

## Concerns about Coverage and Costs in Medicare: A Survey of Medicare Beneficiaries

This report presents findings from eHealth's August 2018 survey of Medicare beneficiaries age 65 and older who purchased a Medicare insurance product through one of eHealth's websites. A total of 1,020 Medicare beneficiaries participated in the survey.

Key findings:

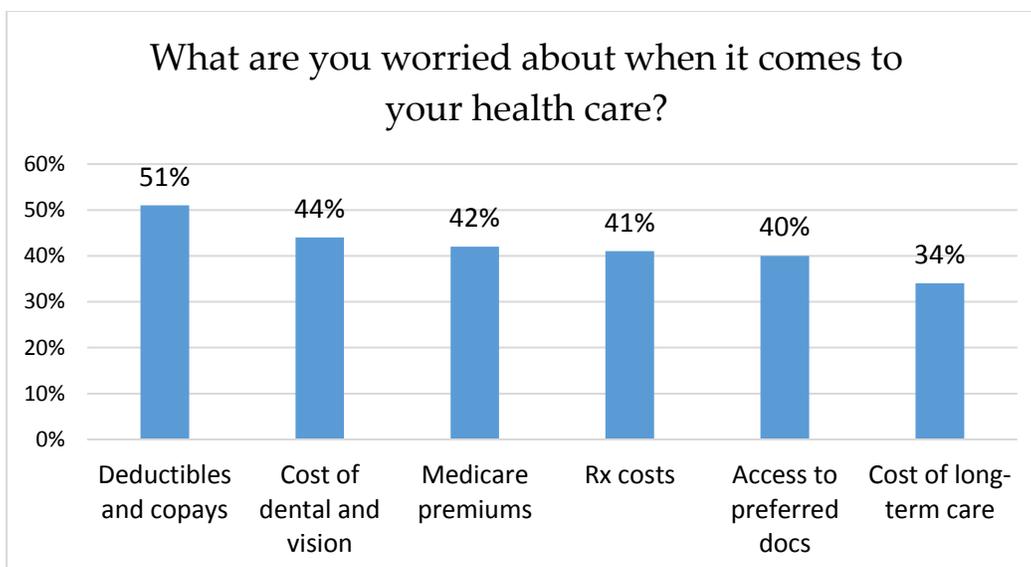
- **Worries about costs may keep beneficiaries from getting needed care:** Nearly four-in-ten (37 percent) say they have skipped or delayed medical care in order to save money. Half (51 percent) of respondents worry about their ability to afford their deductibles and copayments under Medicare.
- **Women feel less secure in their coverage than men:** Women are significantly more concerned than men that they won't be able to afford their Medicare coverage in the future (47 percent vs. 38 percent).
- **Higher and lower-income beneficiaries have different concerns:** People with incomes greater than \$50,000 per year are most likely to be concerned about access to their preferred doctors (47 percent of higher-income respondents), while lower-income respondents are most concerned about paying for deductibles and copayments (56 percent of lower-income respondents).

Detailed topline results are provided below and breakouts by age, income level, and gender are provided where relevant.

### What Medicare Beneficiaries Worry about Most When it Comes to Health Care

When asked what they worry about most when it comes to their health care, approximately half of respondents (51 percent) cited the cost of deductibles and copayments. The cost of dental and vision coverage was a major concern for 44 percent of respondents, while 42 percent expressed concern about the cost of their Medicare insurance premiums. Forty-one percent are worried about the cost of prescription drugs. Forty percent of respondents expressed concern about access to their preferred doctors and hospitals, and 34 percent worry about paying for long-term care.

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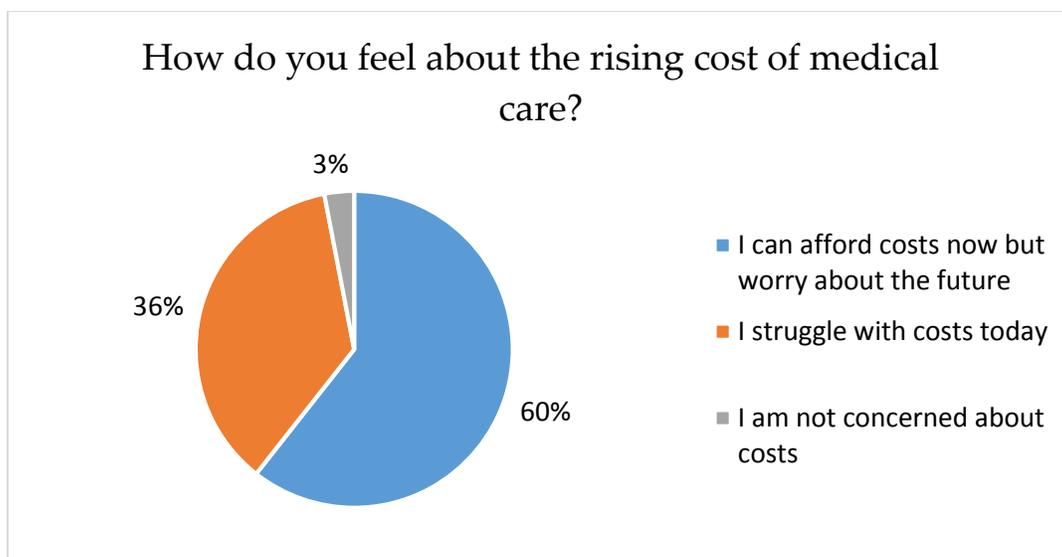


