



SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

TRACKING SURVEY OF SENIORS WHO ARE ENROLLED IN THE MEDICARE PRESCRIPTION DRUG BENEFIT MARCH 6-9, 2006 (SELF ENROLLEES) MARCH 6-11, 2006 (AUTOMATIC ENROLLEES)

These surveys of seniors enrolled in the Medicare prescription drug benefit, including 408 respondents who signed up for the benefit themselves, and 401 respondents who were automatically enrolled through Medicaid, show that the vast majority of seniors who are enrolled in the plan have had no problems with the plan and say the plan covers the drugs they need. And among those who signed up for the plan themselves, two-thirds would recommend that other seniors sign up as well.

Key findings from the surveys, conducted March 6-9, 2006 for the self-enrolled seniors (with a margin of error of ± 4.85 percent) and March 6-11, 2006 for the automatically-enrolled seniors (with a margin of error of ± 4.89 percent) are:

Self-Enrolled Seniors

- 1. Three-fifths of seniors say they are saving money with the new benefit compared to their previous costs.** Fifty-nine percent of seniors say they are saving money, while 23 percent say they are not and 18 percent are unsure.
- 2. Nine out of ten self-enrolled seniors take a prescription drug on a regular basis, and four out of five of these seniors say the drugs they need are covered.** Ninety percent of self-enrolled seniors say they regularly take a prescription drug, including 22 percent who take four or five drugs a month and 25 percent who take more than five drugs a month. Among those who regularly take a prescription drug, 79 percent say the plan covers the drugs they need, 12 percent say it does not, and 9 percent are unsure.
- 3. More than four-fifths of self-enrolled seniors had no problems with signing up for the plan, with a similar number saying they have had no problems using the plan.** Eighty-four percent of these seniors say they had no problems signing up for the plan, while 11 percent had a problem that has been resolved and 5 percent have had a problem that has not been resolved. Eighty-five percent have had no problems using the plan, while 2 percent had

a problem that has been resolved and 5 percent have had a problem that has not been resolved. Overall, just 3 percent have had a problem both signing up and using the plan.

4. **Two-thirds of self-enrolled seniors say the benefits are worth the time and effort they put into evaluating “the many drug plans.”** Self-enrolled seniors say the time and effort was worth it by a 66 to 13 percent margin, up from a 57 to 16 percent margin in December before the benefit started.
5. **Similarly, two-thirds say they would recommend that other seniors sign up for the benefit.** Self-enrolled seniors would recommend that other seniors sign up by a 65 to 8 percent margin (18 percent say it depends on the circumstances), up from a 56 to 9 percent margin in December.
6. **A third of seniors used the Internet to decide on a benefit plan and a fifth attended a seminar.** Thirty-two percent used the Internet to decide on a plan (16 percent by themselves and 16 percent with help from someone else), up slightly from 28 percent in December. Eighteen percent say they attended a seminar, down from 25 percent in December.
7. **Pluralities of self-enrolled seniors say they think that politicians who criticize the new benefit are doing so to score political points, and that the criticism makes other seniors less likely to sign up.** Forty-six percent of self-enrolled seniors say they think politicians who criticize the plan are doing so to score political points, while 14 percent say they think these politicians are sincerely trying to fix the plan and 40 percent are undecided. When asked if they think that criticism makes other seniors less likely to sign up for the plan, 41 percent say it does make other seniors less likely to sign up, 24 percent say the criticism has no effect, and 35 percent are unsure.

Automatically-Enrolled (Dual-Eligible) Seniors

1. **More than four out of five automatically-enrolled seniors say they regularly take a prescription drug, and four out of five of them say the plan covers the drugs they need.** Eighty-three percent of automatically-enrolled seniors say they regularly take a prescription drug, including 17 percent who take four or five prescriptions a month and 35 percent who take more than five prescription drugs a month. Among these seniors who regularly take a prescription drug, 80 percent say their plan covers the drugs they need, while 15 percent say the plan does not and 4 percent are unsure.
2. **Nine out of ten automatically-enrolled seniors say they have had no problems using the new prescription drug benefit.** Ninety percent of these seniors report no problem using the new benefit, while 4 percent say they have had a problem that has been resolved, and 4 percent say they have had a problem that has not been resolved.
3. **Automatically-enrolled seniors say politicians who criticize the new benefit are doing so to score political points by a two-to-one margin, with a bare majority undecided.** Thirty-five percent of automatically-enrolled seniors say they think politicians who criticize the plan are doing so to score political points, while 14 percent say they think these politicians are sincerely trying to fix the plan and 51 percent are undecided. When asked if

they think that criticism makes other seniors less likely to sign up for the plan, 32 percent say it does make other seniors less likely to sign up, 23 percent say the criticism has no effect, and 45 percent are unsure.

Methodology for Self-Enrolled Seniors

The survey of 408 self-enrolled seniors was conducted March 6-9, 2006. Respondents were selected randomly from a listed sample targeting households with members 65 and older. All respondents confirmed that they are at least 65 years of age, are enrolled in the Medicare Part D prescription drug benefit plan, and that they signed up for the plan themselves. The margin of error for responses with an even split – 50 percent for one response and 50 percent for another response – is plus or minus 4.85 percent. The margin of error is smaller when one response receives a higher level of support. For example, the margin of error is plus or minus 4.20 percent when 75 percent of respondents choose one response and 25 percent choose another response.

Methodology for Automatically Enrolled Seniors

The survey of 401 self-enrolled seniors was conducted March 6-11, 2006. Respondents were selected randomly from a listed sample targeting households with members 65 and older. All respondents confirmed that they are at least 65 years of age, are enrolled in the Medicare Part D prescription drug benefit plan, and that they were automatically enrolled through Medicaid. Also, potential respondents reporting annual incomes higher than \$30,000 were excluded from the sample. The margin of error for responses with an even split – 50 percent for one response and 50 percent for another response – is plus or minus 4.89 percent. The margin of error is smaller when one response receives a higher level of support. For example, the margin of error is plus or minus 4.24 percent when 75 percent of respondents choose one response and 25 percent choose another response.