

A large green rectangular area is positioned in the top left corner of the page. A thin grey line extends from the bottom right corner of this green area, ending in a small yellow square. This line continues horizontally across the page, then turns vertically down to the right, ending in another small yellow square. A large, thin, light-brown arc starts from the top right and curves down to meet the vertical line at the yellow square.

# 2002 AARP Oregon Prescription Drug Survey

Published November 2002



# **2002 AARP Oregon Prescription Drug Survey**

**Data Collected by Woelful Research, Inc.  
Report Prepared by Jennifer H. Sauer, M.A.**

**Copyright © 2002  
AARP  
Knowledge Management  
601 E Street NW  
Washington, D.C., 20049  
[HTTP://RESEARCH.AARP.ORG](http://RESEARCH.AARP.ORG)  
Reprinting with Permission Only**

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](http://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.

## **Acknowledgements**

AARP staff from the Oregon State Office, State Affairs, and Knowledge Management contributed to the design and implementation of this study. Special thanks go to Jerry Cohen, Enid Moore, John Luehrs, Van Ellet, David Gross, Gretchen Straw, Darlene Matthews, and Jennifer Leslie. Special acknowledgment also goes to Leslie Seabright of Woelful Research for her commitment to field this study and present us with results in less than 10 days. Jennifer H. Sauer, Knowledge Management, was the project manager. For more information, contact Jennifer H. Sauer at (202) 434-6207.

## Background

For the past year, the state of Oregon has been funding research conducted at the Oregon Health Sciences University that entails the review of studies and clinical trials of various medications in order to compare the safety and effectiveness of similar prescription drugs. The Oregon Health Resources Commission (HRC) – a panel of doctors and pharmacists – is currently using the findings from this research to make recommendations to the Oregon Medical Assistance Program so they can create a preferred list of prescription drugs for fee-for-service participants in the Oregon Health Plan.

*The 2002 Oregon Prescription Drug Survey* was conducted because AARP Oregon believed it was essential to assess how important comparative prescription drug information is to *all* Oregonians, particularly those ages 50 and older. Therefore, this survey gauges the support of older Oregonians for the state's continued funding of this research so that a guide comparing the safety and effectiveness of prescription drugs can be made available and easily accessible to all consumers, as well as doctors and pharmacists.

This survey is, in part, a quantitative follow-up to an earlier qualitative project that explored Oregonians views regarding a possible prescription drug formulary list that would eventually become translated into a prescription drug guide. It also explores older Oregonians support for the state implementing a prescription drug assistance program for lower income people age 65 and older. In 2001, Oregon passed legislation creating a state prescription drug assistance program for older low-income residents. The program was designed so that individuals age 65 and older whose annual incomes is less than \$16,000 and couples whose annual incomes is less than \$20,000 would have help from the state to pay for their prescription drugs. To date, Oregon has not funded this program.

## Findings

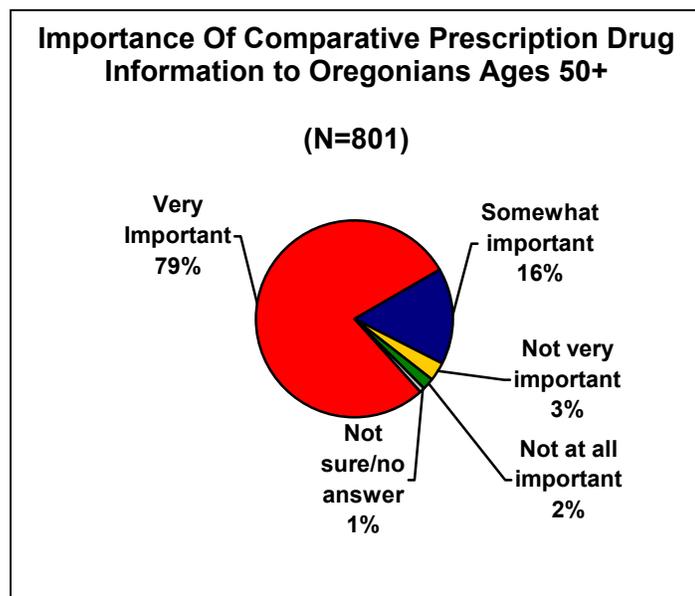
### Three in five Oregonians age 50+ have NOT talked to their doctor about alternative prescription drugs.

