



Medicare Annual Enrollment Period Consumer Insights

October 2023

Introduction

During Medicare's Annual Enrollment Period (AEP) beneficiaries are inundated with TV ads, mailers, and sales pitches. But for those who take advantage of it, AEP offers the best opportunity each year to review their coverage choices and find the best Medicare Advantage or Part D prescription drug plan for their personal needs.

There are several reasons why a change of plan may be in order. This year's best plan choice isn't necessarily next year's best choice. Benefits and costs can change one year to the next and, as reflected in our report, a significant share of beneficiaries have new doctors, new diagnoses, and new prescription drugs today that they didn't have a year ago.

Most Medicare beneficiaries are worried about inflation's impact on their health care costs, and changes in their personal finances can also drive some to reconsider their options.

Based on a survey of more than 5,000 beneficiaries, eHealth's latest original research sheds light on all these factors and more as we approach Medicare's Annual Enrollment Period for 2024 coverage.

Highlights

Most Medicare beneficiaries intend to review their coverage options this Annual Enrollment Period:

- 76% intend to review their options this AEP.
- 50% of Medicare Advantage enrollees and 64% of Part D plan enrollees have been on their current plan two years or longer, suggesting it may no longer be optimal.

Many have experienced life changes this year that may suggest a new plan is in order:

- 47% began visiting new medical care providers in the past year.
- 41% began using a new prescription drug.
- 28% received a new medical diagnosis.

Personal finances may also drive many to review their options:

- 41% say their personal financial situation has changed in the past year.
- 87% say they are worried about the impact of inflation on their medical costs.

Many Medicare beneficiaries are open to rethinking the way AEP works:

- Beneficiaries are twice as likely to think the way AEP works should change (32%) than to think it should stay as it is (16%).
- Among those who feel it should change, 62% would support an Annual Enrollment Period timed to coincide with their birth month rather than a single 8-week period intended to serve the needs of 65+ million beneficiaries.

Medicare beneficiaries who use eHealth are more informed and confident about finding the right plan:

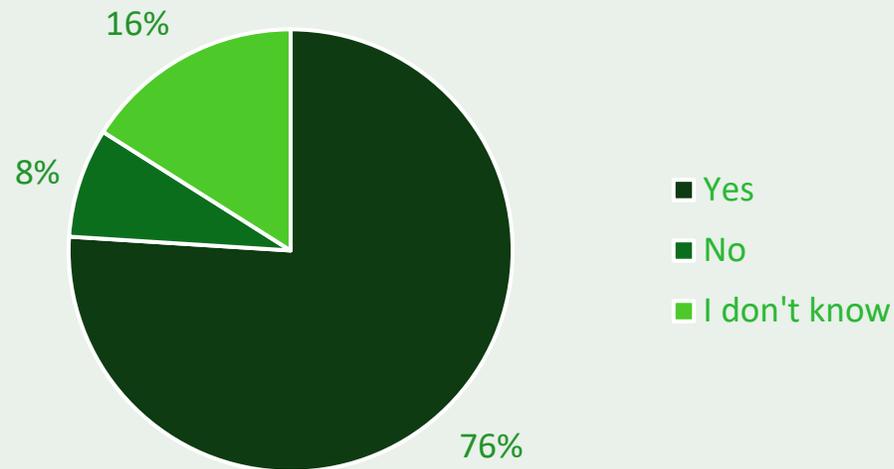
- 72% of eHealth customers know when AEP occurs, compared to 47% of beneficiaries in the general population.
- 55% of eHealth customers feel “very confident” they can find the right plan for their needs, compared to 34% of Medicare beneficiaries in the general population.

Medicare Beneficiaries' Intentions for AEP

Most Medicare beneficiaries intend to review their coverage options for 2024 during AEP

- 76% intend to review their coverage options during AEP.
- 8% do not intend to review their options this year.
- 16% are unsure.

