

A decorative graphic is positioned on the left side of the page, featuring a solid green vertical bar. At the bottom of this bar, there is a small yellow square. A thin grey horizontal line extends from the right side of this yellow square across the page. A thin grey vertical line extends downwards from the right side of the horizontal line. A large, thin, light-brown arc starts from the top right of the horizontal line and curves upwards and to the left, ending near the top of the green bar.

# **Prescription Drugs and Medicare Part D: A Report on Access, Satisfaction, and Cost**

November 2007



# **Prescription Drugs and Medicare Part D: A Report on Access, Satisfaction, and Cost**

**Data Collected by Woelfel Research  
Report Prepared by Teresa A. Keenan, Ph.D.**

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# Executive Summary

## Introduction

The AARP Prescription Drugs and Medicare Part D survey was fielded in October 2007 among a random sample of 400 respondents aged 50-64 and 400 respondents aged 65+ who have Medicare Part D<sup>1</sup>. All respondents were asked about their overall health, their use of prescription drugs, and their attitudes toward and use of generic drugs. Respondents age 65 and older who have Medicare Part D were also asked about their satisfaction with their drug plan, their enrollment plans for 2008, their opinions about the cost of prescription drugs under Medicare Part D, and their experiences with filling prescriptions. They were also asked about the “coverage gap” (or “doughnut hole”) and their experiences with it.

## Key Findings

Results from this survey suggest that respondents are generally satisfied with their access to brand name and generic prescription drugs and are willing to talk to their physicians and other health professionals about their prescription drug options. Older respondents who have Medicare Part D prescription drug coverage report high levels of satisfaction with the plan and their premiums, with many stating that prescription drugs are more affordable now than they were prior to their enrollment.

### Access

Not surprisingly, use of prescription drugs varied by age, with older respondents reporting higher drug use than younger ones. Large majorities of respondents in both age groups said they are willing to use generic medicines to reduce costs, about two-thirds said they *always* or *usually* ask their doctor if a generic is available, and about half said they learn about new generics from their doctor or nurse.

### Satisfaction

About eight in ten respondents ages 65 and older with Medicare Part D prescription drug coverage said they think they made a *good choice* in selecting their drug plan, about six in ten said they are *extremely* or *very satisfied* with their current plan, and about half are *extremely* or *very satisfied* with the amount of their monthly premium. Additionally, more than eight in ten respondents ages 65 and older who tried to fill a prescription reported that it was *extremely* or *very easy* to do so.

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<sup>1</sup> The sampling error for the each of the two groups is +/- five percentage points at the 95% confidence level. This means that in 95 out of 100 samples of this size, the results would fall in a range of no more than five percentage points of what would have been obtained if every person age 50 or older had been surveyed. For more information about the methodology used for this survey, please see Appendix C.

### Cost

About two-thirds of respondents with Medicare Part D coverage said they think their prescription drugs are *much more affordable*, *somewhat more affordable*, or *just as affordable* as they were before their enrollment. About two-thirds said the savings they received were *better* or *about the same* as they had expected, and half believe they have saved a *great deal* of money or *some* money on their prescriptions since enrolling.

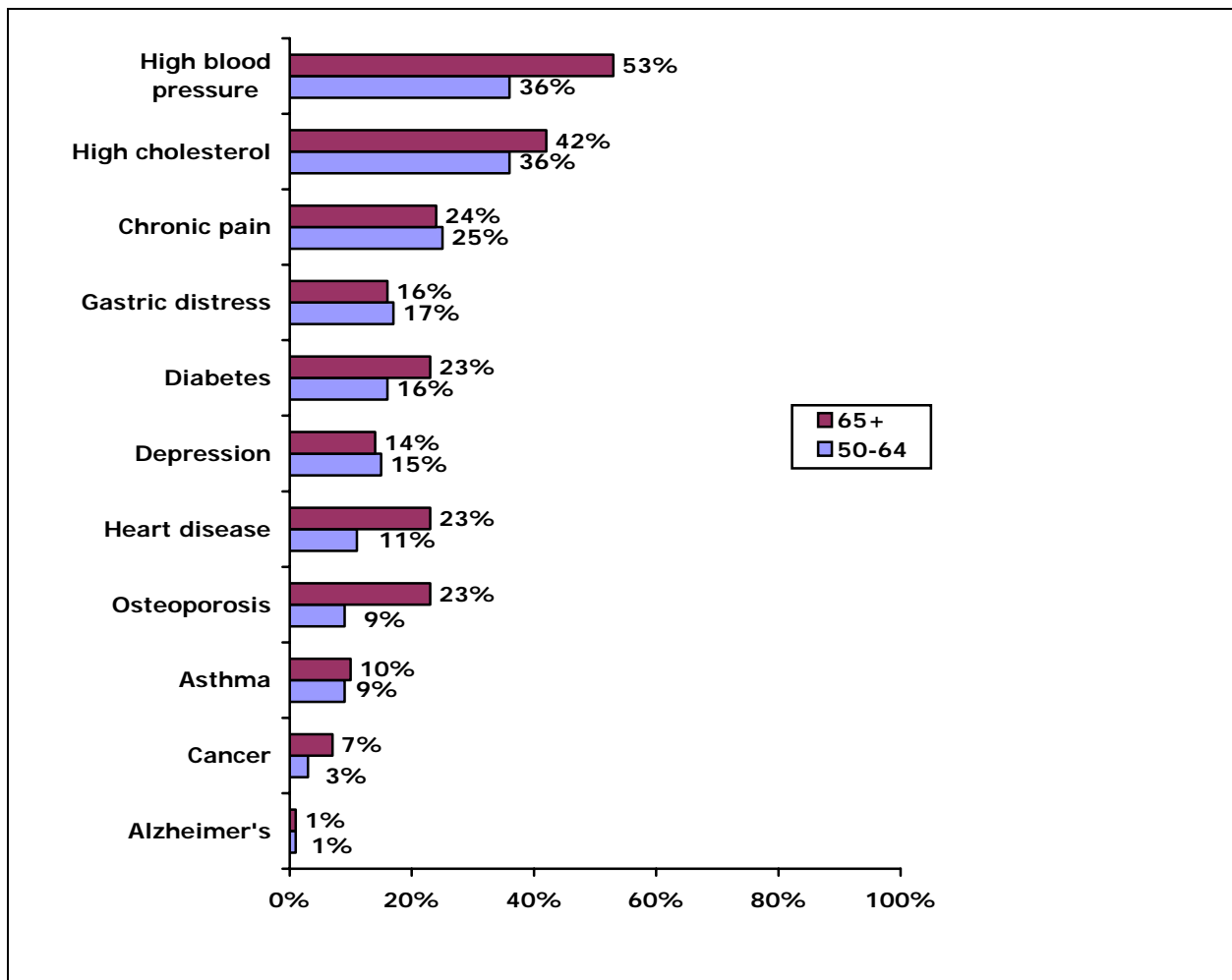
## Detailed Findings

### Health Status

Half of respondents age 50-64 rated their health as either *excellent* (13%) or *very good* (37%). In contrast, fewer than four in ten respondents age 65 and older said their health was *excellent* (12%) or *very good* (27%).

