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## A New WSJ.com/Harris Interactive Study Finds That a Large Majority of Seniors Are Satisfied with Medicare Drug Plans

*Only One-Fifth Likely to Switch Despite Cost Increases*

While three-fourths (75%) of seniors were satisfied with their Medicare drug plan at the end of last year, even more (87%) are satisfied this year. Seniors still find their plan saves them money on prescription drugs (75% 2007; 70% 2006) and is easy to use (83% 2007; 82% 2006). In both 2006 and 2007 half of those enrolled in a Medicare drug plan say they received information from their plans on ways to lower their drug costs (50% 2007; 49% 2006), and one-third says their physicians switched them to generics in order to lower their costs (35% 2007 and 2006).

These are some of the results of a survey of 571 U.S. adults ages 65 and older, conducted online by Harris Interactive between November 29 and December 3, 2007 for The Wall Street Journal Online's Health Industry Edition ([www.wsj.com/health](http://www.wsj.com/health)).

Only one-fifth (21%) of those currently enrolled in a Medicare drug plan has been advised by others to look at other drug plans before deciding if theirs is still the best fit. The same proportion (19%) says they are likely to switch plans during the six-week open enrollment period for 2008, which began on November 15<sup>th</sup>.

Of those who are likely to switch plans, almost all (97%) intend to seek information about the different plans, mainly from the Medicare website (54%) and health plan brochures and websites (48%). The choice of prescription drugs covered (91%) is the most important factor when choosing a plan, followed closely by the cost of co-pays for prescriptions (89%) and the monthly premium cost (89%). However, average premiums are expected to rise about seventeen percent, and many plans are starting to charge different amounts for both brand name and generic drugs.\* Seniors who decide to stay on their current plan without looking into the upcoming changes and alternatives could find themselves less satisfied next year.

Katherine Binns, Division President for Healthcare Research at Harris Interactive, comments, "Most seniors did not switch plans for 2007 – it's not easy to review and understand all of the different options – and most will not switch for 2008, even though many plans are raising monthly premiums and changing drug coverage. Many seniors who stay with their current plans could be surprised when the plan that was free to them in 2007 is no longer free in 2008."

\*NPR, *Seniors Urged to Research Their Drug-Plan Options, November 15, 2007.*

# Health-Care Poll

**Table 1**

**Enrollment in Medicare Drug Plans**

“Which of the following statements best describes you?”

Base: Adults Aged 65 and Older

	Total
	%
I am currently enrolled in a Medicare drug plan.	47
I am not currently enrolled in a Medicare drug plan, but I plan to sign up for one for next year (2008).	1
I am not currently enrolled in a Medicare drug plan and I have no plans to sign up for one Next Year (2008).	44
Not sure	7

Note: Percentages may not add up exactly to 100% due to rounding.

**Table 2**

**Seniors' Experiences with Medicare Drug Plans**

“Have you personally experienced any of the following since joining your Medicare drug plan?”

Base: Seniors Enrolled in a Medicare Drug Plan

		Yes	No	Not Sure
		%	%	%
My plan has saved me money on prescription drugs	2006	70	20	11
	2007	75	13	12
I asked my doctor to switch me to or prescribe a generic medication in order to lower my drug costs	2006	40	55	5
	2007	39	58	3
My drug plan gave me information to help me find ways to lower my drug costs	2006	49	36	15
	2007	50	38	12
Without me asking about it, my doctor suggested switching to or prescribing a generic medication in order to lower my drug costs	2006	35	58	7
	2007	35	57	8
I had to pay the full price for my prescription drugs because I hit the donut hole	2006	15	82	3
	2007	12	81	7
I had to switch medications because a drug I had been taking was not covered by my drug plan	2006	18	78	3
	2007	12	84	4
My drug plan has been easy to use	2006	82	13	5
	2007	83	12	5
I have been advised by others that I should take a look at other drug plans before deciding whether or not my current plan is still right for me	2007	21	74	5

Note: Percentages may not add up exactly to 100% due to rounding.

# Health-Care Poll

**Table 3**

**Seniors' Satisfaction with Their Medicare Drug Plans**

"Overall, how satisfied are you with your Medicare drug plan?"

Base: Seniors Enrolled in a Medicare Drug Plan

	2006 Total	2007 Total
	%	%
<b>Very/Somewhat Satisfied (NET)</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>87</b>
Very satisfied	35	46
Somewhat satisfied	40	41
<b>Not Very/At All Satisfied (NET)</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>6</b>
Not very satisfied	16	5
Not at all satisfied	8	2
Don't know	*	7

Note: Percentages may not add up exactly to 100% due to rounding.

\* = Less than 0.5 percent.

**Table 4**

**Seniors Likelihood to Change Drug Plans**

"Seniors will be able to switch Medicare drug plans beginning at the start of the new year; how likely is it that you will switch plans?"

Base: Seniors Enrolled in a Medicare Drug Plan

	2006 Total	2007 Total
	%	%
<b>Very/Somewhat Likely (NET)</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>19</b>
Very likely	2	9
Somewhat likely	11	11
<b>Not Very/At All Likely (NET)</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>71</b>
Not very likely	34	26
Not at all likely	39	45
Don't know	14	10

Note: Percentages may not add up exactly to 100% due to rounding.

