A decorative bar in the top left corner, consisting of a large green rectangle and a smaller gold square at its bottom right corner. A thin grey line extends from the gold square to the left, ending at the start of the title text.

# **Health and Long-Term Care: A Survey of Mississippi AARP Members**

A decorative element in the bottom right corner, featuring a gold square. A thin grey line extends from the top of the square to the left, crossing the horizontal line of the date. Another thin grey line extends from the right side of the square downwards.

December 2004



# **Health and Long-Term Care: A Survey of Mississippi AARP Members**

**Data Collected by Alan Newman Research, Inc.  
Report Prepared by Joanne Binette**

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AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan membership organization that helps people 50+ have independence, choice and control in ways that are beneficial and affordable to them and society as a whole. We produce *AARP The Magazine*, published bimonthly; *AARP Bulletin*, our monthly newspaper; *AARP Segunda Juventud*, our bimonthly magazine in Spanish and English; *NRTA Live & Learn*, our quarterly newsletter for 50+ educators; and our Web site, [www.aarp.org](http://www.aarp.org). AARP Foundation is our affiliated charity that provides security, protection, and empowerment to older persons in need with support from thousands of volunteers, donors, and sponsors. We have staffed offices in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

### **Acknowledgements**

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## Background

Mississippi, like many other states, is facing major long-term care challenges as the population ages and people live longer lives. In 2005, there will be 363,000 people over the age of 65 in Mississippi. By 2025, the number of people over age will increase to 615,000.<sup>1</sup> In 2004, Mississippi had a \$450 million shortfall in the budget. This resulted in large budget cuts across the board: 65 million dollars was cut from health and long-term care services, and more cuts are expected in 2005.

Another important issue facing Mississippi is the protection of health care coverage for the low-income elderly. When the Mississippi Legislature begins the 2005 regular session on January 4th, the first major piece of legislation it will consider is the restoration of Medicaid benefits to the PLAD (Poverty-Level Aged and Disabled) category of beneficiaries. During the 2004 regular session, legislators eliminated PLAD from the Medicaid program, thereby cutting 65,000 elder and disabled Mississippians from Medicaid services. AARP Foundation Litigation and other advocacy groups succeeded in the lawsuit they filed on behalf of Mississippi Medicaid beneficiaries. AARP was not directly involved in the litigation, and the lawsuit was filed on behalf of individual Medicaid beneficiaries, not AARP. The governor agreed to a consent decree to continue PLAD benefits until January 31st, 2005, giving the legislature adequate time to act once they reconvene on January 4th.

This report is part of a larger telephone survey of 800 AARP members in Mississippi conducted between November 9 and November 23, 2004. The full annotated questionnaire is contained in the appendix to this report. This report focuses on members' opinions about generating money for health and long-term care services and restoring health care coverage for the low-income elderly and people with disabilities.

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. Population Projections. <<http://www.census.gov/population/projections/state/stpjage.txt>>

## Highlights

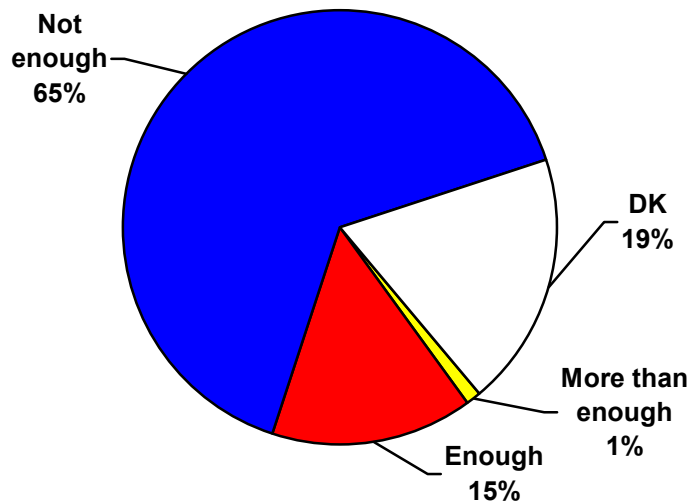
- About two-thirds (65%) of AARP members in Mississippi think there *is not enough* money in the state budget for health and long-term care services. Less than one in six (15%) believe there *is enough* money, and only one percent say there *is more than enough* money.
- Nine in ten Mississippi members believe it is very (75%) or somewhat important (15%) to restore money that was cut from health and long-term care services.
- Almost four in five Mississippi members strongly (59%) or somewhat support (19%) increasing Mississippi's cigarette tax from \$0.18 to \$1.18 per pack to generate money for health and long-term care services for children, people with disabilities, and the elderly. A similar proportion strongly (62%) or somewhat support (17%) increasing Mississippi's cigarette tax from \$0.18 to \$0.68 per pack.
- More than four in five Mississippi members strongly (62%) or somewhat support (22%) permanently restoring health care coverage for the low-income elderly and persons with disabilities who are currently covered under the PLAD program.

