



# Medicare Annual Enrollment Period Consumer Insights

*An eHealth Survey*

October 2022

## **Introduction**

Medicare's Annual Enrollment Period (AEP) began on October 15 and many seniors are already reviewing their coverage options – but not enough of them. As our new survey of over 1,000 Medicare beneficiaries shows, significant numbers are poorly educated about AEP or unaware of changes to their current plan that may take effect next year.

Most are enrolled in the same Medicare coverage they had three years ago, though about half admit their prescription drugs needs, the doctors they see, and their personal finances have changed in the past year – good reasons to review new plan options.

Inflation is also a big concern for seniors, many of whom live on a fixed income. Social Security payments are scheduled to increase in 2023, and Part B premiums are going down, but that may not be enough to keep out-of-pocket costs affordable for things like prescription drugs and over-the-counter medical supplies.

The insights provided by our new survey illustrate why eHealth recommends all Medicare beneficiaries take stock of their evolving needs and review their coverage options every AEP.

## Highlights

**Many Medicare beneficiaries may be overdue to reconsider their coverage options:** 53% have had the same Medicare coverage for three or more years; 45% say they have not reviewed their coverage options in the past year.

**About half experienced changes in the past year that may suggest a new plan is in order:** 46% say their prescription drug needs changed in the past year; 51% began seeing new medical providers; 46% say their personal financial situation has changed.

**Significant numbers are uneducated about enrollment opportunities and plan changes:** 36% don't know that Medicare's Annual Enrollment Period is currently under way; 40% are unaware of any potential changes to their Medicare plan benefits for 2023.

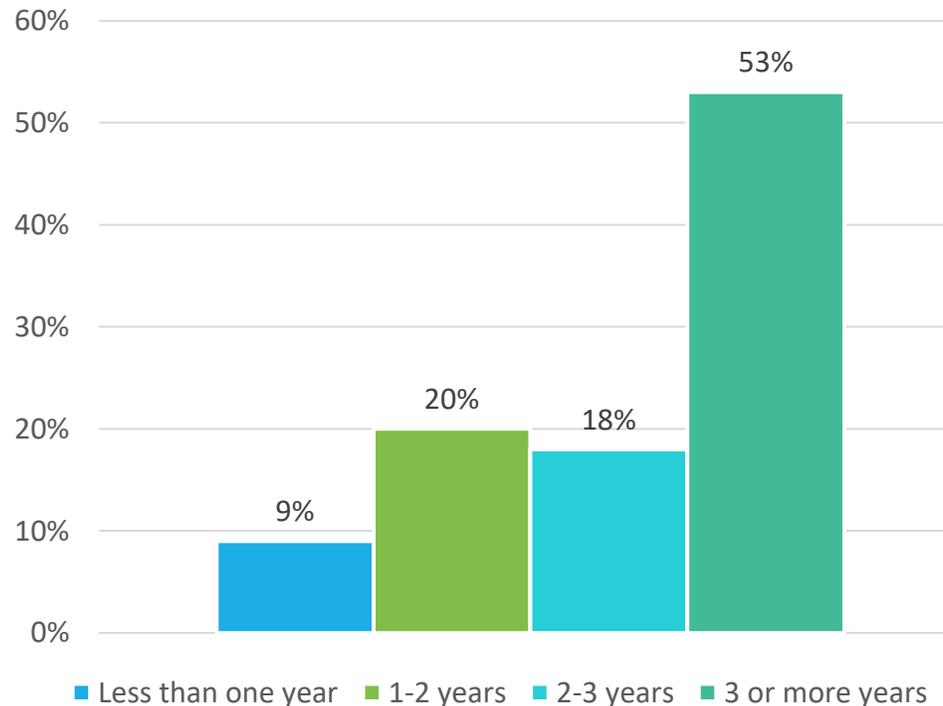
**Inflation is a big concern for the long-term affordability of their coverage:** 75% say they are worried about inflation's impact on health care costs; fewer than half could afford it if their out-of-pocket costs increased more than 5%.