“Do you intend to review your Medicare coverage options during the Annual Enrollment Period (AEP)?”



Curiosity and contentment drive decisions whether or not to take advantage of AEP

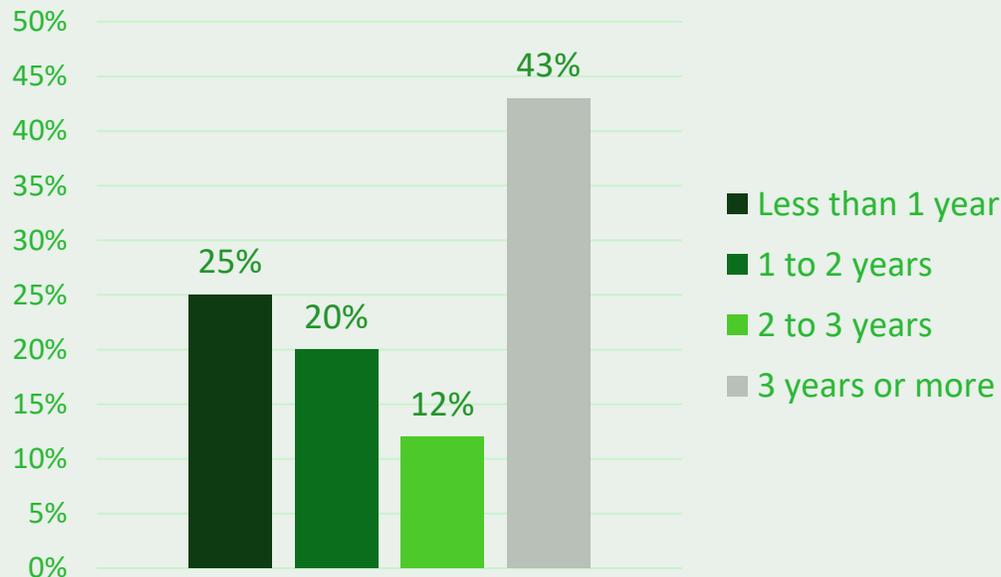
- 72% of those who plan to review their options during AEP say they want to see if there are any better choices available for them this year.
- Among those who do not intend to review their options during AEP, 81% say they are happy with their current plan.

Most Have Been in Their Current Plan Multiple Years

Four in 10 have been covered by the same plan three years or longer

- 25% have been enrolled in their current Medicare plan for less than one year.
- 20% have been enrolled in their current plan between one and two years.
- 12% have been enrolled in their current plan between two and three years.
- 43% have been enrolled in their current plan for three years or longer.

“How long have you been enrolled in your current Medicare plan?”



Most Medicare Advantage and Part D plan enrollees have been on their current plan two years or longer

