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Many Agree on Potential Benefits of Onsite Clinics in Major Retail Stores That Can Provide Basic Medical Services, Yet Large Numbers Are Also Skeptical

Among U.S. adults who have never used an onsite health clinic at a store for basic medical services, more say they would be unlikely to use one, while fewer, though substantial numbers, would

A new Wall Street Journal Online/Harris Interactive Health-Care Poll shows that while few (7%) U.S. adults have ever used an onsite health clinic in a pharmacy or retail chain, vast majorities of all adults agree that these retail-based clinics may be more convenient, accessible and perhaps would offer some services at a lower cost. Among those who have never gone to an in-store clinic for healthcare services, 59% say they would be not very or not at all likely to use such a clinic and 41% say they would be somewhat or very likely to use one for basic medical services. Many consumers express some concern about the quality of care they would receive at these clinics and from whom they would receive it.

Below are the results of the online survey of 2,245 U.S. adults conducted by Harris Interactive between Oct. 12 and 14, 2005 for The Wall Street Journal Online's Health Industry Edition.

Among those who have used an onsite health clinic in a pharmacy or retail chain, most report being somewhat or very satisfied with various aspects of their experience. Clinic users were most satisfied with its convenience (92% say they were somewhat/very satisfied), followed by the quality of care (89%), having qualified staff to provide the care (88%) and the cost (80%).

Despite the current low incidence of onsite clinic use at retail chains or pharmacies (possibly due to the low incidence of availability of this service), large majorities of all adults see the convenience and affordability benefits these sites offer.

- More than four in five (83%) adults strongly or somewhat agree that onsite health clinics at retail stores can provide basic medical services to people at times when doctors' offices are closed, like evenings and weekends.
- Seventy-eight percent (78%) strongly or somewhat agree that onsite health clinics provide busy people with a fast and easy way to get basic medical services.
- Three-quarters (75%) of adults strongly or somewhat agree that onsite health clinics can provide low-cost basic services to people who otherwise might not be able to afford care.

However, large majorities have concerns about these clinics and do not see them as purely helpful to consumers.

- Three in four (75%) adults strongly or somewhat agree that they would be worried that serious medical problems might not be accurately diagnosed by someone working in an onsite health clinic in a retail store or pharmacy.

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- Seventy-one percent (71%) strongly or somewhat agree that they would be worried about the qualifications of the staff that provides care in a health clinic not run by medical doctors.
- About two-thirds (66%) strongly or somewhat agree that onsite health clinics are just another way for big companies to make more money.

“As consumers’ out-of-pocket costs for healthcare services continue to rise, major retail chains are stepping in to provide basic medical services via retail-based clinics,” says Katherine Binns, president of the Healthcare and Public Relations Research Practice at Harris Interactive. “While only a small number of adults have ever used these clinics, these survey findings suggest that this approach to providing convenient and low-cost basic care might be appealing and helpful to many consumers.”

TABLE 1
Perceptions of Retail-Based Health Clinics

“Major pharmacy and retail chains like CVS, Wal-Mart® and Target®, have opened health clinics in their stores. These clinics provide routine medical services like strep-throat tests, flu shots and sports physicals, without an appointment, for fees that range from \$25 to \$60 per visit. Based on what you know or have heard, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?”

Base: All Adults

		Agree Strongly/ Somewhat (NET)	Agree Strongly	Agree Somewhat	Disagree Strongly/ Somewhat (NET)	Disagree Strongly	Disagree Somewhat	Not Sure
Onsite health clinics at retail stores provide busy people with a fast and easy way to get basic medical services.	%	78	29	48	12	8	4	10
I would be worried about the qualifications of the staff that provides care in a health clinic not run by medical doctors.	%	71	35	36	21	16	5	8
Onsite health clinics at retail stores can provide low-cost basic services to people who otherwise might not be able to afford care.	%	75	33	41	13	10	4	12
Onsite health clinics are just another way for big companies to make more money.	%	66	29	38	24	18	6	10
Onsite health clinics at retail stores can provide basic medical services to people at times when doctors’ offices are closed, like evenings and weekends.	%	83	38	45	8	5	3	9
I would be worried that serious medical problems might not be accurately diagnosed by someone working in an onsite health clinic in a retail store or pharmacy.	%	75	35	40	16	13	4	9

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TABLE 2

Experience With Retail-Based Health Clinics

"Have you or has someone in your immediate family ever used an onsite health clinic in a pharmacy or retail chain like CVS, Wal-Mart or Target?"

Base: All Adults

	Total
	%
Yes, have used an onsite health clinic	7
No, have not used an onsite health clinic	93

TABLE 3

Satisfaction With Retail-Based Health Clinics

"Overall, how satisfied were you with your or your family member's experience using an onsite health clinic in a pharmacy or retail chain on the following items?"

Base: Used an onsite health clinic (n=131)

		Very/ Somewhat Satisfied (NET)	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Not At All/ Not Very Satisfied (NET)	Not Very Satisfied	Not At All Satisfied	Not Sure
Quality of care	%	89	46	44	6	5	1	4
Cost	%	80	42	37	12	12	*	8
Convenience	%	92	61	31	2	2	-	6
Having qualified staff to provide care	%	88	50	38	7	7	*	5

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

*Less than 0.5%.

TABLE 4

Interest In Retail-Based Health Clinics

"How likely would you be to use an onsite health clinic in a pharmacy or retail chain if you or someone in your immediate family needed basic medical services like a flu shot, strep-throat test or sports physical?"

Base: Have not used an onsite health clinic (n=2,114)

	%
Very/Somewhat Likely (NET)	41
Very likely	10
Somewhat likely	31
Not Very/Not At All Likely (NET)	59
Not very likely	32
Not at all likely	27

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Downloadable PDFs of Wall Street Journal Online/Harris Interactive Health-Care Polls are posted at http://www.harrisinteractive.com/news/newsletters_wsj.asp.

Methodology

Harris Interactive conducted this online survey within the United States between Oct. 12 and 14, 2005 among a nationwide cross section of 2,245 adults, ages 18 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.

In theory, with probability samples of this size, one can say with 95% certainty that the overall results have a sampling error of plus or minus 3 percentage points of what they would be if the entire U.S. adult population had been polled with complete accuracy. Sampling error for the samples of those who have used an onsite health clinic (131) and those who have not used an onsite health clinic (2,114) is higher and varies. Unfortunately, there are several other possible sources of error in polls or surveys that are probably more serious than theoretical calculations of sampling error. This includes refusals to be interviewed (nonresponse), question wording and question order, and weighting. It is impossible to quantify the errors that may result from these factors. This online sample is not a probability sample.

These statements conform to the principles of disclosure of the National Council on Public Polls.

About the Survey

The Wall Street Journal Online/Harris Interactive Health-Care Poll is an exclusive poll that is published in the award-winning Health Industry Edition of The Wall Street Journal Online at www.wsj.com/health.

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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. In 2004, the Online Journal received an EPpy Award for Best Internet Business Service over 1 million monthly visitors.

The Wall Street Journal Online network includes CareerJournal.com, OpinionJournal.com, StartupJournal.com, RealEstateJournal.com and CollegeJournal.com.

About Harris Interactive

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