# Health-Care Poll

**Table 5**  
**Important Factors**

“Whether or not you will consider changing plans, how important is each of the following for you personally when choosing a Medicare drug plan?”

Base: Seniors Enrolled in a Medicare Drug Plan

		Very/ Some- what Import- ant (NET)	Very Import- ant	Some- what Import- ant	Not at All/Not Very Import- ant (NET)	Not Very Import- ant	Not at All Import- ant	Not Sure
The choice of prescrip- tion drugs that is covered by the plan	%	91	76	15	5	2	3	4
The cost of the co- pays and deductibles I would pay for prescription drugs	%	89	73	16	6	3	3	4
The cost of the monthly premium I would pay	%	89	68	21	6	3	4	5
The network of phar- macies that I could use to fill my prescription	%	83	53	30	12	8	5	4
Customer service ratings that the plans receive from their members	%	76	42	34	17	12	5	7
Ratings that the plans receive from Medicare	%	73	34	39	18	11	7	9

Note: Percentages may not add up to exactly 100% due to rounding.

# Health-Care Poll

**Table 6**  
**Information Sources**

“Which of the following sources, if any, will you rely on to get information about Medicare drug plans?”

Base: Seniors Planning to Enroll In or Switch Medicare Drug Plans

	<b>Total</b>
	%
<b>Will Rely On Any Source (NET)</b>	<b>97</b>
Medicare’s website (www.Medicare.gov)	54
Health plan brochures, advertisements of websites	48
My pharmacist(s)	26
My doctor(s)	25
Friends or family	20
In-person information sessions at a local senior or community center	18
Some other source	26
None	1
Not sure	2

Note: Percentages may not add up to exactly 100% due to rounding.

# Health-Care Poll

Downloadable PDFs of Wall Street Journal Online/Harris Interactive Health-Care Polls are posted at [http://www.harrisinteractive.com/news/newsletters\\_wsj.asp](http://www.harrisinteractive.com/news/newsletters_wsj.asp).

## Methodology

Harris Interactive conducted this online survey within the United States between November 29 and December 3, 2007 among a national cross section of 571 adults ages 65 years and over. Figures for age, gender, race/ethnicity, education, income and region were weighted where necessary to align with population proportions. Propensity score weighting was also used to adjust for respondents' propensity to be online.

All sample surveys and polls, whether or not they use probability sampling, are subject to multiple sources of error which are most often not possible to quantify or estimate, including sampling error, coverage error, error associated with nonresponse, error associated with question wording and response options, and post-survey weighting and adjustments. Therefore, Harris Interactive avoids the words "margin of error" as they are misleading. All that can be calculated are different possible sampling errors with different probabilities for pure, unweighted, random samples with 100% response rates. These are only theoretical because no published polls come close to this ideal.

Respondents for this survey were selected from among those who have agreed to participate in Harris Interactive surveys. The data have been weighted to reflect the composition of the U.S. adult population. Because the sample is based on those who agreed to be invited to participate in the Harris Interactive online research panel, no estimates of theoretical sampling error can be calculated.

## About The Wall Street Journal Online

The Wall Street Journal Online at WSJ.com, published by Dow Jones & Company (NYSE: DJ; [www.dowjones.com](http://www.dowjones.com)), is the largest paid subscription news site on the Web. Launched in 1996, the Online Journal continues to attract quality subscribers who are at the top of their industries, with 989,000 subscribers world-wide as of Q3 2007. The Wall Street Journal Online network includes CareerJournal.com, OpinionJournal.com, RealEstateJournal.com and CollegeJournal.com.

The Online Journal provides in-depth business news and financial information 24 hours a day, seven days a week, with insight and analysis, including breaking business and technology news and analysis from around the world. It draws on the Dow Jones network of nearly 1,900 business and financial news staff – the largest network of business and financial journalists in the world.

In 2007, the Online Journal received the Webby Award for Best Website in the Financial Services category. In 2005, the Online Journal was awarded a Codie Award for Best Online News Service for the second consecutive year, and its Health Industry Edition was awarded Best Online Science or Technology Service for the third consecutive year.



# Health-Care Poll

## About Harris Interactive

Harris Interactive is one of the largest and fastest-growing market research firms in the world. The company provides innovative research, insights and strategic advice to help its clients make more confident decisions which lead to measurable and enduring improvements in performance. Harris Interactive is widely known for *The Harris Poll*, one of the longest running, independent opinion polls and for pioneering online market research methods. The company has built what it believes to be the world's largest panel of survey respondents, the Harris Poll Online. Harris Interactive serves clients worldwide through its North American, European and Asian offices, and through a global network of independent market research firms. More information about Harris Interactive may be obtained at [www.harrisinteractive.com](http://www.harrisinteractive.com).

To become a member of the Harris Poll Online and be invited to participate in online surveys, register at [www.harrispollonline.com](http://www.harrispollonline.com).

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