

A large green square is positioned in the top left corner of the page. A thin grey line extends from its bottom right corner, ending in a small yellow square. This line continues horizontally to the left, then vertically down, and finally horizontally to the right, ending in another small yellow square. A large, thin, light-brown arc curves from the top right towards the bottom right, passing behind the title text.

# **Prescription Drug Issues on Long Island: An AARP Survey**

April 2006



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**Report Prepared by  
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Data Collected by Woelfel Research, Inc.**

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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](http://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.

### **Acknowledgements**

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## Background

AARP has long been a consumer advocate, focusing on marketplace practices that affect the ability of older Americans to obtain essential products and services. AARP New York is dedicated to making prescription drugs affordable.

Affordable prescription drugs remain an important consumer issue for residents of Long Island. Prescription drug prices continue to grow at an alarming rate. In 1994, the average prescription cost \$28.67. Today, that same drug costs \$63.59, an increase of more than 8.3 percent a year.<sup>1</sup>

This current study of 800 Long Island AARP members explores:

- Support for prescription drug bulk purchasing legislation
- Support for legislation requiring drug manufacturers to report how much they spend on marketing practices

This report is part of a larger telephone survey of AARP members in New York exploring their support for prescription drug and consumer issues legislations, their opinions on cell phone consumer protections, and their attitudes toward identity theft and identity theft legislation. This telephone survey was conducted between December 19 and December 28, 2005 with a random member sample of 800 New York AARP members from Nassau and Suffolk counties. Nassau and Suffolk counties are home to the largest concentration of suburban AARP members in the state of New York.

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<sup>1</sup> Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, *Prescription Drug Trends*, (November 2005).

## Highlights

- Three-fourths (75%) of Long Island members say they support a bulk purchasing program for prescription drugs that would pass the savings on to those without prescription drug coverage.
- Eight in ten (80%) support legislation that would require drug manufacturers to report how much they spend on marketing practices such as providing physicians with meals or other gifts.
- Nearly nine in ten (87%) say it is important for New York to provide access to information that compares the safety and effectiveness of prescription drugs.

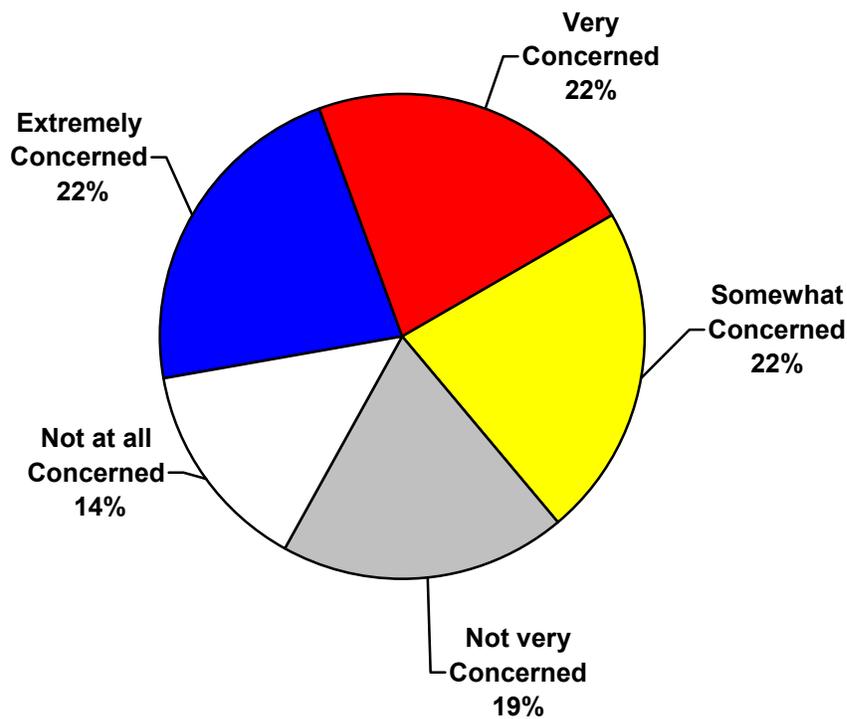
# Findings

## Prescription Drugs

**Long Island members are concerned about being able to afford needed prescription drugs.**

Eighty percent of respondents say they are currently taking prescription medication on a regular basis. However, whether they currently take prescription drugs or not, more than four in ten (44%) are extremely or very concerned about their ability to afford needed prescription drugs over the next two years. Furthermore, two in ten (22%) are somewhat concerned about their ability to pay for needed drugs.