## Findings

### Most Mississippi members think there is not enough money in the state's budget for health and long-term care services.

Nearly two-thirds (65%) of AARP members in Mississippi think there is not enough money in the state budget for health and long-term care services, while a mere one percent say there is more than enough money in the budget. Less than one in six (15%) say there is enough money, and nearly one in five (19%) are unsure.

Perception of Current State Budget for Health and Long-Term Care Services (N=800)

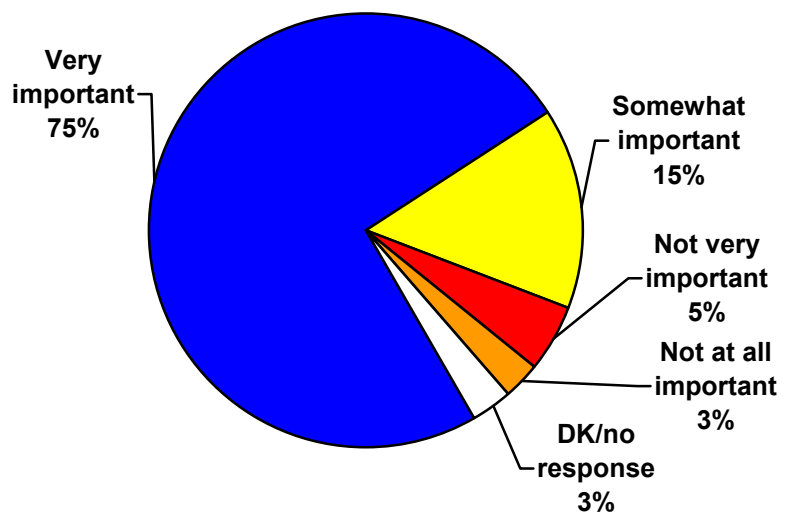


### Nine in ten Mississippi members believe it is important to restore money that was cut from health and long-term care services.

This year, Mississippi had a \$450 million shortfall in the budget. This resulted in large budget cuts across the board: \$65 million was cut from health and long-term care services. More cuts are expected in 2005.

Three-quarters (75%) of members in Mississippi believe it is very important for the state to restore money that was cut from health and long-term care services for children, people with disabilities, and the elderly, and another fifteen percent think it is somewhat important.

Importance of Restoring Money to Health and Long-term Care Services\* (N=800)



\*Percentages do not add up to 100 due to rounding.

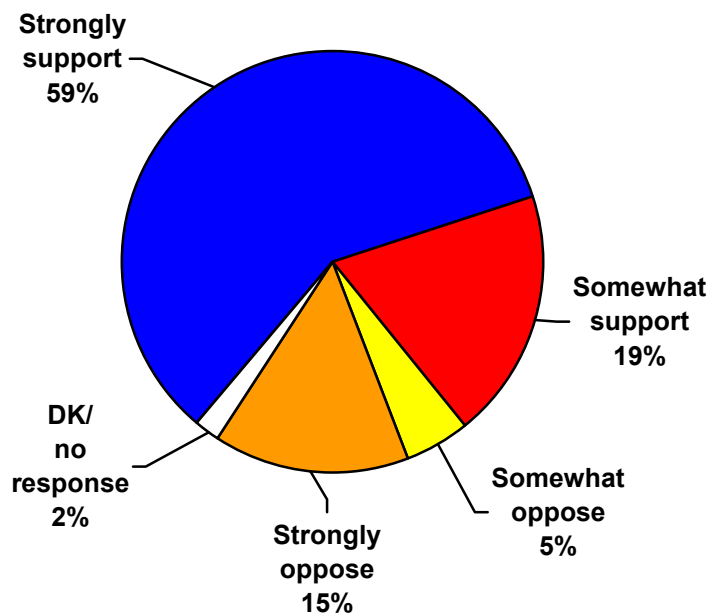
**Almost four in five Mississippi members support a tax increase of one dollar per pack on cigarettes to generate money for health and long-term care services.**

