

**Managing Prescription
Drug Costs: A 2005
Colorado AARP
Member Survey**

December 2005



Managing Prescription Drug Costs: A 2005 Colorado AARP Member Survey

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AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan membership organization that helps people 50+ have independence, choice and control in ways that are beneficial and affordable to them and society as a whole. We produce *AARP The Magazine*, published bimonthly; *AARP Bulletin*, our monthly newspaper; *AARP Segunda Juventud*, our bimonthly magazine in Spanish and English; *NRTA Live & Learn*, our quarterly newsletter for 50+ educators; and our website, www.aarp.org. AARP Foundation is our affiliated charity that provides security, protection, and empowerment to older persons in need with support from thousands of volunteers, donors, and sponsors. We have staffed offices in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

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Background

AARP Colorado 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.

Managing Prescription Drug Costs: A 2005 Colorado AARP Member Survey 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 member support for two proposals that could help to control the cost of medication: a bulk prescription drug purchasing pool and use of a preferred drug list in state-funded prescription drug programs. The importance of consumer access to information on the safety and effectiveness of prescription drugs was also assessed.

This report is part of a larger mail survey of 956 Colorado AARP members conducted between August and September 2005. The full questionnaire is contained in the appendix to this report. Throughout the report, statistics representing member responses are reported in percentages.¹ In some instances, percentages are small and may not seem to represent a significant proportion of members, yet when projected to the total Colorado membership the actual number of people may be substantial. As of November 2005, the number of AARP members in Colorado was 628,021.

¹Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Highlights

- Nearly nine in ten (86%) Colorado members have bought a prescription drug in the past 12 months. Of these,
- About half indicate it has been a major (13%) or minor financial problem (33%) to pay for their medications.
- Over a third (34%) report they spend \$100 or more out of their own pocket per month to pay for their medications.
- One in four members (25%) report that they or family members have delayed getting a prescription filled, taken less medication than the doctor prescribed, and/or did not fill a prescription because of the cost of the drug.
- Nearly nine in ten members (89%) say it is important for Colorado to make prescription drug costs more affordable.
- Nearly eight in ten members (78%) support Colorado creating a bulk purchasing pool to negotiate lower drug prices with pharmaceutical companies, and more than half (51%) say they would be more likely to vote for a candidate for state office who supported a bulk purchasing pool.
- The vast majority of members (93%) believe it is important for consumers to have access to information that compares the safety and effectiveness of prescription drugs.

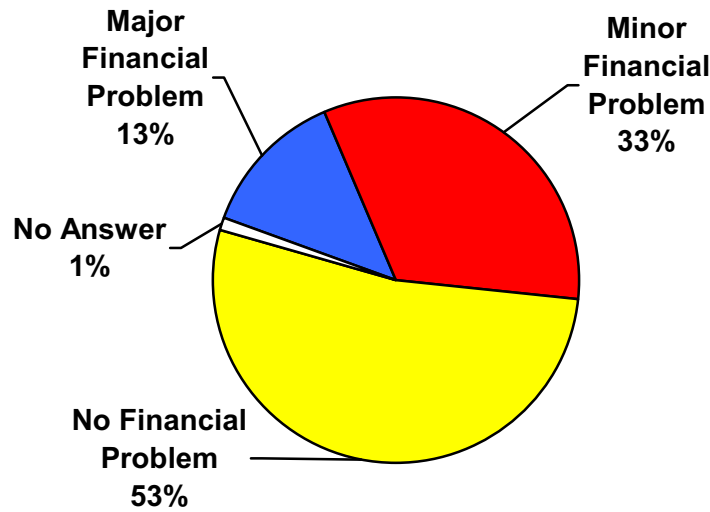
Detailed Findings

About half of those members who have bought prescription drugs in the past 12 months report that paying for medications has been a financial problem.

When asked if they had bought a prescription drug in the past 12 months, nearly nine in ten (86%) indicate they have. Ten percent say they have not. More older members report that they have bought a prescription drug in the past 12 months (50-59, 81% vs. 60-74, 89% and 75+, 88%).

Among those who have purchased prescription medications in the past 12 months, nearly half (46%) say that paying for prescription medications has been a major or minor financial problem for them.

Problems Paying for Prescription Medications
(n=822)