After thinking about the last time a doctor prescribed medication for them, less than half of the respondents say they talked to their doctor about alternative drugs (other prescription medications for the same ailment that may have different side effects, precautions, or ingredients that might be better for them). However, most respondents did talk to their doctor about the medicine they prescribed in terms of what it was supposed to do, how and when to take the medicine, precautions to consider when taking the medicine, and side effects of the medicine.

Did talk to doctor about:	% Respondents (n=801)
How and when to take the prescribed medicine	91
What the prescribed medicine was supposed to do	88
Precautions to take while using the prescribed medicine	77
What side effects might occur from the prescribed medicine	73
Alternative drugs	42

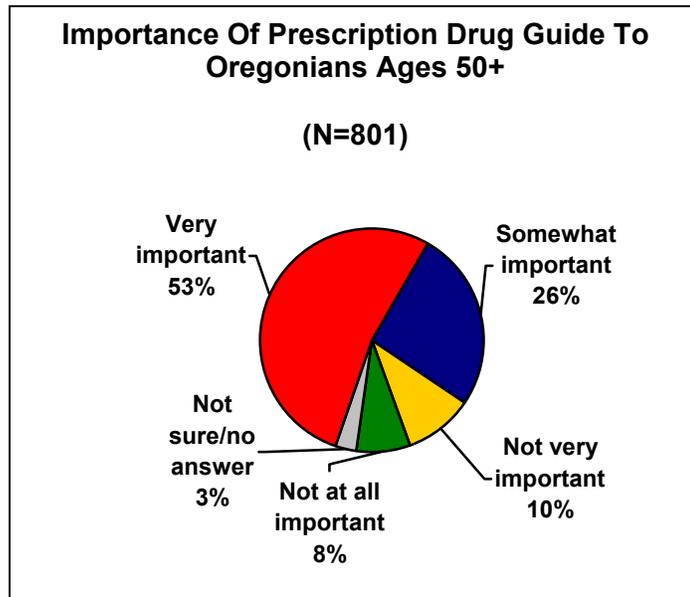
### Most Oregonians age 50+ say it is important for consumers to have information available that compares the safety and effectiveness of prescription drugs.

Nearly eight in ten older Oregonians say it is *very important* that comparative information on the safety and effectiveness of prescription drugs be made available to consumers. An additional one in six say it is *somewhat important*.



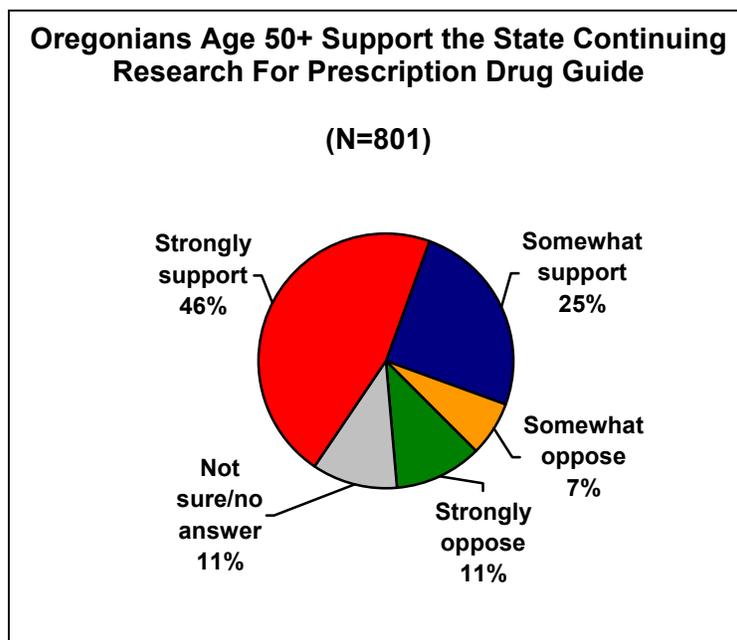
**Most Oregonians age 50+ say it is important to have a prescription drug guide made available to them.**

Respondents were told about the Oregon Health Sciences University research that is producing comparative information for consumers, doctors, and pharmacists on the safety and effectiveness of various types of medications. Over half say that having such a guide available is *very important* (53%) to them, and one-quarter say it is *somewhat important* (26%) to them.



