

Survivor Views: Medicare Prescription Payment Plan January 2024



Overview:

The American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN) empowers advocates across the country to make their voices heard and influence evidence-based public policy change, as well as legislative and regulatory solutions that will reduce the cancer burden. As part of this effort, ACS CAN deploys surveys to better understand cancer patient and survivor experiences and perspectives, through our [Survivor Views](#) research panel. The panel is a group of cancer patients and survivors who respond to regular surveys and provide important insights to support ACS CAN’s advocacy work at all levels of government.

Fielded January 3-22, 2024, our latest survey explores how Medicare beneficiaries get information and updates about their policies. The web-based survey was conducted among 1,524 cancer patients and survivors nationwide who have been diagnosed with or treated for cancer in the last seven years, with a subset of 249 patients and survivors who are currently enrolled in Medicare.

Key Findings:

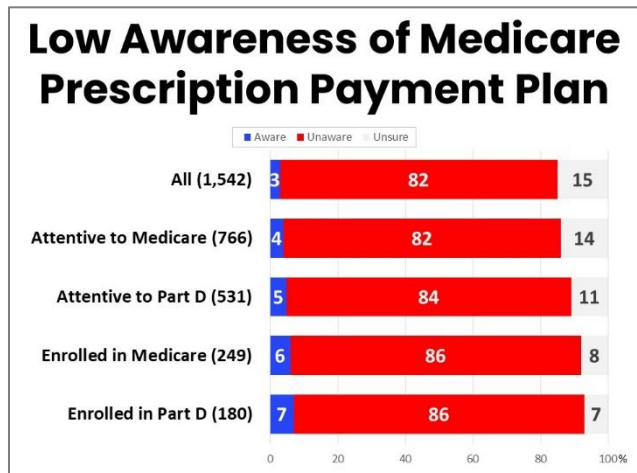
- Awareness of the Medicare Prescription Payment Plan is currently very low with just 3% of cancer patients and survivors aware, and only 6% of Medicare subscribers and 7% of those enrolled in Part D coverage reporting having heard about it.
- Most of those aware of the plan heard about it from the news media or an unspecified internet source (36%). Nine percent heard about it from CMS/Medicare and 4% from an insurance provider or professional.
- Medicare & You is the most relied-upon source of information about Medicare (23%), followed by health plan providers (20%) and Medicare EOB forms (18%).
- Direct mail is the preferred mode for communicating changes to Medicare (41%) while 34% prefer email. Just 13% prefer to find information about changes to Medicare on a website.

Detailed Survey Findings:

Most Unaware of Medicare Prescription Payment Plan, Including Those Currently Enrolled in Part D

Forty percent of cancer patients and survivors surveyed consider Medicare to be their primary health care coverage, and 74% say they pay attention to Medicare because they are either a caregiver for someone who is enrolled or expect to be enrolled themselves. Just 26% say they pay little or no attention to Medicare. Fifty-eight percent say they pay attention to Part D coverage, which provides prescription drug benefits, while 42% report having paid little to no attention to Part D.

Despite this relatively high reported engagement however, awareness of upcoming changes to Part D coverage is in the low single digits. Only 3% of cancer patients and survivors say they have heard about the Medicare Prescription Payment Plan, which was defined in the survey as “a new approach to paying the patient’s share of prescription drug costs under Part D which will