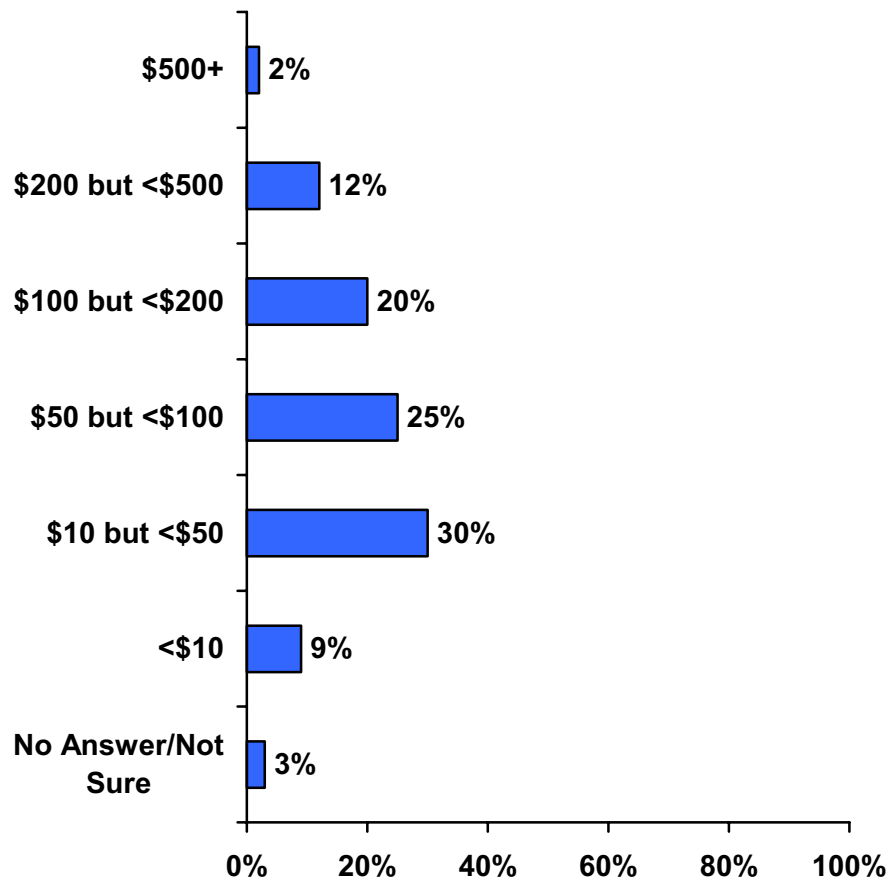


More members with lower annual incomes say paying for prescription drugs has been a major financial problem (<\$40K, 37% vs. \$40K>, 29 %%).

Slightly more than one in three members who have bought prescriptions spend at least \$100 per month out of their own pocket to pay for prescription drugs.

Members were asked to estimate approximately how much they have spent in the past 12 months out of their own pocket each month on prescription drugs. While two in three members (64%) report spending less than \$100 per month on prescription drugs, slightly more than one in three (34%) report spending \$100 or more per month. Two percent say they have spent \$500 or more out-of-pocket per month.

**Approximate Amount Spent Out-of-Pocket
For Prescription Drugs Each Month**
(n=822)

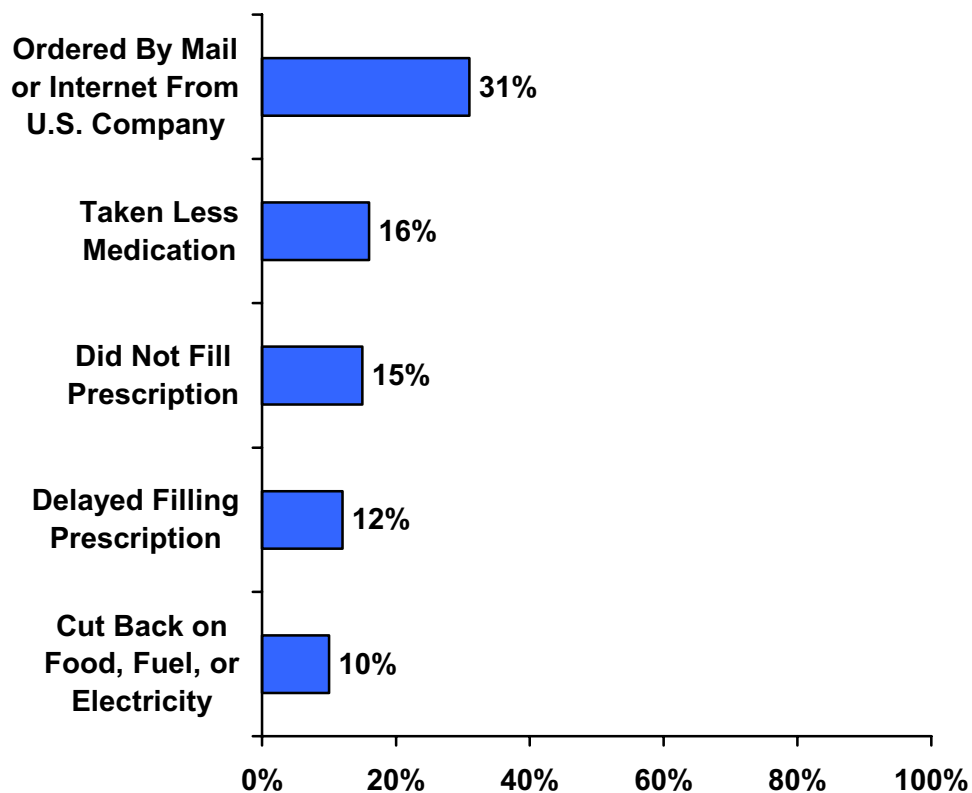


Age and income are not factors in reported out-of-pocket expenses.

Slightly more than three in ten members who have taken medications report they or family members have ordered prescription drugs by mail or over the Internet from a U.S. company as a means to control the cost of their prescription medications.

Members were presented with a list of five actions persons may take to control the cost of their prescription medications, and they were asked if they or family members have taken any of the measures in the past 12 months. The most common action taken is to order their prescription drugs by mail or over the Internet from a company in the U.S. because they cost less. One in six members or family members have taken less medicine than their doctor prescribed to make it last longer. Between 10 and 15 percent of members or their family members have decided not to fill a prescription because of the cost of the drug, delayed getting a prescription filled because they did not have enough money to pay for it, or cut back on items such as food, fuel, or electricity to be able to afford a prescription drug.

Actions Taken to Control Cost of Prescription Drugs
(n=822)



More younger members have taken actions to reduce cost. The primary exception to that finding is members ages 60 to 74 are more likely than those older to say they or family members have cut back on items such as food, fuel, and electricity.

Actions Taken to Reduce Medication Costs By Age and Income

	50-59	60-74	75+	<\$40K	\$40K+
Sample Size n=	259	339	175	366*	398
Actions Taken	%	%	%	%	%
Delayed filling prescription	16	12	4	15	10
Taken less medication than prescribed	21	14	11	19	13
Cut back on food, fuel, or electricity	11	12	7	16	5
Order by mail or Internet	34	31	24	29	33
Not filled prescription	20	14	8	17	14

Note: Bolded numbers indicates statistically significant differences.