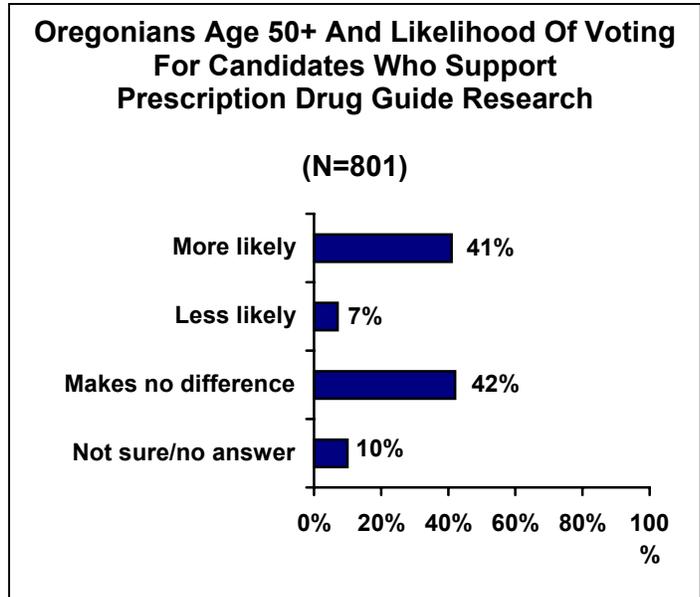
**Seven in ten Oregonians age 50+ support the state continuing prescription drug research for a consumer guide.**

The comparative prescription drug research is estimated to save the Oregon Health Plan about \$17 million in its first year, and \$35 million over the next two years as additional drug studies are completed. Upon hearing this, most say they support, and almost half say they *strongly support*, the state continuing this research to be included in a guide for them, their doctor, and their pharmacist.



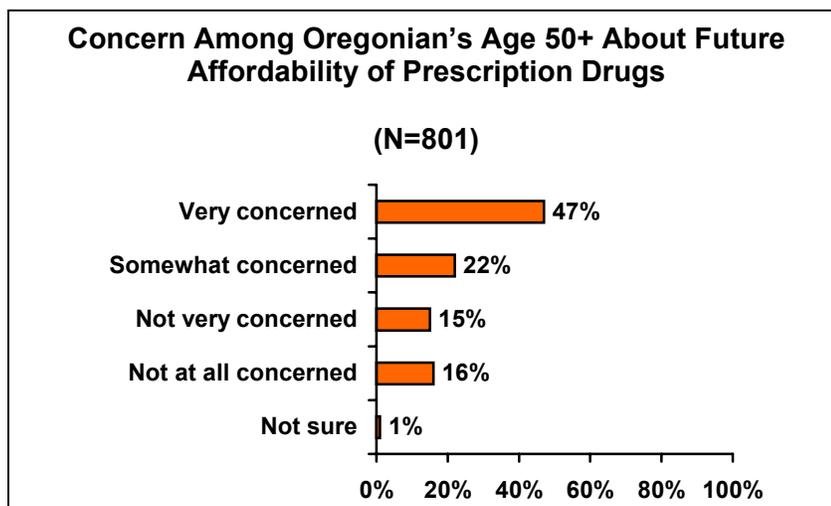
**Four in ten Oregonians age 50+ are more likely to vote for a candidate for state office who supports funding research for a consumer guide that compares the safety and effectiveness of various prescription drugs.**

Forty-one percent of Oregonians age 50+ say they are *more likely* to vote for a state political candidate who supports funding the research behind a comparative information guide for consumers on prescription drugs. A similar proportion say that candidate support for such research and its subsequent guide would *make no difference* to them. In contrast, only 7 percent say they would be *less likely* to vote for such a candidate.



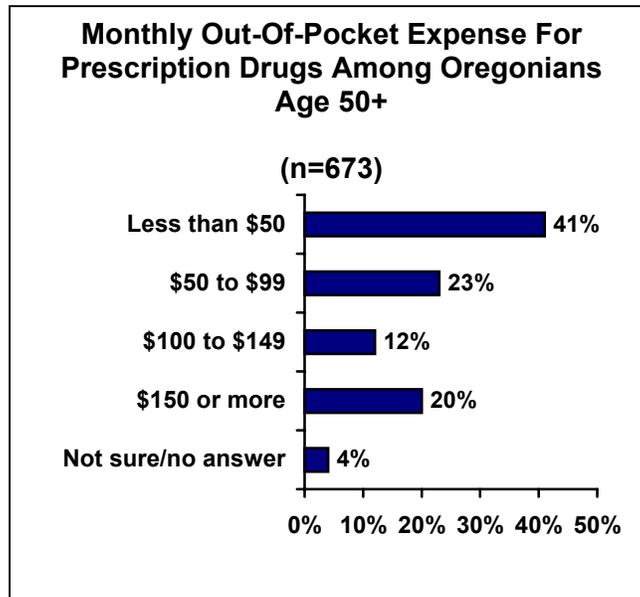
**Nearly half of Oregonians age 50+ are very concerned about being able to afford prescription drugs over the next five years.**

Older Oregonians are concerned about being able to afford the cost of prescription drugs in the near future. Almost one half say they are *very concerned*, and almost one-quarter say they are *somewhat concerned*.