**Concern About Paying for Prescription Drugs  
(N=800)**

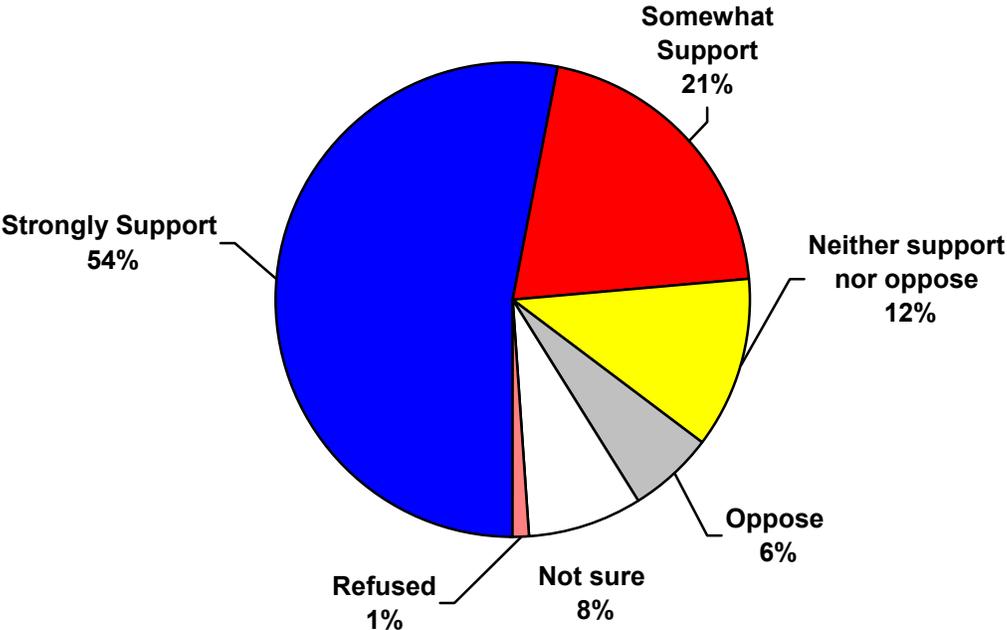


**Three-fourths of Long Island members support a bulk purchasing program that would pass savings on to people without adequate prescription drug coverage.**

A bulk purchasing program would allow New York to establish a buying pool for its state programs and to include in this buying pool individuals who lack prescription drug coverage. The bulk purchasing program would pass the savings in the cost of drugs on to people without adequate prescription drug coverage. AARP New York supports legislation that would use the savings from a bulk purchasing program to create a drug discount card, which would allow those without prescription drug coverage to buy drugs at a discount.

Three-fourths (75%) of respondents strongly or somewhat support legislation that would introduce a bulk purchasing program in New York.

**Support for Bulk Purchasing Legislation  
(N=800)**

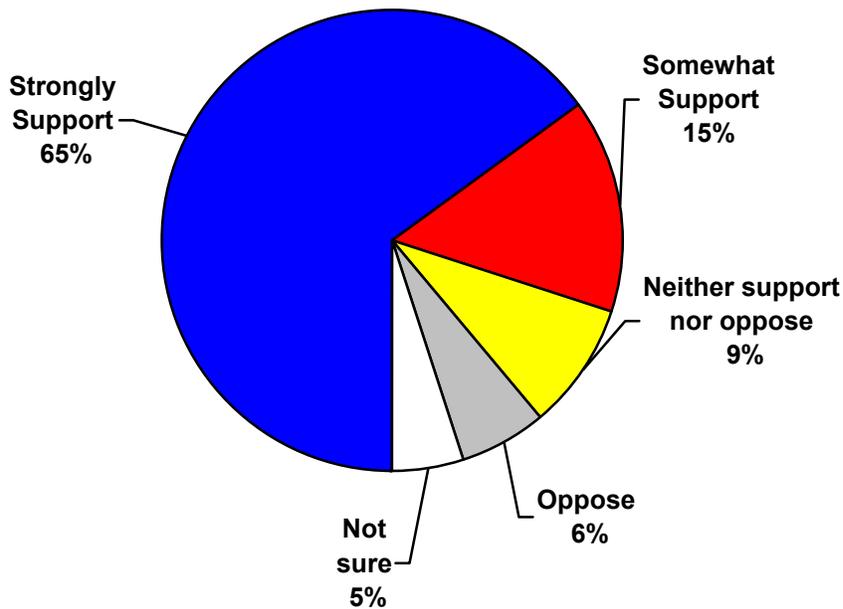


**Eight in ten members support legislation that would require drug manufacturers to report how much they spend on marketing.**

