A decorative graphic is present on the page. It features a large, thin, gold-colored arc that starts near the top right and curves down towards the bottom right. A horizontal line and a vertical line intersect at the end of this arc, with a small gold square at the intersection point. Another small gold square is located at the bottom right corner of a green rectangular area in the top left corner of the page.

Prescription Drugs in Nebraska: A Survey of Experiences and Opinions

May 2005



Prescription Drugs in Nebraska: A Survey of Experiences and Opinions

Report Prepared by Susan L. Silberman, Ph.D.

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Acknowledgements

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Background

Prescription drug spending is among the fastest growing components of health-care expenditures in the United States.¹ A Kaiser Family Foundation analysis examined the main factors in the rising costs of prescription drugs. Cost increases were attributed to the number of prescriptions, the change to newer and higher-priced drugs, price increases by manufacturers, and direct-to-consumer advertising.²

In 2003, the average price of a retail prescription in Nebraska was \$49.08 and retail prescriptions filled per capita were 10.8,³ slightly above the national average. Moreover, retail prescription sales in Nebraska totaled almost \$900 million dollars in 2003.⁴ Nationally, from June 2003 to June 2004, prices for brand name prescription drugs used most commonly by older Americans rose 7.6 percent.⁵ This increase was 3.5 times the rate of inflation.

This study was commissioned by AARP Nebraska to gauge how Nebraskans are being affected by the costs of prescription drugs. In addition, survey respondents were asked about proposed legislation, Legislative Bill 712 (LB712), creating a statewide prescription drug discount program; establishing a state preferred drug list; and providing consumers with access to information comparing safety, effectiveness, and costs of prescription drugs.

The present report is based on data from a telephone survey of 1,000 Nebraska registered voters 18 years of age or older. It was conducted from February 2 through February 14, 2005. The survey has a sampling error of +/- 3.1%;⁶ the data are weighted by age and gender based on registered voters in Nebraska. The full methodology is provided on page 13, and the questionnaire is contained in the appendix of this report.

¹ Data from Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services at www.cms.hhs.gov/statistics/nhe/default.asp, (National Health Counts).

² Trends and Indicators in the Changing Health Care Marketplace, 2004 update, *Prescription Drug Trends*, October 2004, www.kff.org.

³ Vector One: National from Verispan, L.L.C.: Special Data Request, 2004 at www.statehealthfacts.kff.org.

⁴ Vector One: National from Verispan, L.L.C.: Special Data Request, 2004 at www.statehealthfacts.kff.org.

⁵ AARP: *Trends in Manufacturers Prices for Brand Name Drugs Most Commonly Used by Older Americans – Second and Third Quarter 2004 Update* (2004). Washington, D.C.

⁶ Meaning that at the 95% confidence level, if every Nebraska resident age 18 and over was interviewed, their responses would be within 3.1 percentage points of those reported here.

Highlights

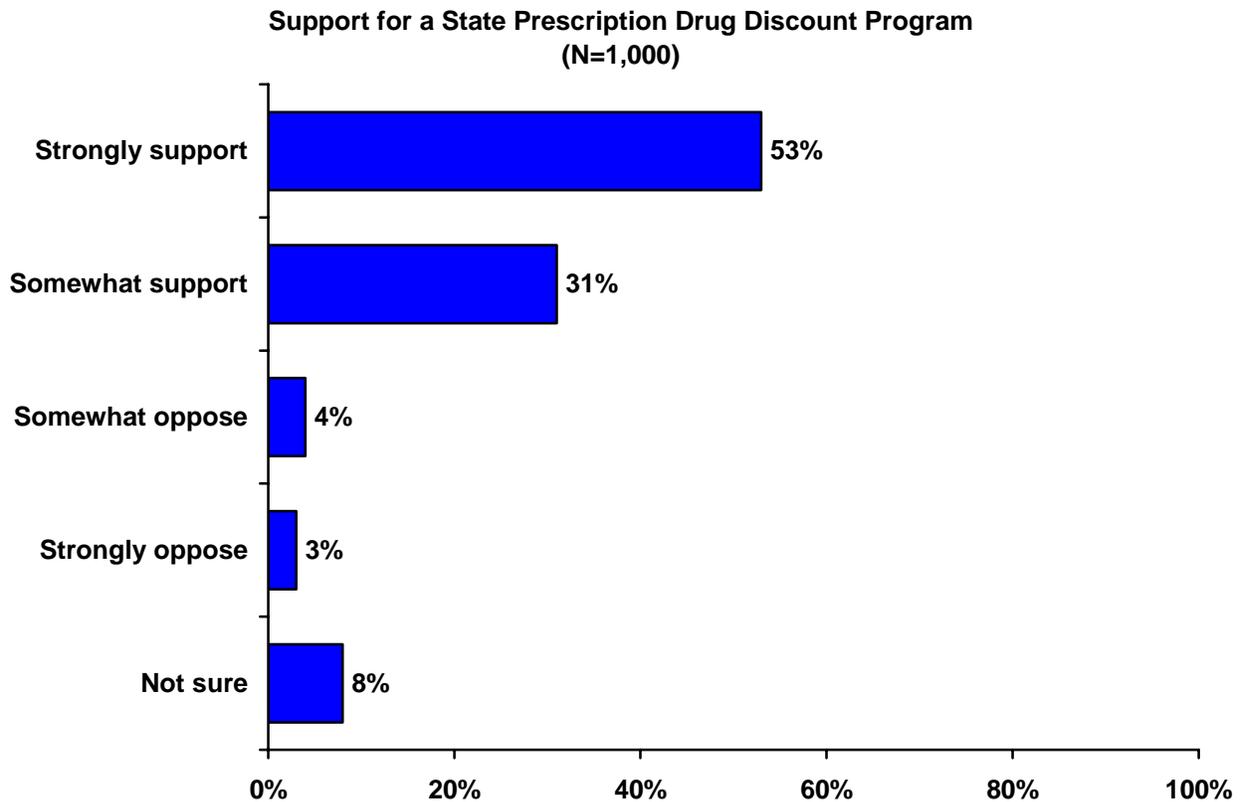
- More than eight in ten Nebraskans (84%) support offering a statewide prescription drug discount (proposed under Legislative Bill 712 or LB 712) for low and middle income individuals without prescription drug coverage.
- More than nine in ten state residents (94%) believe it is important for consumers to have access to information that compares safety, effectiveness, and costs of prescription drugs.
- Almost six in ten Nebraskans (57%) are concerned about being able to afford the cost of needed prescription drugs in the next two years.
- More than a third of Nebraskans (34%) have experienced a problem paying for prescription drugs in the past 12 months.
- More than one in ten (11%) Nebraskans is taking six or more prescription drugs on a regular basis, and one in ten (9%) is paying more than \$200 per month for their prescription drugs.
- In the past 12 months, Nebraskans have purchased a generic drug because it cost less (68%), delayed getting a prescription filled because they did not have enough money to pay for it (15%), taken less medicine than prescribed by a doctor to make it last longer (14%), cut back on items such as food and utilities to be able to afford a prescription drug (8%), and purchased drugs by mail, Internet, or on-site in another country, such as Canada or Mexico, because they cost less (14%).