- Lower-income respondents worry about out-of-pocket costs while higher-income respondents worry about doctor access: Respondents with an income of \$50,000 per year or less were significantly more likely to worry about the cost of deductibles and copayments than those earning more than \$50,000 annually (56 percent vs. 42 percent). Those with annual earnings above \$50,000 are more likely to worry about access to their preferred medical providers than those with lower incomes (47 percent vs. 35 percent).
- The cost of long-term care is the top concern among respondents age 80 and older (43 percent).

#### Concerns over Medical Costs Now vs. Future Costs

Sixty percent of respondents said they are able to afford their medical care now but worry about needing expensive care in the future. More than a third (36 percent) said they are concerned about their ability to pay their medical costs now since costs are already a strain on their budget. Only 3 percent said they are not worried about rising health care costs.

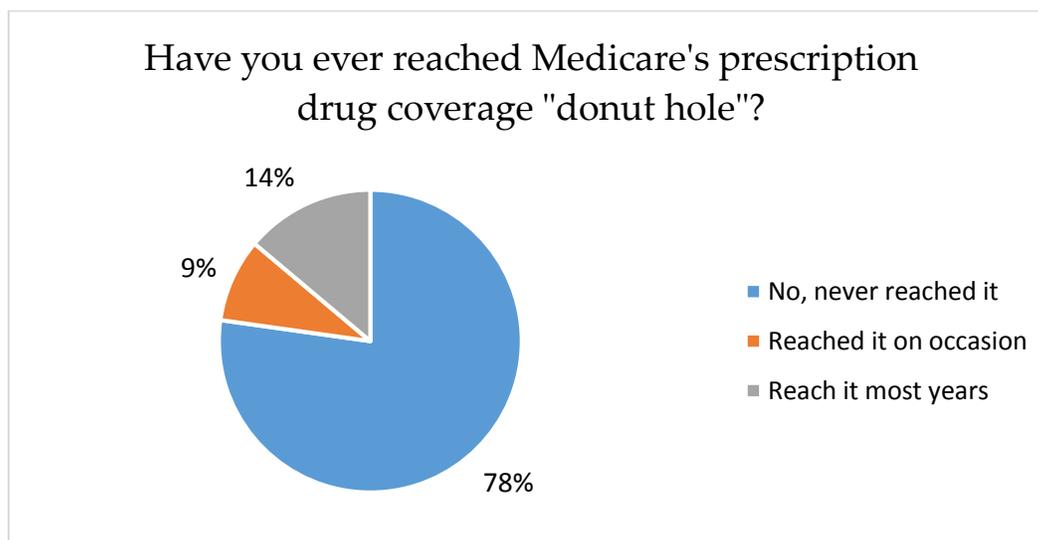
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- Higher-income respondents less concerned about costs:** Among respondents with an income of \$50,000 per year or less, 50 percent said they can afford their medical care now but worry about their ability to do so in the future, while 47 percent are already experiencing a financial strain in covering their medical costs. By comparison, among those with incomes greater than \$50,000 per year, 77 percent can afford medical expenses now; 19 percent say their medical costs are a strain on them today.

