

Prescription Drugs

There Are Striking Differences in Confidence in Receiving Most Appropriate Prescription Drugs

While most Americans are confident that they are receiving the most appropriate prescription drugs, confidence levels vary significantly by certain characteristics (table 1).

- Overall, 64 percent of Americans were extremely or very confident that, when they have a prescription filled, they are receiving the most appropriate drug. Only 7 percent were not too or not at all confident in the appropriateness of the prescription drugs they receive.
- Americans who give health care in America an excellent or very good rating were significantly more likely to be confident that they are receiving the most appropriate prescription drugs than were those who rate health care as fair or poor (80 percent versus 56 percent).
- Eighty-two percent of those with traditional fee-for-service health insurance were confident that they receive the most appropriate drugs, while only 48 percent of the uninsured were confident in this aspect of health care.
- Those who are extremely or very satisfied with their current health plan were more confident in the appropriateness of their prescription drugs than were those who are not satisfied with their health plan (81 percent versus 41 percent).

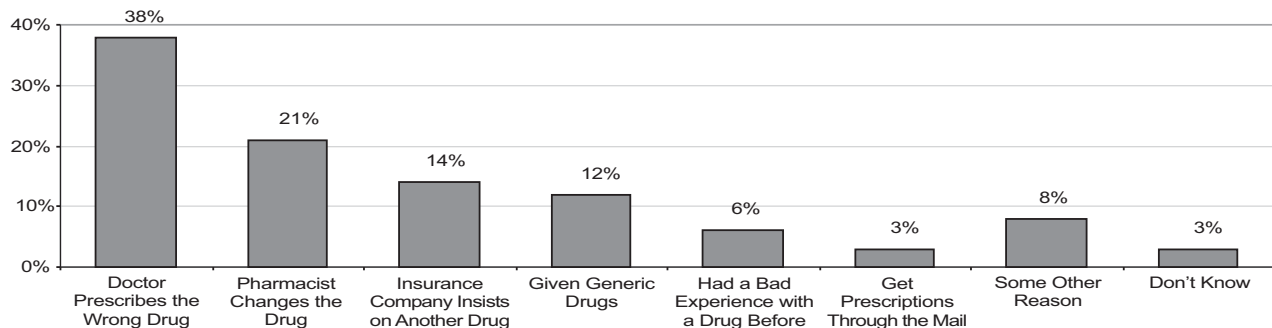
Table 1
Confidence in Receiving Most Appropriate Drug

| | Total | Rating of Health Care in America | | | Type of Health Insurance Plan | | | | | Satisfaction with Current Health Plan (insured only) | | |
|---------------------------------|-------|----------------------------------|------|---------------|-------------------------------|--------------|---------------------|----------|-----------|--|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|
| | | Excellent/ Very Good | Good | Fair/ Poor | HMO- Type | PPO- Type | Fee-for- Service | Medicare | Uninsured | Extremely/ Very Satisfied | Somewhat Satisfied | Not Too/ Not At All Satisfied |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Extremely or Very Confident | 64% | 80% | 70% | 56% | 64% | 64% | 82% | 71% | 48% | 81% | 54% | 41% |
| Somewhat Confident | 28% | 19% | 25% | 32% | 29% | 30% | 13% | 20% | 39% | 17% | 37% | 38% |
| Not Too or Not At All Confident | 7% | 1% | 3% | 11% | 7% | 6% | 5% | 7% | 13% | 2% | 7% | 18% |

Those who were not confident that they receive the most appropriate prescription drugs gave various reasons for their lack of confidence (chart 1).

- Thirty-eight percent cited doctors prescribing the wrong drugs as a reason.
- Twenty-one percent said the pharmacist changes the drug, 14 percent said their insurance company insists on another drug, and 12 percent said they were given generic versions of the drugs.

Chart 1
Reasons Some Americans Are Not Confident They Receive the Most Appropriate Drugs



There is Broad Awareness of Generics, But Confidence in Them Is Not Universal

Nearly all Americans are aware of generic drugs (table 2). However, only half of them are confident that generic drugs are as safe and effective as the original brand-name drugs (table 3). (“Under the Drug Price Competition and Patent Term Restoration Act of 1984, manufacturers seeking approval to market a generic drug product must submit data demonstrating that the drug product is bioequivalent to the pioneer (innovator) drug product. A major premise underlying the 1984 law is that bioequivalent drug products are therapeutically equivalent and, therefore, interchangeable.”¹⁾)

- Ninety-five percent of Americans were aware of generic drugs.
- Awareness varies by health plan type and insurance status. While 97 percent of those with some form of health coverage were aware of generics, only 81 percent of the uninsured were aware of them.
- Americans who were college graduates, had household income of \$35,000 or more, or were white were more likely than others to be aware of generic drugs.