Mississippi is now considering increasing the state cigarette tax to generate money to replace funding cut this year and prevent cuts in 2005 for health and long-term care services under Medicaid used by children, people with disabilities, and the elderly. At \$0.18 per pack, Mississippi's cigarette tax is the third lowest cigarette tax in the country and was last increased in 1985. One proposal to generate money for health and long-term care services calls for an increase in the cigarette tax by \$1.00 per pack.

Nearly six in ten (59%) members strongly support increasing Mississippi's cigarette tax from \$0.18 to \$1.18 per pack to generate money for health and long-term care services for children, people with disabilities, and the elderly, and about almost one in five (19%) somewhat support this action.

Members who do not smoke are far more likely to strongly or somewhat support the one dollar per pack cigarette tax increase than members who do smoke (82% versus 29%).<sup>2</sup>

**Support for Increasing Mississippi's Cigarette Tax by One Dollar Per Pack to Generate Money for Health and Long-Term Care Services (N=800)**



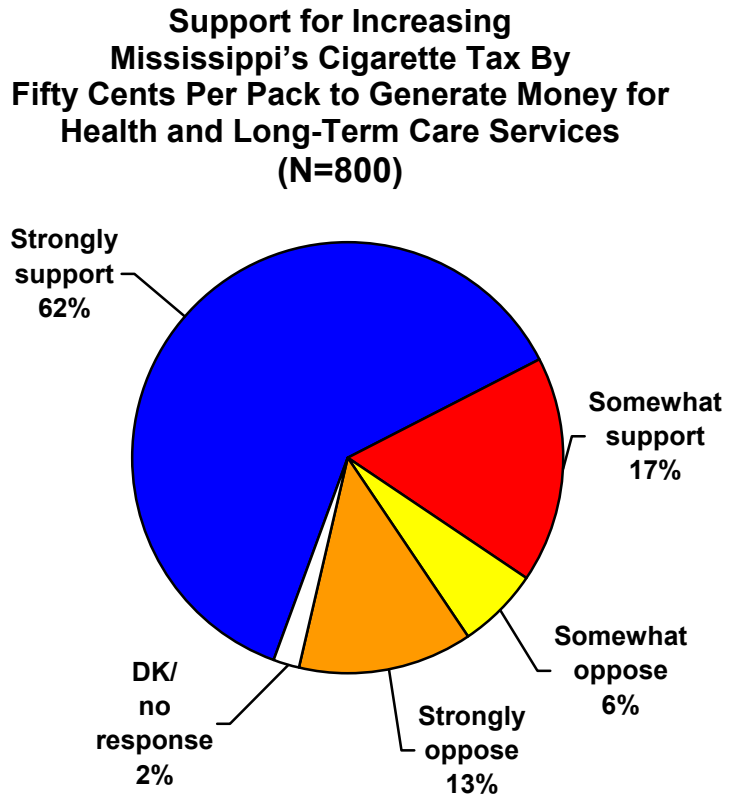
<sup>2</sup> Nine percent of Mississippi members report that they currently smoke cigarettes on a regular basis.

**Almost four in five Mississippi members support a tax increase of fifty cents per pack on cigarettes to generate money health and long-term care services.**

Mississippi members were then asked their opinion on another proposal to increase the cigarette tax by \$0.50 per pack to generate money for health and long-term care services for children, people with disabilities, and the elderly.

More than six in ten (62%) members strongly support increasing Mississippi’s cigarette tax from \$0.18 to \$0.68 per pack, and another one in six (17%) somewhat support this action.

Members who do not smoke are far more likely to strongly or somewhat support the fifty-cent per pack cigarette tax increase than members who do smoke (83% versus 36%).