**Prescription Drugs and the Donut Hole**

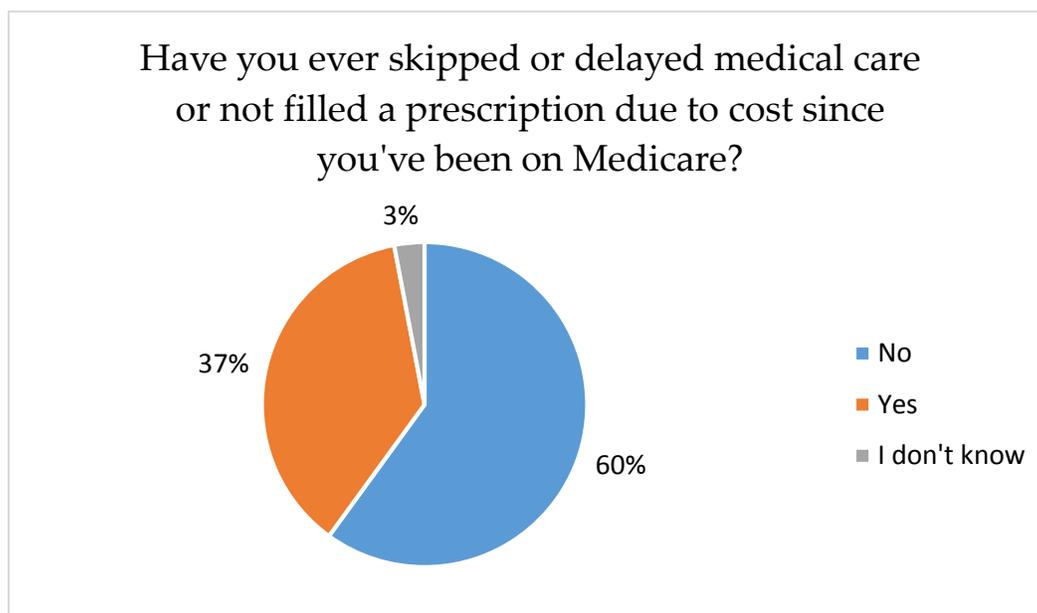
Most respondents (78 percent) said they have never reached the Medicare prescription drug coverage gap known as the “donut hole.” Fourteen percent said they reach the donut hole most years, while an additional 9 percent said they have reached the donut hole only on occasion in the past.



- Older respondents more than twice as likely to reach the donut hole most years: Nearly a quarter (24 percent) of respondents age 80 and older said they reach the donut hole most years, compared to 10 percent of those between ages 65 and 70.

### Skipping Medical Care or Prescriptions Due to Costs

Almost four-in-ten (37 percent) respondents said they have skipped or delayed medical care or not filled a prescription due to the cost. Sixty percent have not done so.

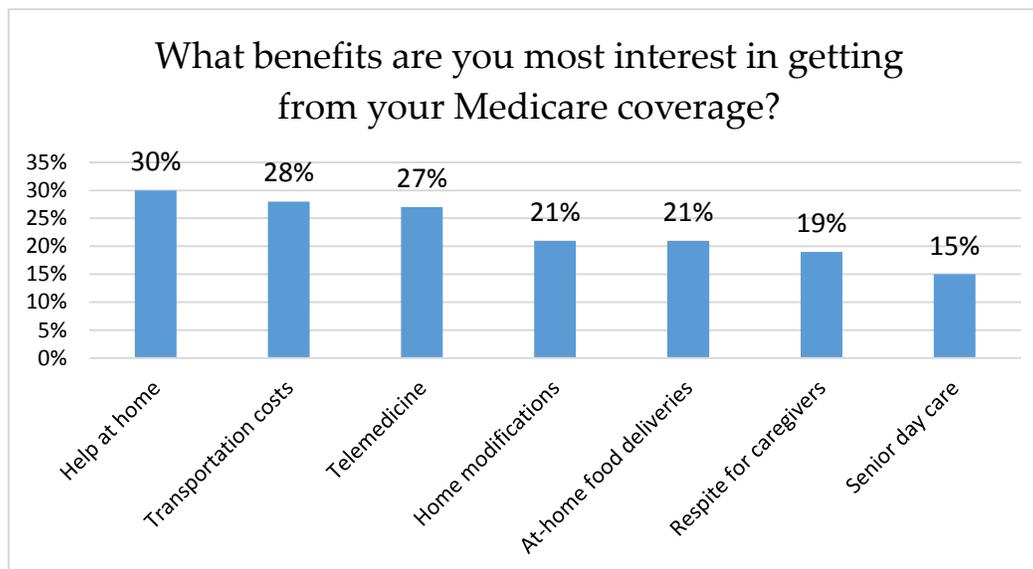


- Both brand name and generic are often unaffordable: Among those who said they have not filled a prescription due to cost, 45 percent said that both the brand name and the generic medications were too expensive.
- Older respondents were less likely to have skipped or delayed care than younger Medicare enrollees: 23 percent of people age 80 and older said they have skipped or delayed care or not filled a prescription due to cost, compared to 40 percent of people between the ages of 71 and 79.

