AARP

Medicare Prescription Drug Benefits: A Survey of Registered Voters Age 50+ In Arkansas

Published July 2002

Medicare Prescription Drug Benefits:
A Survey of Registered Voters
Age 50+ in Arkansas

Data Collected by Woelfel Research, Inc.
Report Prepared by
Margret Straw, Ph.D.

AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan membership organization for people 50 and over. We provide information and resources; advocate on legislative, consumer, and legal issues; assist members to serve their communities; and offer a wide range of unique benefits, special products, and services for our members. These benefits include AARP Webplace at www.aarp.org, *AARP Modern Maturity,* and *My Generation* magazines, the monthly *AARP Bulletin*, and a Spanish-language newspaper, *Segunda Juventud.* Active in every state, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, AARP celebrates the attitude that age is just a number and life is what you make it.
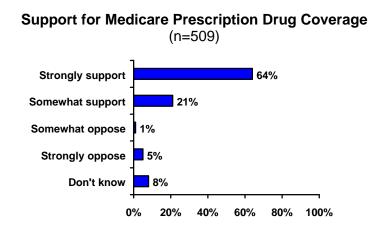
Background

The U.S. Senate is considering expansion of Medicare to include a prescription drug benefit. This survey of 509 registered voters age 50 and older in Arkansas explores opinions about Medicare prescription drug legislation. Specifically, it explores reactions to "a permanent Medicare drug benefit that has an affordable premium, has some cost-sharing, has no gap in coverage, is voluntary, and is available to everyone eligible for Medicare."

Key Findings

Medicare prescription drug coverage is important to Arkansas registered voters age 50+: Over eight in ten say it is very important (70%) or somewhat important (15%) that the Senate passes this Medicare prescription drug legislation.

There is strong support for this Medicare prescription drug legislation. Over eight in ten Arkansas voters age 50+ strongly (64%) or somewhat (21%) support this benefit. Indeed, supporters outnumber opponents by a margin of 14 to1 (85% vs. 6%).

Support for Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage
(n=509)

Strongly support	64%
Somewhat support	21%
Somewhat oppose	1%
Strongly oppose	5%
Don't know	8%

0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

Arkansas voters age 50+ are more likely to vote for a candidate who supports this Medicare prescription drug benefit: Over 19 times as many say that support for this benefit would make them more likely to vote *for* a candidate (58%) than say it would make them more likely to vote *against* a candidate (3%). For 31 percent support for this benefit would make no difference in voting, and 7 percent do not know what affect it would have on their vote.

If the respondent's Senator did not act on this bill this year, 39 percent say they would be more likely to vote *against* that Senator in the next election, compared to just 9 percent who would be more likely to vote *for* the Senator. The remainder say it would not affect their vote (40%) or they do not know what the impact would be (10%).

Methodology

AARP commissioned Woelfel Research to conduct a random digit dial (RDD) telephone survey of registered voters age 50 or older in Arkansas. Respondents were screened for age and voter registration. A total of 509 interviews were completed from July 12 – July 17, 2002.[1] The survey has a sampling error of plus or minus 4.4 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 4.4 percentage points of what would have been obtained if every registered voter in Arkansas age 50 or older had been surveyed. Data were weighted to correctly represent the gender distribution of the 50+ population in Arkansas. Responses to all survey questions are in the attached annotated questionnaire.

For more information about this study, contact Margret Straw, AARP Knowledge Management, (202) 434-6334.

---

[1] The response rate for this survey was 8% and the cooperation rate was 94%. 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
AARP ARKANSAS Medicare Prescription Drug Benefit Survey

N = 509
Sampling error = + 4.4 percent
* indicates less than .5%; percents may not add up to 100 due to rounding
Data weighted by age and gender

[Quota: 500 Eligible voters age 50+]

Introduction

Hello, this is _____ from Woelfel Research, a national opinion research company. We're conducting a study among ARKANSAS residents about an important topic. This is not a sales call and you will not be asked to buy anything either now or later. We would really like to include your opinions in our study and assure you that all of your answers will remain completely confidential. The survey should take only about 5 minutes to complete.

Screening

1. How many people are in your household that are…[READ LIST]
    1   Under 50 _____
    2   50 years or older _____

    [IF NONE 50 OR OLDER, THANK AND TERMINATE. IF 1, ASK FOR THAT PERSON. IF 2 OR MORE, ASK Q2]

2. To make our study more representative, I need to speak with the youngest male who is at home right now *and* is at least 50 years old.
    1   Person on phone is youngest male ➔ [SKIP TO Q.5]
    2   Other person is youngest male and is coming to phone ➔ [SKIP TO Q.4]
    3   Person is not available
    4   Refused ➔ [SKIP TO Q.REFUSAL]

3. Then may I speak to the oldest female who is at home right now *and* is at least 50 years old?
    1   Person on phone is oldest female ➔ [SKIP TO Q.5]
    2   Other person is oldest female and is coming to the phone ➔ [SKIP TO Q.4]
    3   Person is not available ➔ [SCHEDULE CALLBACK]
    4   Refused ➔ [SKIP TO Q.REFUSAL]

4. Hello, this is _____ from Woelfel Research, a national opinion research company. We're conducting a study among ARKANSAS residents about an important topic. This is not a sales call and you will not be asked to buy anything either now or later. We would really like to include your opinions in our study and assure you that all of your answers will remain completely confidential. The survey should take only about 5 minutes to complete.