## How Often Medicare Beneficiaries Review or Change Plans

Half are enrolled today in the same Medicare coverage they had three or more years ago

- 53% have had the same Medicare coverage for three or more years.
- 18% have had the same coverage for two to three years.
- 20% have had the same coverage for one to two years.
- 9% have had their current coverage for less than one year.

“How long have you had your current Medicare coverage?”



Many haven't reviewed their coverage options in more than a year

- 45% say they have not reviewed their Medicare options in the past year.

A third of Medicare beneficiaries are unlikely to review their coverage options

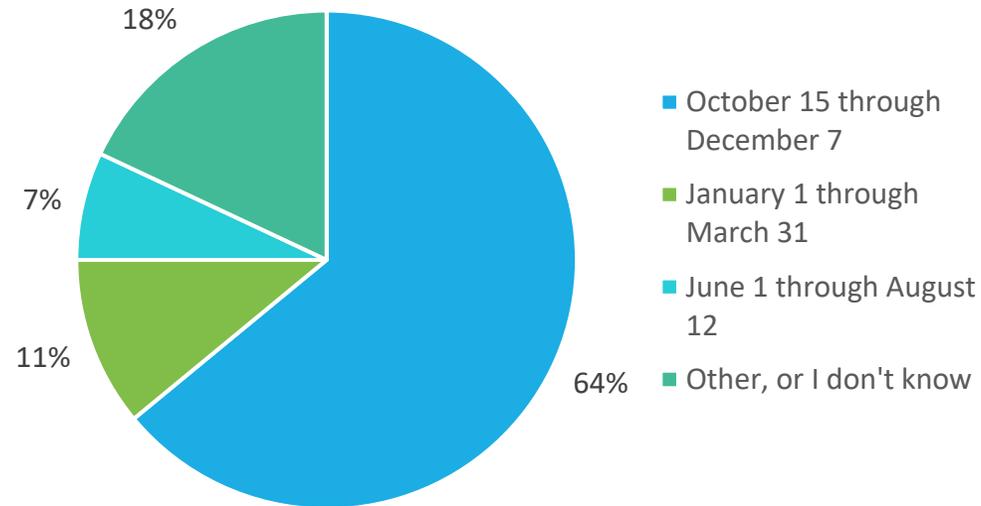
- 67% of respondents say they are likely to review their coverage options for 2023, but 33% say they are not likely to do so.

## Many Are Uneducated About AEP & Plan Changes

More than a third of Medicare beneficiaries don't know the Annual Enrollment Period is under way

- 64% know, correctly, that Medicare's AEP runs from October 15 through December 7.
- 11% think it occurs from January 1 through March 31.
- 7% think it occurs from June 1 through August 12.
- 18% think it occurs at some other time, or don't know when it occurs.

“To the best of your knowledge, when does Medicare’s Annual Enrollment Period (AEP) Occur?”