Findings

More than eight in ten residents support Nebraska offering a prescription drug discount program for low and middle income individuals without prescription drug coverage.

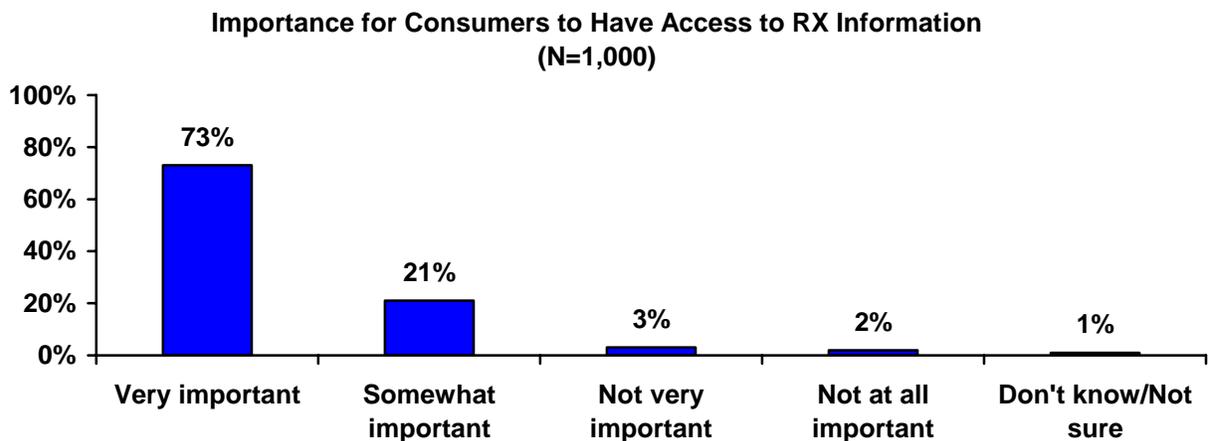
The state of Nebraska is considering a proposal to create a statewide prescription drug discount program (Legislative Bill 712) where the state would use its purchasing power to negotiate with pharmaceutical manufacturers to lower drug prices for participating residents and families. Enrollment in this program would be voluntary and available to Nebraska residents of all ages who do not have prescription drug coverage and who meet income guidelines. The proposed annual income guidelines are \$28,000 for one person, \$37,000 for a couple, \$47,000 for a family of three, and \$56,000 for a family of four or more.

Survey respondents were asked their level of support for Nebraska offering this type of state prescription drug discount program for low and middle-income individuals without prescription drug coverage. More than eight in ten residents (84%) support Nebraska offering this type of prescription drug service.



More than nine in ten Nebraskans believe it is important for consumers to have access to information that compares safety, effectiveness, and costs of prescription drugs.

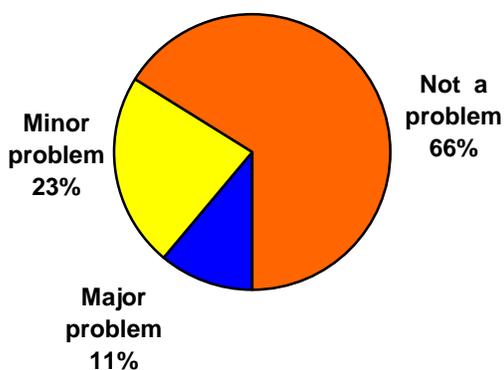
Several states are developing information comparing the safety and effectiveness of prescription drugs in order to help consumers, doctors, and pharmacists choose the right drug at the best cost. More than nine in ten (94%) Nebraskans think it is important for consumers to have access to this information.



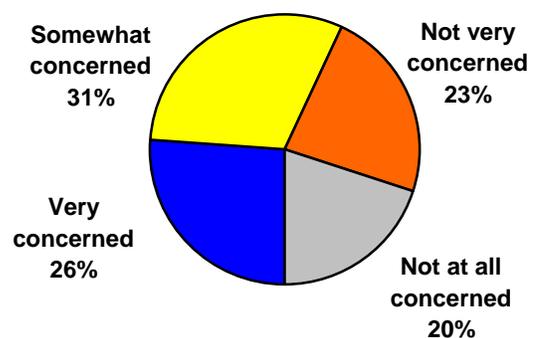
More than a third of Nebraskans have experienced a problem paying for prescription drugs in the past twelve months. Almost six in ten Nebraskans are concerned about being able to afford the cost of prescription drugs in the next two years.