**Sample size for <\$40K is 365 for Order by mail or Internet.*

Those with lower annual incomes are more likely to report that they or family members have delayed filling prescriptions, taken less medication than prescribed, and cut back on items such as food, fuel, and electricity. Alternatively, those with higher incomes are slightly more likely to report they ordered a prescription through the mail or over the Internet.

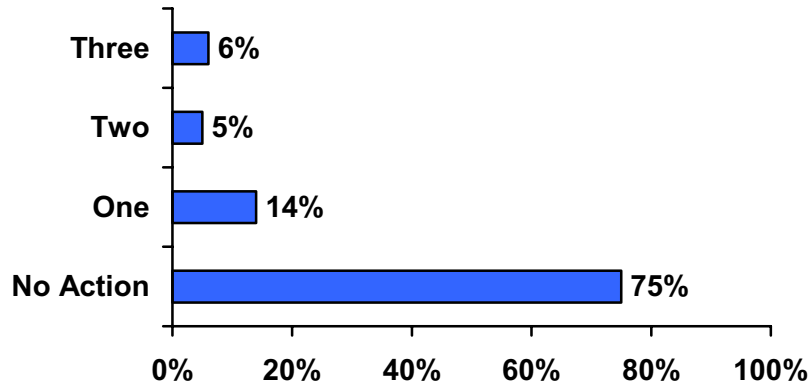
About half (48%) of members report that they or family members have taken at least one of these actions to control the cost of their prescription medications.

Age and income are factors in actions taken:

- Those members age 75 and older are more likely to report that they or family members have taken none of these measures than those ages 60 to 74 (75+, 64% vs. 60-74, 53%).
- Those members with higher annual incomes are more likely to indicate that they or family members have taken none of the actions (\$40K+, 62% vs. <\$40K, 52%).

One in four members (25%) indicate they or family members have delayed getting a prescription filled, taken less medication than the doctor prescribed, and/or not filled a prescription because of the cost of the drug. Six percent of members say they or family members have taken all three actions.

Count of Members/Family Members Who Reduced or Delayed Medication Use Due to Cost of Drugs
(n=822)



Both age and income are factors in response:

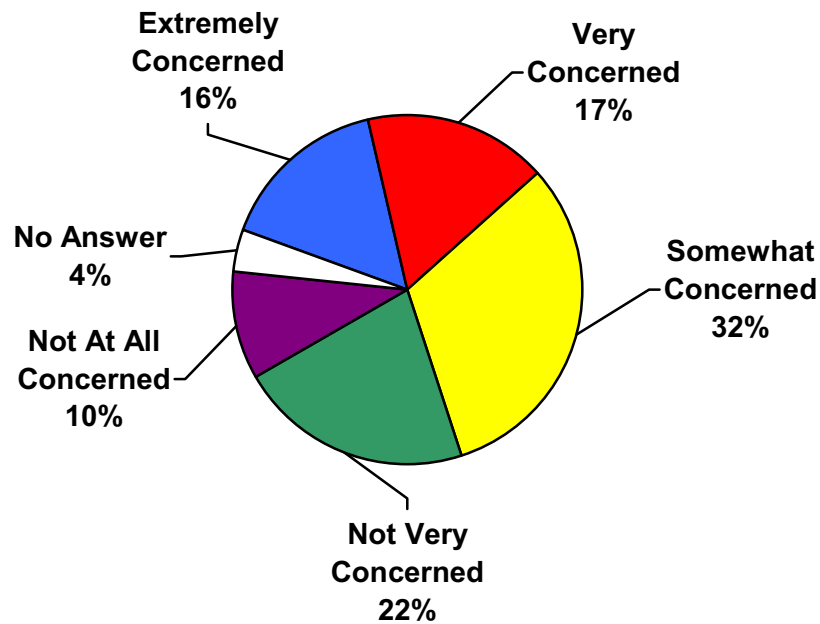
- Members age 75+ are more likely than those ages 50-59 to report that they have taken no action that reduces their medication usage (75+, 85% vs. 50-59, 74%).
- Those with higher annual incomes are more likely to report they have taken no action that reduces their medication usage (\$40K+, 83%, vs. <\$40K, 73%).

One in three members report they are extremely or very concerned about being able to afford the cost of needed prescription drugs over the next two years, and nearly one in three are somewhat concerned.

All members were asked how concerned they were about being able to afford the cost of needed prescription drugs over the next two years. About two in three members indicate that they are at least somewhat concerned. One in ten members report they are not at all concerned.

Concern about Ability to Afford Prescription Drugs Over the Next Two Years

(N=955)

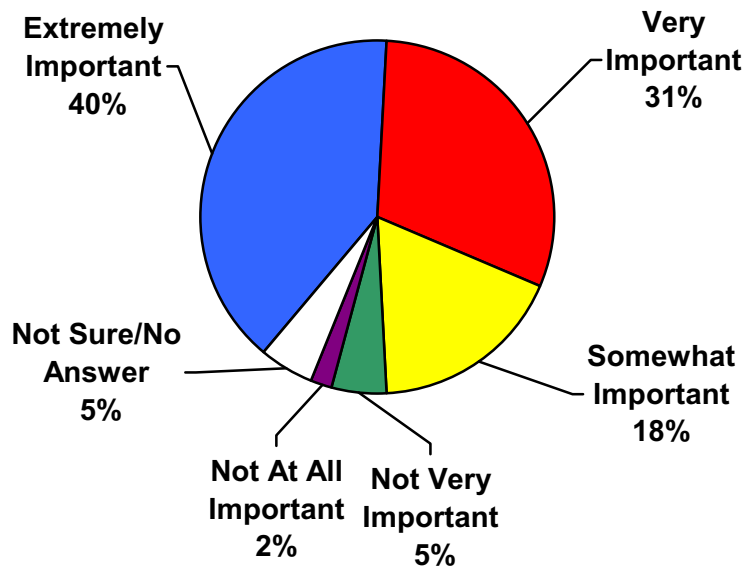


Members ages 60 to 74 are more likely than those older to report they are extremely concerned (60-74, 17% s. 75+, 11%).