**One in five Oregonians who have taken prescription drugs in the last twelve months spend \$150 or more out-of-pocket each month for these medications.**

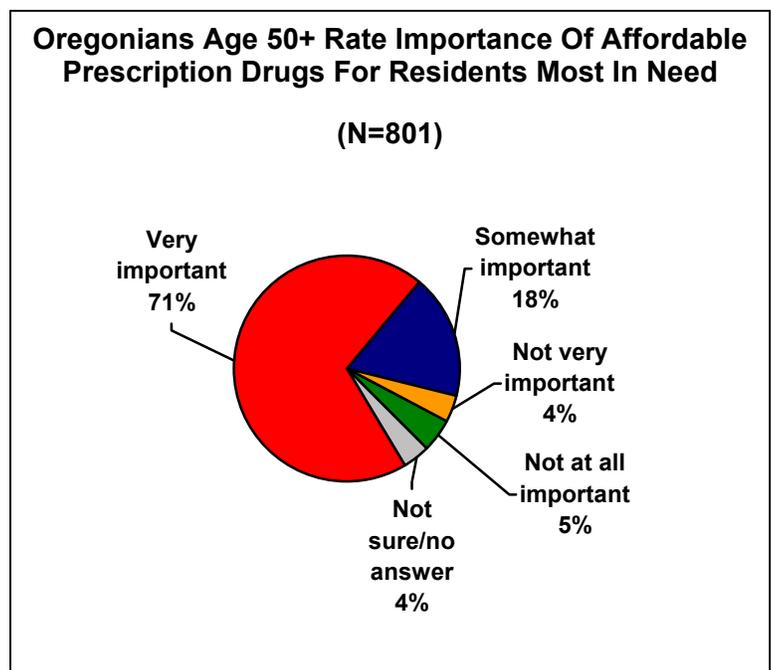
Twenty percent of those older Oregonians who have taken prescription medication in the last twelve months say they spend at least \$150 out of their own pocket for prescription drugs each month. Another one in five say they spend between \$50 and \$99 each month, and about two in five spend less than \$50 per month on their prescription drugs. Furthermore, one-quarter (26%) say they do not get any help paying for their prescription drugs from insurance or any other health care coverage plan or program (see Annotated Survey in appendix).



**Most older Oregonians feel that it is *very important* that the state make prescription drugs more affordable for those in need.**

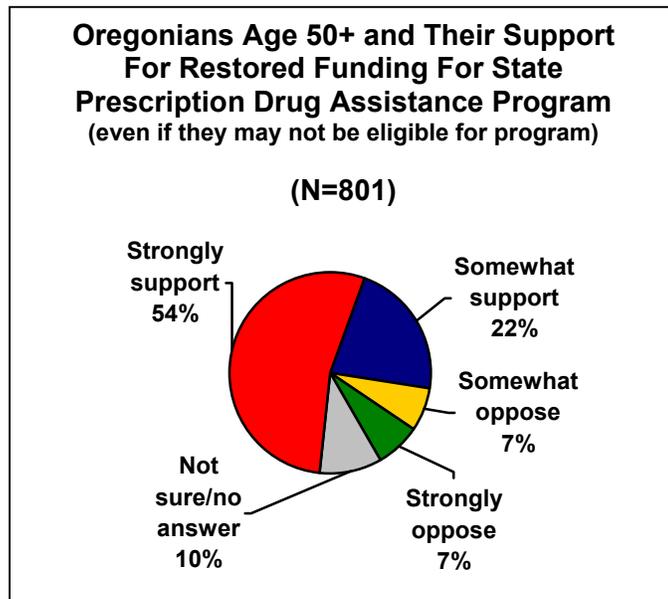
Nearly all Oregonians age 50+ say it is important to them that the state make prescription drugs more affordable to those most in need: almost seven in ten say it is *very important*, and another one in five say it is *somewhat important* to them.