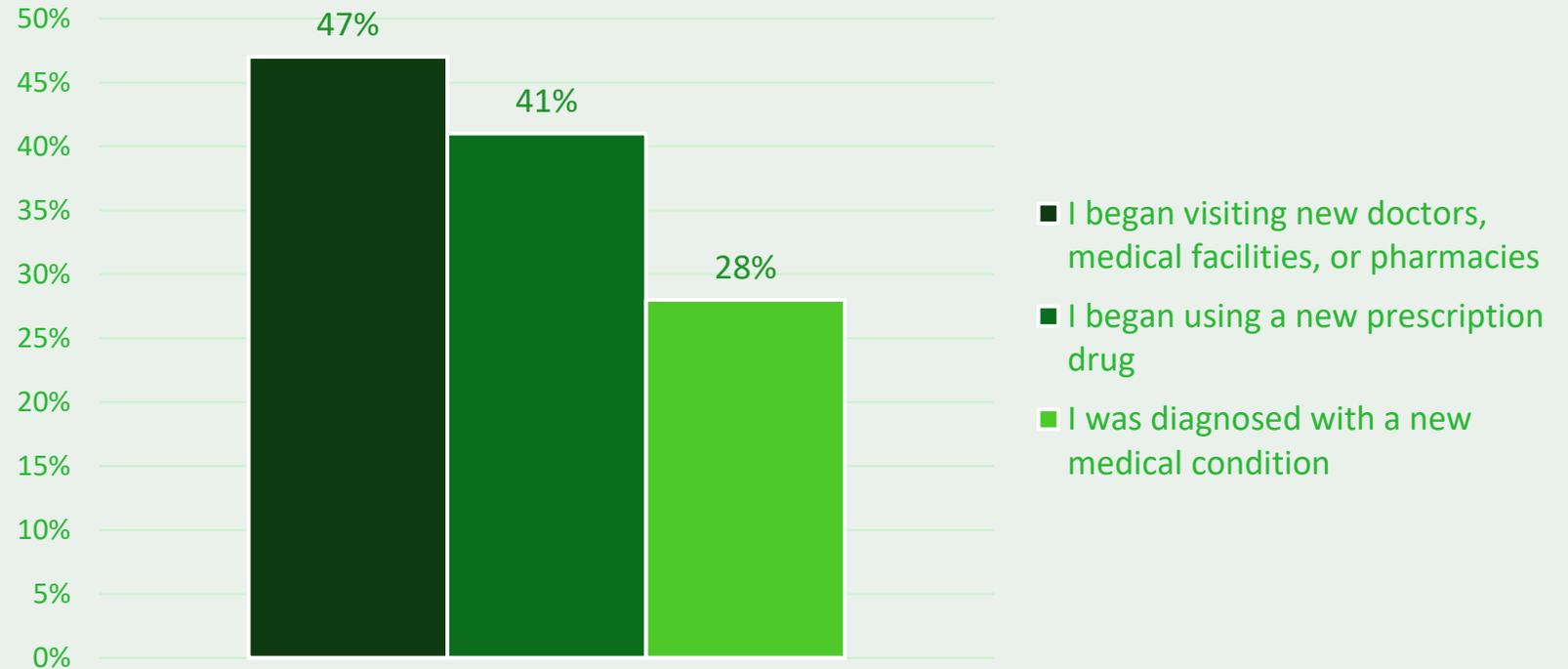
- Among Medicare Advantage enrollees, 50% have had their current plan two years or longer.
- Among Part D prescription drug plan enrollees, 64% have had their current plan two years or longer.

Life Changes Can Drive Plan Changes

More than four in 10 started seeing new doctors or using new prescription drugs in the past year

- 47% of Medicare beneficiaries began visiting new medical care providers or facilities in the past year.
- 41% began using a new prescription drug in the past year.
- 28% were diagnosed with a new medical condition in the past year.

“Did any of the following apply to you in the last year?”