Thirty-four percent of survey respondents say they have had a problem paying for prescription drugs in the past 12 months. Fifty-seven percent of survey respondents are concerned about affording the cost of prescription drugs over the next two years.

**Problem Paying for Prescriptions in Past 12 Months
(N=1,000)**



**Concern About Affording Prescription Drugs in the Next Two Years
(N=1,000)**

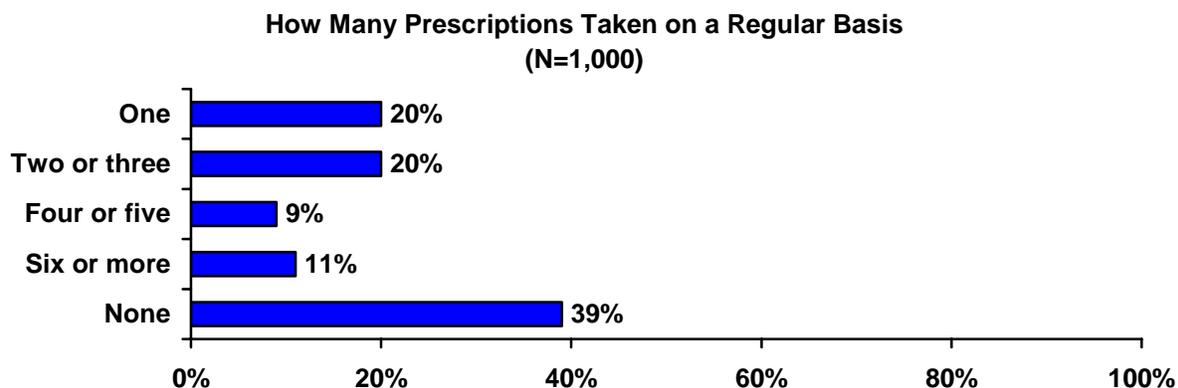


More than eight in ten Nebraskans are covered by a form of health insurance that helps pay for prescription drugs.

Survey respondents were asked if they had any form of health insurance coverage that helps pay for prescriptions, including private or employee health insurance plans, government programs like Medicare or Medicaid, or through a spouse’s plan. Eighty-one percent have some type of prescription drug coverage; eighteen percent do not have any prescription coverage.

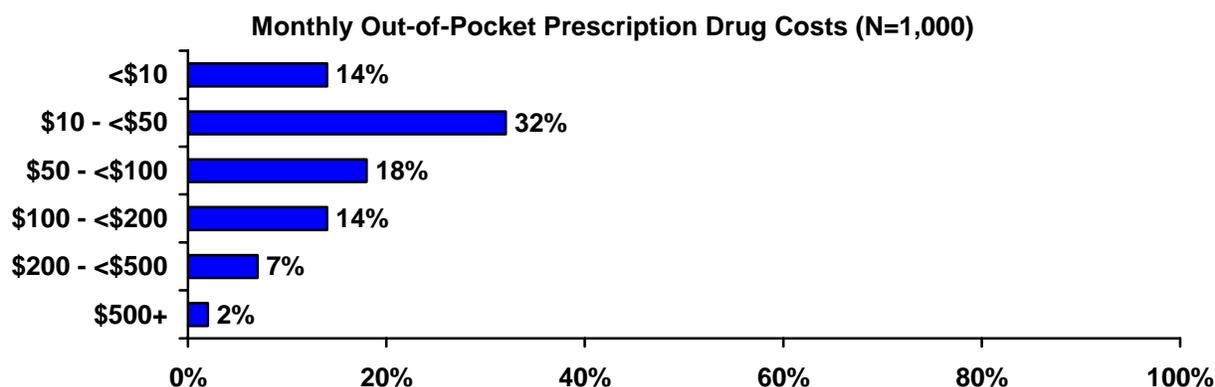
More than one in ten Nebraskans take six or more prescriptions on a regular basis.

Nebraskans were asked how many different prescription drugs they take on a regular basis – that is, daily, weekly, monthly, or some other recurring basis. Twenty percent of residents take only one prescription; another twenty percent of residents take two to three prescriptions. One in ten survey respondents take six of more prescriptions.



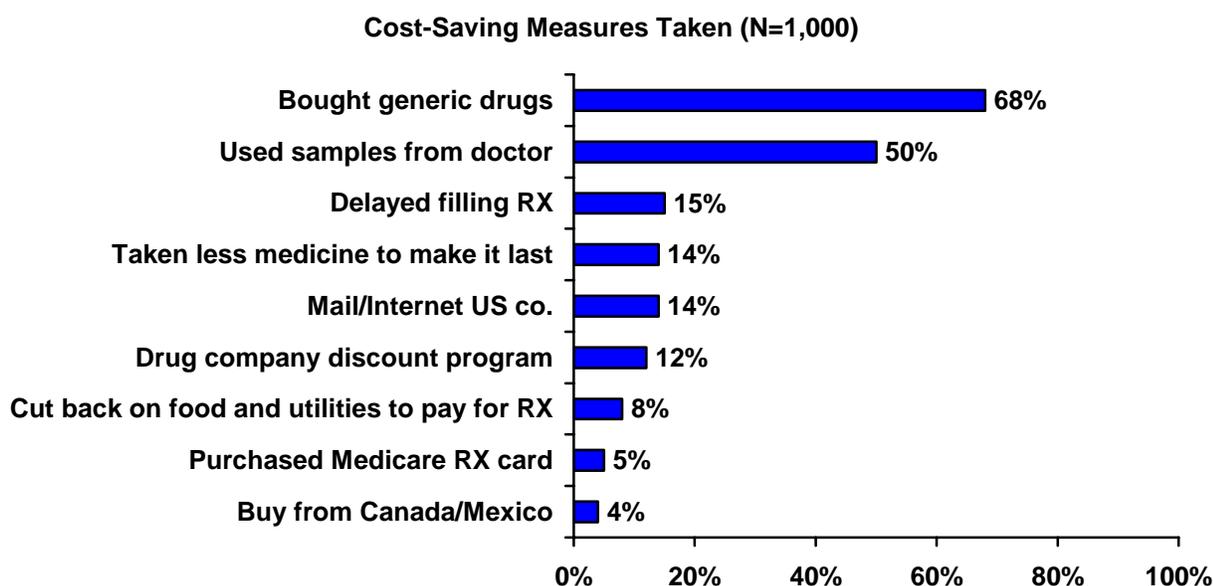
One in ten Nebraskan spends at least \$200 per month out-of-pocket for prescription drugs.

