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

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A Survey of Registered Voters
Age 50+ in Iowa

Data Collected by Woelfel Research, Inc.
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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 535 registered voters age 50 and older in Iowa 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 Iowa registered voters age 50+: Eight in ten say it is very important (54%) or somewhat important (26%) that the Senate passes this Medicare prescription drug legislation.

There is strong support for this Medicare prescription drug legislation. Over three-quarters of Iowa voters age 50+ strongly (50%) or somewhat (27%) support this benefit. Indeed, supporters outnumber opponents by a margin of 11 to 1 (77% vs. 7%).

Iowa voters age 50+ are more likely to vote for a candidate who supports this Medicare prescription drug benefit: Over ten times as many say that support for this benefit would make them more likely to vote for a candidate (47%) than say it would make them more likely to vote against a candidate (4%). For 36 percent support for this benefit would make no difference in voting, and 13 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, 28 percent say they would be more likely to vote against that Senator in the next election, compared to just 10 percent who would be more likely to vote for the Senator. The remainder say it would not affect their vote (47%) or they do not know what the impact would be (16%).
Methodology

AARP commissioned Woelfel Research to conduct a random digit dial (RDD) telephone survey of registered voters age 50 or older in Iowa. Respondents were screened for age and voter registration. A total of 535 interviews were completed from July 12 – July 14, 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 Iowa age 50 or older had been surveyed. Data were weighted to correctly represent the gender distribution of the 50+ population in Iowa. 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 10% and the cooperation rate was 98%. 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 IOWA Medicare Prescription Drug Benefit Survey

N = 535
Sampling error = ± 4.4 percent
* indicates less than .5%; percents may not add up to 100 due to rounding

[Quota: 500 Eligible voters age 50+]

Introduction
Hello, this is ____________ from Woelfel Research, a national opinion research company. We’re conducting a study among IOWA 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 IOWA 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]

%  
48 50-64
51 65+
* Refused

5B. [RECORD GENDER]

%  
46 Male
54 Female

5C. Are you currently registered to vote in IOWA?

1 Yes
2 No

[THANK AND TERMINATE IF NOT REGISTERED VOTER IN IOWA]
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?
   %
   54 Very important
   26 Somewhat important
   6 Not very important
   7 Not at all important
   8 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?
   %
   50 Strongly support
   27 Somewhat support
   3 Somewhat oppose
   4 Strongly oppose
   15 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]
   %
   28 Much more likely to vote for
   19 Somewhat more likely to vote for
   36 Would make no difference
   1 Somewhat more likely to vote against
   3 Much more likely to vote against
   13 Don’t know (Volunteered)
   * 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]

\[
\begin{array}{|c|c|}
\hline
& \% \\
\hline
\text{Much more likely to vote for} & 5 \\
\text{Somewhat more likely to vote for} & 5 \\
\text{Would make no difference} & 47 \\
\text{Somewhat more likely to vote against} & 14 \\
\text{Much more likely to vote against} & 14 \\
\text{Don’t know (Volunteered)} & 16 \\
\text{Refused (Volunteered)} & 16 \\
\hline
\end{array}
\]

**Demographics**

My last few questions are for classification purposes only.

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

\[
\begin{array}{|c|c|}
\hline
& \% \\
\hline
\text{Married} & 64 \\
\text{Single, never married} & 5 \\
\text{Divorced/separated} & 8 \\
\text{Not married, living together} & 1 \\
\text{Widowed} & 22 \\
\text{DON’T KNOW / NOT SURE} & * \\
\text{REFUSED} & * \\
\hline
\end{array}
\]

D2. What is your race? [READ LIST]

\[
\begin{array}{|c|c|}
\hline
& \% \\
\hline
\text{White} & 96 \\
\text{African American} & 1 \\
\text{Asian} & * \\
\text{Native American or Alaskan Native} & * \\
\text{Some other race [SPECIFY:]} & Mixed \\
\text{DON’T KNOW / NOT SURE} & 1 \\
\text{REFUSED} & 1 \\
\hline
\end{array}
\]
D3. Which of the following best describes your highest level of education? [READ]

%  
7 Some high school or less  
38 High school graduate  
28 Some college or technical school  
17 College graduate  
9 Post graduate degree  
* DON’T KNOW / NOT SURE  
* REFUSED

D4. Are you currently…. [READ LIST]

%  
32 Employed full-time  
9 Employed part-time  
52 Retired and not working  
4 Homemaker  
1 Unemployed and looking for work  
   Something else (Specify:)  
2 Disabled  
* Self-employed  
* 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?

%  
64 Always vote  
32 Sometimes miss one  
2 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?

%  
4 Less than $10,000  
16 $10,000 to $19,999  
18 $20,000 to $29,999  
10 $30,000 to $39,999  
7 $40,000 to $49,999  
15 $50,000 to $74,999  
11 $75,000 or more  
4 DON’T KNOW / NOT SURE  
15 REFUSED

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=102 who did not answer D6

%  
22 Yes, Below  
17 No, $40,000 or more  
14 DON’T KNOW / NOT SURE  
47 REFUSED

Thank you for participating! Your Opinion Counts.

Interviewer Name: __________________________
Date: _______________________
Time end: _______________________
Length of interview: _______________________
Interviewer ID # _______ _______ _______
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For more information contact Margret Straw (202) 434-6334