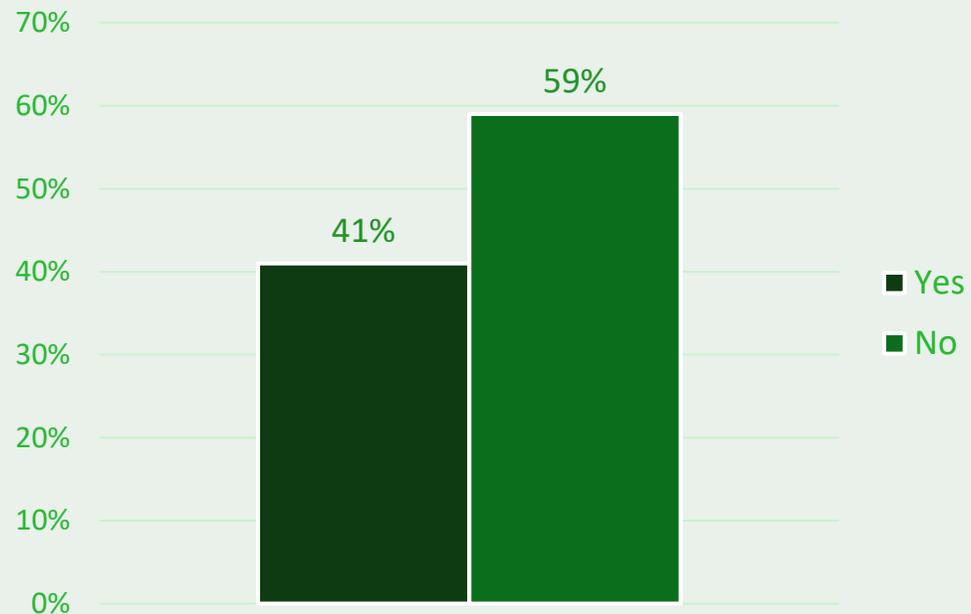


Financial Changes Can Lead to Plan Reconsideration

Four in 10 Medicare beneficiaries have seen changes to their personal finances in the past year

- 41% say they are either bringing in less money or more money per year than they were a year ago.
- 59% say their finances remain unchanged.

“Has your personal financial situation changed in the past year?”



Nearly nine in 10 are worried about inflation’s impact on their health care costs

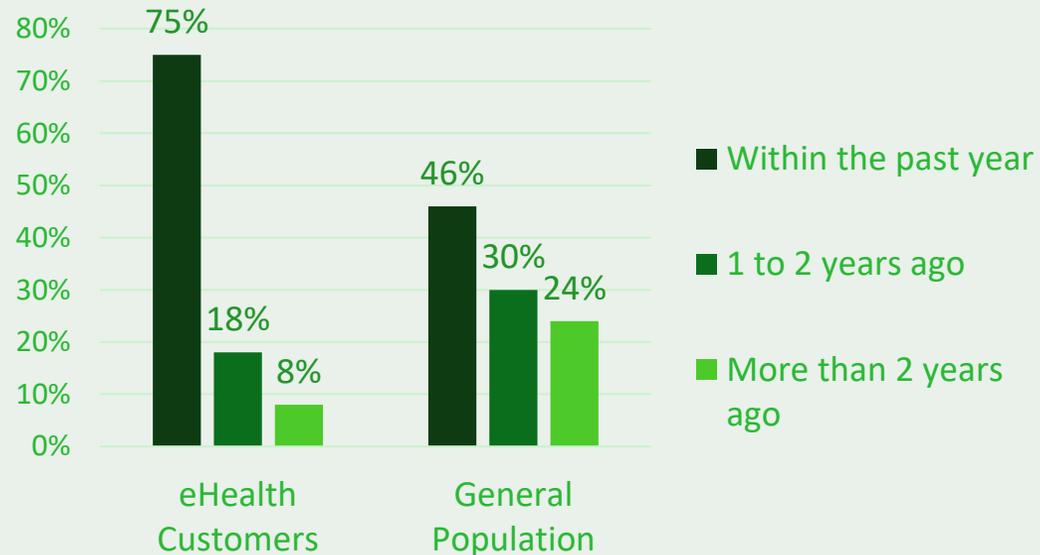
- 40% say they are “very worried” about how inflation may impact their health care costs.
- 47% are “somewhat worried.”
- Only 13% are not worried at all.

How Often Beneficiaries Review Their Options

Beneficiaries who use eHealth are more likely to review their coverage options regularly

- Among those who enrolled in their current Medicare plan through eHealth, 75% say they have reviewed their coverage choices within the past year.
- 18% reviewed their options within the past one to two years.
- 8% have not reviewed their options within the past two years.

“When was the last time you reviewed your Medicare coverage options?”



Beneficiaries in the general population* are less likely to review their coverage options each year.

- Among Medicare beneficiaries in the general population, 46% say they have reviewed their coverage options within the past year.
- 30% reviewed their options one to two years ago.
- 24% last reviewed their options more than two years ago.