About nine in ten Colorado members say it is at least somewhat important for Colorado to make prescription drug costs more affordable.

When asked how important it was for them to have Colorado make prescription drug costs more affordable, nearly nine in ten say that it is important to them. Two in five indicate that it is extremely important, and slightly more than three in ten report that it is very important. Less than one in ten say it is not very or not at all important to them.

Importance of Colorado Making Prescription Drug Costs More Affordable
(N=955)



Age and income are factors in response to this question.

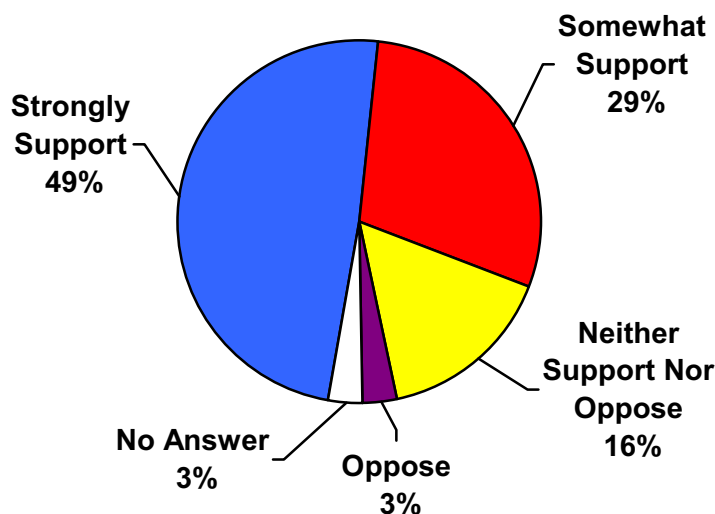
- Members ages 60 to 74 are more likely than those older to report this is extremely important (60-74, 45% vs. 75+, 25%).
- More members with lower annual incomes report making prescription drugs more affordable is extremely important (<40K, 44% vs. \$40K>, 36%).

Nearly eight in ten members support Colorado creating a bulk purchasing pool to negotiate lower prices with prescription drug companies.

Members were asked how supportive they would be of Colorado creating a bulk purchasing pool to negotiate with prescription drug companies for lower drug prices. The purchasing pool would be made up of state agencies, private businesses, and individual consumers who choose to enroll. Savings would be passed on to consumers, businesses, and agencies enrolled in the program.

About eight in ten (78%) members strongly or somewhat support Colorado creating the bulk purchasing pool. Sixteen percent neither support nor oppose a bulk purchasing pool, and fewer than five percent oppose creating the pool.

Member Support for a Bulk Purchasing Pool
(N=955)

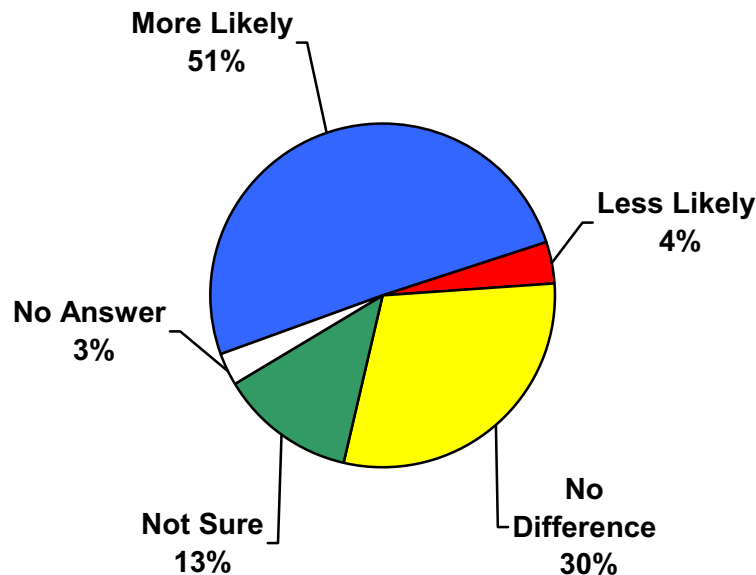


More members under age 75 strongly support this proposal (50-59, 52% and 60-74, 56% vs. 75+, 33%).

Slightly more than half of Colorado AARP members report they would be more likely to vote for a candidate who supported the state joining a bulk prescription drug purchasing pool.

More than half of members indicate they would be more likely to vote for a candidate for state office who supported Colorado joining a bulk prescription drug purchasing pool. Only four percent say they would be less likely while three in ten report it would not make a difference in how they vote.