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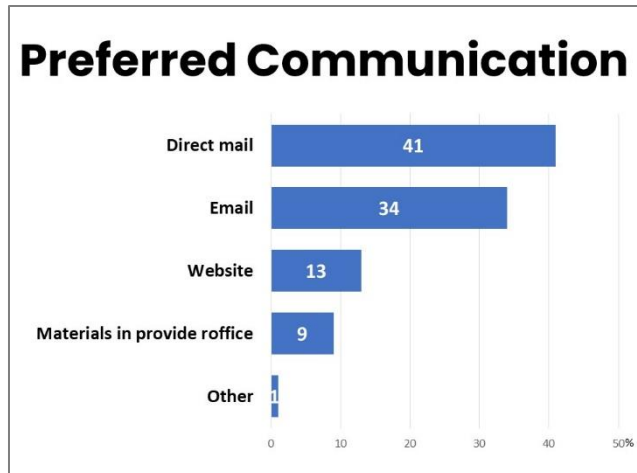
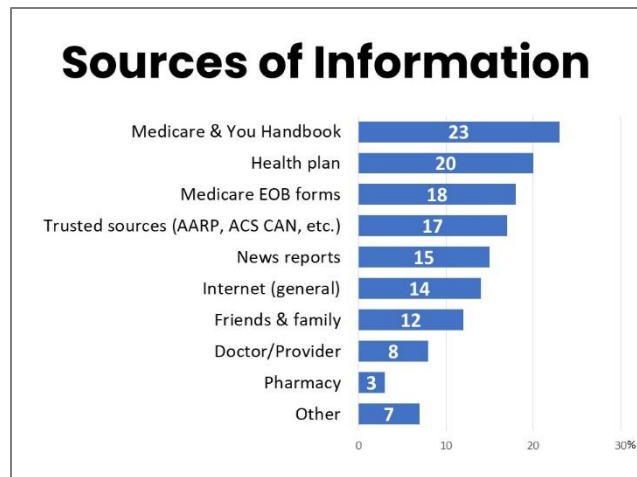
allow those costs to be spread over an entire year instead of front-loading the costs at the start of the year until an out-of-pocket cap is met, sometimes been referred to as smoothing.” Based on this definition, 82% of cancer patients say they haven’t heard about this. Awareness remains very low among those who report paying attention to Medicare (4% aware) and those who report paying attention to Part D (5%), and isn’t much higher among those currently enrolled in Medicare (N=249) at 6%, or among those enrolled in Part D coverage (N=180) at 7%.

Of the 3% (N=45) aware of the Medicare Prescription Payment Plan, many (N=35) were able to cite where they heard about it. The most frequently cited was a general source such as the news, media, or unspecified internet sources (mentioned by 36% of those aware of plan), followed by 9% who reported hearing about it from AARP. Seven percent say they heard about this from CMS/Medicare, the same as those who heard about it from friends and family (7%). Insurance professionals (4%), unspecified advocacy groups (4%), and employers (2%) were also mentioned as sources of this information.

Medicare & You Handbook and Direct Mail Are Most Important Sources of Information on Medicare

When it comes to information about changes to Medicare benefits, the Medicare & You handbook is the source most relied upon by those paying attention to Medicare, with close to a quarter (23%) saying this is where they usually get this information. One-in-five (20%) say their health plan is where they usually get information about changes to Medicare benefits, followed by Medicare explanation of benefits (EOB) forms (18%), and trusted sources such as AARP and ACS CAN (17%). Fifteen percent usually get this information from news reports, 14% from the internet, and 12% from friends and family. Eight percent say they usually get the information from their doctor or provider and 3% from their pharmacy.

Direct mail is the preferred mode of communicating changes to Medicare benefits (41%), but electronic communications are also important. Over one-third (34%) prefer to receive this information via email while just 13% would prefer to get the information on a website. Nine percent would rather get the information from materials available in their provider’s office or pharmacy.



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Methodology:

ACS CAN's [Survivor Views](#) research initiative was designed to support the organization's efforts to end suffering and death from cancer through public policy advocacy. Data provided by cancer patients and survivors as part of this project allows for a greater understanding of their experiences and opinions on cancer-related issues and gives voice to cancer patients and survivors in the shaping and advocating of public policies that help prevent, detect, and treat cancer and promote a more positive quality of life for those impacted.

To ensure the protection of all participants in this initiative all research protocols, questionnaires, and communications are reviewed by the Morehouse School of Medicine Institutional Review Board.

The survey population is comprised of individuals who meet the following criteria:

- Diagnosed with and/or treated for cancer within the last seven years
- Over the age of 18 (parents of childhood cancer survivors were invited to participate on behalf of their minor children)
- Reside in the US or US territories

Potential Survivor Views participants are invited to participate through email invitations, social media promotion, and partner group outreach. Those who agree to participate after reviewing the informed consent information complete a brief survey including demographic and cancer history information to inform analysis as well as topical questions as discussed in this document. The data were collected between January 3-22, 2024. A total of 1,542 participants responded to the survey. Differences reported between groups are tested for statistical significance at a 95% confidence interval.

About ACS CAN

The American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN) advocates for evidence-based public policies to reduce the cancer burden for everyone. We engage our volunteers across the country to make their voices heard by policymakers at every level of government. We believe everyone should have a fair and just opportunity to prevent, detect, treat, and survive cancer. Since 2001, as the American Cancer Society's nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy affiliate, ACS CAN has successfully advocated for billions of dollars in cancer research funding, expanded access to quality affordable health care, and advanced proven tobacco control measures. We stand with our volunteers, working to make cancer a top priority for policymakers in cities, states and our nation's capital. Join the fight by visiting www.fightcancer.org.