

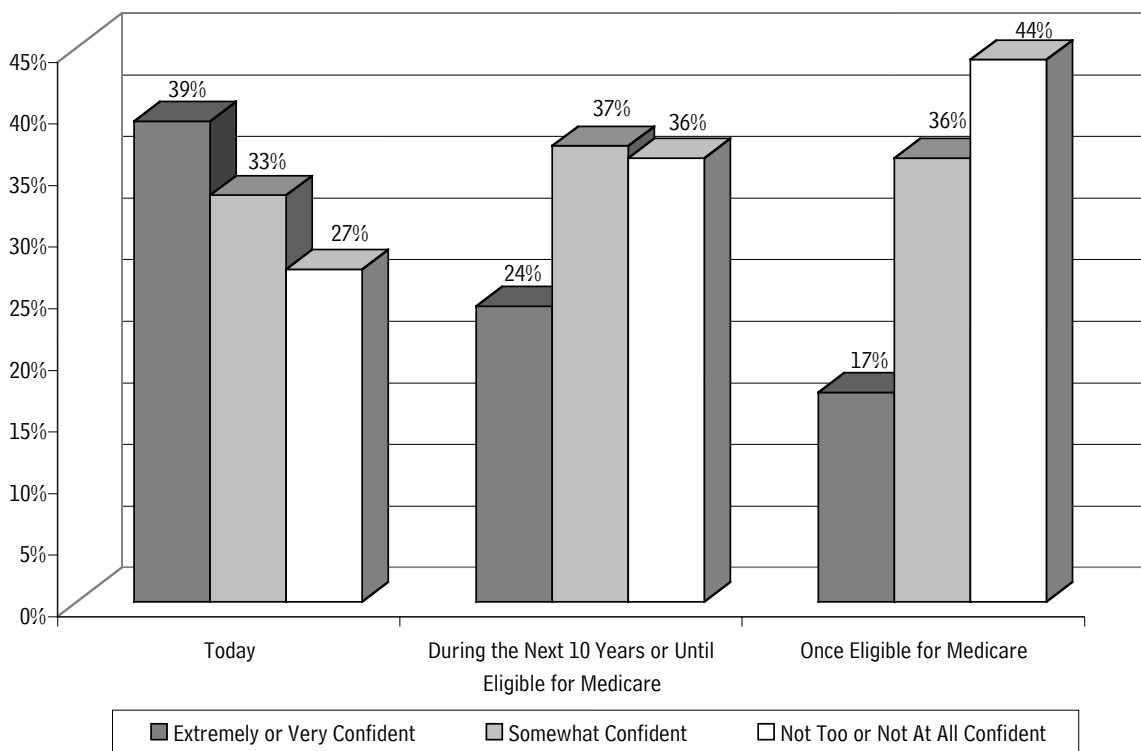
## Prescription Drugs

### Affordability of Prescription Drugs Causes Concern

The 2002 Health Confidence Survey (HCS) finds that less than half of Americans are confident in their ability to afford prescription drugs today, and even fewer are confident in their ability to afford prescription drugs in the future (Figure 1).

- **Today:** Thirty-nine percent of Americans are *extremely* or *very* confident that they are able to afford prescription drugs without financial hardship today. Thirty-three percent are only *somewhat* confident, and 27 percent are *not too* or *not at all* confident.
- **In the Next 10 Years:** Twenty-four percent of Americans are *extremely* or *very* confident that they will be able to afford prescription drugs without financial hardship in the next 10 years (or until they are eligible for Medicare). Thirty-six percent are not confident.
- **Once Eligible for Medicare:** Only 17 percent of those not yet on Medicare are *extremely* or *very* confident that they will be able to afford prescription drugs without financial hardship once they become eligible for Medicare. Forty-four percent are not confident.

Figure 1  
**CONFIDENCE IN ABILITY TO AFFORD PRESCRIPTION DRUGS, 2002**



Source: Employee Benefit Research Institute, Consumer Health Education Council, and Mathew Greenwald & Associates, Inc., 2002 Health Confidence Survey.

- Americans who are satisfied with their current health plan and those who give health care in America an excellent or very good rating are more likely to be confident in their ability to afford prescription drugs in all three time periods.
- While 39 percent of all Americans are confident in their ability to afford prescription drugs today, 58 percent of those who are satisfied with their health plan are confident, and 63 percent of those who give health care in America an excellent or very good rating are confident in their ability to afford prescriptions today.
- Current Medicare beneficiaries are more likely than others with health insurance to be *not* confident that they are able to afford prescription drugs without financial hardship today.
- Americans with no health insurance coverage are more likely than those with coverage to be *not* confident that they are able to afford prescription drugs now or that they will be able to afford them during the next 10 years. As they look toward Medicare, however, the uninsured are as likely or more likely than other coverage-type groups to be confident in their ability to afford prescription drugs.
- Americans with annual household incomes less than \$35,000 are more likely than those with higher incomes to be *not* confident in their ability to afford prescription drugs today, but the differences in confidence levels by income become smaller the further Americans look into the future (Figure 2). In fact, as they look toward Medicare, Americans across the income spectrum are equally *not* confident in their ability to afford prescription drugs without financial hardship.
- Women are more likely than men to be *not* confident in their ability to afford prescription drugs, especially as they look toward Medicare (Figure 2).