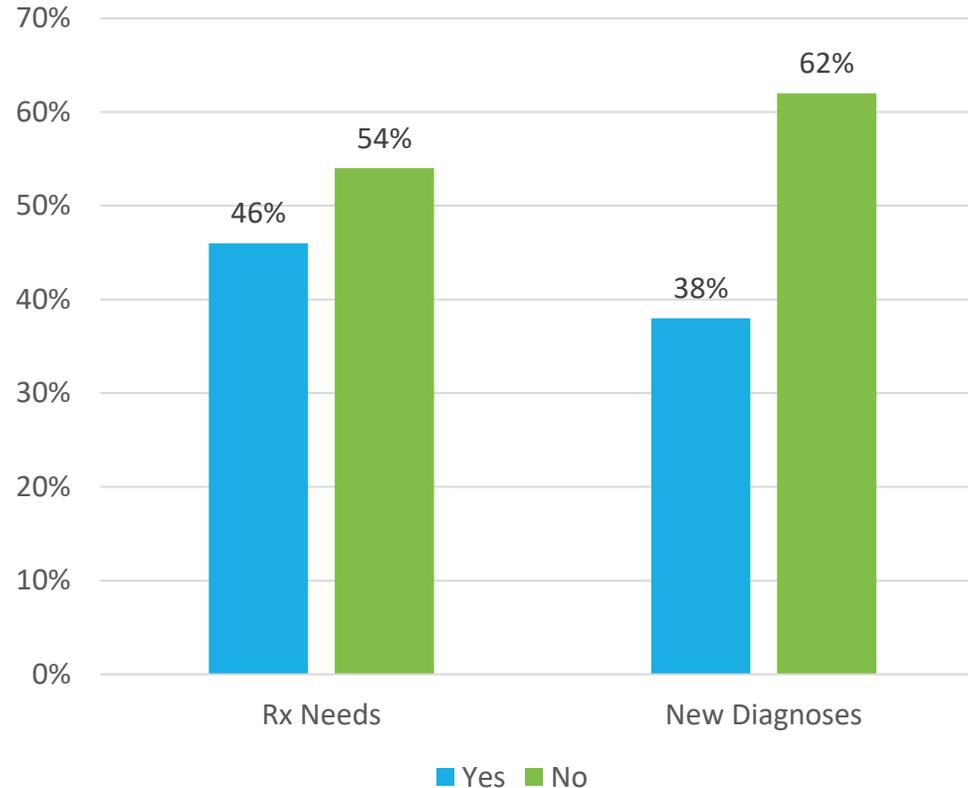
Four in 10 don't know if benefits are changing next year under their current plan

- 40% of those enrolled in Medicare Advantage, Medicare Part D plans, or Medicare Supplement plans say they are unaware if benefits under their plan may be changing in 2023.

## Life Changes that May Alter Coverage Needs

Nearly half experienced changes to their prescription drug needs in the past year

- 46% say they were prescribed new medications in the past year, suggesting a change of plan may be in order.
- 54% were not prescribed new medications in the past year.



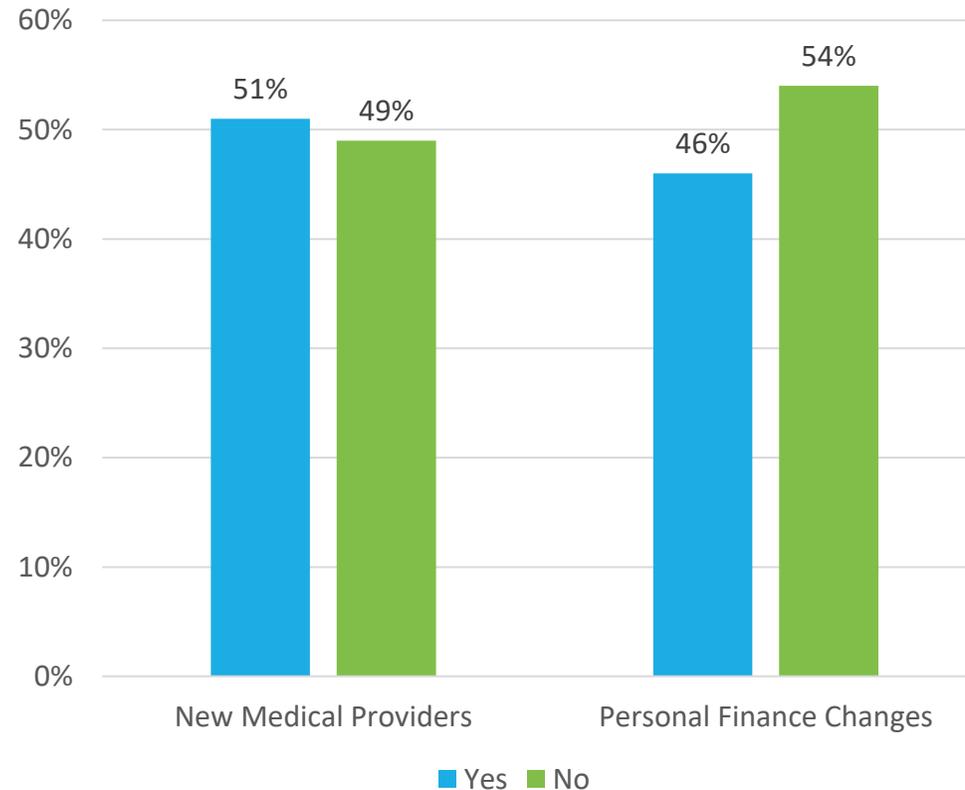
More than a third received new medical diagnoses in the past year