Subsequently, older Oregonians were asked about their support for restoring funding to a prescription drug assistance program for low-income seniors age 65 and older that was created in 2001 but never implemented due to cuts in funding.



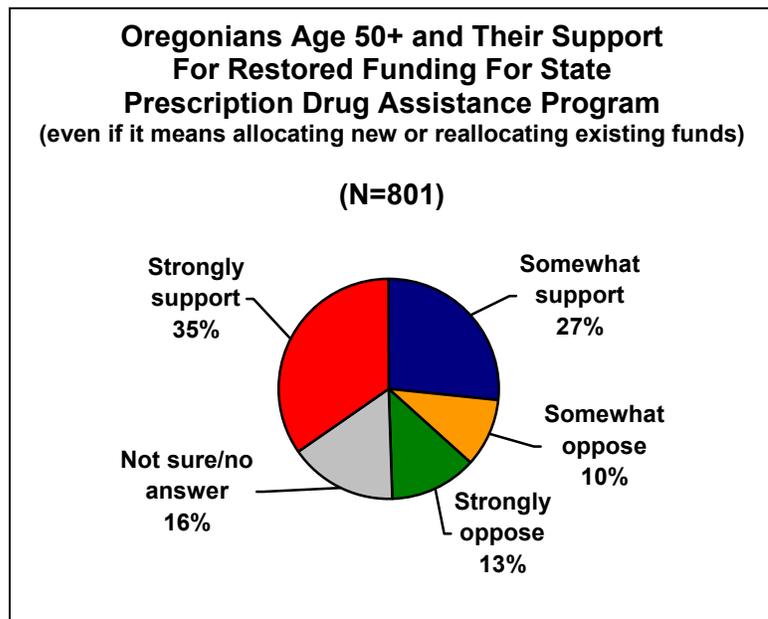
**Most Oregonians age 50+ support restoring funding to a prescription drug assistance program for low-income seniors even if they may not be eligible for the benefit.**

Over half of older Oregonians say they *strongly support* and about one in five say they *somewhat support* restoring funding to a prescription drug assistance program for low-income seniors age 65 and older even if they personally may not qualify to collect such a benefit.



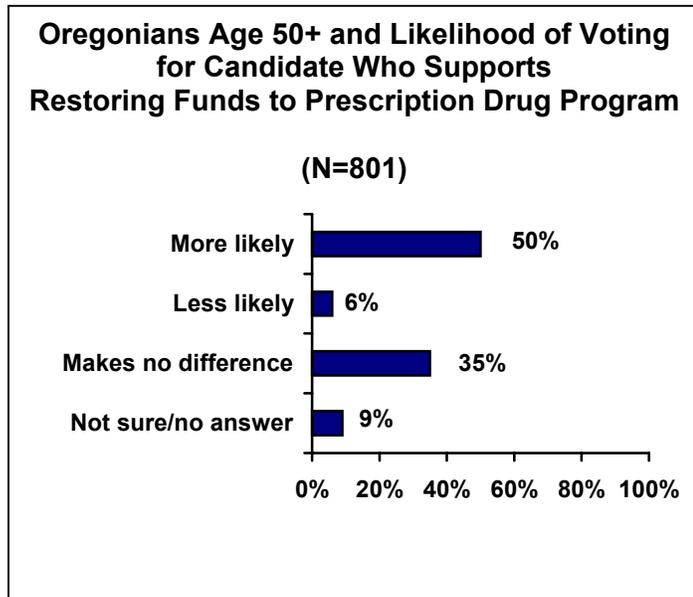
**Six in ten Oregonians age 50+ support restoring funding to a prescription drug assistance program for low-income seniors even if it means allocating new or reallocating existing state funds do help pay for it.**

Over one-third of older Oregonians say they *strongly support*, and another one in four say they *somewhat support* restoring funding to a prescription drug assistance program for low income seniors age 65 and older even if means allocating new or reallocating existing funds to help pay for it.



**One half of Oregonians age 50+ say they are more likely to vote for a candidate for state office who supports restoring funds to this prescription drug assistance program for low-income seniors age 65 and older.**

Fifty percent of older Oregonians say they would be *more likely* to vote for a candidate for state office who supported restoring funds to a prescription drug assistance program for low-income seniors age 65 and older, and only 6 percent say they would be *less likely* to vote for that candidate. Slightly more than one-third say that it would *make no difference* to them with respect to who they will vote for if a state candidate supported restoring funds to this prescription drug assistance program.