Almost half of Nebraskans (46%) spend less than \$50 per month out-of-pocket on prescription drugs. One in ten residents (9%) spends at least \$200 per month out-of-pocket monthly.



Nebraskans are pursuing a number of cost saving measures. One in seven residents have delayed filling a prescription because they did not have enough money to pay for it, and a similar proportion have taken less medication than was prescribed to make it last longer.

Almost seven in ten Nebraskans (68%) have purchased a generic drug because it was less expensive. Other money saving actions by survey respondents include using doctor provided samples (50%), delaying filling a prescription due to not having enough money to pay for it (15%), and taking less medication than prescribed by a doctor to make it last longer (14%).

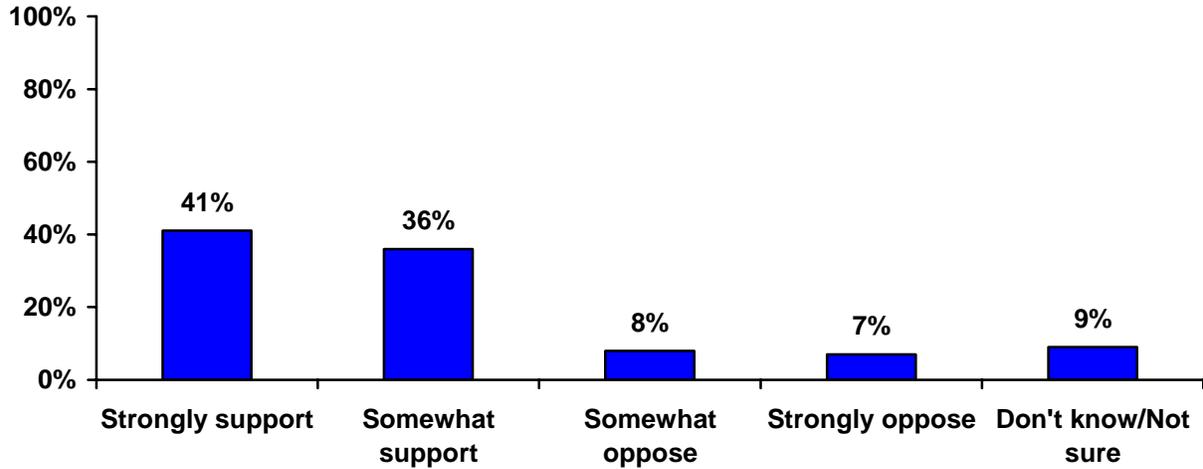


More than three-quarters of Nebraska residents support a state prescription drug program for low and middle income individuals, even if it requires state funding for a two year period.

The state of Nebraska is considering a proposal to create a statewide prescription drug discount program (LB 712) where the state would use their purchasing power to negotiate with pharmaceutical manufacturers to lower the drug prices for participating residents and families. Enrollment in this program would be voluntary and available to Nebraska residents of all ages who do not have prescription drug coverage and who meet income guidelines. It is estimated that the state of Nebraska would need to provide \$500,000 to fund such a program for a one-year period. After that the program would be financed by rebate payments from drug companies.

Seventy-seven percent of Nebraskans support a statewide prescription drug discount program for low and middle income individuals, even if it requires state funding for a two year period.

**Support for Nebraska RX Discount Program
(N=1,000)**

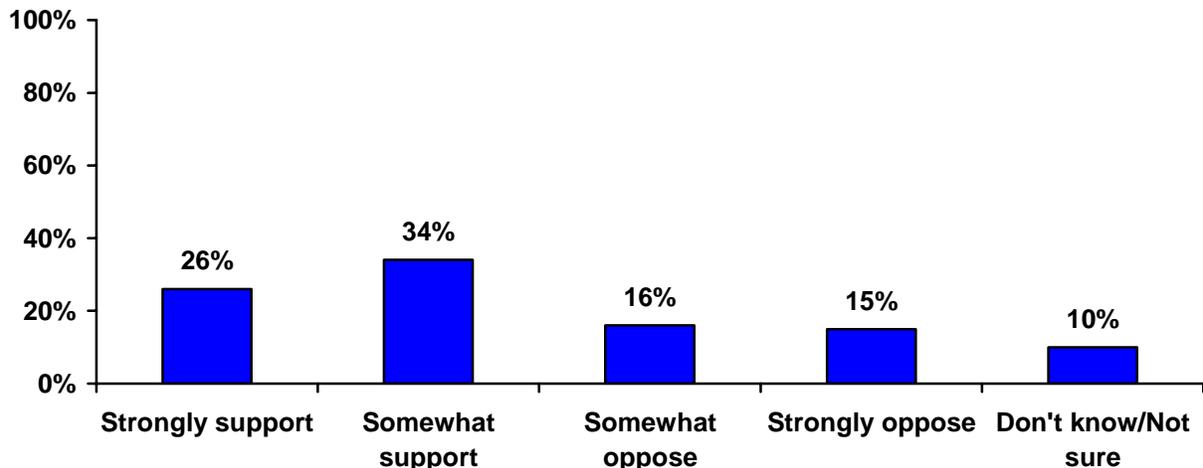


Six in ten Nebraskans support the state adopting a preferred drug list for use in state-funded prescription drug assistance programs.