Likelihood of Voting for a Candidate for State Office Who Supported Colorado Joining a Bulk Prescription Drug Purchasing Pool
(N=955)



Age and income are factors in response:

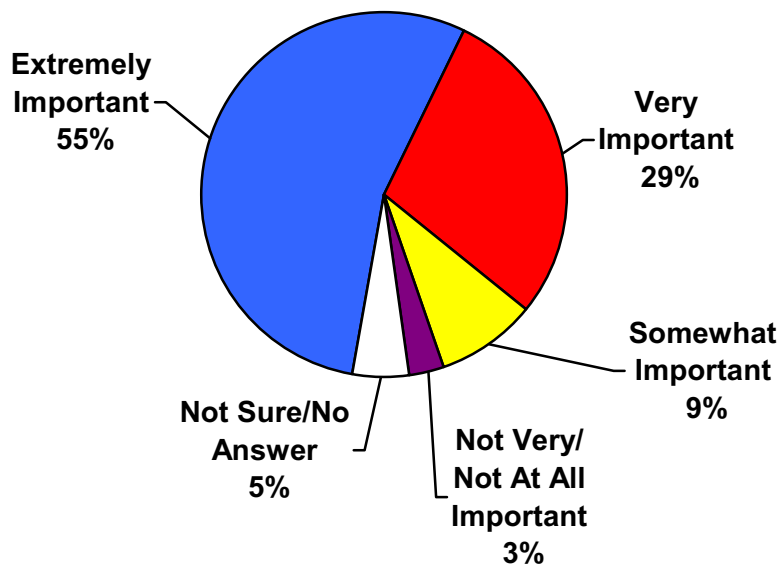
- More members under age 60 are say they would be more likely to vote for a candidate for state office who supported the state joining a bulk prescription drug pool than the oldest members (50-59, 55% vs. 75+, 45%).
- More members with higher annual incomes report they would vote for a candidate who support the pool ($\$40K$ >, 55% vs. $\<\$40K$, 48%), while more members with lower incomes say they are unsure ($\<\$40K$, 16% vs. $\$40K$ >, 10%).

Nearly all Colorado members say it is important to them for consumers to have access to information that compares the safety and effectiveness of prescription drugs.

Members were told that several states are developing information comparing the safety and effectiveness of prescription drugs to help consumers, doctors, and pharmacists choose the right drug at the best price.

They were then asked how important it was to them personally for consumers to have access to information that compares the safety and effectiveness of prescription drugs. Nearly all members report that it is at least somewhat important to them with more than half of them indicating it is extremely important. Only three percent indicate that it is not important to them personally.

Importance of Consumer Access to Information Comparing the Safety and Effectiveness of Prescription Drugs
(N=955)



More members under age 75 indicate this is extremely important to them (50-59, 56% and 60-74, 61% vs. 75+, 43%).

Nearly two-thirds of members support Colorado adopting a preferred drug list for use in state-funded prescription drug programs.

Members were informed that a majority of states use preferred drug lists as a method of controlling rising prescription drug costs in state-funded prescription drug assistance programs such as Medicaid. A preferred drug list was defined as a list that contains information about the safest and most effective as well as cost effective drugs. Physicians use the list to prescribe drugs for their patients on state programs. However, if physicians wish to prescribe a drug that is not on the list, they must obtain approval to prescribe it.

Nearly two-thirds of members say they would strongly (31%) or somewhat support (32%) Colorado adopting a preferred drug list for use in state-funded prescription drug programs while only about one in eight say they would oppose the adoption of the list (6% strongly, 7% somewhat). About one in five (21%) say they would neither support nor oppose use of a preferred drug list.

More members age 60 and older strongly support the use of a preferred drug list (50-59, 23% vs. 60-74, 36% and 75+, 34%).

Nearly four in ten Colorado AARP members report they would be more likely to vote for a candidate for state office who supported the state using a preferred drug list in state-funded prescription drug programs.

When asked how likely they would be to vote for a candidate for state office who supported Colorado using a preferred drug list, about four in ten (39%) report they would be more likely to vote for the candidate. Fewer than one in ten (9%) indicate they would be less likely to vote for the candidate. More than a third (35%) say it would make no difference in their voting behavior and one in seven (14%) say they are unsure.

More members with lower annual incomes report they are unsure how a candidate's support for the preferred drug list would effect how they would vote (<\$40K, 19% vs. \$40K>, 9%).

Conclusions

The vast majority of Colorado members say they have purchased a prescription drug within the past 12 months. About half of these members report paying for these drugs has been a financial problem for them. Half also report that they or family members have taken some actions – such as ordering their drugs through the mail or over the Internet or cutting back on items such as food, fuel, or electricity, or reducing or not taking prescribed medications -- to control their out-of-pocket costs for these drugs. Indeed, one in four of members who have taken medications report they or family members have delayed filling a prescription, taken less medication than prescribed, and/or not filled the prescription.

As they look forward to the next two years, a majority of members express concern about their ability to afford the cost of needed prescription medications. Members are supportive of strategies that could help them control their prescription drug costs. While majorities of members support Colorado creating a bulk prescription drug purchasing pool and adopting the use of preferred drug lists in state-funded prescription drug programs, there is greater support for the bulk purchasing pool. Although members report that they would be more likely to vote for candidates who support these measures, they are much more likely to vote for a candidate supporting the creation of a bulk prescription drug purchasing pool.