## Conclusions

The findings from this survey clearly show that availability and access to information is very important to consumers, particularly information that compares the effectiveness and safety of prescription drugs. Seventy-nine percent of Oregonians age 50+ say this kind of information is very important to them, and a similar proportion of respondents say it is important that a prescription drug guide be made available to them that includes this type of comparative information. Further supporting the focus group conclusion that people want useful information about prescription drugs are the seven in ten Oregonians who say they support the state of Oregon continuing to fund the research behind the consumer guide. In addition, four in ten older Oregonians say they are more likely to vote for a candidate for state office who supports funding the research for this consumer prescription drug guide.

On a related issue, most older Oregonians say it is very important that the state make prescription drugs more affordable to those in need. Furthermore, they show substantial support for a prescription drug program for lower income seniors even if they may not be eligible, and even if it means the state may have to allocate new or reallocate existing funds to pay for it. This isn't surprising given that sizeable proportions of older Oregonians are very concerned about the near future affordability of prescription drugs, are paying at least \$150 a month out of their own pocket for their medications, and do not have any help paying for these drugs from an insurance or health coverage plan or program. Finally, half of Oregonians age 50 and older say they are more likely to vote for a candidate that supports restoring funds to the prescription drug assistance program for low-income seniors age 65 and older.

## Methodology

AARP commissioned Woelfel Research, Inc. to conduct a random-digit-dial (RDD) telephone survey of adults age 50 or older in Oregon. From a random sample of 16,754, a total of 801 interviews were completed from October 21 to October 30, 2002, yielding a 10 percent response rate and 90 percent cooperation rate.<sup>1</sup> The survey has a sampling error of plus or minus 3.5 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 3.5 percentage points of what would have been obtained if every person in Oregon age 50 or older had been surveyed. Survey responses were weighted to reflect the distribution of age and gender in the adult population of Oregon. Weighted responses to all survey questions are in the attached annotated questionnaire. For more information about this study, contact Jennifer H. Sauer, AARP Knowledge Management, (202) 434-6207.

---

<sup>1</sup> 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.

# **Appendix A**

## **Annotated Questionnaire**

# Oregon Survey

## State Prescription Drug Survey

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_. I'm calling from WRI, a national opinion research firm. We are conducting a survey in Oregon to find out people's opinions on some important issues facing the state. Your views are important and we would greatly appreciate your participation.

This is not a sales call and you will not be asked to buy anything either now or later and your responses are kept entirely confidential. The survey should take only about 6 or 7 minutes to complete.

**A. Are you currently a resident of Oregon?**

Yes

No [ASK TO SPEAK TO SOMEONE IN HH WHO IS OREGON RESIDENT. IF NONE AVAILABLE, SCHEDULE CALLBACK.]

**1. Which category would you say your age falls into? [READ LIST]**

<u>%</u>		
43	50-59	
36	60-74, or	
21	75 or older	
-	Under 18	[THANK AND TERMINATE]
-	18-29	[THANK AND TERMINATE]
-	30-49	[THANK AND TERMINATE]
-	Refused	[THANK AND TERMINATE]

**2. What is your current marital status? Are you currently...[READ LIST]?**

<u>%</u>	
60	Married
19	Widowed
12	Divorced
2	Separated, or
6	Never married
1	Living as married
1	Refused

**3. In the past 12 months, have you (IF MARRIED/LIVING AS MARRIED--or your spouse/partner) taken any prescription drugs?**

<u>%</u>		
84	Yes ( <b>PROBE:</b> Yes, just you have? Yes, just your spouse/partner has? Or yes, both you and your spouse/partner have?)	
16	No	[SKIP TO Q5]
1	Don't know	[SKIP TO Q5]
-	Refused	[SKIP TO Q5]

**4. In the past 12 months, approximately how much have you spent out of your own pocket for prescription drugs each month? [READ LIST] (n=673)**

<u>%</u>	
41	Less than \$50/month
23	\$50 but less than \$100/month
12	\$100 but less than \$150/month, or
20	\$150 or more/month
4	Don't know
<1	Refused

**[IF NO OR DK TO Q3, READ:]**

5. “Even if you are not taking any prescription drugs at this time, would you get any help in paying for prescription drugs from insurance or any other health care coverage plan or program if you needed them?”

**[IF YES TO Q3, READ:]**

“Do you get any help in paying for prescription drugs from insurance or any other health care coverage plan or program?”