Figure 2  
**PROPORTION *NOT* CONFIDENT IN ABILITY TO AFFORD PRESCRIPTION DRUGS, 2002**

	Total	Gender		Household Income		
		Male	Female	Less than \$35,000	\$35,000–\$74,999	\$75,000 and Higher
Today	27%	24%	30%	39%	23%	12%
During the Next 10 Years or Until Eligible for Medicare	36	33	39	43	35	23
Once Eligible for Medicare	44	37	52	43	47	45

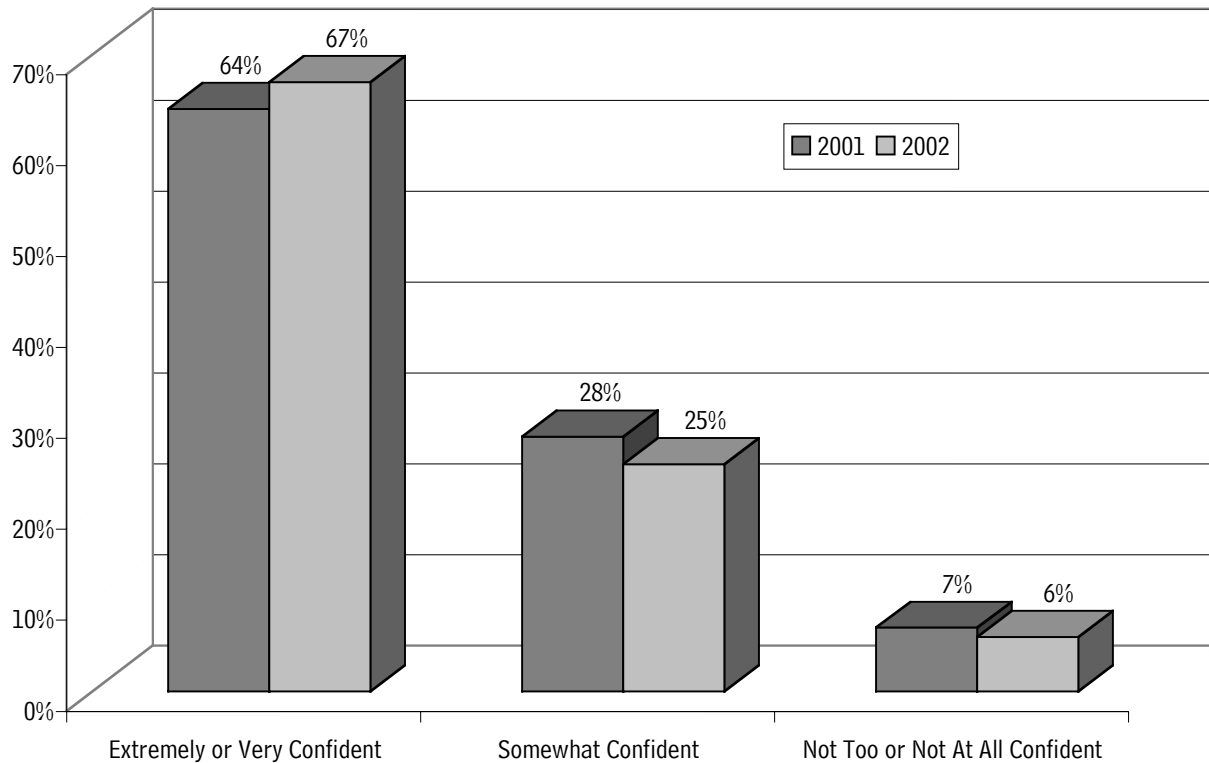
Source: Employee Benefit Research Institute, Consumer Health Education Council, and Mathew Greenwald & Associates, Inc., 2002 Health Confidence Survey.

**Americans Confident They Are Receiving the Most Appropriate Prescription Drugs**

*Most 2002 HCS respondents are confident that they are receiving the most appropriate prescription drugs, as were respondents in 2001.*

- Sixty-seven percent of Americans are *extremely* or *very* confident that, when they have a prescription filled, they receive the most appropriate drug, about the same as 64 percent in 2001. Only 6 percent are *not too* or *not at all* confident in the appropriateness of the prescription drugs they receive (Figure 3).

Figure 3  
**CONFIDENCE IN RECEIVING MOST APPROPRIATE DRUG, 2001 AND 2002**



Source: Employee Benefit Research Institute, Consumer Health Education Council, and Mathew Greenwald & Associates, Inc., 2001 and 2002 Health Confidence Surveys.

- As with affordability, Americans who are satisfied with their current health plan or who give health care in America an excellent or very good rating are more likely to be confident that they are receiving the most appropriate prescription drugs (84 percent and 82 percent, respectively).
- In 2002, Americans with annual household incomes of \$35,000 or more were more likely than those with lower incomes to be confident that they receive the most appropriate prescription drugs.
- In both 2001 and 2002, white Americans were more likely than nonwhite Americans to be confident about receiving the most appropriate prescription drugs.

Source: 2001 and 2002 Health Confidence Surveys.