When asked about eleven health conditions, respondents age 65 and older were more likely than those ages 50-64 to say they have such a condition (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1**  
**Do you have these health conditions?**  
(n=800)



Source: Prescription Drugs and Medicare Part D Survey, November 2007



For example, while more than half (53%) of respondents 65+ said they have high blood pressure, only slightly more than one-third (36%) of respondents ages 50-64 said that they have it. High cholesterol, diabetes, heart disease, osteoporosis, and cancer were also noted by higher percentages of respondents age 65 and older.

### Use of Prescription Drugs

Use of prescription drugs also varied by age, with about one-fifth (22%) of respondents age 65 and older reporting taking seven or more prescriptions on a regular basis. For respondents age 50-64, the comparable figure was thirteen percent.

About three in ten (29%) respondents age 50-64 reported that they take no prescription drugs while one in ten (10%) of those age 65+ said they take no prescription drugs.

When asked to estimate how much money they spent on prescription drugs at three points in time, respondents age 50-64 were about twice as likely as those age 65+ to say they have spent nothing on prescription drugs (typical month: 25% vs. 11%; June 2007: 28% vs. 12%; September 2007: 32% vs. 14%). In contrast, as shown in Table 1, respondents age 65 and older were more likely to say they have spent \$50-\$199 (32% vs. 26%; 28% vs. 21%; 26% vs. 22%) in those time periods.

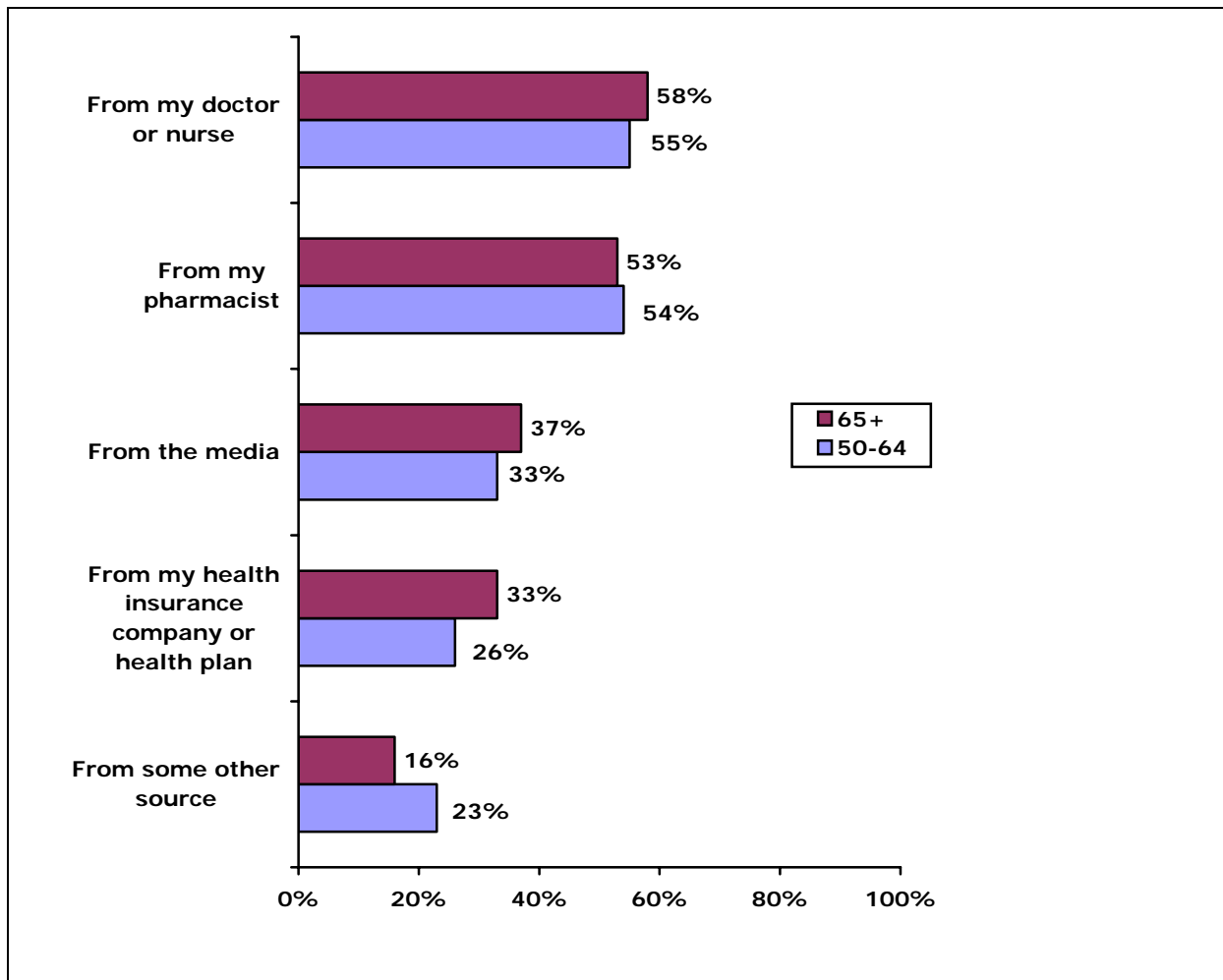
<b>Table 1 Estimated Prescription Drug Costs at Three Time Points</b>						
	Typical month in 2006		June 2007		September 2007	
	50-64	65+	50-64	65+	50-64	65+
\$0	25%	11%	28%	12%	32%	14%
\$1-\$49	34%	33%	35%	32%	31%	34%
\$50-\$199	26%	32%	21%	28%	22%	26%
\$200-\$399	7%	10%	8%	9%	7%	11%
\$400-\$599	2%	3%	1%	3%	1%	3%
\$600 +	3%	3%	3%	3%	2%	2%
Refused/Don't Know	4%	10%	5%	12%	4%	11%

### Attitudes Toward and Use of Generics

Respondents ages 50-64 and those 65+ were about equally likely to say when their doctor is prescribing a drug they *always* or *usually* (63%) ask if there are any generic drugs available that are equally as safe and effective to the brand name drug. They were similarly likely to say they talked to their doctor about a range of prescription medicines **including generics** that could be used to treat their condition (46% and 47%). Finally, they were also similarly likely to say they talked to their doctor about a range of prescription medicines **other than generics**—such as brand names drugs—that could be used to treat their condition (16% for 50-64 and 14% for 65+).