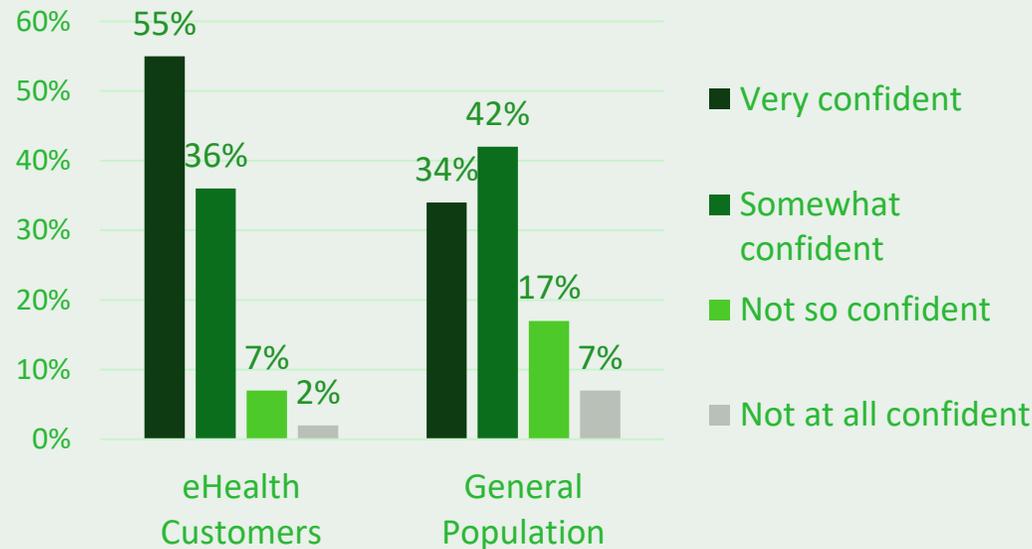
* Refer to the methodology section at the end of this report.

Confidence in Finding the Right Plan

Nine in 10 who use eHealth express confidence in their ability to find the right plan for their needs

- 55% of eHealth customers say they are “very confident” they can find the best Medicare plan for their needs.
- 36% are somewhat confident.
- 7% are not so confident.
- 2% are not at all confident.

“How confident are you in your ability to find the best Medicare plan for your needs?”



Beneficiaries in the general population* are less confident when it comes to finding the right plan

- 34% of general population respondents say they are “very confident” in their ability to find the best Medicare plan, compared to 55% of eHealth customers.
- 42% of general population respondents say they are “somewhat confident.”

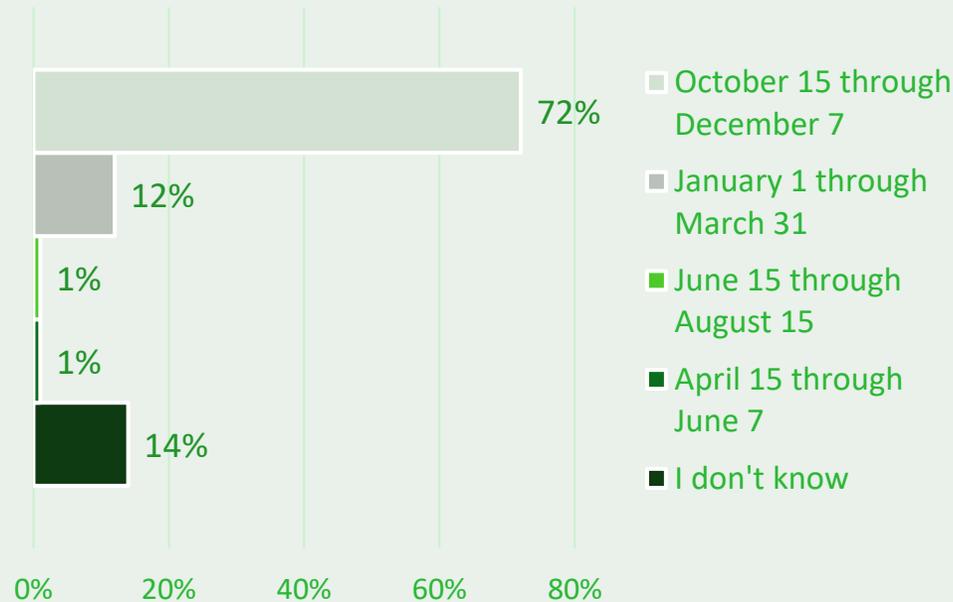
* Refer to the methodology section at the end of this report.