Many states have adopted the use of preferred drug lists as one method of controlling rising prescription drug costs in state-funded prescription drug assistance programs such as Medicaid. A state preferred drug list would be a list of effective and discounted drugs that physicians can freely prescribe to patients on state programs. If a patient wants a prescription drug that is not on the preferred drug list, the physician must seek approval to prescribe the medication.

Six in ten Nebraskans (60%) support the state adopting a preferred drug list for use in state-funded prescription drug assistance programs.

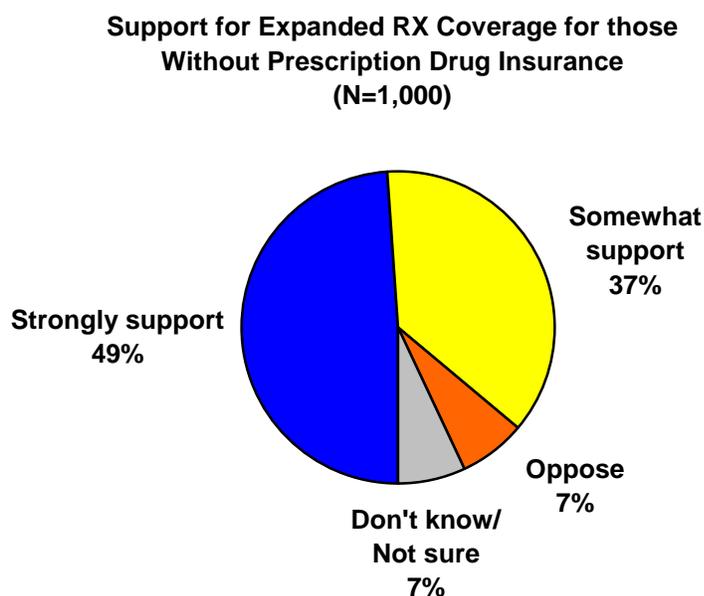
**Support for Nebraska Adopting a Preferred Drug List
(N=1,000)**



More than eight in ten Nebraskans support the state using savings it receives under the new Medicare prescription drug benefit to expand prescription coverage for individuals without prescription drug insurance.

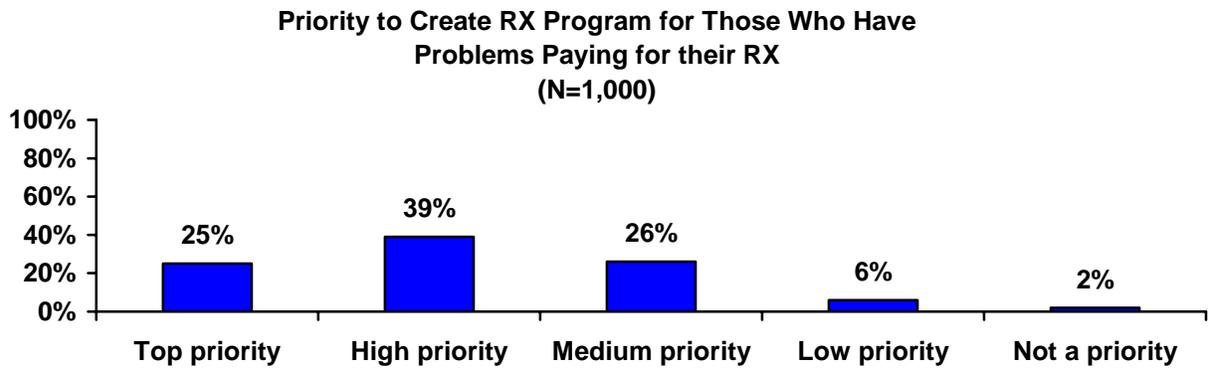
The new Medicare prescription drug benefit, which takes effect in January 2006, will pay for prescription drug coverage for many residents of Nebraska with lower incomes. This means that the State, which currently pays for prescription drug coverage for low-income individuals, could save millions of tax dollars each year. Nebraska could use these savings to expand prescription drug assistance coverage for lower- to middle-income residents currently without prescription drug insurance.

Eighty-six percent of Nebraskans support using savings to expand prescription drug assistance coverage for lower- to middle-income residents currently without prescription drug insurance.



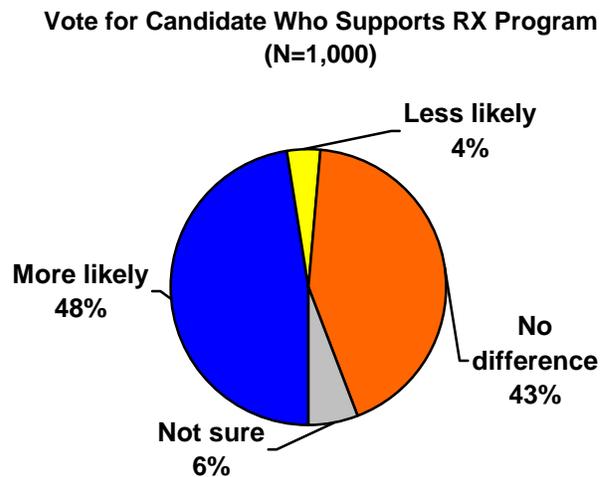
More than six in ten Nebraskans say it is a top or high priority for the Legislature to create a prescription drug assistance program for people who have problems paying for their prescriptions.

Sixty-four percent of Nebraska residents say it is a top (25%) or high (39%) priority for the state legislature to create a prescription drug assistance program to assist persons who have problems paying for their prescriptions.



Half of Nebraskans are more likely to support a candidate for state office who would establish a prescription drug program for those who need help with their prescription drug costs.

Forty-eight percent of survey respondents say they are more likely to vote for a candidate for state office in Nebraska who supported legislation that would establish a prescription drug program for those who need help with their prescription drug costs. Another 43 percent say a candidate’s position on this issue would not make a difference in their vote.