As shown in Figure 2, about half of respondents said they generally learn about new generic medicines either from their doctor or nurse (55% of those 50-64 and 58% for those 65+) or from their pharmacist (54% and 53%, respectively). Roughly one-third said they learn about new generics from the media (33% and 37%).

**Figure 2**  
**How do you generally learn that a new generic medicine to treat your condition is available?**  
**(n=800)**



Source: Prescription Drugs and Medicare Part D Survey, November 2007

Notably, respondents ages 65 and older were more likely than those ages 50-64 (33% vs. 26%) to say they learn about new generic medicines from their health insurance company or health plan, while those ages 50-64 were more likely than older respondents to say they learn from some other source (23% vs. 16%).

When asked how often they choose a generic over a brand name drug (when generics are available), respondents ages 65 and older were more likely than those ages 50-64 to say they *always* (59% vs. 48%) choose a generic over a brand name drug.

About three in ten respondents (32% of those 50-64 and 28% of those 65+) reported having been prescribed a brand name drug that they learned they could not afford when they tried to fill their prescription. More than eight in ten (81%) of those respondents ages 50-64 who could not afford the prescription asked their doctor or pharmacist if a lower cost option might be available. About three-quarters (74%) of those 65+ reported doing the same thing.

Large majorities of respondents said they are willing to use generic medicines to reduce their out-of-pocket drug costs (88% of those 50-64 and 86% of those 65+). Among the fifteen percent of respondents who said they *might* use generics, most said it depends on a conversation with their doctor.

### Prescription Drug Coverage

More than four in ten (44%) respondents ages 50-64 reported having had prescription drug coverage in 2006 through either their current (36%) or former (8%) employer. Another fifth (19%) said they had coverage from their spouse's current (15%) or former (4%) employer.

In contrast with younger respondents, only about one in eight (12%) respondents ages 65 and older said they had coverage through their own employer and about one in twelve (8%) said they had it through their spouse's employer. Not surprisingly, more than four in ten (42%) respondents ages 65 and older reported having prescription drug coverage via Medicare Part D.

When respondents ages 65 and older were asked why they enrolled in a Medicare Part D prescription drug plan, one-fifth (20%) said they thought they would save money, about one in seven (15%) said they turned age 65, and one in eight (13%) said they had high prescription drug costs. Five percent or fewer respondents said they enrolled because they wanted to be able to budget their monthly expenses (5%), because they wanted peace of mind (3%), because enrolling seemed less costly than waiting and paying a penalty (3%), because they thought the cost of their prescription drugs would increase (2%), and because a drug plan cost less than they expected (2%).

### Satisfaction with Medicare Part D

Among respondents ages 65 and older with Medicare Part D, about six in ten said they are either *extremely satisfied* (17%) or *very satisfied* (42%) with the Medicare prescription plan they are enrolled in now. About half said they are *extremely* (17%) or *very satisfied* (32%) with the amount of the monthly premium they pay for their prescription drug coverage.

About half of the respondents ages 65 and older with Medicare Part D (54%) said the monthly premium they pay is *the most they can afford*, while about one-quarter (23%) said they *could pay a higher monthly premium* to get better coverage but decided not to.

Nearly eight in ten respondents 65+ with Medicare Part D (78%) said they think they *made a good choice* in selecting their prescription drug plan. Six percent think they'd *be better off with a different plan*.

### Prescription Drug Enrollment Plans for 2008

When asked if they plan to enroll in Medicare Part D for 2008, more than eight in ten (82%) respondents ages 65+ said they plan to. Of those, a similar figure (80%) said they plan to stick with the same plan they have this year. However, sixteen percent said they don't know if they will switch plans.

### Opinions about the Cost of Prescription Drugs

More than four in ten respondents ages 65+ said they think prescription drugs are either *much more affordable* (20%) or *somewhat more affordable* (24%) under Medicare Part D. Another fifth (19%) said they are *just as affordable* as before. However, one in seven (14%) said that the price of prescription drugs is *somewhat less affordable* (8%) or *much less affordable* (6%) under Medicare Part D than it was before the program was enacted.

When asked their level of agreement about two statements related to the affordability of prescription drugs, more than eight in ten (84%) respondents ages 50-64 and nearly eight in ten (79%) respondents ages 65 and older *most agreed* with the statement "the government needs to do more to make prescription drugs affordable for everyone" rather than the alternative "the government has already done enough to make prescription drugs more affordable for everyone." Likewise, roughly nine in ten respondents in each age group (90% for those 50-64 and 87% for those 65+) *most agreed* with the statement "the pharmaceutical industry needs to do more to make prescription drugs more affordable for everyone" rather than its counterpart "the pharmaceutical industry has already done enough to make prescription drugs more affordable for everyone."