Drug manufacturers market new, expensive drugs to physicians. Marketing practices include free meals, trips, entertainment, and other gifts. Some experts believe that these practices encourage the prescribing of newer, more expensive drugs when equally effective and less costly drugs exist. Other experts believe such practices encourage the use of new, more effective drugs.

Eight in ten (80%) Long Island members support the state of New York enacting legislation that would require drug manufacturers to report how much they are spending on these marketing practices.

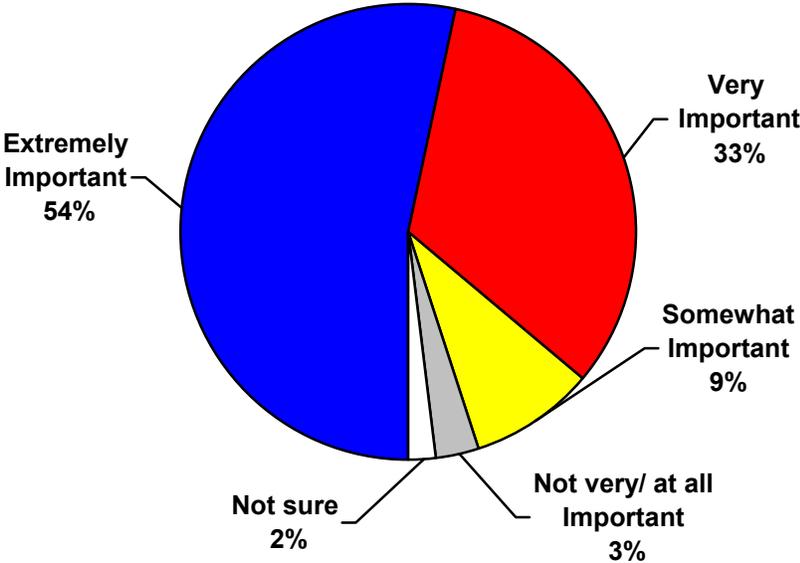
**Support for Drug Manufacturer Disclosure of Marketing Expenditures (N=800)**



**Almost nine in ten Long Island members say it is extremely or very important to have information on the safety and effectiveness of prescription drugs.**

Currently, several states are developing information that compares the safety and effectiveness of prescription drugs. Such information helps consumers, doctors, and pharmacists choose the right drug at the best cost. Almost nine in ten (87%) survey respondents say that having access to this information is important to them.

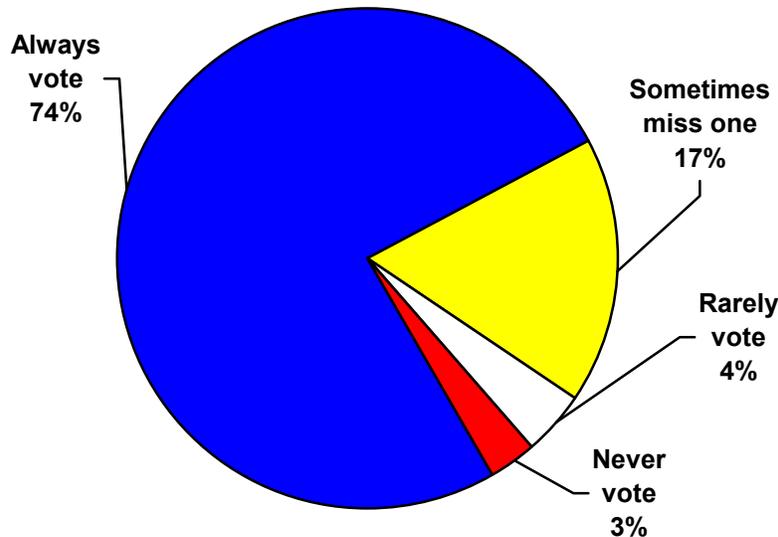
**Importance of Access to Information on Safety and Effectiveness of Prescription Drugs  
(N=800)**



