



## Rising Prescription Drug Price Concerns: Voters 50+ Support Government Action to Lower Costs

2021 AARP Survey of New Jersey Voters Ages 50 and Older

### ABOUT THIS SURVEY

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In an AARP Rx Watch Report, which looked at more than 260 brand-name medications, prescription drug prices rose more than twice as fast as general inflation in 2020. In fact, prices have risen faster than inflation every year for at least a decade. This survey of more than 1,000 New Jersey adults ages 50 and older gauged the current use of prescription medications, concerns regarding the affordability of their medication, and what Congress should do to reign in the ever-increasing prices of prescription drugs. Conducted by Fairleigh Dickenson University on behalf of AARP in October 2021, this survey has a margin of error of  $\pm 3.0$  percent.

### KEY FINDINGS

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#### **Older voters are concerned with not being able to afford their prescriptions.**

This survey found that more than 4 in 5 (83%) New Jersey voters age 50+ say they, or a family member have taken a prescription medication in the past 2 years.

About 7 in 10 (69%) of these voters are concerned with being able to afford prescription medications in the future, with even larger percentages of Asian American (89%), Latino (88%) and Black (73%) voters expressing this concern.

**Cost is a significant factor for many deciding not to fill prescriptions.** A quarter of voters age 50+ (24%) say they have not filled a prescription in the past two years. While many say they did not fill prescriptions because their condition improved (47%) or they had concerns about possible side-effects (43%), four in ten (42%) said they did not fill the prescription due to cost.

**New Jersey voters support government action to reduce prescription drug prices.** The vast majority of New Jersey voters age 50 and older (82%) believe the government should intervene to reduce the price of prescription drugs, while 12 percent say the government should not step in. As further evidence, the proposal to create a 'Prescription Drug Affordability Board' designed

to review the affordability and set upper cost limits of medications in New Jersey garners strong support (82%) among these voters.

Moreover, at the federal level, virtually all (94%) believe it is important for Congress and the president to come up with a solution to lower prescription drug costs this year, including overwhelming support (89%) for allowing Medicare to negotiate lower drug prices with drug companies.

### IMPLICATIONS

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**Even those who can currently afford their medications are worried about affordability in the future and think something needs to be done.** As such, they want the government – at the state or federal level – to do something to ensure that the prescription drugs they take remain affordable.

**There are wide gaps between racial and ethnic groups.** Concerns about prescription drug costs are more widespread among Black, Latino, and Asian American voters age 50+ than White voters of the same age. While the number of respondents in this survey is relatively small compared to the larger New Jersey population, results here suggest that Black, Latino, and Asian American voters age 50+ may be more likely to skip a prescription drug due to cost.

Concerns about prescription drug prices are likely contributing to already disparate impacts on health access and outcomes in communities of color.

**An issue that transcends normal political boundaries.**  
This issue of prescription drug affordability cuts across

partisan lines, with majorities from each party supporting the creation of a Prescription Drug Affordability Board support (91% Dem.; 71% Rep.) and allowing Medicare to negotiate drug prices (92% Dem.; 85% Rep.) When it comes to keeping medicines affordable, older voters seem more interested in their health than their politics.



## SURVEY RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

*n = 1,109 Registered New Jersey voters ages 50 and older*

Demographic Variable	Weighted	Unweighted
<b>Age</b>		
50 – 59	31%	36%
60 – 64	17%	22%
65 – 74	29%	24%
75 or older	23%	17%
<b>Gender</b>		
Men	45%	51%
Women	54%	48%
Some Other Way	1%	1%
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>		
Non-Hispanic Caucasian	74%	69%
Non-Hispanic African-American	7%	11%
Hispanic	11%	12%
Non-Hispanic Asian/Pacific Islander	5%	4%
Non-Hispanic others	4%	5%
<b>Education</b>		
Less than high school	2%	2%
High school or some college	44%	41%
Bachelor's degree	29%	32%
Graduate degree	24%	24%
<b>Household Income</b>		
Less than \$25,000	10%	10%
\$25,000 - \$74,999	40%	40%
\$75,000 - \$99,999	19%	21%
\$100,000 or more	31%	30%

## METHODOLOGY

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The Fairleigh Dickinson University Poll (FDU) conducted a survey of randomly selected registered voters in New Jersey aged 50 and older. The study was conducted on behalf of the AARP. FDU utilized a combination of Random Digit Dialing (RDD) telephone and Text to Web (TTW) methods based on registered voter sample lists to complete a total of 800 surveys with New Jersey registered voters aged 50 and older. In addition, FDU oversampled 100 individuals across each of three ethnic groups (African Americans, Hispanics, Asians) via web surveys. The sampling was employed to ensure a valid random sampling of registered voters across the state. To approximate the current make-up of cell phones in the state with this target audience, FDU completed about 40% of the telephone surveys with cell phone participants, and 60% via landline phones. Once all 1,100 surveys were completed, the data were mathematically weighted to match the known demographics of age, gender, education and race of New Jersey's registered voters aged 50 and above. The ethnic data and their oversamples were then teased out of the weighted results and analyzed and reported throughout this report separately. With a randomly selected sample of 1,100, one can be 95 percent confident that the margin of error (MoE) is +/- 3.0 percentage points. The margin of error for subgroups is larger and varies by the size of that subgroup. All surveys were completed between the end of September through the second week in October 2021 and averaged approximately 20 minutes in length.

For more information on the methodology or the survey, contact Dan Cassino at 973-443-8797 or [dcassino@fdu.edu](mailto:dcassino@fdu.edu); Rich Higginson at 908-763-0857 or [richard\\_higginson@fdu.edu](mailto:richard_higginson@fdu.edu); or Kate Bridges at 202-434-3183 or [kbridges@aarp.org](mailto:kbridges@aarp.org). For media inquiries, contact [rauerbach@aarp.org](mailto:rauerbach@aarp.org) or [media@aarp.org](mailto:media@aarp.org). You can find this summary and the full report at <http://aarp.org/research>