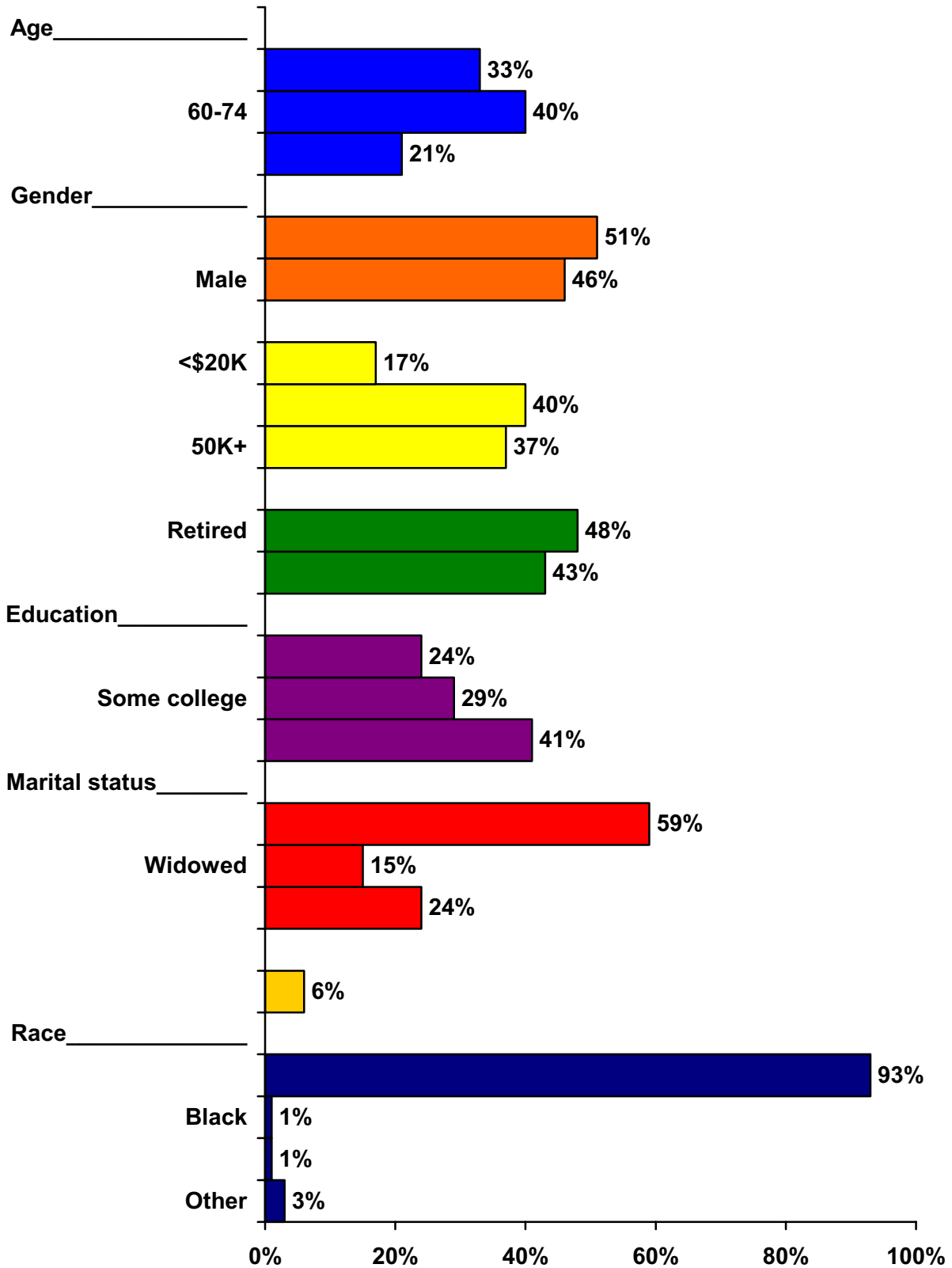
Colorado members want to be able to make informed decisions about the medications they take. Nearly all say it is important for consumers to have access to information that compares the safety and effectiveness of prescription drugs.

The findings of this research suggest that Colorado members would support AARP Colorado's strategies to make the cost of prescription drugs more affordable and to increase consumer access to information about the safety and effectiveness of prescription medications.

Methodology

AARP conducted the *2005 Colorado AARP Member Survey* from August 24, 2005 through September 21, 2005. A random sample of 2,000 AARP members in Colorado, 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. Forty-eight percent of the sampled Colorado members returned surveys by the cut-off date, providing 956 useable surveys for analysis. Thus, the survey has a sampling error of plus or minus 3.2 percent. Survey responses were weighted to reflect the distribution of the age segments in the member population of Colorado. Due to rounding of the weights, the final number of cases for the weighted dataset is 955. As of November, 2005, the number of AARP members in Colorado was 628,021.

Demographic Characteristics (N=955)



**Appendix:
Annotated Questionnaire**

2005 Colorado Member Survey

(AARP Members Weighted N= 955; Response Rate = 48%; Sampling Error = $\pm 3.2\%$)
(Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding or multiple responses.)

Long-Term Care

Long-term care refers to support and services provided over an extended period of time at home, in a community setting, or in a nursing home. These supports and services are available to people of all ages who are frail, ill, or have a disability and who need help with regular daily activities – such as getting dressed, bathing, preparing meals, or eating. **Home and community-based services** refer to long-term care support and services received by people in their homes or in other home-like settings.

1. Which of the following statements best describes Colorado's current funding for health and long-term care services? (Please check only one answer.)

%

- 2 There is *more than enough money* in the state budget to meet the need for services and ensure quality.
- 6 There is *enough money* in the state budget to meet the need for services and ensure quality.
- 43 There is *not enough money* in the state budget to meet the need for services and ensure quality.
- 48 Not sure
- 2 No answer

2. Have you or anyone in your family -- such as grandparents, parents, children, or a sister or brother -- used long-term care services within the last five years?

%

- 24 Yes
- 75 No
- 1 Not sure
- 1 No answer

3. How likely is it that you or a family member may need long-term care services in the next five years?

%

- 10 Extremely likely
- 14 Very likely
- 30 Somewhat likely
- 28 Not very likely
- 8 Not at all likely
- 9 Not sure
- 1 No answer

4. How worried are you about being able to afford long-term care services for you or your family?

%

- 13 Extremely worried
- 19 Very worried
- 37 Somewhat worried
- 21 Not very worried
- 7 Not at all worried
- 3 Not sure
- 1 No answer

5. How worried are you about having enough choices regarding the type of long-term care services available for you or your family?