## A Profile of Long Island Respondents

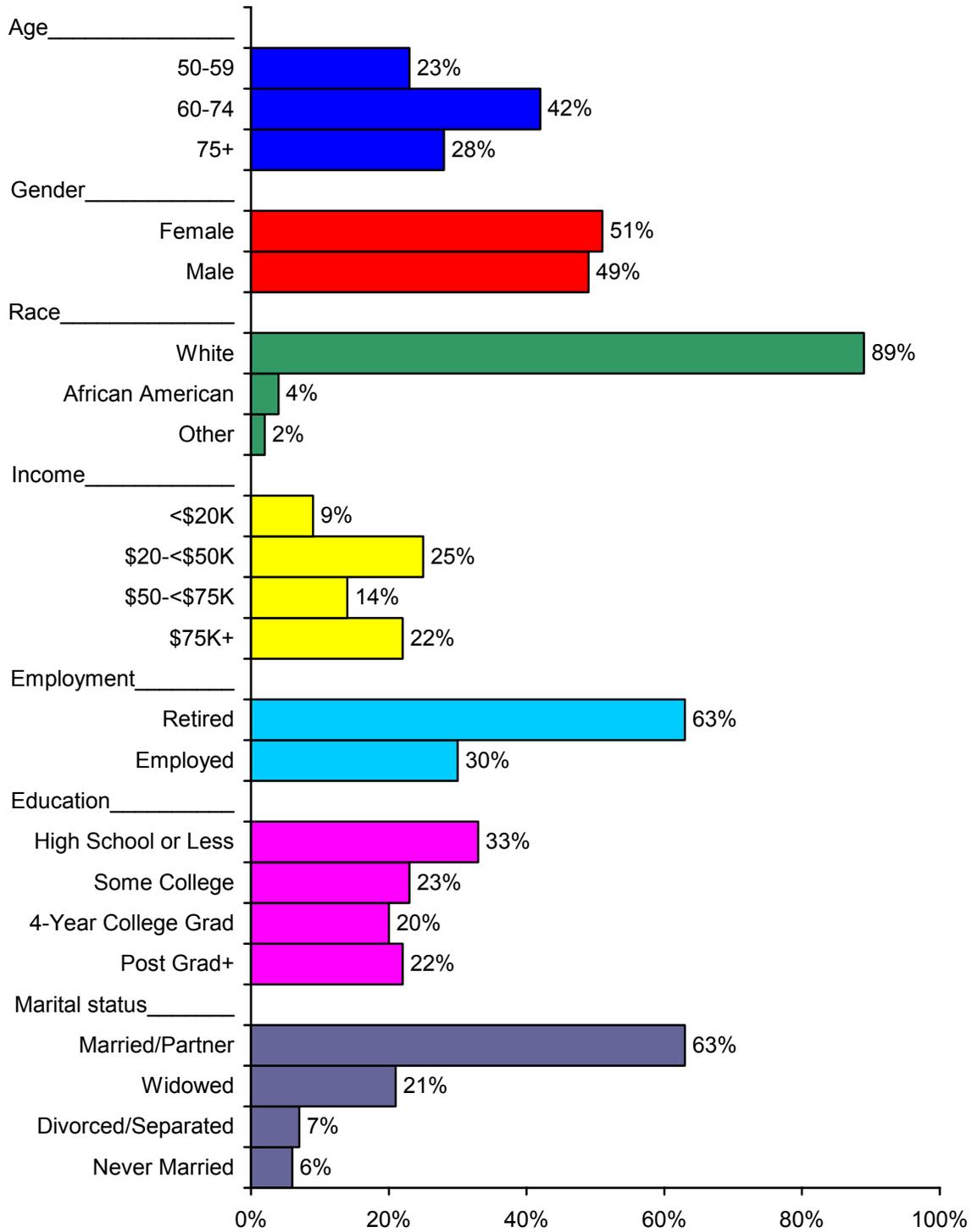
Eight hundred Long Island AARP members participated in this survey. An overwhelming majority (91%) of respondents are regular voters. Seventy-four percent of those surveyed report they *always vote* while another 17 percent say they *sometimes miss one* vote.