### Experience Filling Prescriptions

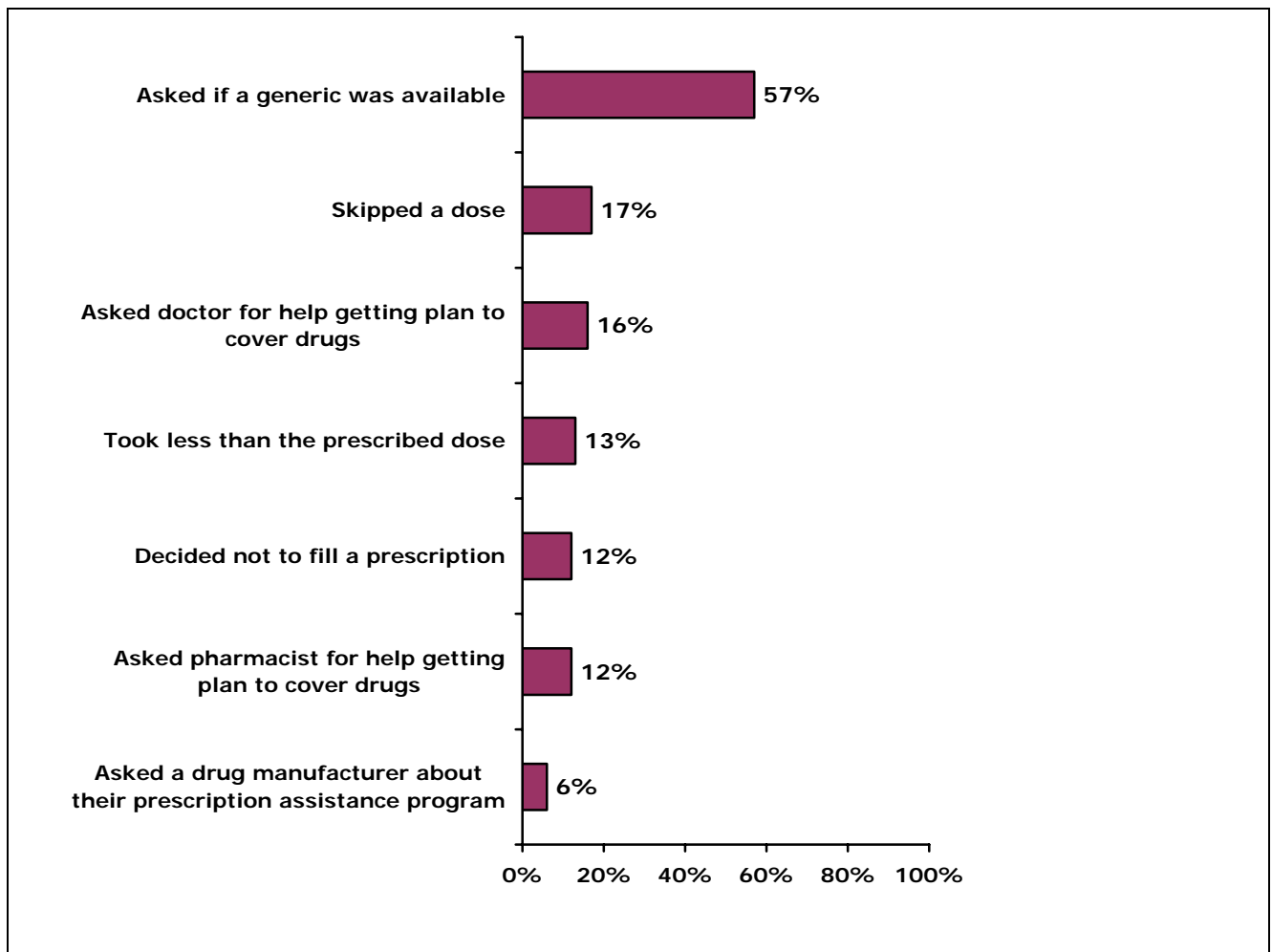
Slightly more than one-third (36%) of respondents ages 65 and older said they had tried to fill a prescription under their new Medicare drug plan. Of those, more than eight in ten said it was either *extremely easy* (38%) or *very easy* (43%) to get the medicines they needed. Another thirteen percent said it was *somewhat easy*. In contrast, only four percent reported it was *not very* (3%) or *not at all easy* (1%) to fill prescriptions under their new Medicare prescription drug plan.

About half of the respondents ages 65 and older believe they have saved either a *great deal of money* (19%) or *some money* (32%) on prescription drugs since enrolling in Medicare Part D. However, a full third of respondents believe they have saved *very little money* (16%) or *no money* (16%) since enrolling in the program.

When asked how the saving they're receiving compares to what they expected, about one-fifth (19%) said they are *better* than they expected, nearly half (46%) said they are *about the same* as they expected, and one in seven (15%) said they are *worse* than they expected.

Since enrolling in the prescription drug plan, nearly six in ten (57%) respondents ages 65 and older said they have asked if a generic drug was available (See Figure 3).

**Figure 3**  
**Since enrolling in your new prescription drug plan,**  
**have you done any of the following?**  
**(65+ n=400)**



Source: Prescription Drugs and Medicare Part D Survey, November 2007

Far fewer reported skipping a prescription dose (17%), asking their doctor for help getting their plan to cover the drugs they need (16%), taking less than the prescribed dose (13%), deciding not to fill a prescription (12%), or asking their pharmacist for help getting their plan to cover the drugs they need (16%). Only six percent said they asked a drug manufacturer about their prescription assistance program.

### Medicare Part D Coverage Gap

More than four in ten (45%) respondents ages 65 and older said their drug plan has a coverage gap, a point where the plan stops paying for prescriptions and individuals are required to pay the full cost of their medications for awhile. About one-quarter (24%) said they don't know if their drug plan has such a gap.

For those respondents who knew their drug plan had a coverage gap, nearly eight in ten (78%) said they knew of the gap when they enrolled, but a similar figure (84%) said they did not consider buying an enhanced plan to have coverage in the gap. More than four in ten (45%) respondents recalled receiving advance notice that they were approaching the coverage gap.

For those whose drug plan has gap coverage, about one-quarter (23%) said they will seek a plan with gap coverage during the next program enrollment period this year. About one-fifth (22%) of respondents whose plan has coverage in the gap reported that they are now (15%) or have already been (7%) in the coverage gap.

While the actual number of respondents who reported either having been in the coverage gap or being in it now is small, it is notable that most say they continued to purchase prescriptions from the pharmacy they always use while in the coverage gap, while about half as many said they used a local pharmacy with a better price. Those who were in the gap at some point said they asked their doctor for samples or used a lower-cost generic. Nearly all said they had never been contacted by anyone who could have helped with their medications. Very few respondents with coverage gap experience said they encountered any unexpected medical problems that might have been avoided if they had a plan with continuous coverage.

About half of those respondents who have plans with gap coverage said they had heard of the "extra help" option, where an individual with an annual income of \$14,700 or less (or \$19,800 for a couple) would qualify for assistance as long as the value of their assets is no more than \$11,500 (or \$23,000 for a couple). But, only ten percent thought they would qualify for the assistance.

## **Summary and Conclusions**

Results from this survey suggest that respondents are generally satisfied with their access to brand name and generic prescription drugs and are willing to talk to their physicians and other health professionals about their prescription drug options. Older respondents who have Medicare Part D prescription drug coverage report high levels of satisfaction with the plan and their premiums, with many stating that prescription drugs are more affordable now than they were prior to their enrollment.

### **Access**

Not surprisingly, use of prescription drugs varied by age, with older respondents reporting higher drug use than younger ones. Large majorities of respondents in both age groups said they are willing to use generic medicines to reduce costs, about two-thirds said they *always* or *usually* ask their doctor if a generic is available, and about half said they learn about new generics from their doctor or nurse.

### **Satisfaction**

About eight in ten respondents ages 65 and older with Medicare Part D prescription drug coverage said they think they made a *good choice* in selecting their drug plan, about six in ten said they are *extremely* or *very satisfied* with their current plan, and about half are *extremely* or *very satisfied* with the amount of their monthly premium. Additionally, more than eight in ten respondents ages 65 and older who tried to fill a prescription reported that it was *extremely* or *very easy* to do so.

### **Cost**

About two-thirds of respondents with Medicare Part D coverage said they think their prescription drugs are *much more affordable*, *somewhat more affordable*, or *just as affordable* as they were before their enrollment. About two-thirds said the savings they received were *better* or *about the same* as they had expected, and half believe they have saved a *great deal* of money or *some* money on their prescriptions since enrolling.