- 38% were diagnosed with new medical conditions in the past year, suggesting a change of plan may be in order.
- 62% received no new medical diagnoses in the past year.

## Life Changes that May Alter Coverage Needs (cont.)

More than half started seeing new medical providers in the past year

- 51% say they started seeing new doctors or visiting new clinics, hospitals, or pharmacies in the past year - suggesting a change of plan may be in order.
- 49% are seeing the same medical providers they were a year ago.



Nearly half experiences changes to their personal finances in the past year

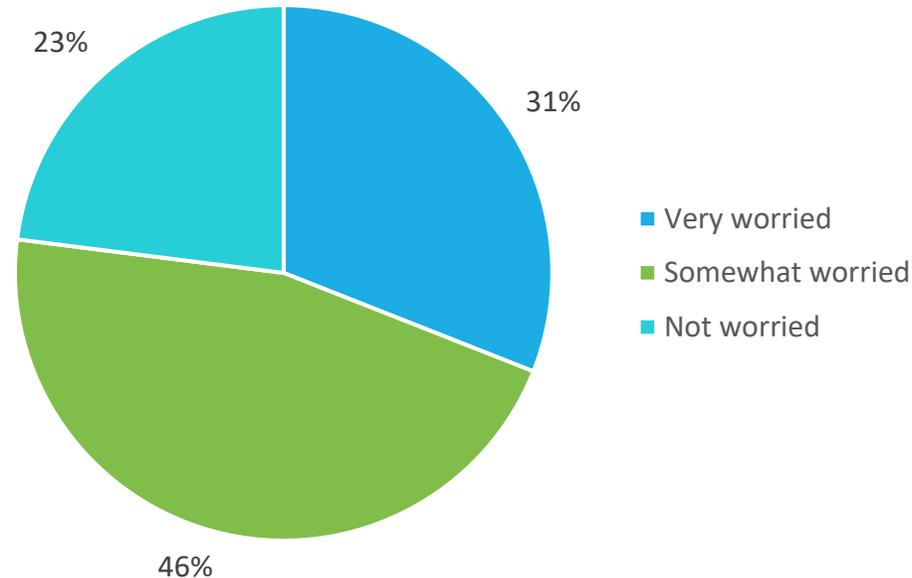
- 46% say they have experienced changes to their personal finances in the past year, suggesting a change of plan may be in order.
- 54% say their personal finances are unchanged from a year ago.

## Inflation-Driven Health Care Costs Are a Big Concern

Inflation looms as a challenge for more than 75% of Medicare beneficiaries

- 31% say they are “very worried” about inflation’s impact on their health care costs.
- 46% are “somewhat worried.”
- 23% are not worried.

“How worried are you about the impact of inflation on your health care costs?”



With inflation on the rise, increased out-of-pocket costs would be a problem for most beneficiaries

- 35% say they can’t afford to pay anything more than they already do.
- 24% can afford no more than a 5% increase in health care costs.
- An additional 24% can afford no more than 5-10% in higher costs.

## **Methodology Note**

The findings presented in this report are based on a voluntary survey of Medicare beneficiaries conducted through a third-party survey tool in October of 2022, after the beginning of Medicare's Annual Enrollment Period. A total of 1,013 responses were collected. Respondents voluntarily identified themselves as enrolled in either traditional Medicare Parts A and B, Medicare Advantage, Medicare Supplement, or Medicare Part D prescription drug plans, or a combination of these. Percentages have been rounded to the nearest full percentage point and may add to slightly more or less than 100% due to rounding.

## About eHealth

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