Table 2
Awareness of Generic Drugs

| | Total | Type of Health Insurance Plan | | | | | Education | | | Household Income | | | Race | |
|-----|-------|-------------------------------|----------|-----------------|----------|-----------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------|--------------------|-------------------|---------------------|-------|-----------|
| | | HMO-Type | PPO-Type | Fee-for-Service | Medicare | Uninsured | High School or Less | Some College/Trade School | College Graduate | Less than \$35,000 | \$35,000-\$74,999 | \$75,000 and Higher | White | Non-White |
| Yes | 95% | 99% | 97% | 97% | 95% | 81% | 93% | 96% | 98% | 92% | 97% | 98% | 98% | 86% |
| No | 5% | 1% | 2% | 3% | 4% | 19% | 6% | 4% | 2% | 8% | 2% | 1% | 2% | 14% |

- Of those who were aware of generic drugs, 56 percent were extremely or very confident that they are as safe and effective as the original brand name drugs.
- Americans who were extremely or very satisfied with their current health plan, were college graduates, or were white, were more likely than others to be confident that generic drugs are as safe and effective as the original brand name drugs.
- Those who rated health care in America as fair or poor or were in fair or poor health were less likely than others to be confident that generic drugs are as safe and effective as the original brand name drugs.

Table 3
Confidence That Generic Drugs Are as Safe and Effective as the Original Brand Name Drugs Among Those Who Are Aware of Generic Drugs

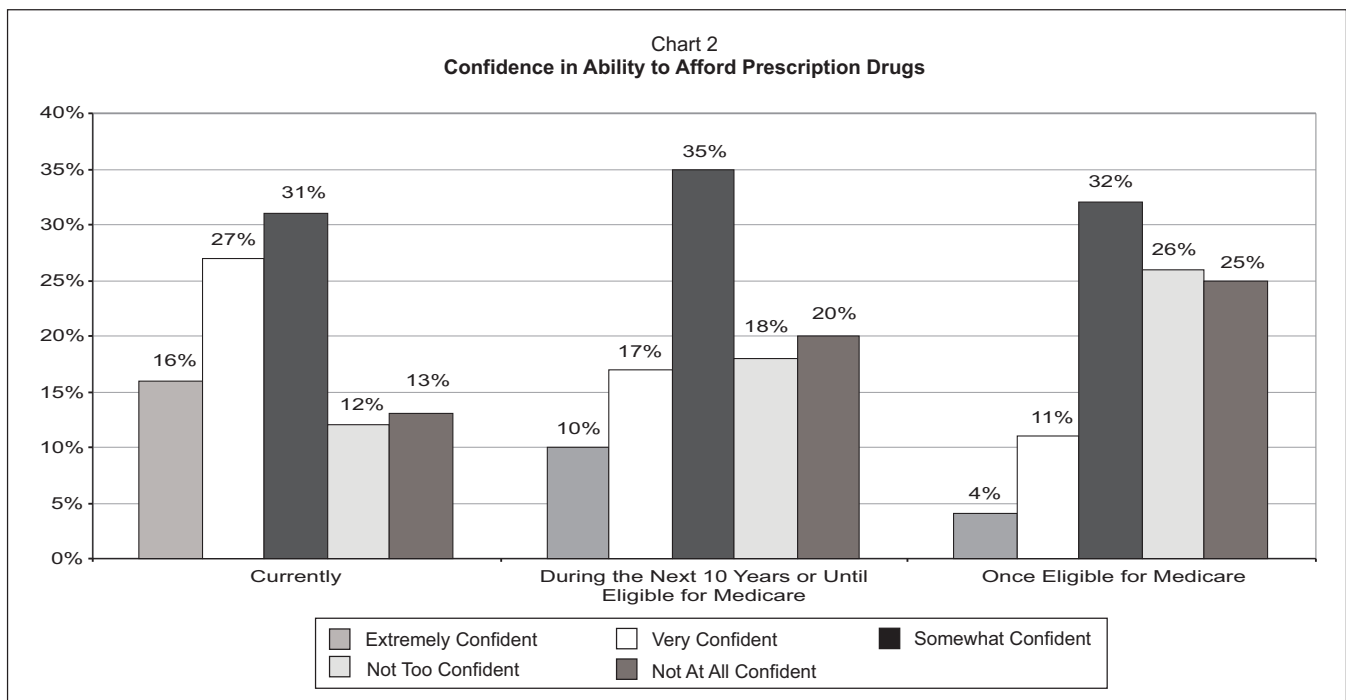
| | Total | Rating of Health Care in America | | | Satisfaction with Current Health Plan (insured only) | | | Personal Health Status | | | Education | | | Race | |
|---------------------------------|-------|----------------------------------|------|-----------|--|--------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|------|-----------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------|-------|-----------|
| | | Excellent/Very Good | Good | Fair/Poor | Extremely/Very Satisfied | Somewhat Satisfied | Not Too/Not At All Satisfied | Excellent/Very Good | Good | Fair/Poor | High School or Less | Some College/Trade School | College Graduate | White | Non-White |
| Extremely or Very Confident | 56% | 70% | 61% | 49% | 65% | 51% | 43% | 60% | 52% | 47% | 51% | 55% | 67% | 58% | 45% |
| Somewhat Confident | 30% | 25% | 28% | 32% | 23% | 35% | 37% | 27% | 37% | 34% | 31% | 33% | 24% | 29% | 33% |
| Not Too or Not At All Confident | 12% | 3% | 7% | 17% | 9% | 14% | 18% | 11% | 10% | 18% | 15% | 11% | 7% | 11% | 19% |
| Don't Know | 2% | 2% | 3% | 1% | 3% | 1% | 1% | 3% | 1% | 1% | 3% | 1% | 2% | 2% | 3% |

