1

## Adult Day Care and Assisted Living

Adult day care provides a home-like setting for individuals who, for their own safety and well-being, cannot remain home unsupervised. Adult day care centers are usually open five days a week during business hours and include a mixture of health, social and support services. Specialized programs for individuals with Alzheimer's disease or related disorders also exist.

8. Currently, there are 34 licensed Adult Day Care centers in Oklahoma that serve 2,000 residents. Statewide studies show that at least 89 centers are needed to serve all disabled, ill, and elderly Oklahoma residents wanting this type of care.

How important do you think it is for the state of Oklahoma to increase funding to provide additional adult day care services for the disabled, ill, and elderly?

	<u>%</u>
Very important	60
Somewhat important	28
Not very important	4
Not at all important	1
Not sure	6
No response	1

Assisted living is a residential setting that provides or coordinates personal care services, activities, and health related services with the goals of maximizing resident privacy, independence, and dignity and minimizing the need for residents to move when their needs change.

9. Currently, the federal government does not regulate assisted living facilities at all and the state of Oklahoma has only minimal oversight. How strongly would you support or oppose state legislation to expand government oversight of all assisted living facilities to ensure consumer protection and quality care?

	<u>%</u>
Strongly support	61
Somewhat support	24
Somewhat oppose	3
Strongly oppose	4
Not sure	7
No response	1

## Nursing Homes

10. Currently, nursing homes in Oklahoma are required to perform criminal background checks on nursing home staff including nurses, nursing assistants, and physical and occupational therapists. Criminal background checks are not required for other nursing home staff such as janitors, maintenance persons, housekeeping, or food service workers who may have direct, unsupervised contact with nursing home residents.

10. *(continued)* How strongly would you support or oppose the state of Oklahoma requiring nursing homes to perform criminal background checks on these other nursing home staff to ensure the safety of nursing home residents?

	<u>%</u>
Strongly support	89
Somewhat support	8
Somewhat oppose	1
Strongly oppose	1
Not sure	1
No response	1

11. There have been recent reports about registered sex offenders and other convicted violent offenders living in nursing homes in Oklahoma. Cases of sexual and physical assault on nursing home residents by registered sex offenders and other convicted violent offenders living in nursing homes in Oklahoma have also been documented.

How important do you think it is for the state of Oklahoma to require that these offenders be served in separate nursing home facilities or secured units to ensure the safety of other nursing home residents?

	<u>%</u>
Very important	88
Somewhat important	7
Not very important	1
Not at all important	1
Not sure	1
No response	1

12. If a candidate for state office in Oklahoma supported legislation that would require registered sex and violent offenders to be served in separate nursing home facilities or secured units to ensure the safety of other nursing home residents, would you be more likely to vote for that candidate, less likely to vote for him or her, or would it not make any difference?

	<u>%</u>
More likely	81
Less likely	2
Would not make a difference	9
Not sure	7
No response	1

## Prescription Drugs

13. Have you or a family member bought a prescription drug within the past 12 months?

	<u>%</u>
Yes	97
No	2
Not sure	<.1
No response	1



14. In the past 12 months, has paying for prescription medications been a major problem, a minor problem, or not a problem for you?

	<u>%</u>
A major problem	26
A minor problem	34
Not a problem	38
No response	2

15. In the past 12 months, approximately how much have you spent, each month, out of your own pocket for prescription drugs?

	<u>%</u>
Less than \$10 per month	8
\$10 but less than \$50 per month	19
\$50 but less than \$100 per month	20
\$100 but less than \$200 per month	23
\$200 but less than \$500 per month	21
\$500 or more per month	4
Nothing, have not purchased prescription drugs	3
Not sure	3
No response	1

16. How concerned are you about being able to afford the cost of needed prescription drugs over the next two years?

	<u>%</u>
Very concerned	42
Somewhat concerned	29
Not very concerned	17
Not at all concerned	9
Not sure	2
No response	1

17. Many people face difficult decisions when buying prescription drugs. In the past 12 months, have you or a family member done any of the following?