**Voting Behavior in State Elections in the Last 10 Years  
(N=800)**



The majority of respondents are age 60 to 74 (42%), with about a quarter 50 to 59 (23%) or 75 and older (28%). Half of respondents are women (51%). Nearly two-thirds of respondents (63%) are married, while two in ten (21%) are widowed. A large proportion of respondents hold high school diplomas or the equivalent (29%), while 42 percent have a college education or higher. Sixty-three percent are retired. Another 16 percent work full-time. More than two in ten Long Island members (22%) have an annual household income of \$75,000 or more. The majority of respondents are Caucasian (89%) and three percent are of Hispanic, Spanish, or Latino origin.

## Demographic Profile of Respondents (N=800)



## Conclusions

Members in Long Island are worried about the rising price of prescription drugs. Two-thirds are worried about their ability to pay for needed medication over the next two years. Members strongly support a bulk purchasing program that would pass the cost savings on to those without adequate prescription drug coverage. They also strongly support legislation that would require drug manufacturers to disclose how much they spend on marketing practices. Finally, Long Island members want access to information on the safety and effectiveness of their prescription drugs.

Support for these legislative measures shows that Long Islanders are serious about their state lowering the cost of needed drugs and providing information on their cost, effectiveness, and the marketing practices of the pharmaceutical industry. Long Island AARP members want more information about the behavior of pharmaceutical companies and the cost and effectiveness of their prescription medication.

## Methodology

AARP commissioned Woelfel Research to conduct a random digit dial (RDD) telephone survey of New York members in the counties of Nassau and Suffolk. A total of 800 interviews were completed. The survey was conducted from December 19 through December 28, 2005.<sup>2</sup> The survey has a sampling error of plus or minus 3.1 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 3.1 percentage points of what would have been obtained if every Long Island AARP member had been surveyed. Survey responses were weighted to reflect the age distribution by age of members in New York. Weighted responses to all prescription drug-related questions are in the attached annotated questionnaire. Weighted responses to all survey questions are available upon request.

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<sup>2</sup> The response rate is 20 percent and the cooperation rate is 91 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**

# 2005 Long Island New York Prescription Drug Survey

Weighted n=800; Margin of error: +/-3.5%

(Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding or multiple response.)

**800 New York AARP members in Nassau and Suffolk Counties.**

Introduction

Hello, may I please speak with...?

**[WHEN RESPONDENT OR THEIR SPOUSE IS ON THE PHONE, CONTINUE WITH:]**

Hello, this is \_\_\_\_\_ from Woelfel Research. I am calling on behalf of A-A-R-P (American Association of Retired Persons).

This is not a sales call and you will not be asked to buy anything either now or later. We are conducting a survey with A-A-R-P members in New York to find out about members' opinions on some important issues.

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 10 minutes to complete.

{IF ASKED, "Where did you get my name?",  
SAY "A-A-R-P provided a list of members for us to call."}

QA. [INTERVIEWER NOTE: ARE YOU SPEAKING TO THE MEMBER OR THE SPOUSE?]

1. Member
2. Spouse

Now, I'm going to ask you some questions about prescription drugs:

A Bill has been introduced in the New York State Legislature that would establish a bulk purchasing program for prescription drugs. This bill would allow New York to establish a buying pool for its state programs and to include in this buying pool individuals who lack prescription drug coverage.

1. How strongly would you support or oppose legislation that would allow the state to do "bulk purchasing" and pass the savings to people without adequate drug coverage?

| <u>%</u> |                            |
|----------|----------------------------|
| 54       | Strongly support           |
| 21       | Somewhat support           |
| 12       | Neither support nor oppose |
| 2        | Somewhat oppose            |
| 4        | Strongly oppose            |
| 8        | Not sure [VOLUNTEERED]     |
| 1        | Refused                    |

2. Are you currently taking prescription medication on a daily basis?

| <u>%</u> |                    |
|----------|--------------------|
| 80       | Yes                |
| 19       | No                 |
| 1        | Don't know/Refused |

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

| <u>%</u> |                        |
|----------|------------------------|
| 22       | Extremely concerned    |
| 22       | Very concerned         |
| 22       | Somewhat concerned     |
| 19       | Not very concerned     |
| 14       | Not at all concerned   |
| 1        | Not sure [VOLUNTEERED] |
| <.5      | Refused                |

Drug manufacturers market expensive new drugs to physicians. Sales representatives from these companies may provide physicians with free meals, trips, entertainment, and other gifts. Some experts believe that these practices encourage physicians to prescribe newer, more expensive drugs when equally effective and less costly drugs exist. Other experts believe such practices encourage the use of new, more effective drugs.