## Appendix A

### Demographic Characteristics of Respondents



## **Demographic Characteristics of Respondents**

- By design, half of the respondents are ages 50-64 and half are ages 65 and older. All of the respondents ages 65 and older are Medicare beneficiaries.
- Slightly more than half the respondents (55%) are female, while slightly more than four in ten (45%) are male.
- About half (48%) of respondents ages 50-64 (or their spouses) are AARP members, while six in ten (60%) of those ages 65 and older are members.
- More than half (54%) are married, one-fifth (22%) are widowed, and one in seven (14%) are divorced. Five percent are never married, while two percent report being separated.
- More than four in ten respondents have either a high school education (32%) or less (12%), one in seven (15%) have some college or technical training, and nearly one-quarter (25%) are college graduates. Fifteen percent have a post-graduate or professional degree.
- More than half (53%) are retired and not working, while one-third of the respondents are either employed full-time (27%) or part-time (7%).
- More than eight in ten (85%) respondents are white, while eight percent are black/African American and four percent are Hispanic.
- One-fifth (21%) of respondents reported annual household incomes of less than \$20,000, three in ten (31%) reported incomes between \$20,000 and \$50,000, and twelve percent said their income was between \$50,000 and \$75,000. Roughly one in six (16%) reported an annual household income of \$75,000 or more.

**Appendix B**  
**Annotated Questionnaire**

**Rx Drugs and Medicare Part D Survey  
Annotated Questionnaire  
October 2007**

**<Note: Questions 1-14 to be asked of all respondents ages 50+ >**

**Screenener**

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 some important issues concerning health care. Your views are important and we would greatly appreciate your participation. All your responses will be kept entirely confidential.

QS1. Are you between the ages of 18 and 49, 50 and 64, or are you 65 years of age or older?

- |    |             |  |
|----|-------------|--|
| 1. | 18-49       | <b>[ASK TO SPEAK TO SOMEONE AGE 50+]</b> |
| 2. | 50-64       | <b>[SKIP TO MAIN SURVEY]</b>             |
| 3. | 65 or Older | <b>[ASK QS2]</b>                         |
| 4. | UNDER 18    | <b>[ASK TO SPEAK TO SOMEONE AGE 50+]</b> |
| 5. | REFUSED     | <b>[ASK TO SPEAK TO SOMEONE AGE 50+]</b> |

[ASK RESPONDENTS AGE 65 OR OLDER]

QS2. Do you have MEDICARE PART D prescription drug coverage?

- |    |         |                              |
|----|---------|------------------------------|
| 1. | Yes     | <b>[CONTINUE]</b>            |
| 2. | No      | <b>[THANK AND TERMINATE]</b> |
| 3. | Refused | <b>[THANK AND TERMINATE]</b> |

## Main Questionnaire

Q1: First, how would you rate your health overall?

Base: Total Respondents	50-64 %	65+ %
Excellent	13	12
Very good	37	27
Good	29	31
Fair	13	22
Poor	8	8
Don't Know	<1	1
Refused	<1	-

Q2. Many people suffer from a number of health conditions. I'm going to read you a list of health conditions, and for each one, please let me know if you have it.

Base: Total Respondents	50-64 %				65+ %			
	Yes	No	DK	Refused	Yes	No	DK	Refused
a. high cholesterol	36	62	1	1	42	56	1	-
b. high blood pressure	36	63	<1	1	53	47	<1	-
c. heart disease	11	88	1	1	23	76	1	-
d. diabetes	16	84	-	1	23	77	-	-
e. gastric distress	17	82	<1	1	16	83	1	-
f. asthma	9	90	<1	1	10	89	1	-
g. depression	15	84	<1	1	14	85	1	-
h. cancer	3	95	1	1	7	94	-	-
i. chronic pain	25	74	-	1	24	76	<1	-
j. osteoporosis	9	89	1	1	23	75	2	<1
k. Alzheimer's	1	98	-	1	1	99	<1	-

Q3: In a typical month, how many different prescription drugs do you take on a regular basis?

Base: Total Respondents	50-64 %	65+ %
None / Zero	29	10
One or Two	33	23
Three to Six	25	45
Seven to Nine	7	12
Ten or more	6	10
Don't Know	-	1
Refused	<1	-

Q4: I'd like to ask you to estimate how much money you spent on prescription drugs in a typical month in 2006. Would you say...? How about in June 2007? And, in September 2007...how much money did you spend on prescription drugs?

Base: Total Respondents	50-64 %			65+ %		
	A typical month in 2006 %	June 2007 %	September 2007 %	A typical month in 2006 %	June 2007 %	September 2007 %
\$0	25	28	32	11	12	14
\$1-\$49	34	35	31	33	32	34
\$50-\$199	26	21	22	32	28	26
\$200-\$399	7	8	7	10	9	11
\$400-\$599	2	1	1	3	3	3
\$600 or more	3	3	2	3	3	2
Refused	3	4	3	8	12	10
Don't Know	1	1	1	<1	<1	1

<Give a description of generic drugs>

Q5. When your doctor prescribes a new drug for you, how often do you ask if there are any generic drugs that would be equally safe and effective to the brand name drug?

Base: Total Respondents	50-64 %	65+ %
Always	50	53
Usually	13	10
Sometimes	3	8
Seldom	7	2
Never	25	24
Don't Know	2	3
Refused	1	1

Q6: The last time a doctor prescribed a medicine for you, did you talk about a range of prescription medicines—including generics—that could be used to treat your condition?

Base: Total Respondents	50-64 %	65+ %
Yes	46	47
No	50	51
Don't Know	3	3
Refused	1	<1

Q7. The last time a doctor prescribed a medicine for you, did you talk about a range of prescription medicines—*other than generics (such as older brand-name drugs)*—that could be used to treat your condition?

<b>Base: Total Respondents</b>	<b>50-64 %</b>	<b>65+ %</b>
Yes	16	14
No	80	83
Don't Know	3	3
Refused	1	-

Q8. How do you generally learn that a new generic medicine to treat your condition is available?

<b>Base: Total Respondents</b>	<b>50-64</b>				<b>65+</b>			
	<b>Yes %</b>	<b>No %</b>	<b>DK %</b>	<b>Refused %</b>	<b>Yes %</b>	<b>No %</b>	<b>DK %</b>	<b>Refused %</b>
From my doctor or nurse	55	44	1	-	58	40	2	1
From my pharmacist	54	44	2	-	53	44	2	1
From my health insurance company or health plan	26	73	1	<1	33	64	3	1
From the media	33	65	2	-	37	58	4	1
From some other source	23	76	1	-	16	82	2	1

Q9. When generic drugs are available, how often do you choose a generic over a brand name drug?