Being Informed About Medicare's AEP Dates

eHealth customers are well informed about when Medicare's AEP occurs

- 72% know that AEP runs from October 15 through December 7.
- 12% think it runs from January 1 through March 31.
- 1% each think it runs from June 15 through August 15 or from April 15 through June 7.
- 14% are unsure when it occurs.

“To the best of your knowledge, when does Medicare's Annual Enrollment Period occur?”



Medicare beneficiaries in the general population* are less likely to know when AEP occurs

- 47% of general population respondents know the correct date of Medicare's Annual Enrollment Period.
- 18% think it runs from January 1 through March 31.
- 12% think it runs from April 15 through June 7.
- 7% think it runs from June 15 through August 15.
- 16% are unsure.

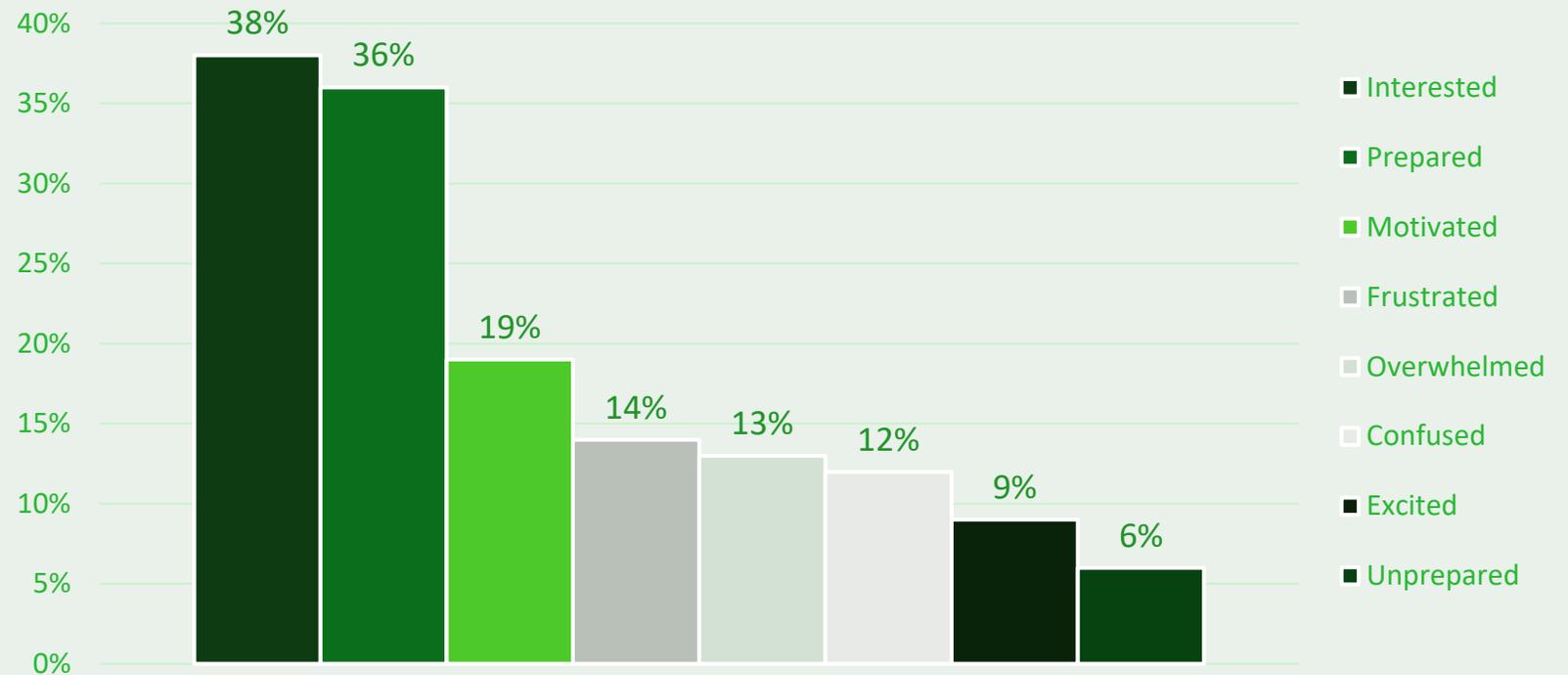
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Looking Forward to Medicare's Annual Enrollment Period