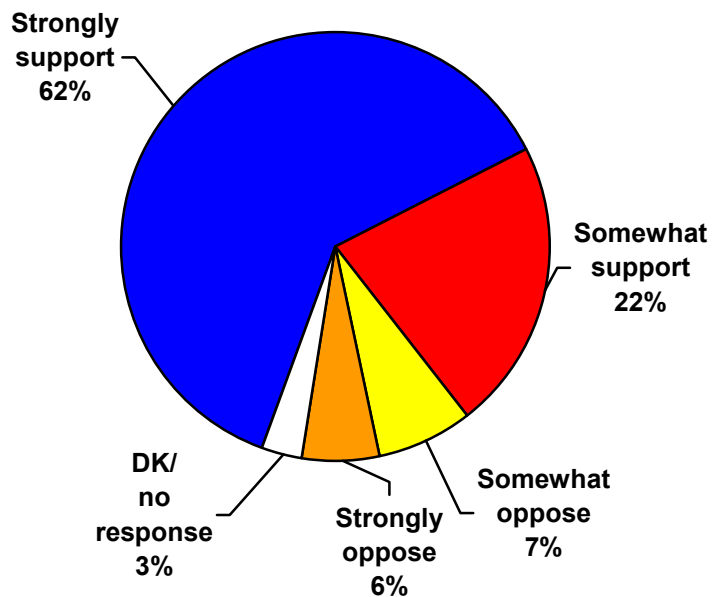


**More than four in five Mississippi members support permanently restoring health care coverage for the low-income elderly and people with disabilities covered under the PLAD program.**

The Governor signed legislation that terminated the Poverty-Level Aged and Disabled program known as PLAD. This program provides important health care coverage for about 65,000 low-income elderly and people with disabilities. While health care coverage was partially restored for about 17,000 of these people, about 50,000 people lost all of their coverage including prescription drugs and dental care. Mississippi has agreed to a court settlement and will temporarily restore these health care benefits through January 2005. If the state legislature does not take any further action, these individuals will again lose their health care coverage.

Over four in five (84%) Mississippi members support permanently restoring health care coverage for the low-income elderly and persons with disabilities who are currently covered under the PLAD program, while only about one in eight (13%) oppose this action.

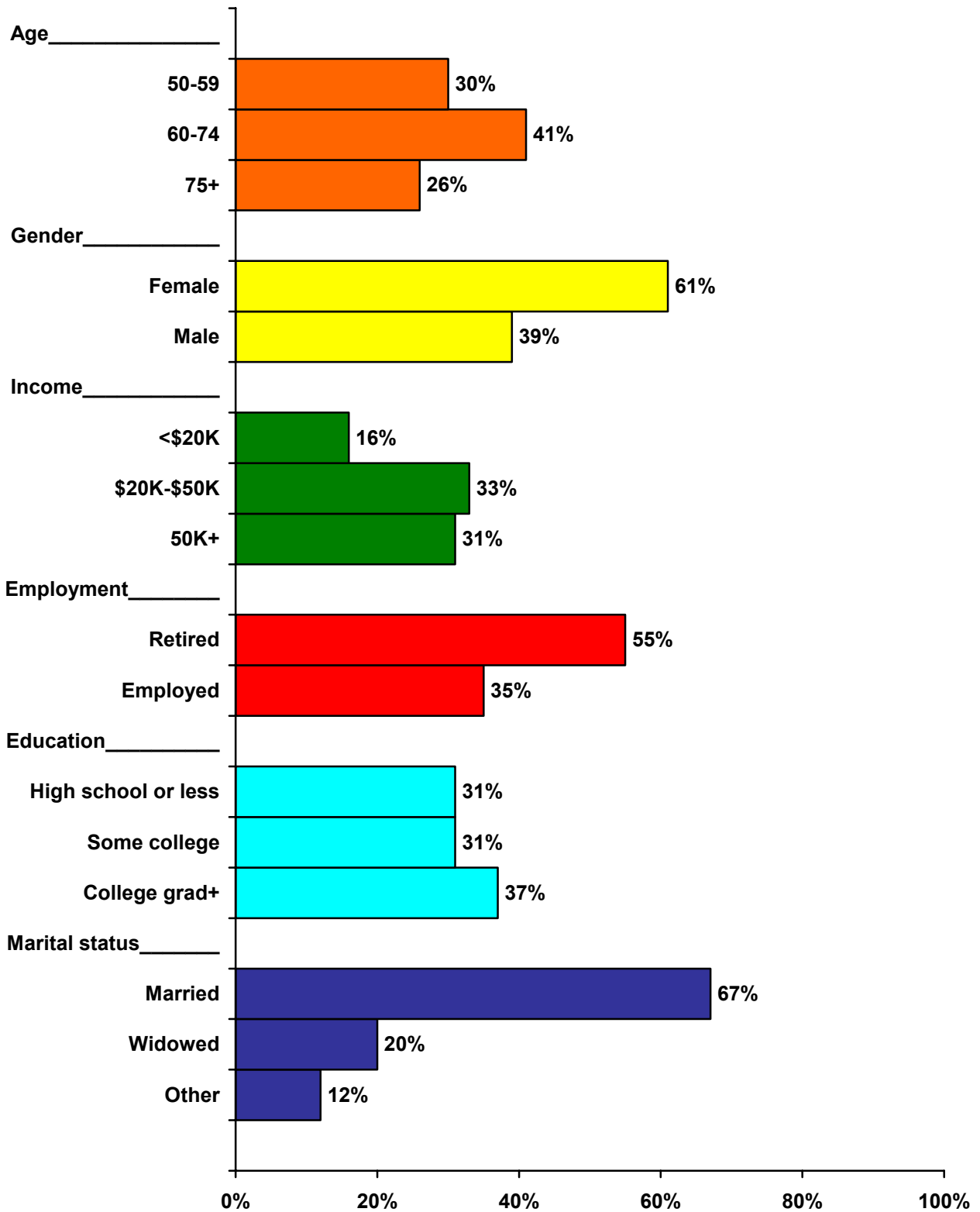
**Support for Permanently Restoring Health Care Coverage for the Low-Income Elderly and People with Disabilities Covered Under PLAD (N=800)**