<b>Base: Total Respondents</b>	<b>50-64 %</b>	<b>65+ %</b>
Always	48	59
Usually	20	15
Sometimes	13	11
Seldom	5	1
Never	13	10
Don't Know	2	5
Refused	-	1

Q10. Have you ever been prescribed a brand name drug, only to learn upon trying to fill the prescription that you could not afford to pay for it?

<b>Base: Total Respondents</b>	<b>50-64 %</b>	<b>65+ %</b>	
Yes	32	28	Go to Q10 A
No	67	70	Go to Q11
Don't Know	1	1	Go to Q11
Refused	-	1	Go to Q11

Q10A. Did you ask your doctor or pharmacist if a lower cost option might be available?

<b>Base: Could not afford prescribed brand name drug</b>	<b>50-64 N=129 %</b>	<b>65+ N=113 %</b>
Yes	81	74
No	18	22
Don't Know	1	3
Refused	-	1

Q11. Are you willing to use generic medicines in order to reduce your out-of-pocket drug costs?

<b>Base: Total Respondents</b>	<b>50-64 %</b>	<b>65+ %</b>	
Yes	88	86	
It depends	7	7	Go to Q11 A
No	5	4	
Don't Know	1	2	
Refused	-	1	

Q11A. What does it depend upon? <Check all that apply.>

<b>Base: It depends – use generic medicine</b>	<b>50-64 N=27 %</b>	<b>65+ N=29 %</b>
A conversation with my doctor	31	20
A conversation with my pharmacist	8	2
An article in materials from my insurance company	-	-
The cost of the generic	15	2
My health plan	7	-
For those 65+: I am close to the coverage gap	-	-
For those 65+: I am in the coverage gap	3	-
Other	51	67
Don't Know	7	11

Q12. What was the source of your prescription drug coverage in 2006?

<b>Base: It depends – use generic medicine</b>	<b>50-64 N=27 %</b>	<b>65+ N=29 %</b>
Provided by my current employer	36	2
Provided by my spouse's current employer	15	2
Retiree benefit from my former employer	8	10
Retiree benefit from my spouse's former employer	4	6
Individually purchased Medigap policy, usually lettered H, I or J	3	7
Medicaid	4	5
State prescription assistance plan	2	1
Medicare private plan with drug benefits, e.g., HMO	5	7
Medicare Part D	-	42
Veterans' Administration / Military	4	2
I don't have prescription drug coverage	8	3
Other	11	9
Don't Know	1	4

Q13. With which of the following two statements do you most agree?

<b>Base: Age 50-64 Respondents</b>	<b>50-64 %</b>
a. The government needs to do more to make prescription drugs more affordable for everyone	84
b. The government has already done enough to make prescription drugs more affordable for everyone	11
Don't Know	4
Refused	2

Q14. With which of the following two statements do you most agree?

<b>Base: Age 50-64 Respondents</b>	<b>50-64 %</b>
a. The pharmaceutical industry needs to do more to make prescription drugs more affordable for everyone	90
b. The pharmaceutical industry has already done enough to make prescription drugs more affordable for everyone	6
Don't Know	3
Refused	1



**<Note: Questions 15- 33 are asked of respondents ages 65+  
Ask their age to determine Medicare Part D eligibility.>**

Q15. What was the main reason that you decided to enroll in a Medicare Part D drug plan?  
<Please check one box.>

<b>Base: Age 65+ Respondents</b>	<b>65+ %</b>
Because I have high drug costs	13
Because I think the cost of my prescription drugs will increase	2
Because I want to be able to budget my monthly expenses	5
Because a Medicare drug plan cost less than I had expected	2
Because enrolling seemed less costly than waiting to enroll and paying a penalty later on	3
Because I wanted peace of mind about the future	3
Because I think I will save money on my drugs	20
Because I turned (age) 65	15
No answer	-
Other	28
Don't Know	11

Q16. In general, how satisfied are you with the Medicare prescription drug plan you are enrolled in now?

<b>Base: Age 65+ Respondents</b>	<b>65+ %</b>
Extremely satisfied	17
Very satisfied	42
Somewhat satisfied	26
Not very satisfied	6
Not at all satisfied	4
No answer	-
Don't Know	3
Refused	1

Q17. How satisfied are you with the amount of the monthly premium that you pay for your prescription drug coverage?

<b>Base: Age 65+ Respondents</b>	<b>65+ %</b>
Extremely satisfied	17
Very satisfied	32
Somewhat satisfied	31
Not very satisfied	9
Not at all satisfied	5
No answer	-
Don't Know	5
Refused	1

Q18. When considering the monthly premium that you pay, which of the following statements best reflects your opinion?

<b>Base: Age 65+ Respondents</b>	<b>65+ %</b>
I could pay a higher monthly premium to get better coverage but decided not to	23
The monthly premium is the most I can afford to pay	54
Don't Know	17
Refused	6

Q19. Overall, do you think you made a good choice in selecting your Medicare prescription drug plan, or do you think you would have been better off with a different plan?

<b>Base: Age 65+ Respondents</b>	<b>65+ %</b>
I made a good choice	78
I'd be better off with a different plan	6
I don't know	15
Refused	1

Q20. Do you plan to sign up for Medicare Part D for 2008?

<b>Base: Age 65+ Respondents</b>	<b>65+ %</b>	
Yes	82	Go to Q 20 A
No	6	
Don't Know	11	
Refused	<1	

Q20A. Do you plan to sign up with the same plan as you are in this year? Or, do you plan to sign up with a different plan?

<b>Base: Plan to sign up for Medicare Part D for 2008</b>	<b>65+ N=327 %</b>
With the same plan	80
With a different plan	3
I don't know if I will switch plans	16
Refused	1

Q21. What do you think about the price of prescription drugs under Medicare Part D?

<b>Base: Age 65+ Respondents</b>	<b>65+ %</b>
I think prescription drugs are much more affordable	20
I think prescription drugs are somewhat more affordable	24
I think prescription drugs are just as affordable as before	19
I think prescription drugs are somewhat less affordable	8
I think prescription drugs are much less affordable	6
I don't know	21
Refused	2

Q22. With which of the following two statements do you most agree?

<b>Base: Age 65+ Respondents</b>	<b>65+ %</b>
a. The government needs to do more to make prescription drugs more affordable for everyone	79
b. The government has already done enough to make prescription drugs more affordable for everyone	12
Don't Know	7
Refused	2

Q23. With which of the following two statements do you most agree?

<b>Base: Age 65+ Respondents</b>	<b>65+ %</b>
a. The pharmaceutical industry needs to do more to make prescription drugs more affordable for everyone	87
b. The pharmaceutical industry has already done enough to make prescription drugs more affordable for everyone	5
Don't Know	7
Refused	1

Q24. Since the month in which your prescription drug coverage took effect, have you tried to fill any prescriptions under your new Medicare drug plan?