<u>%</u>	
74	Yes [ <b>PROBE:</b> Yes, just for you? Yes, just for your spouse/partner? Or yes, for both you and your spouse/partner?]
26	No [ <b>SKIP TO Q6]</b>
1	Don't know [ <b>PROBE,</b> “For example, do you get help from a Medicare supplement plan, the Oregon HealthPlan/Medicaid, an employer plan or previous employer plan?”
	<b>[IF YES, ASK 5A. IF NO/DK, SKIP TO Q6]</b>
1	Refused [ <b>SKIP TO Q6]</b>

**5A. Which of the following types of insurance or health care coverage helps you pay for your prescription drugs? [READ LIST]**

<u>%</u>	
33	Private insurance through a <i>current</i> employer or union (or your spouse's)
18	Private insurance through a <i>former</i> employer or union (or your spouse's)
18	Medicare+Choice plan / Medicare HMO /Medicare
8	The Oregon Health Plan (Medicaid)
6	Other government source (e.g. Veteran's, Dept. of Defense, etc).
9	Private insurance through some other source (individually purchased or rough some other group)
2	[DO NOT READ] Not sure
1	[DO NOT READ] I don't have drug insurance
20	Other (specify): _____

**Other sources of coverage verbatim:**

2% Kaiser Permanente	1% HMO
4% Blue Cross	1% Providence
<1% AARP	1% ODS
4% Insurance	<1% Pacific care
1% Tricare	7% Miscellaneous

6. **How concerned are you about being able to afford the cost of needed prescription drugs over the next five years? Are you very, somewhat, not very, or not at all concerned?**

<u>%</u>	
47	Very concerned
22	Somewhat concerned
15	Not very concerned
16	Not at all concerned
1	<b>[DO NOT READ]</b> Don't Know
0	<b>[DO NOT READ]</b> Refused

7. **Even if you are not taking any prescription drugs at this time, how important do you think it is for consumers like yourself to have information available that compares the safety and effectiveness of prescription drugs?**

**[READ LIST]**

<u>%</u>	
79	Very important
16	Somewhat important
3	Not very important, or
2	Not at all important
1	<b>[DO NOT READ]</b> Not sure

8. **Thinking about the last time a doctor prescribed a medicine for you, did you talk about...[INSERT A THROUGH D].**

% Yes

88	What the medicine was supposed to do? <b>(IF response is 4, Skip to Question 9– don't continue with b-e)</b>
91	How and when to take the medicine?
77	Precautions to take while using the medicine?
73	What side effects might occur from the medicine?
42	Alternative (other) drugs? [PROBE: "other medicines for the same ailment that may have different side effects, precautions, or ingredients that might be better for you"]
	Yes
	No
	<b>[DO NOT READ]</b> Not sure/don't remember
	<b>[DO NOT READ]</b> Have never been prescribed drugs by a doctor
	<b>[DO NOT READ]</b> Refused

Now, I'd like to hear your opinion about a state funded plan to help Oregonians talk with their doctors or pharmacists when choosing their prescription drugs.

9. **The Oregon Health Sciences University has been developing information that compares the safety and effectiveness of prescription drugs. Based on their findings and recommendations, the Oregon Health Resources Commission – a panel that includes doctors and pharmacists – has begun creating a prescription drug guide. This guide will be made available at no cost to you – the consumer, your doctor, and your pharmacist to help determine the drug that's best for you.**

9. *(continued)* How important is it to you that this type of prescription drug guide be made available to you? [READ LIST]

<u>%</u>	
53	Very important
26	Somewhat important
10	Not very important
8	Not at all important
3	[DO NOT READ] Not sure
<1	[DO NOT READ] Refused

10. **The state has funded this research during the past year. The research to be included in this guide is projected to save the Oregon Health Plan about \$17 million in its first year, and \$35 million over the next two years as additional drug studies are completed. Some legislators want this research to continue and others feel that consumers and health care professionals do not need this kind of information or may not benefit from it.**

**Do you support or oppose the state of Oregon continuing this prescription drug research to be included in a guide for you, your doctor, and your pharmacist?**  
*["Is that strongly or somewhat....."]*

46	Strongly support
25	Somewhat support
7	Somewhat oppose [SKIP TO Q11]
11	Strongly oppose [SKIP TO Q11]
11	Not sure [SKIP TO Q11]

11. **If a candidate for state office in Oregon supported funding prescription drug research that compares the safety and effectiveness of prescription drugs and is made available to you – the consumer, doctors, and pharmacists, would you be more likely to vote for that candidate, less likely to vote for that candidate, or would it not make a difference?**

<u>%</u>	
41	More likely
7	Less likely
42	Would make no difference
10	[DO NOT READ] Not sure

Now, I'd like to ask you just a few questions about another state plan...