### **A Profile of Mississippi Members**

Eight hundred AARP members in Mississippi participated in the survey. Eighty-five percent of those surveyed report they *always vote*, while another 10 percent say they *sometimes miss one vote*. Three percent say they *rarely* or *never* vote. Nearly nine in ten (89%) Mississippi members report that they do not currently smoke cigarettes on a regular basis, and nine percent say they do.

## Demographic Characteristics (N=800)



## Conclusions

Most AARP members in Mississippi believe that it is important for the state to restore funding that was cut from health and long-term care services. As Mississippi seeks ways to raise revenues to pay for health and long-term care services, increasing the cigarette tax is an action that Mississippi members support: almost four in five support either a one dollar per pack or a \$0.50 per pack increase. Not only are people willing to increase the cigarette tax to pay for health and long-term care, they are as willing to increase it by a dollar as by \$0.50 – suggesting the possibility of raising a significant amount of funding for health and long-term care programs in Mississippi.

Mississippi members want to ensure that the low-income elderly and people with disabilities will continue to receive health care coverage in 2005. More than four in five members support permanently restoring health care coverage for the low-income elderly and people with disabilities who are currently covered under the PLAD category of Medicaid beneficiaries.

## Methodology

AARP commissioned Alan Newman Research, Inc. to conduct a telephone survey from a list of randomly selected AARP members in Mississippi. A total of 800 interviews were completed. The survey was conducted between November 9 and November 23, 2004.<sup>3</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 AARP member in Mississippi had been surveyed. Survey responses were weighted to reflect the distribution of the age segments in the member population of Mississippi. As of November 2004, the number of AARP members in Mississippi was 259,261. Weighted responses to all survey questions are in the attached annotated questionnaire.

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<sup>3</sup> The response rate is 38 percent and the cooperation rate is 53 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**

## 2004 Mississippi Legislative Issues Survey: Health and Long-Term Care and Prescription Drugs

Weighted N = 800; Sampling Error = 3.5%; Response Rate = 38%  
(Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.)

### Screener

(ASK TO SPEAK WITH NAME LISTED IN SAMPLE FILE)

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_. I'm calling on behalf of the AARP (American Association of Retired Persons) from **Alan Newman Research, a national research firm**. We are conducting a survey with AARP members in Mississippi to find out about members' opinions on some important issues. 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. We are not telemarketers.** Of course, as with all **Alan Newman Research** opinion surveys, your responses are kept entirely confidential.