<b>Base: Age 65+ Respondents</b>	<b>65+ %</b>	
No	59	Go to Q26
Yes	36	Go to Q25
Don't Know	5	

*(Asked of those who have tried to fill any prescription under their new plan)*

Q25. How easy was it for you to get the medicines you needed under your new prescription drug plan?

<b>Base: Tried to fill any prescriptions under your new Medicare drug plan</b>	<b>65+ N=236 %</b>
Extremely easy	38
Very easy	43
Somewhat easy	13
Not very easy	3
Not at all easy	1
Don't Know	1
Refused	1

Q26. Compared to last year, how much do you think you have saved on prescription drugs since you enrolled in the new plan?

<b>Base: Age 65+ Respondents</b>	<b>65+ %</b>
I have saved a great deal of money	19
I have saved some money	32
I have saved very little money	16
I have saved no money	16
No answer	-
Don't Know	16
Refused	2

Q27. How do the savings you're receiving compare to what you expected to save?

<b>Base: Age 65+ Respondents</b>	<b>65+ %</b>
The savings are better than I had expected	19
The savings are about the same as I had expected	46
The savings are worse than I had expected	15
No answer	-
Don't Know	18
Refused	2

Q28. Since enrolling in your new prescription drug plan, have you done any of the following? <Please check all that apply.>

Base: Age 65+ Respondents	65+ %			
	Yes %	No %	DK %	Refused %
a. Decided not to fill a prescription	12	87	1	<1
b. Skipped a dose	17	81	1	<1
c. Took less than the prescribed dose of a medication	13	85	2	<1
d. Asked if a generic drug was available	57	40	3	<1
e. Asked a drug manufacturer about their prescription assistance program	6	92	2	<1
f. Asked your doctor for help getting your plan to cover the drugs you need	16	82	2	<1
g. Asked your pharmacist for help getting your plan to cover the drugs you need	12	87	1	<1

Q29. Many plans have what is called a “coverage gap” or “doughnut hole”—a point where the plan stops paying for prescriptions and individuals are required to pay the full cost of their medications for awhile. Does your Medicare drug plan have such a coverage gap?

Base: Age 65+ Respondents	65+ %	
Yes, my plan has a coverage gap	45	Go to Q29A
No, my plan does not have a coverage gap	31	Go to Demos
I don't know	24	Go to Demos
Refused	<1	

*(Asked of those whose drug plans has a coverage gap)*

Q29A. For each of the following questions about the coverage gap, please check the box with your response.

Base: Yes my plan has a coverage gap	65+ N=180		
	Yes %	No %	Don't Know %
Did you know about the coverage gap when you enrolled in a prescription drug plan?	78	19	4
Did you consider buying an enhanced plan to have coverage in the gap?	14	84	3
Do you recall receiving advance notice that you were approaching the coverage gap?	45	41	5

Q30. Will you be seeking a drug plan with gap coverage during the next enrollment period?

<b>Base: Yes my plan has a coverage gap</b>	<b>65+ N=180 %</b>
Yes	23
No	64
I don't know	13

Q31. Where are you in relation to the coverage gap? <Please check one box.>

<b>Base: Yes my plan has a coverage gap</b>	<b>65+ N=180 %</b>	
I do not expect to reach the coverage gap in 2007	60	Go to Q32
I expect to reach the coverage gap by next month	9	Go to Q32
I am in the coverage gap now	15	Go to Q31A
I am past the coverage gap now and getting benefits again	7	Go to Q31A
I don't know	8	Go to Q32

Q31A. While in the coverage gap, where did you purchase your prescriptions?

<b>Base: In the coverage gap now or past the coverage gap now and getting benefits again</b>	<b>N=40 %</b>		
	Yes	No	Don't Know
Through the pharmacy I always use	87	13	-
Through a local pharmacy with a better price	44	52	4
Through an online pharmacy with a better price	5	95	-
I used mail order (in the United States)	23	77	-
Through a Canadian pharmacy	2	98	-
Through another foreign (not Canadian) pharmacy	0	100	-
Other	2	98	-

Q31B. While in the coverage gap, how did you get your prescriptions?

<b>Base: In the coverage gap now or past the coverage gap now and getting benefits again</b>	<b>N=40 %</b>			
	Yes	No	Don't Know	Refused
	%	%	%	%
a. I decided not to fill a prescription	15	79	4	3
b. I skipped a dose / doses	19	79	2	-
c. I took less than the prescribed dose of a medication	7	91	2	-
d. I split some pills in half (quarters, thirds, etc...)	22	76	2	-
e. I used a lower-cost generic medicine	32	62	6	-
f. I asked a drug manufacturer about their prescription assistance program	9	89	2	-

g. I used a discount card program (such as those provided by state governments, pharmacy chains, etc...)	4	90	6	-
h. I asked my doctor for samples	46	52	2	-
i. I asked my pharmacist for help	15	83	2	-
Other	2	96	2	-

Q31C. While in the coverage gap, did anyone who could have helped you with your medications contact you to see how you were doing?

<b>Base: In the coverage gap now or past the coverage gap now and getting benefits again</b>	<b>N=40</b>
	<b>%</b>
Yes, my doctor	5
Yes, my pharmacist	4
Yes, someone from my Medicare Part D plan	2
No, no one contacted me	86
Other	2
Don't Know	2

Q31D. While in the coverage gap, did you experience any unexpected medical problems that might have been avoided if your prescription drug coverage had been continuous (ie., there had been no gap in coverage)? <Check all that apply.>

<b>Base: In the coverage gap now or past the coverage gap now and getting benefits again</b>	<b>N=40</b>		
	Yes %	No %	Don't Know %
No, my medical condition did not change	18	81	2
My medical condition got worse, but I only saw my doctor for routine (regularly-scheduled) visits	6	92	2
My medical condition got worse and I had to see my doctor for an emergency	11	88	2
My medical condition got worse and I had to go to the hospital emergency room	4	92	4
My medical condition got worse and I had to be admitted to the hospital	11	86	4
My medical condition got worse but I did not seek care	4	92	4

Q32. According to Medicare, individuals with annual incomes of \$14,700 or less (\$19,800 for a couple) would qualify for “extra help” as long as the value of their assets is no more than \$11,500 (or \$23,000 for a couple). A home, vehicles, personal possessions, a burial plot, and up to \$1,500 for funeral expenses would not be counted as assets. But, bank accounts, additional real estate, investments, and the value of life insurance policies would be counted.

Have you heard of this “extra help” option?

<b>Base: Yes my plan has a coverage gap</b>	<b>65+ N=180 %</b>
Yes	48
No	49
Don't Know	3

Q33. Based on this definition, do you think you would qualify for this extra help?