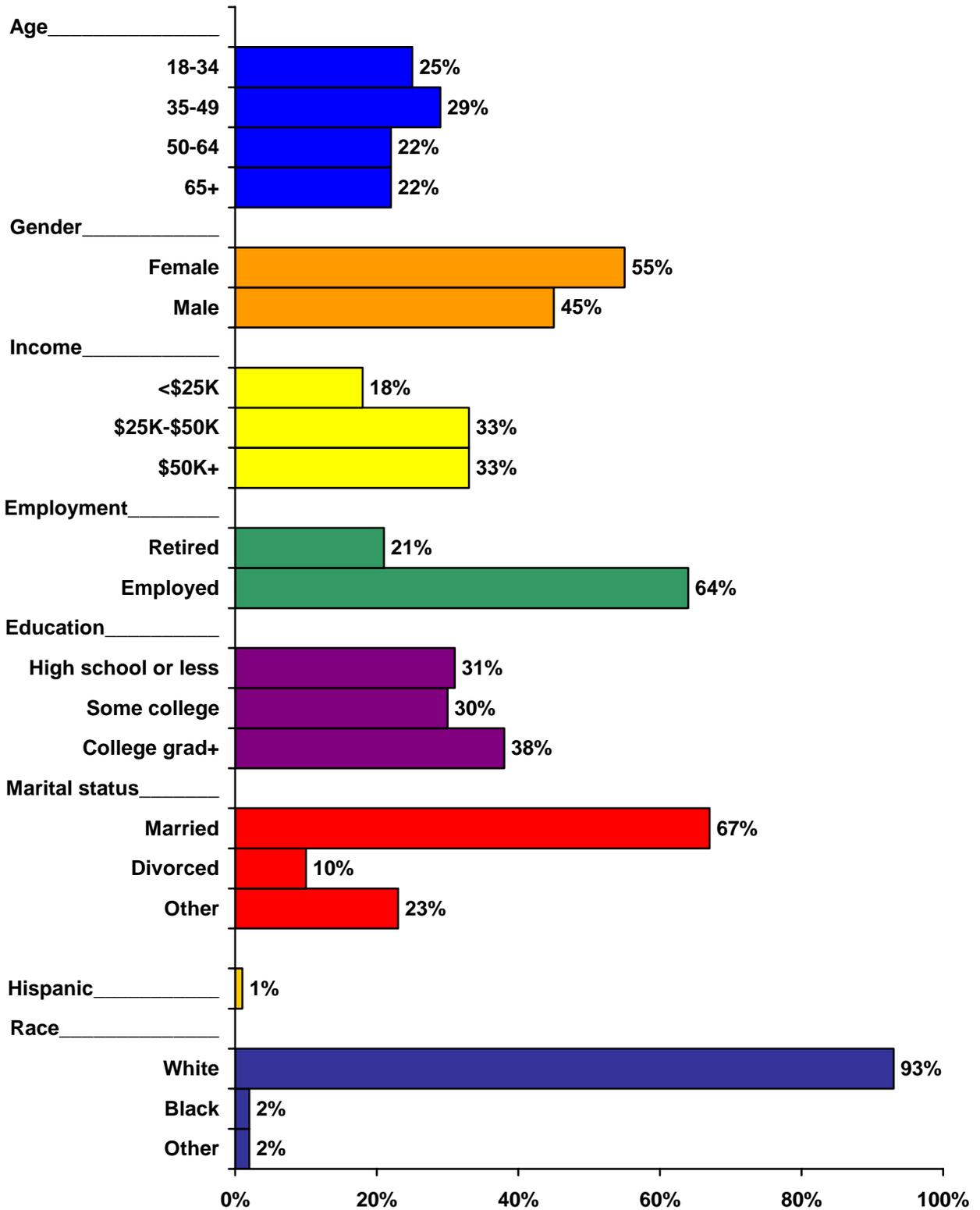
A Profile of Nebraska Respondents

A total of 1,000 Nebraskans aged 18 and older participated in the survey. An overwhelming majority (92%) of respondents are regular voters. Seven in ten of those surveyed report they *always vote* while another 21 percent say they *sometimes miss* a vote.

There are more female respondents (55%) than male respondents (45%). Two-thirds of respondents (67%) are married. One in seven Nebraskan respondents (13%) has never been married. Three in ten respondents have some college or technical training beyond high school (30%) and 26 percent are college graduates. The majority of Nebraska survey respondents (93%) are white. Two-thirds of respondents (64%) are employed either full-or part-time. One in six Nebraska respondents (18%) have an annual household income of \$25,000 or less, while 33 percent have incomes of \$50,000 or more. Nineteen percent of survey respondents are members of AARP.

Demographic Characteristics

N = 1,000



Conclusion

A significant number of Nebraskans are struggling with prescription drug costs. About one in ten Nebraskans over the age of 18 are paying more than \$200 per month for prescription drugs. About the same proportion of the population is taking six or more drugs. And one in five does not have health insurance that will offset some of the cost of prescription drugs. While a segment of the population is currently struggling with drug costs, an even larger group (57%) is concerned about their ability to afford prescription drugs in the next two years.

Nebraskans support state action to address this problem. An overwhelming majority (84%) supports legislation which would create a statewide prescription drug discount program for persons who don't have prescription drug coverage and who have modest incomes. Additionally, three-quarters of survey respondents support a state-wide prescription drug discount program, even if it requires new state funding for a two-year period. Eighty-six percent of respondents support using the savings from the new Medicare drug benefit to expand prescription drug assistance for lower- and middle-income Nebraskans who don't have prescription drug insurance.

A large majority (94%) of Nebraskans believe that citizens should have access to information that compares the safety, effectiveness and costs of prescription drugs. The provision of basic consumer information would provide state residents with a better opportunity to make wise use of prescription drugs.