Beneficiaries are most likely to feel interested, prepared, and motivated as Medicare AEP approaches

- 38% feel interested.
- 36% feel prepared.
- 19% feel motivated.
- 14% feel frustrated.
- 13% feel overwhelmed.
- 12% feel confused.

“Which of the following describes how you feel about Medicare AEP? Select all that apply.”

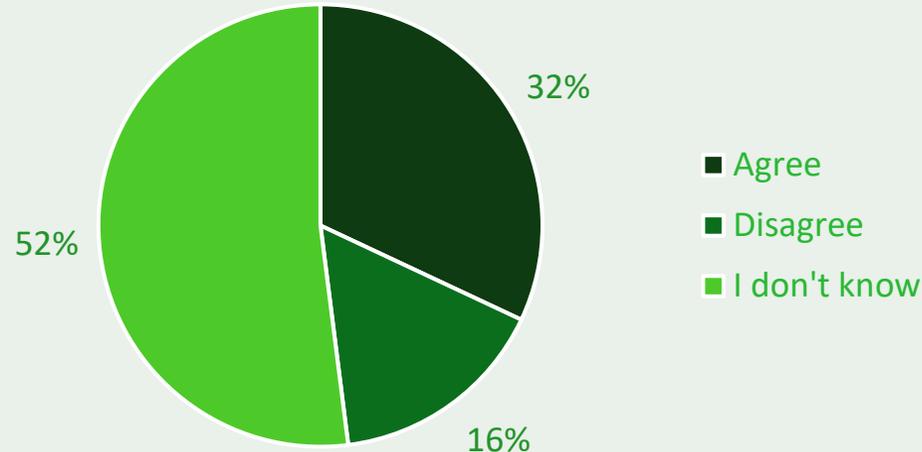


Reimagining Medicare's Annual Enrollment Period

Medicare beneficiaries are twice as likely to feel AEP should change vs. stay the same

- 32% think the government should change the way Medicare's AEP works.
- 16% disagree.
- 52% are unsure.

"Please indicate your level of agreement with the statement: 'The government should change the way AEP works.'"



Many would support staggered Annual Enrollment Periods based on their birthday

- Among those who feel the government should change the way Medicare AEP works, 62% would support an annual enrollment opportunity timed to coincide with their birth month.

Methodology Note

The findings presented in this report are based on a voluntary survey of 5,551 Medicare beneficiaries who purchased Medicare health insurance plans (Medicare Advantage, Medicare Supplement, or Medicare Part D) through eHealth, with coverage currently in effect at the time of the survey. For comparison purposes, a second survey of 257 Medicare beneficiaries from the general population was also conducted through a third-party vendor survey tool. Both surveys were conducted in September of 2023. Throughout this report, percentages have been rounded to the nearest full percentage point and may add to slightly more or less than 100% due to rounding.

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