%

- 11 Extremely worried
- 17 Very worried
- 37 Somewhat worried
- 23 Not very worried
- 6 Not at all worried
- 4 Not sure
- 1 No answer

6. If you needed long-term care services, how would you prefer to receive those services?

%

(Please check only one answer.)

- 13 Have family and friends provide all the care at home
- 36 Pay a nurse or a personal care aide to provide care at home
- 38 Have care provided in a home-like *setting such as an assisted living or a care home where housing, food, and personal help with bathing, dressing, and other activities are provided to those who need them*
- 2 Have care provided in a nursing home
- 9 Not sure
- 2 No answer

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

%

- 40 Extremely important
- 42 Very important
- 12 Somewhat important
- 2 Not very important
- 1 Not at all important
- 2 Not sure
- 2 No answer

8. The Older Coloradans Act was established to provide services that allow older persons to remain in their own homes and communities as they age. These services include personal care such as help with bathing and dressing, chore assistance, transportation, home delivered meals, and adult day care. Compared to most other states Colorado provides less funding for services that allow older persons to remain in their own homes and communities.

How strongly do you support or oppose increasing funding to ensure that the services available through the Older Coloradans Act continue to be provided to all who need them?

<u>%</u>	
60	Strongly support
21	Somewhat support
8	Neither support nor oppose
2	Somewhat oppose
2	Strongly oppose
5	Not sure
4	No answer

9. How likely would you be to vote for a candidate for state office in Colorado who supports increasing funds for long-term care services that help people age 65 and older to stay in their own homes and communities longer? 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>	
72	More likely
16	Would not make a difference
3	Less likely
6	Not sure
4	No answer

Prescription drugs

10. Have you bought a prescription drug within the past 12 months?

<u>%</u>	
86	Yes
10	No (Go to question 14)
<.5	Not sure (Go to question 14)
4	No answer

11. In the past 12 months, has paying for prescription medications been a major financial problem, a minor financial problem, or not a financial problem for you? (n=822, respondents who have bought prescription drugs)

<u>%</u>	
13	A major financial problem
33	A minor financial problem
53	Not a financial problem
1	No answer

12. In the past 12 months, approximately how much have you spent, each month, out of your own pocket for prescription drugs? (n=822, respondents who have bought prescription drugs)

<u>%</u>	
9	Less than \$10 per month
30	\$10 but less than \$50 per month
25	\$50 but less than \$100 per month
20	\$100 but less than \$200 per month
12	\$200 but less than \$500 per month
2	\$500 or more per month
1	Not sure
2	No answer

13. Many people face difficult decisions when buying prescription drugs. In the past 12 months, have you done any of the following? (n=822, respondents who have bought prescription drugs)

In the past 12 months, have you or a family member...

	Yes	No	No
	▼	▼	Answer
	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>
a. Delayed getting a prescription filled because you didn't have enough money to pay for it	12	77	12
b. Taken less medicine than your doctor prescribed to make it last longer	16	74	11
c. Cut back on items such as food, fuel, or electricity to be able to afford a prescription drug.....	10	78	12
d. Ordered your prescription drugs by mail or Internet from a company <u>in the U.S.</u> because they cost less	31	61	8
e. Decided not to fill a prescription because of the cost of the drug ..	15	75	11

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

<u>%</u>	
16	Extremely concerned
17	Very concerned
32	Somewhat concerned
22	Not very concerned
10	Not at all concerned
4	No answer

15. How important is it to you that Colorado makes prescription drug costs more affordable?

<u>%</u>	
40	Extremely important
31	Very important
18	Somewhat important
5	Not very important
2	Not at all important
2	Not sure
2	No answer

16. One proposal to make prescription drugs more affordable is for the state to create a prescription drug purchasing pool made up of state agencies, private businesses, and individual consumers who choose to enroll. Through bulk buying, this pool could then negotiate with drug companies for lower prices, and the savings would be passed on to the consumers, businesses, and agencies that enroll.

How strongly do you support or oppose Colorado creating a bulk purchasing pool to negotiate with prescription drug companies for lower prices?

<u>%</u>	
49	Strongly support
29	Somewhat support
16	Neither support nor oppose
2	Somewhat oppose
2	Strongly oppose
3	No answer

17. 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.

17. *(continued)*

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

%

- 55 Extremely important
- 29 Very important
- 9 Somewhat important
- 2 Not very important
- 1 Not at all important
- 2 Not sure
- 3 No answer

18. **The majority of states use preferred drug lists as one method of controlling rising prescription drug costs in state-funded prescription drug assistance programs such as Medicaid. A preferred drug list contains information about the safest and most effective as well as cost effective drugs, similar to lists used by private health insurance companies. Physicians would then use the list to prescribe drugs for their patients on state programs. If physicians wish to prescribe a drug that is not on the list, they must go through an approval process.**

How strongly do you support or oppose Colorado adopting a preferred drug list for use in state-funded prescription drug programs?