12. **How important is it to you that the state of Oregon make prescription drugs more affordable to those most in need?** [READ LIST]

<u>%</u>	
71	Very important
18	Somewhat important
4	Not very important
5	Not at all important
3	[DO NOT READ] Not sure
1	[DO NOT READ] No answer/Refused

13. In 2001, Oregon passed legislation creating a state prescription drug assistance program. This program would cover the cost of prescription drugs for individuals' age 65 and older whose annual incomes are less than \$16,000 and couples age 65 and older with annual incomes of less than \$20,000. However, funding for the program was cut so Oregon has not implemented this program.

Would you support or oppose restoring funding to this program, even if you personally were not eligible for the benefit? *Is that strongly or somewhat....?*

%

- |    |                        |
|----|------------------------|
| 54 | Strongly support       |
| 22 | Somewhat support       |
| 7  | Somewhat oppose        |
| 7  | Strongly oppose        |
| 9  | [DO NOT READ] Not sure |
| 1  | [DO NOT READ] Refused  |

14. Would you support or oppose restoring funding to the program, even if it means allocating new or reallocating existing state funds to help pay for it?

*Is that strongly somewhat....?*

%

- |    |                        |
|----|------------------------|
| 35 | Strongly support       |
| 27 | Somewhat support       |
| 10 | Somewhat oppose        |
| 13 | Strongly oppose        |
| 14 | [DO NOT READ] Not sure |
| 2  | Refused                |

15. If a candidate for state office in Oregon supported restoring funds to this prescription drug assistance program for low-income seniors age 65 and older, would you be more likely to vote for that candidate, less likely to vote for them, or would it not make any difference?

%

- |    |                          |
|----|--------------------------|
| 50 | More likely              |
| 6  | Less likely              |
| 35 | Would make no difference |
| 9  | [DO NOT READ] Not sure   |

Now, I'd like to ask you a few questions for statistical purposes only.

**D1. What is your age as of your last birthday?**

RECORD \_\_\_\_\_

**D2. Thinking about your state elections for Oregon Governor and State 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>		
76	Always vote	
16	Sometimes miss one	
3	Rarely vote	
4	Never vote	
<1	<b>[DO NOT READ]</b>	Don't know
1	<b>[DO NOT READ]</b>	Refused

**D3. What is the highest level of education that you completed? [READ LIST]**

<u>%</u>	
6	Less than high school
27	High school graduate or equivalent
34	Some college or technical training beyond high school
19	College graduate, or
13	Post-graduate or professional degree
<1	<b>[DO NOT READ]</b> Don't know

**D4. Which of the following best describes your current employment status? Are you currently...[READ LIST]?**

<u>%</u>	
31	Employed or self-employed full-time
9	Employed or self-employed part-time
52	Retired and not working
3	Unemployed and looking for work, or
<1	Other
<1	<b>[DO NOT READ]</b> Refused

**D5. Do you have access to a computer at home, at work, or some other place?**

<u>%</u>			
71	Yes	—————▶	IF YES: Do you have access to the Internet or the ability to use online services such as America Online (AOL)?
29	No		68% Yes                      8% No

**D6. Now, for statistical purposes only, please stop me when I get to the category that included your household's income before taxes in 2001.**

<u>%</u>	
7	Less than \$10,000
15	\$10,000 but less than \$20,000
15	\$20,000 but less than \$30,000
13	\$30,000 but less than \$40,000
10	\$40,000 but less than \$50,000
13	\$50,000 but less than \$75,000, or
15	\$75,000 or more
13	Refused/Don't know

**D7. What is your race/ethnicity? [READ LIST]**

<u>%</u>	
92	Caucasion/white
1	African American/black
1	Hispanic/Spanish/Latino
1	Asian
2	Native American
1	Other: _____
2	<b>[DO NOT READ]</b> Refused

**D8. Are you a member of AARP?**

<u>%</u>	
50	Yes
48	No
1	<b>[DO NOT READ]</b> Not sure
1	<b>[DO NOT READ]</b> Refused

**D9. What is your 5-digit zip code?**

RECORD \_ \_ \_ \_ \_

**D10. Gender**

46	Male
54	Female

**AARP**  
**Knowledge Management**  
**For more information contact Jennifer Sauer (202) 434-6207**