4. How strongly would you support or oppose the state of New York enacting legislation that would require drug manufacturers to report how much they spend on these marketing practices?

| <u>%</u> |                            |
|----------|----------------------------|
| 65       | Strongly support           |
| 15       | Somewhat support           |
| 9        | Neither support nor oppose |
| 2        | Somewhat oppose            |
| 4        | Strongly oppose            |
| 5        | Not sure [VOLUNTEERED]     |
| <.5      | Don't know/Refused         |

5. 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 New York to provide access to information that compares the safety and effectiveness of prescription drugs?

| <u>%</u> |                        |
|----------|------------------------|
| 54       | Extremely important    |
| 33       | Very important         |
| 9        | Somewhat important     |
| 2        | Not very important     |
| 1        | Not at all important   |
| 2        | Not sure [VOLUNTEERED] |
| 0        | Don't know/Refused     |

**Finally, I'd like to ask you some questions about you.**

## DEMOGRAPHICS

### D1. RECORD GENDER

| <u>%</u> |        |
|----------|--------|
| 49       | Male   |
| 51       | Female |

### D2. What is your age as of your last birthday? \_\_\_\_\_

| <u>%</u> |             |
|----------|-------------|
| <.5      | 40-49       |
| 23       | 50-59       |
| 42       | 60-74       |
| 28       | 75 or older |
| 7        | Refused     |

### D3. What is your current marital status?

| <u>%</u> |                                  |
|----------|----------------------------------|
| 63       | Married                          |
| 1        | Not married, living with partner |
| 21       | Widowed                          |
| 6        | Divorced                         |
| 1        | Separated                        |
| 6        | Never married                    |
| 3        | Refused                          |

### D4. Thinking about your state elections for New York Governor and Legislators in the last ten years, which of the following best describes your voting behavior?

| <u>%</u> |                    |
|----------|--------------------|
| 74       | Always vote        |
| 17       | Sometimes miss one |
| 4        | Rarely vote        |
| 3        | Never vote         |
| <.5      | Not sure           |
| 2        | Don't know/Refused |

D5. What is the highest level of education that you completed?

| <u>%</u> |  |
|----------|--|
| 4        | 0-12 <sup>th</sup> grade (no diploma)  |
| 29       | High school graduate or equivalent     |
| 11       | Post high school education (no degree) |
| 13       | 2 year college degree                  |
| 20       | 4 year college degree                  |
| 5        | Post-graduate study (no degree)        |
| 17       | Graduate or professional degree        |
| 3        | Refused                                |

D6. Which of the following best describes your employment status?

| <u>%</u> |                                      |
|----------|--------------------------------------|
| 2        | Self employed part-time              |
| 4        | Self employed full-time              |
| 7        | Employed part-time                   |
| 16       | Employed full-time                   |
| 63       | Retired, not working at all          |
| 4        | Not in labor force for other reasons |
| 1        | Unemployed but looking for work      |
| 3        | Refused                              |

D7. Are you of Hispanic, Spanish, or Latino origin or descent?

| <u>%</u> |          |
|----------|----------|
| 3        | Yes      |
| 93       | No       |
| 3        | Not sure |

D8. What is your race?

| <u>%</u> |                                     |
|----------|-------------------------------------|
| 89       | White or Caucasian                  |
| 4        | Black or African American           |
| 1        | American Indian or Alaskan Native   |
| 1        | Asian                               |
| <.5      | Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander |
| 1        | Other                               |
| 1        | Don't know                          |
| 4        | Refused                             |

D9. For statistical purposes only, please stop me when I get to your household income level, before taxes, for 2005:

| <u>%</u> |                                |
|----------|--------------------------------|
| 2        | Less than \$10,000             |
| 7        | \$10,000 to less than \$20,000 |
| 12       | \$20,000 to less than \$35,000 |
| 12       | \$35,000 to less than \$50,000 |
| 6        | \$50,000 to less than \$60,000 |
| 8        | \$60,000 to less than \$75,000 |
| 22       | \$75,000 and above             |
| 4        | Don't know                     |
| 26       | Refused                        |

**AARP**  
**Knowledge Management**  
**For more information contact Katherine Bridges at (202) 434-6329**