    1   CONTINUE
    2   REFUSED ➔ [SKIP TO Q.REFUSAL]

5. What was your age as of your last birthday?

_____ [RECORD IN YEARS]

%
53 50-64
45 65+
 2 Refused

5B. [RECORD GENDER]

%
45 Male
55 Female

5C: Are you currently registered to vote in ARKANSAS?

    1   Yes
    2   No

[THANK AND TERMINATE IF NOT REGISTERED VOTER IN ARKANSAS]

Main Questionnaire [ASK ALL]

The U.S. Senate is currently considering Medicare prescription drug legislation that would provide a permanent Medicare drug benefit that has an affordable premium, has some cost-sharing, has no gap in coverage, is voluntary, and is available to everyone eligible for Medicare. [INSTRUCTION TO INTERVIEWER – READ THIS DESCRIPTION SLOWLY SO THAT RESPONDENT HEARS EACH PHRASE. REPEAT IF NECESSARY FOR CLARITY DURING FOUR FOLLOWING QUESTIONS]

1. How important is it to you that the Senate passes this legislation? Is it very important, somewhat important, not very important, or not at all important?

    %
    70   Very important
    15   Somewhat important
    5   Not very important
    7   Not at all important
    3   Don't know (Volunteered)
    0   Refused (Volunteered)

2. Would you support or oppose this Medicare prescription drug benefit? And would you strongly or somewhat (support/oppose) this benefit?

    %
    64   Strongly support
    21   Somewhat support
    1   Somewhat oppose
    5   Strongly oppose
    8   Don't know (Volunteered)
    1   Refused (Volunteered)

3. If a candidate for the U.S. Senate supported funding this Medicare prescription drug benefit, would you be more likely to vote for that candidate, more likely to vote against them, or would it not make any difference? And would you be much more likely or somewhat more likely to vote (for/against) this candidate? [ROTATE ORDER OF PRESENTATION OF FOR AND AGAINST STATEMENT]

    %
    40   Much more likely to vote for
    18   Somewhat more likely to vote for
    31   Would make no difference
    1   Somewhat more likely to vote against
    2   Much more likely to vote against
    7   Don't know (Volunteered)
    1   Refused (Volunteered)

4. If your Senator did not act on this bill this year, would you be more likely to vote for your Senator in the next election, more likely to vote against your Senator, or would it make no difference? And is that much more likely or somewhat more likely to vote (for/against) your Senator? [ROTATE ORDER OF PRESENTATION OF FOR AND AGAINST STATEMENT]

%
   3   Much more likely to vote for
   6   Somewhat more likely to vote for
  40   Would make no difference
  13   Somewhat more likely to vote against
  26   Much more likely to vote against
  10   Don't know (Volunteered)
   1   Refused (Volunteered)

Demographics

My last few questions are for classification purposes only.

D1.   Which of the following best describes your marital status? **(READ)**

%
  61   Married
   5   Single, never married
  11   Divorced/separated
   *   Not married, living together
  23   Widowed
   *   DON'T KNOW / NOT SURE
   1   REFUSED

D2.   What is your race? [READ LIST]

%
  84   White
   9   African American
   *   Asian
   3   Native American or Alaskan Native
   1   Some other race [SPECIFY:] Mixed
   *   DON'T KNOW / NOT SURE
   2   REFUSED

D3.   Which of the following best describes your highest level of education? [READ]

%
14   Some high school or less
32   High school graduate
29   Some college or technical school
16   College graduate
 9   Post graduate degree
 *   DON'T KNOW / NOT SURE
 1   REFUSED

D4.   Are you currently…. [READ LIST]

%
24   Employed full-time
 8   Employed part-time
53   Retired and not working
 6   Homemaker
 1   Unemployed and looking for work
       Something else (Specify:)
 5   Disabled - volunteered
 3   Self-employed - volunteered
 *   DON'T KNOW / NOT SURE
 *   REFUSED

D5.   Which of the following best describes your voting behavior in elections for the U.S. Senate and U.S. House of Representatives held in the past ten years? Would you say you always vote, sometimes miss one, rarely vote, or never vote in elections for the U.S. Senate and U.S. House of Representatives?

%
65   Always vote
30   Sometimes miss one
 3   Rarely vote
 1   Never vote
 *   DON'T KNOW / NOT SURE
 1   REFUSED

D6.   Which of the following best represents your household income in the year 2001 before taxes?

%
11   Less than $10,000 ➔ [SKIP TO CLOSE]
16   $10,000 to $19,999 ➔ [SKIP TO CLOSE]
16   $20,000 to $29,999 ➔ [SKIP TO CLOSE]
17   $30,000 to $39,999 ➔ [SKIP TO CLOSE]
 9   $40,000 to $49,999 ➔ [SKIP TO CLOSE]
 7   $50,000 to $74,999 ➔ [SKIP TO CLOSE]
 9   $75,000 or more   ➔ [SKIP TO CLOSE]
 5   DON'T KNOW / NOT SURE ➔ [ASK D7]
11   REFUSED [ASK D7]

D7.   We realize that income is a private matter and that many people do not feel comfortable sharing that information with others. Rather than identifying a particular income range, would you mind telling me simply whether your household income is below $40,000?
Base=82 who did not answer D6
%
30   Yes, Below
16   No, $40,000 or more
16   DON'T KNOW / NOT SURE
38   REFUSED

Thank you for participating! Your Opinion Counts.

Interviewer Name: _____

Date: _____

Time end: _____

Length of interview: _____

Interviewer ID # _____ _____ _____

AARP
Knowledge Management
For more information contact Margret Straw (202) 434-6334