(IF ASKED, "Where did you get my name?" SAY: "AARP provided a list of members for us to call.")

- A. (DO NOT READ) RECORD CALL STATUS
- |                                     |                          |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 Selected respondent available     | CONTINUE                 |
| 2 No such person                    | THANK AND TERMINATE/TQ-A |
| 3 Selected respondent not available | SET UP CALLBACK          |
| 4 Spouse offered instead            | CONTINUE                 |
| R Refused                           | THANK AND TERMINATE/RQ-A |

[INTERVIEWERS -- IF NECESSARY USE ANY OF THE FOLLOWING:

My name is \_\_\_\_\_. I'm calling from Alan Newman Research, a national opinion research firm located in Richmond, Virginia. Let me assure you, this is NOT a sales call and you will NOT be asked to buy anything either now or later. We are NOT telemarketers. You will not be asked to buy anything either now or later. All of your responses are kept entirely confidential. Your views are important and we would greatly appreciate your participation. **The survey should only take a few minutes (10 minutes) of your time depending on your answers.]**

### Respondent Selection

S1. RECORD GENDER OF PERSON WHO ANSWERED PHONE:

- 1) Male
- 2) Female

S2. Before I begin, can I just confirm that you are currently a member of AARP?

- 1) Yes → [SKIP TO Q1]
- 2) No
- 3) DON'T KNOW / NOT SURE
- 4) REFUSED → [TERMINATE]

S3. May I speak to the person who is a member of AARP?

- 1) Yes
- 2) No, Person not available right now → [SCHEDULE CALLBACK]
- 3) No, Person never available → [SCREENOUT]
- 4) No one in house hold is AARP member → [SCREENOUT]
- 5) DON'T KNOW / NOT SURE → [TERMINATE]
- 6) REFUSED → [TERMINATE]

*Main Questionnaire*

**Q1. Which of the following best describes Mississippi’s current funding for health and long-term care services used by children, people with disabilities, and the elderly?**

**Do you think.... (READ LIST AND ROTATE ANSWER CATEGORIES. ENTER ONLY ONE RESPONSE.)**

	<u>%</u>
There is <u>more than enough</u> money in the state budget to meet the need for health and long-term care services and ensure quality?	1
There is <u>enough</u> money in the state budget to meet the need for health and long-term care services and ensure quality?	15
There is <u>not enough</u> money in the state budget to meet the need for health and long-term care services and ensure quality?	65
Don't know <b>(DO NOT READ)</b>	19
Refused <b>(DO NOT READ)</b>	0

**Q2. This year, Mississippi had a \$450 million shortfall in the budget. This resulted in large budget cuts across the board. \$65 million was cut from health and long-term care services. More cuts are expected in 2005.**

**How important is it to you for Mississippi to restore money that was cut from health and long-term care services for children, people with disabilities, and the elderly?**

**Would it be..... (READ EACH OPTION)**

	<u>%</u>
Very important	75
Somewhat important	15
Not very important	5
Not at all important	3
Don't know <b>(DO NOT READ)</b>	3
Refused <b>(DO NOT READ)</b>	<.5

**Q3. Mississippi is now considering increasing the state cigarette tax to generate money in order to replace funding cut this year and prevent cuts in 2005 for health and long-term care services under Medicaid used by children, people with disabilities, and the elderly.**

**At .18 cents per pack, Mississippi’s cigarette tax is the third lowest cigarette tax in the country. It was last increased in 1985. One proposal to generate money for health and long-term care services calls for an increase in the cigarette tax by \$1.00 per pack. This proposal would generate \$184 million dollars annually and bring in an additional \$552 million dollars annually in federal money.**

**Q3. (continued)**

**How strongly do you support or oppose increasing Mississippi's cigarette tax from .18 cents per pack to \$1.18 per pack to generate money for health and long-term care services for children, people with disabilities, and the elderly? Do you.....** (READ EACH OPTION)

	<u>%</u>
Strongly support	59
Somewhat support	19
Somewhat oppose	5
Strongly oppose	15
Don't know (DO NOT READ)	2
Refused (DO NOT READ)	<.5