%

- 31 Strongly support
- 32 Somewhat support
- 21 Neither support nor oppose
- 7 Somewhat oppose
- 6 Strongly oppose
- 3 No answer

19. **If a candidate for state office in Colorado supported the state joining a bulk prescription drug purchasing pool, 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?**

%

- 51 More likely
- 30 Would not make a difference
- 4 Less likely
- 13 Not sure
- 3 No answer

20. If a candidate for state office in Colorado supported the use of a preferred drug list, 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>	
39	More likely
35	Would not make a difference
9	Less likely
14	Not sure
3	No answer

Utilities

21. Do you currently have natural gas service at home?

<u>%</u>	
81	Yes
16	No (Go to question D1)
4	No answer

22. Who is your natural gas service provider? (Please check only one answer.) n=769

<u>%</u>	
4	Aquila Networks (PNG)
7	Atmos Energy Corporation
1	Citizens Utilities Company
3	Colorado Natural Gas
<.5	ComFur T Gas
<.5	Eastern Colorado Utility Company
5	Kinder Morgan
4	Public Service Company of Colorado
67	Xcel
8	Not sure
3	No answer

23. In the past year, have your natural gas utility bills increased, stayed about the same, or decreased? n=769

<u>%</u>	
84	Increased
12	Stayed about the same
<.5	Decreased
3	Not sure
1	No answer

24. Thinking about your last natural gas bill, how easy was it for you to understand your bill? n=769

%

- 6 Extremely easy
- 37 Very easy
- 36 Somewhat easy
- 13 Not very easy
- 4 Not at all easy
- 3 Not sure
- 2 No answer

25. Thinking about the past year, are you paying too little, about the right amount, or too much for your natural gas? n=769

%

- 1 Paying too little
- 27 Paying about the right amount
- 60 Paying too much
- 10 Not sure
- 2 No answer

26. How concerned are you about being able to afford to pay future natural gas bills? n=769

%

- 15 Extremely concerned
- 25 Very concerned
- 38 Somewhat concerned
- 17 Not very concerned
- 4 Not at all concerned
- 1 No answer

27. How satisfied are you with your natural gas service? n=769

%

- 10 Extremely satisfied
- 54 Very satisfied
- 30 Somewhat satisfied
- 5 Not very satisfied
- 1 Not at all satisfied
- 2 No answer

28. In the past year the natural gas rates in Colorado have increased by approximately 19 percent. Have you had to take any of the following actions due to increases in your natural gas bill? n=769

28. (continued)

In the past year, have you...

	Yes ▼ %	No ▼ %	No Answer ▼ %
a. Cut back on items such as food, prescription drugs, clothing, or other utilities to be able to afford to pay your natural gas bill ..	13	78	9
b. Lowered the heat in your home substantially	50	46	4
c. Turned off the heat in your home	7	83	11
d. Closed off parts of your home	40	53	7
e. Cut down on the use of natural gas appliances.....	19	71	10
f. Stopped using natural gas appliances	4	85	12
g. Used a kitchen range or oven as a space heater.....	5	85	10

29. **State law authorizes the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) to regulate rates and services provided by Colorado public utilities. These utilities include electrical, common carrier, pipeline, gas, telephone, telegraph and water corporations, all of which supply services to the public. The PUC is made up of three individuals who are appointed by the Governor.**

How important is it to you that the individuals who are appointed by the Governor to the PUC represent the best interests of consumers? n=769

%	
69	Extremely important
24	Very important
2	Somewhat important
<.5	Not very important
0	Not at all important
2	Not sure
3	No answer

30. **All natural gas companies in Colorado pass on the cost of purchasing natural gas from wholesale suppliers to their customers. Both increases and decreases in the cost of purchasing natural gas are passed along to customers on a dollar-for-dollar basis. Xcel is the largest natural gas provider in Colorado. In order to cover the rising costs of providing natural gas to their customers over the past year, Xcel has proposed increasing natural gas rates by \$33 million. This would mean an increase in the monthly service charge from \$8.54 to \$13.14 for all residential Xcel customers.**

30. (continued)

How strongly do you support or oppose an increase from \$8.54 to \$13.14 in the monthly service charge on natural gas? n=769

<u>%</u>	
3	Strongly support
8	Somewhat support
19	Neither support nor oppose
20	Somewhat oppose
46	Strongly oppose
4	No answer

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?

<u>%</u>	
66	Yes
31	No
3	No answer

D2. Are you male or female?

<u>%</u>	
46	Male
51	Female
3	No answer

D3. What is your age as of your last birthday? _____ (in years)

33	50-59
40	60-74
21	75+
6	No answer

D4. What is your current marital status?

<u>%</u>	
59	Married
3	Not married, living with partner
1	Separated
14	Divorced
15	Widowed
5	Never married
3	No answer

D5. Thinking about your state elections for Colorado Governor and Legislators in the last ten years, how often would you say you vote?

<u>%</u>	
73	Always
15	Most of the time
3	About half of the time
3	Seldom
3	Never
3	No answer

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

<u>%</u>	
5	0-12 th grade (no diploma)
19	High school graduate (or equivalent)
21	Post-high school education (no degree)
8	2-year college degree
16	4-year college degree
7	Post-graduate study (no degree)
18	Graduate or professional degree (s)
6	No answer

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

<u>%</u>	
6	Self-employed, part-time
7	Self-employed, full-time
9	Employed, part-time
22	Employed, full-time
48	Retired, not working at all
3	Not in labor force for other reasons
2	Unemployed but looking for work
4	No answer

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

<u>%</u>	
6	Yes
92	No
2	No answer
1	Not sure

D9. What is your race?

<u>%</u>	
93	White or Caucasian
1	Black or African American
1	American Indian or Alaska Native
1	Asian
<.5	Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
2	Other
3	No answer

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

D11. What was your annual household income before taxes in 2004?

<u>%</u>	
4	Less than \$10,000
12	\$10,000 to \$19,999
12	\$20,000 to \$29,999
16	\$30,000 to \$39,999
12	\$40,000 to \$49,999
17	\$50,000 to \$74,999
19	\$75,000 or more
7	No answer

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 **September 21, 2005.**

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