In the past 12 months, have you or a family member...		Yes	No	Not sure	No response
		<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>
a.	Delayed getting a prescription filled because you didn't have enough money to pay for it?	21	75	2	3
b.	Taken less medicine than your doctor prescribed to make it last longer?	23	73	2	3
c.	Cut back on items such as food, fuel, or electricity to be able to afford a prescription drug?	14	81	2	3
d.	Ordered your prescription drugs by mail or Internet from a company <u>in the U.S.</u> because they cost less?	27	69	2	3

**17. (continued)**

e.	Ordered your prescription drugs by mail or Internet from a company <b><u>in another country</u></b> because they cost less?	6	90	1	3
f.	Decided not to fill a prescription because of the cost of the drug?	21	74	2	3
g.	Traveled to Mexico, Canada, or another country to purchase prescription drugs because they cost less?	3	93	1	3

**18. Currently, there is not a centralized source that Oklahoma 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 Oklahoma to create a centralized source that residents can use to get information on prescription drugs?**

	<b>%</b>
Very important	58
Somewhat important	28
Not very important	7
Not at all important	3
Not sure	3
No response	2

**19. How strongly would you support or oppose the state of Oklahoma publicizing prescription drug prices in a centralized source to allow consumers to comparison shop?**

	<b>%</b>
Strongly support	70
Somewhat support	20
Somewhat oppose	2
Strongly oppose	1
Not sure	5
No response	2

**20. 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?**

	<b>%</b>
Very important	82
Somewhat important	13
Not very important	1
Not at all important	1
Not sure	2
No response	2

- 21. If a candidate for state office in Oklahoma supported creating a centralized source that Oklahoma residents can use to get information on the price, safety, and effectiveness of prescription drugs, would you be more likely to vote for that candidate, less likely to vote for him or her, or would it not make any difference?**

	<u>%</u>
More likely	73
Less likely	1
Would not make a difference	15
Not sure	9
No response	2

## About You

The following questions are for classification purposes only and will be kept entirely confidential.

- D1. In the last 12 months, have you accessed the Internet from your home or work, or from some other source such as your local library? (Check all that apply)**

	<u>%</u>
Yes, from home	51
Yes, from work	17
Yes, from some other source	7
No	41
No response	2

- D2. Are you male or female?**

	<u>%</u>
Male	47
Female	51
No response	3

- D3. What is your age as of your last birthday? \_\_\_\_\_ (in years)**

	<u>%</u>
50-59	27
60-74	43
75+	25
No response	3

- D4. What is your current marital status?**

	<u>%</u>
Married	63
Widowed	19
Divorced	12
Separated	<.1
Never married	2
No response	4

**D5. Thinking about your state elections for Oklahoma Governor and Legislators in the last ten years, which of the following best describes your voting behavior?**

	<u>%</u>
Always vote	70
Sometimes miss one	19
Rarely vote	4
Never vote	3
Not sure	1
No response	4

**D6. What is the highest level of education that you completed?**

	<u>%</u>
Less than high school	6
High school graduate or equivalent	26
Some college or technical training beyond high school	34
College graduate (4 years)	14
Post-graduate or professional degree	15
No response	6

**D7. Which of the following best describes your current employment status?**

	<u>%</u>
Employed or self-employed <u>full-time</u>	26
Employed or self-employed <u>part-time</u>	10
Retired and not working	54
Other such as homemaker	5
Unemployed and looking for work	1
No response	5

**D8. Are you of Hispanic, Spanish, or Latino origin or descent?**

	<u>%</u>
Yes	2
No	93
Not sure	<.1
No response	5

**D9. What is your race?**

	<u>%</u>
White or Caucasian	88
Black or African American	2
Asian	1
Native American or Alaskan Native	3
Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	<.1
Other (Specify: _____)	1
No response	6

**D10. What is your 5-digit zip code? (WRITE IN YOUR ZIP CODE.)** \_ \_ \_ \_ \_

**D11. What was your annual household income before taxes in 2003?**

	<u>%</u>
Less than \$10,000	7
\$10,000 to \$19,999	15
\$20,000 to \$29,999	19
\$30,000 to \$39,999	12
\$40,000 to \$49,999	10
\$50,000 to \$74,999	13
\$75,000 or more	14
No response	12

**Thank you** for completing this survey. Please use the postage-paid envelope and return it to State Member Research, AARP, 601 E Street, NW, Washington, DC 20049, by **November 19, 2004.**

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