**Q4. Another proposal to increase the cigarette tax calls for an increase of .50 cents per pack. This proposal would generate \$154 million dollars annually and bring in an additional \$462 million dollars annually in federal money.**

**How strongly do you support or oppose increasing Mississippi's cigarette tax from .18 cents per pack to .68 cents per pack to generate money for health and long-term care services for children, people with disabilities, and the elderly? Do you.....** (READ EACH OPTION)

	<u>%</u>
Strongly support	62
Somewhat support	17
Somewhat oppose	6
Strongly oppose	13
Don't know (DO NOT READ)	2
Refused (DO NOT READ)	<.5

**(NOTE TO INTERVIEWER:  
IN Q.5 PLAD IS PRONOUNCED AS ONE WORD LIKE THE COLOR  
PATTERN PLAID)**

**Q5. The Governor signed legislation that terminated the Poverty-Level Aged and Disabled program known as PLAD. This program provides important health care coverage for about 65,000 low-income elderly and people with disabilities. While health care coverage was partially restored for about 17,000 of these people, about 50,000 people lost all of their coverage including prescription drugs and dental care. Mississippi has agreed to a court settlement and will temporarily restore these health care benefits through January 2005. If the state legislature does not take any further action, these individuals will again lose their health care coverage.**

**Q5. (continued)**

**How strongly do you support or oppose permanently restoring health care coverage for the low-income elderly and people with disabilities?**

**Do you..... (READ EACH OPTION)**

	<u>%</u>
Strongly support	62
Somewhat support	22
Somewhat oppose	7
Strongly oppose	6
Don't know (DO NOT READ)	3
Refused (DO NOT READ)	<.5

**(INTERVIEWER PROBE: IF SUPPORT IN Q. 5: Just to confirm your response, you support restoring health care coverage for the low-income elderly and people with disabilities. IF OPPOSE IN Q. 5: Just to confirm your response, you oppose restoring health care coverage for the low-income elderly and people with disabilities.)**

*Now, I would like to ask you a few questions about prescription drugs.*

**Q6. In the past 12 months, have you bought any prescription drugs?**

	<u>%</u>
Yes	90
No (GO TO Q. 9)	10
Don't know (DO NOT READ) (GO TO Q. 9)	<.5
Refused (DO NOT READ) (GO TO Q. 9)	0

**Q7. In the last three months or 90 days, approximately how much money did you spend out of your own pocket on prescription drugs? [DO NOT READ RESPONSES – USE FOR CODING] (n=716 Respondents who bought a prescription drug in the past 12 months)**

	<u>%</u>
Nothing	3
Less than \$10	1
\$10 but less than \$25	5
\$25 but less than \$50	9
\$50 but less than \$75	6
\$75 but less than \$100	7
\$100 but less then \$250	25
\$250 but less than \$500	22
\$500 but less than \$750	7
\$750 but less than \$1,000	3
\$1,000 or more	5
Don't know (DO NOT READ)	6
Refused (DO NOT READ)	<.5



**Q8. Would you say that *paying* for these prescription medications is a major financial problem, a minor financial problem, or not a financial problem for you? (n=716 Respondents who bought a prescription drug in the past 12 months)**

	<u>%</u>
Major problem	30
Minor problem	28
Not a problem	41
Don't know ( <b>DO NOT READ</b> )	1
Refused ( <b>DO NOT READ</b> )	<.5

**Q9. How concerned are you about being able to afford the cost of prescription drugs for yourself or a family member over the next two years?  
Would you say you are..... (READ EACH OPTION)**

	<u>%</u>
Very concerned	54
Somewhat concerned	24
Not very concerned	10
Not at all concerned	11
Don't know ( <b>DO NOT READ</b> )	1
Refused ( <b>DO NOT READ</b> )	<.5

**Q10. Currently, there is not a centralized source that Mississippi residents can use to get information on prescription drugs, such as how to lower their costs and get the best drug for their illnesses.**

**How important would it be to you for the state of Mississippi to create a centralized source that residents can use to get information on prescription drugs?**