¹Food And Drug Administration, Center For Drug Evaluation and Research, *Approved Drug Products with Therapeutic Equivalence Evaluations*, www.fda.gov/cder/ob/docs/preface/ecpreface.htm

Americans Are Concerned About Being Able to Afford Prescription Drugs

Americans are concerned about their ability to afford prescription drugs today, in the next 10 years, and once they become eligible for Medicare. As people look further into the future, their confidence in their ability to afford prescription drugs decreases (chart 2).

- In 2001, 44 percent of Americans were extremely or very confident that they are able to afford prescription drugs without financial hardship, while 25 percent were not too or not at all confident.
- Twenty-six percent of Americans were extremely or very confident that they would be able to afford prescription drugs without financial hardship in the next 10 years or until they are eligible for Medicare. Thirty-eight percent were not confident.
- Only 15 percent of those not yet on Medicare were extremely or very confident that they would be able to afford prescription drugs without financial hardship once they become eligible for Medicare. Fifty-one percent were not confident.



- Americans in fair or poor health, those who give health care in America a fair or poor rating, and those who are not satisfied with their current health plan were more likely than others to be not too or not at all confident that they would be able to afford prescription drugs, either now, in the next 10 years, or once they become eligible for Medicare.
- Uninsured Americans, current Medicare beneficiaries, and those with household income below \$35,000 per year were more likely than others to be not confident that they would be able to afford prescription drugs now or during the next 10 years.
- While not less confident now, women were more likely than men to be not confident of their ability to afford prescription drugs in the next 10 years or once they become eligible for Medicare.

Table 4
Proportion Not Confident in Ability to Afford Prescription Drugs

| | Total | Personal Health Status | | | Rating of Health Care in America | | | Type of Health Insurance Plan | | | | | Satisfaction with Current Health Plan (insured only) | | | Household Income | | | Gender | |
|------------------------------|-------|------------------------|------|------------|----------------------------------|------|------------|-------------------------------|----------|-----------------|----------|-----------|--|--------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|---------------------|--------|--------|
| | | Excellent/ Very Good | Good | Fair/ Poor | Excellent/ Very Good | Good | Fair/ Poor | HMO-Type | PPO-Type | Fee-for-Service | Medicare | Uninsured | Extremely/ Very Satisfied | Somewhat Satisfied | Not Too/ Not At All Satisfied | Less than \$35,000 | \$35,000-\$74,999 | \$75,000 and higher | Male | Female |
| Now/Currently | 25% | 19% | 27% | 41% | 13% | 20% | 32% | 14% | 19% | 19% | 39% | 38% | 15% | 28% | 47% | 35% | 19% | 14% | 25% | 25% |
| During the Next Ten Years or | 38% | 31% | 43% | 55% | 22% | 28% | 48% | 32% | 34% | 29% | 45% | 49% | 23% | 45% | 66% | 47% | 33% | 26% | 33% | 42% |
| Until Eligible for Medicare | 51% | 47% | 57% | 61% | 30% | 48% | 60% | 53% | 53% | 35% | n/a | 52% | 41% | 59% | 80% | 51% | 53% | 53% | 45% | 57% |
| Once Eligible for Medicare | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Source: 2001 Health Confidence Survey.