Nearly two-thirds of Nebraskans say that it is either a top priority (25%) or a high priority (39%) for the Nebraska Legislature to create a prescription drug assistance program to help persons who are having problems paying for their prescriptions.

Prescription drug affordability is a problem for many Nebraskans. They are dealing with the challenge in a number of ways ranging including using generics (68%), obtaining samples from a physician (50%), delaying filling a prescription (15%), taking less medication than prescribed (14%), using a drug company discount program (12%), and cutting back on essentials to buy drugs (8%). Four percent have purchased prescription drugs in another country. These circumstances, particularly those that result in non-compliance with prescribed drug therapy, have caused AARP Nebraska to designate prescription drug affordability as a priority issue. As the cost of prescription drugs continues to rise, this issue will become more important to all Nebraskans who purchase prescription drugs, including the 200,000 AARP members in the state.

Methodology

AARP commissioned Woelfel Research to conduct a random digit dial (RDD) telephone survey of self-identified registered voters age 18 or older in Nebraska. A total of 1,000 interviews were completed. The sample included 800 18+ Nebraskans with an additional sample of 200 Nebraskans age 50 and older. All respondents were contacted using an RDD methodology and screened for voter registration. The survey was conducted from February 2 - 14, 2005.⁷ The survey has a sampling error of plus or minus 3.1 percent. Survey responses were weighted to reflect the distribution of age and gender among registered voters in the adult population of Nebraska. Weighted responses to all survey questions are in the attached annotated questionnaire.

⁷ The response rate is 22 percent and the cooperation rate is 90 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

Nebraska Prescription Drug Telephone Survey

Sample: 800 18+ with 200 boost 50+
Screen on: Self-Identified Registered Voters

Introduction

Hello, this is _____ calling from Woelfel Research, Inc., a national opinion research firm. We are not telemarketers and are not trying to sell you anything. We would like to find out your opinions on prescription drug issues in Nebraska. Your views are important and we would greatly appreciate your participation. All of your responses are kept entirely confidential. The survey should take less than 10 minutes of your time.

I1. RECORD GENDER OF PERSON WHO ANSWERED PHONE:

- 1) Male
- 2) Female

I2. To make our study more representative of those living throughout Nebraska, I need to speak with the youngest male who is at home right now and is at least 18 years old.

- 1) Person on phone is youngest male [SKIP TO Q1]
- 2) Other person is youngest male and is coming to phone [SKIP TO I4]
- 3) Person is not available
- 4) REFUSED [SKIP TO R1]

I3. Then may I speak to the oldest female who is at home right now and is at least 18 years old?

- 1) Person on phone is oldest female [SKIP TO Q1]
- 2) Other person is oldest female and is coming to the phone [SKIP TO I4]
- 3) Person is not available [TERMINATE]
- 4) REFUSED [SKIP TO R1]

I4. Hello, this is _____ calling from Woelfel Research, Inc., a national opinion research firm. We are not telemarketers and are not trying to sell you anything. We would like to find out your opinions on prescription drug issues in Nebraska. Your views are important and we would greatly appreciate your participation. All of your responses are kept entirely confidential. The survey should only take less than 10 minutes of your time.

- 1) CONTINUE
- 2) REFUSED [SKIP TO R1]



2005 AARP Nebraska Prescription Drug Survey

Total N =1,000; Response Rate =22%; Sampling Error = +/-3.1%)
(Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding or multiple response.)

1. Are you, personally, now covered by any form of health insurance that helps pay for prescription drugs? This could include any private or employee health insurance plan, government programs like Medicare or Medicaid or coverage through your spouse's plans—if they help to pay for prescriptions.

<u>%</u>	
81	Yes
18	No
<1	No Sure

2. Approximately how many different prescription drugs do you take on a regular basis? By “regular” I mean on a daily, weekly, monthly, or some other recurring basis.
[READ LIST]

<u>%</u>	
20	One
20	Two to three
9	Four to five
11	Six or more
39	None, I don't take any prescription drugs
1	Not sure

3. In the past 12 months, approximately how much have you or other members of your household spent, EACH month, out of your own pocket for prescription drugs?
[READ LIST]

<u>%</u>	
14	Less than \$10 per month
32	\$10 but less than \$50 per month
18	\$50 but less than \$100 per month
14	\$100 but less than \$200 per month
7	\$200 but less than \$500 per month
2	\$500 or more per month
9	Nothing, have not purchased prescription drugs
5	No sure

4. In the past 12 months, has paying for prescription drugs been a major problem, a minor problem, or not a problem for you or anyone in your household?

<u>%</u>	
11	A major problem
23	A minor problem
66	Not a problem
<1	No answer

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

<u>%</u>	
26	Very concerned
31	Somewhat concerned
23	Not very concerned
20	Not at all concerned
1	Not sure [VOLUNTEERED]

6. In the past 12 months, have you or has anyone in your household done any of the following? [ROTATE ITEMS A THROUGH I]

In the past 12 months, have you or has anyone in your household	Yes	No	Not Sure
a. Delayed getting a prescription filled because you didn't have enough money to pay for it?	15%	85%	0%
b. Taken less medicine than your doctor prescribed to make it last longer?	14%	86%	0%
c. Cut back on items such as food and utilities to be able to afford a prescription drug?	8%	92%	0%
d. Ordered your prescription drugs by mail or internet from a company in the U.S. because they cost less?	14%	86%	1%
e. Purchased drugs by mail, internet or on site in another country , such as Canada or Mexico, because they cost less?	4%	96%	0%
f. Obtained samples from your physician	50%	50%	1%
g. Purchased a generic drug because it cost less?	68%	31%	1%
h. Used a discount program offered by a drug company	12%	87%	1%
i. Purchased a Medicare approved drug discount cart	5%	94%	1%

7. The state of Nebraska is considering a proposal to create a statewide prescription drug discount program where the state would use their purchasing power to negotiate with pharmaceutical manufacturers to lower the drug prices for participating residents and families. Enrollment in this program would be voluntary and available to Nebraska residents of all ages who don't have prescription drug coverage and who meet income guidelines. The proposed annual income guidelines are \$28,000 for one person, \$37,000 for a couple, \$47,000 for a family of three and \$56,000 for a family of four.