**Would it be..... (READ EACH OPTION)**

	<u>%</u>
Very important	68
Somewhat important	19
Not very important	6
Not at all important	5
Don't know ( <b>DO NOT READ</b> )	2
Refused ( <b>DO NOT READ</b> )	1

**Q11. How strongly do you support or oppose the state of Mississippi publicizing prescription drug prices in a centralized source to allow consumers to comparison for their prescription drugs? Do you.....**

**(IF RESPONDENT DOES NOT UNDERSTAND QUESTION 11  
INTERVIEWER READ: We are asking if you support or oppose Mississippi making prescription drug prices available to the public in one source so that consumers can get the best drug for their illness at the best price.)**

**Do you..... (READ EACH OPTION)**

	<u>%</u>
Strongly support	74
Somewhat support	19
Somewhat oppose	2
Strongly oppose	2
Don't know <b>(DO NOT READ)</b>	3
Refused <b>(DO NOT READ)</b>	1

**Q12. 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 and effectiveness of prescription drugs?**

**Would it be..... (READ EACH OPTION)**

	<u>%</u>
Very important	82
Somewhat important	10
Not very important	3
Not at all important	3
Don't know <b>(DO NOT READ)</b>	1
Refused <b>(DO NOT READ)</b>	<.5

And now I just have a few short questions to ask for statistical purposes only:

## Demographics

**D1. What is your age as of your last birthday? (IN YEARS) \_\_\_\_\_**

	<u>%</u>
Under 50	1
50-59	30
60-74	41
75+	26
Don't know/refused	2

**D2. What is your current marital status? Are you currently..... (READ LIST)**

	<u>%</u>
Currently married,	67
Currently living with partner/significant other	<.5
Widowed	20
Divorced	7
Separated	1
Never married	3
Don't know/not sure ( <b>DO NOT READ</b> )	<.5
Refused ( <b>DO NOT READ</b> )	1

**D3. Thinking about your state elections for Mississippi 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>
Always vote	85
Sometimes miss one	10
Rarely vote	1
Never vote	2
Don't know/not sure ( <b>DO NOT READ</b> )	1
Refused ( <b>DO NOT READ</b> )	1
Depends (VOLUNTEERED)	<.5

**D4. What is the highest level of education you have completed?**

(READ ANSWER CATEGORIES)	<u>%</u>
Less than high school	6
High school graduate or equivalent	26
Some college or technical training beyond high school	31
College graduate	18
Post-graduate or professional degree	19
Don't know/not sure ( <b>DO NOT READ</b> )	0
Refused ( <b>DO NOT READ</b> )	1

**D5. Which of the following best describes your current employment status?**

<i>Are you currently...</i>	<u>%</u>
Retired and not working	55
Employed full-time	25
Employed part-time	7
Homemaker	4
Unemployed and looking for work	1
Self-employed	2
Disabled	4
Student	<.5
Something else [Specify: _____]	<.5
Don't know/not sure ( <b>DO NOT READ</b> )	0
Refused ( <b>DO NOT READ</b> )	1

**D6. Now, for statistical purposes only, please stop me when I get to the category that includes your household's income before taxes in 2003. Was it...**

<i>(READ ANSWER CATEGORIES)</i>	<u>%</u>
Less than \$10,000	5
\$10,000 but less than \$20,000	11
\$20,000 but less than \$30,000	12
\$30,000 but less than \$40,000	11
\$40,000 but less than \$50,000	11
\$50,000 but less than \$75,000	15
\$75,000 but less than \$100,000	8
Or was your income \$100,000 or more	7
Don't know ( <b>DO NOT READ</b> )	3
Refused ( <b>DO NOT READ</b> )	17

**D7. Do you currently smoke cigarettes on a regular basis?**

	<u>%</u>
Yes	9
No	89
Don't know ( <b>DO NOT READ</b> )	0
Refused ( <b>DO NOT READ</b> )	2

**D8. What is your 5-digit zip code? \_\_\_\_\_**

**D9. And, finally, may I verify that I reached you at: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_**

**D10. RECORD RESPONDENT'S GENDER:**

	<u>%</u>
Male	39
Female	61

***Thank you for participating! Your Opinion Counts.***

**AARP**  
**Knowledge Management**  
**For more information contact Joanne Binette (202) 434-6303**