### Benefits Medicare Enrollees Want Their Plans to Include

When asked what benefits they would most like to see in a Medicare plan, 30 percent of respondents identified assistance at home with cooking, cleaning, and getting around to run errands. Twenty-eight percent expressed interest in transportation reimbursement, while 27 percent said they wanted telemedicine benefits (providing them access to doctors and medical

care by phone or video). Twenty-one percent expressed interest in both coverage for home modifications and at-home food delivery.

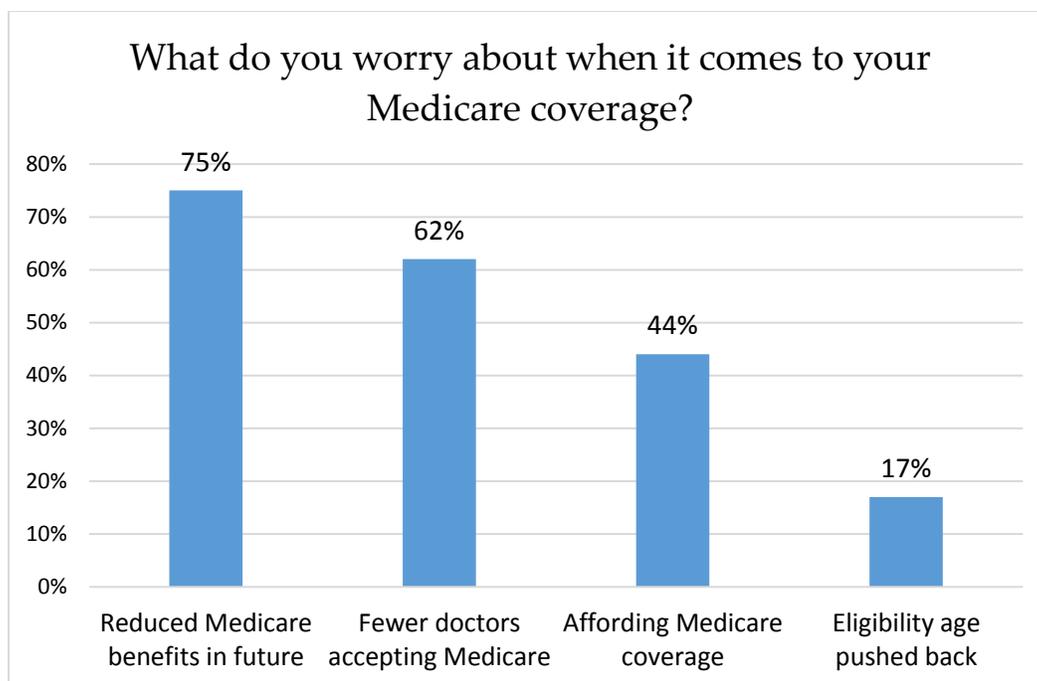


- Domestic benefits more popular with women: Women were more interested in benefits that provide assistance at home with cooking, cleaning and running errands than were men (36 percent vs. 18 percent).
- Telemedicine more interesting to younger respondents: Younger respondents between the ages of 65 and 70 report being most interested in telemedicine benefits (31 percent).
- At-home food delivery less popular among oldest respondents: Twenty-one percent of people between the ages of 65 and 79 said they are interested in at-home food delivery compared with 18 percent of those age 80 and older.

### Concerns about Future Changes to Medicare Coverage

When asked what they worried about with regard to their Medicare coverage, 75 percent cited the possibility of Medicare benefits being reduced, while 62 percent expressed concern that fewer doctors will continue to accept Medicare in the future. Forty-four percent said they worry that they will be unable to afford their Medicare coverage in the future. Seventeen percent are worried that the Medicare eligibility age will be pushed back for future enrollees.

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- Women worry about future costs more than men: Women are significantly more concerned than men that they won't be able to afford their Medicare coverage in the future (47 percent vs. 38 percent).
- Higher incomes mean more security about future costs: People with incomes of \$50,000 or less were also significantly more worried they might not be able to afford Medicare coverage in the future than those with incomes above \$50,000 (53 percent vs. 30 percent).

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**Methodology Note:** eHealth's survey was conducted by email on a voluntary basis. Responses were analyzed anonymously. Only eHealth customers who had purchased Medicare insurance products were invited to participate. The survey was conducted in August 2019 and a total of 1,020 responses were collected. Only responses from persons age 65 and older are presented in this report. Findings are rounded to the nearest full percentage point and may add to slightly more or less than 100%.

### About eHealth

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