<b>Base: Yes my plan has a coverage gap</b>	<b>65+ N=180 %</b>
Yes	10
No	81
Don't Know	8
Refused	1

*<Standard Demographic Questions here>*

D1. Gender

<b>Base: Total Respondents</b>	<b>50-64 %</b>	<b>65+ %</b>
Male	49	41
Female	52	59

D3. What is your age as of your last birthday?

<b>Base: Total Respondents</b>	<b>50-64 %</b>	<b>65+ %</b>
50-59	71	-
60-64	25	-
65-75	-	52
75+	-	47
Refused	5	2



D4. What is your current marital status?

<b>Base: Total Respondents</b>	<b>50-64 %</b>	<b>65+ %</b>
Married	64	45
Not married, living with your partner or significant other	4	1
Separated	2	2
Divorced	16	12
Widowed	7	36
Currently single and never married	7	3
Not sure	<1	-
Refused	<1	<1

D5. Are you or your spouse currently a member of A-A-R-P?

<b>Base: Total Respondents</b>	<b>50-64 %</b>	<b>65+ %</b>
Yes	48	60
No	51	39
Not sure	1	1
Don't Know	-	<1

D6. Do you own or rent your residence?

<b>Base: Total Respondents</b>	<b>50-64 %</b>	<b>65+ %</b>
Own	82	80
Rent	17	17
Not sure	1	2

D7. What is the highest level of education that you completed?

<b>Base: Total Respondents</b>	<b>50-64 %</b>	<b>65+ %</b>
Some high school	8	16
High school graduate or equivalent	28	35
Post high school education but with no degree	13	17
2 year degree	15	9
4 year degree	15	11
Post graduate study, but with no degree	7	3
Graduate or professional degree	13	7
Refused	1	2

D8. Which of the following best describes your current employment status?

<b>Base: Total Respondents</b>	<b>50-64 %</b>	<b>65+ %</b>
Self-employed full-time	11	1
Self-employed part-time	4	1
Employed full-time	39	2
Employed part-time	6	4
Retired and not working at all	21	84
Unemployed and looking for work	4	<1
Not in the labor force for other reasons	15	6
Refused	1	1

D9. Are you of Hispanic, Spanish, or Latino origin or descent?

<b>Base: Total Respondents</b>	<b>50-64 %</b>	<b>65+ %</b>
Yes	5	3
No	95	95
Not sure	<1	<1
Refused	-	2

D10. What is your race?

<b>Base: Total Respondents</b>	<b>50-64 %</b>	<b>65+ %</b>
White or Caucasian	83	87
Black or African American	9	8
Native American or Alaskan Native	2	1
Asian	1	1
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	<1	<1
Some other race	4	1
Refused	1	3

D17. What is your annual household income before taxes?

<b>Base: Total Respondents</b>	<b>50-64 %</b>	<b>65+ %</b>
Less than \$10,000	6	11
\$10,000 but less than \$20,000	7	18
\$20,000 but less than \$35,000	16	17
\$35,000 but less than \$50,000	16	13
\$50,000 but less than \$60,000	6	5
\$60,000 but less than \$75,000	9	4
\$75,000 but less than \$100,000	9	3
\$100,000 or more	16	4
Not sure	4	10
Refused	11	15

**Appendix C**  
**Methodological Note**

## **Summary**

The AARP Prescription Drugs and Medicare Part D Survey is based on telephone interviews with a random sample of 400 respondents aged 50-64 and 400 respondents aged 65+ who have Medicare Part D. The sample was drawn at random from the United States. The interviews were conducted in English by Woelfel Research, Inc. (WRI) from October 5 to October 26, 2007. The results were weighted by age and gender. The margin of sampling error for the each set of 400 respondents is  $\pm 4.9\%$ . Details on the design and execution of the survey are discussed below.

## **Design and Survey Execution**

### Design

The sample was drawn at random from the adult population of the United States in telephone households. The telephone sample was provided by STS, Inc. according to WRI specifications. Sample was drawn using standard list-assisted random digit dialing or Weighted (Type B) (RDD) methodology. *Active blocks* of telephone numbers (area code + exchange + two-digit block number) were selected with probabilities in proportion to their share of listed telephone households; after selection, two more digits were added randomly to complete the number. This method guarantees coverage of every assigned phone number regardless of whether that number is directory listed, purposely unlisted, or too new to be listed. Sampled phone numbers were compared against business directories and matching numbers purged.

All respondents were screened to be 50 or older. Quotas were set to achieve 400 respondents age 50-64 and 400 respondents age 65 and older. The older age group was also screened to assure they have Medicare Part D.

### Questionnaire Development and Testing

The questionnaire was developed by AARP staff. In order to improve the quality of the data, the questionnaire was pre-tested with a small number of respondents. The pretest interviews were monitored by Woelfel Research, Inc. and AARP staff and conducted using experienced interviewers who could best judge the quality of the answers given and the degree to which respondents understood the questions.

### Contact Procedures

As many as ten attempts were made to contact every sampled telephone number. Sample was released for interviewing in replicates, which are representative sub-samples of the larger sample. Using replicates to control the release of sample ensures that complete call procedures are followed for the entire sample. It also ensures that the geographic distribution of numbers called is appropriate. Calls were staggered over times of day and days of the week to maximize the chance of making contact with potential respondents.

## Weighting

The sample was weighted by age and gender. Weights were applied separately to the two age groups (50-64 and 65+). The table below contains information about the weighting. The column labeled "Population" shows the actual age/gender distribution for the United States population in the two age groups. The column labeled "Sample" shows the age/gender distribution of the sample. The column labeled "Weighted Sample" shows the age/gender distribution in the sample after the weights were applied. Those respondents who did not provide their age were given a weight of 1. The Weighted Sample Distribution does not match the Population Distribution exactly because of the missing data for age.

	Population*	Sample	Weighted Sample
Male			
50-59	36.11%	25.75%	34.50%
60-64	12.27%	10.25%	11.75%
Not provided	2.25%	2.25%	2.25%
Female			
50-59	38.08%	40.50%	36.25%
60-64	13.54%	19.00%	13.00%
Not provided	-	2.25%	2.25%
Male			
65-74	23.73%	12.25%	23.25%
75+	17.45%	10.50%	17.00%
Not provided	-	0.25%	0.25%
Female			
65-74	28.83%	33.00%	28.25%
75+	29.99%	42.25%	29.50%
Not provided	-	1.75%	1.75%

\*Taken from 2000 US Census

## Response Rate/ Cooperation Rate

The response rate for this study measured using AAPOR's response rate 3 method. The cooperation rate was measured using AAPOR's cooperation rate 3 method. The table below contains these rates.

Response Rate*	Cooperation Rate*
31%	85%

Calculated using AAPOR's Outcome Rate Calculator Version 2.1, May 2003