How strongly would you support or oppose Nebraska offering this type of state prescription drug discount program for low and middle-income individuals without prescription drug coverage? Would you say you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose offering this type of program?

<u>%</u>	
53	Strongly support
31	Somewhat support
4	Somewhat oppose
3	Strongly oppose
8	Not sure [VOLUNTEERED]
<1	No Response

8. It is estimated that the state of Nebraska would need to provide \$500,000 to fund such a program for a one-year period. After that the program would be financed by rebate payments from drug companies. [INTERVIEWER: If asked the money would come from Nebraska's General Fund.]

How strongly would you support or oppose this type of state prescription drug discount program in Nebraska if it requires new state funding for a two year period?

<u>%</u>	
41	Strongly support
36	Somewhat support
8	Somewhat oppose
7	Strongly oppose
9	Don't know/Not sure [VOLUNTEERED]
<1	No Response

9. Many states have adopted the use of preferred drug lists as one method of controlling rising prescription drug costs in state-funded prescription drug assistance programs such as Medicaid. A state preferred drug list would be a list of effective and discounted drugs that physicians can freely prescribe to patients on state programs. If a patient wants a prescription drug that is not on the preferred drug list, the physician must seek approval to prescribe the medication.

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

<u>%</u>	
26	Strongly support
34	Somewhat support
16	Somewhat oppose
15	Strongly oppose
10	Don't know/Not sure [VOLUNTEERED]
<1	No Response

10. 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, effectiveness, and costs of prescription drugs?

<u>%</u>	
73	Very important
21	Somewhat important
3	Not very important
2	Not at all important
1	Don't know/Not sure [VOLUNTEERED]
<1	No Response

11. The new Medicare prescription drug benefit (which comes into effect in January 2006) will pay for prescription drug coverage for many residents of Nebraska with lower incomes. This means that the state of Nebraska, which currently pays for prescription drug coverage for low-income individuals, could save millions of tax dollars each year.

How strongly would you support or oppose the state of Nebraska using these savings to expand prescription drug assistance coverage for lower- to middle-income residents currently without prescription drug insurance?

<u>%</u>	
49	Strongly support
37	Somewhat support
4	Somewhat oppose
3	Strongly oppose
7	Don't know/Not sure [VOLUNTEERED]
<1	No Response

12. How much of a priority should it be for the Nebraska Legislature to create a prescription drug assistance program to assist persons who have problems paying for their prescriptions? Is it a top priority, high priority, medium priority, low priority, or not a priority?

<u>%</u>	
25	Top priority
39	High priority
26	Medium priority
6	Low priority
2	Not a priority
1	Not sure [VOLUNTEERED]

13. If a candidate for state office in Nebraska supported legislation that would establish a prescription drug program for those who need help with their prescription drug costs, would you be more likely to vote for that candidate, less likely to vote for them, or would it not make any difference?

<u>%</u>	
48	More likely
4	Less likely
43	Would not make a difference
6	Not sure [VOLUNTEERED]

About You

Finally, the following few questions are for classification purposes only and will be kept entirely confidential.

D1. Are you a male or female?

<u>%</u>	
45	Male
55	Female

D2. What is your age as of your last birthday? (IN YEARS) _____

<u>%</u>	
25	18-34
29	35-49
22	50-64
22	65+
2	Refused/No response

D3. What is your current marital status? (READ LIST)

<u>%</u>	
67	Currently Married
1	Currently living with partner/significant other
8	Widowed
10	Divorced
1	Separated
13	Never married
*	Don't know/Not sure
1	Refused/no response

D4. What is the highest level of education that you completed? (READ LIST)

<u>%</u>	
3	Less than high school
28	High school graduate or equivalent
30	Some college or technical training beyond high school
26	College graduate (4 years)
12	Post-graduate or professional degree
*	Don't know/Not sure
1	Refused

D5. Which of the following best describes your current employment status? (READ LIST)

<u>%</u>	
50	Employed or self-employed <u>full-time</u>
14	Employed or self-employed <u>part-time</u>
21	Retired and not working
7	Homemaker
2	Unemployed and looking for work
4	Disabled
2	Student
<1	Don't know/Not sure
1	No Response

D6. Thinking about your state elections for Nebraska Governor and Legislators in the last ten years, which of the following best describes your voting behavior? Would you say you always vote, sometimes miss one, rarely vote, or never vote?

<u>%</u>	
71	Always vote
21	Sometimes miss one
5	Rarely vote
2	Never vote
<1	Don't know/Not sure
1	No Response

D7. What was your annual household income before taxes in 2004?

<u>%</u>	
7	Less than \$15,000 (\$14,999)
11	\$15,000 to less than \$25,000 (\$24,999)
14	\$25,000 to less than \$35,000 (\$34,999)
19	\$35,000 to less than \$50,000 (\$49,999)
18	\$50,000 to less than \$75,000 (\$74,999)
15	\$75,000 or more
5	Don't Know/ Not sure
12	No Response

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

<u>%</u>	
1	Yes
99	No
<1	Don't Know/Not Sure
1	Refused

D9. What is your race?

<u>%</u>	
93	White or Caucasian
2	Black or African American
1	Native American
<1	Asian America
1	Native American or Alaskan Native
1	Other
2	Refused

D10. What is your 5-digit zip code?

D11. Are you or your spouse a member of AARP

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

AARP
Knowledge Management
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