



# Seniors' Opinions About Medicare Rx: Fourth Year Update

***Key Findings***

*April 2009*



## Presentation

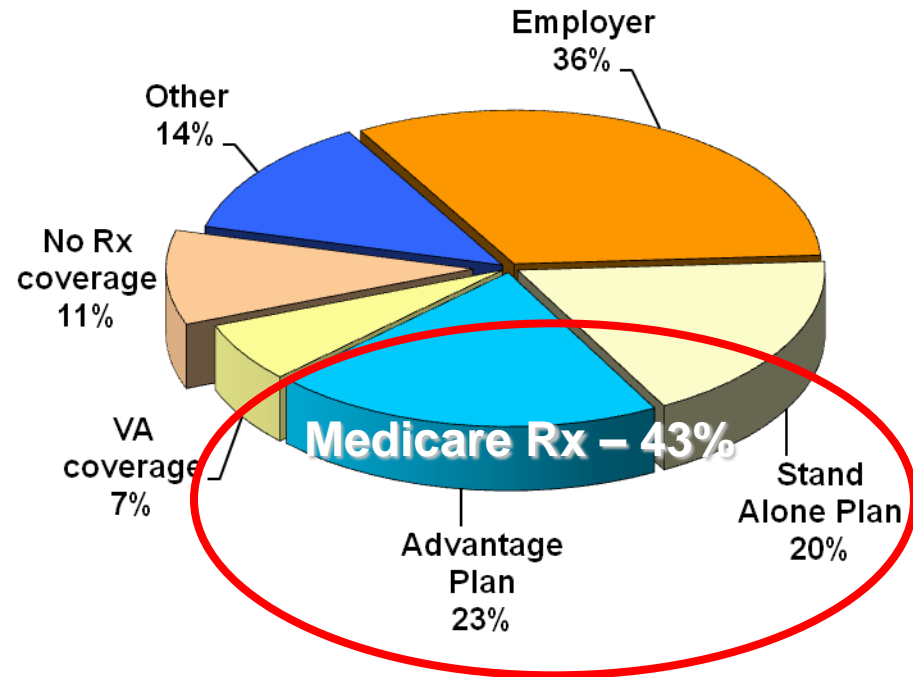
- Method
- Opinions about Medicare Rx
- Conclusions

# Method

Nationally representative telephone sample of 1,063 seniors 65+ enrolled in Medicare conducted March 19-25, 2009. The margin of error (MOE) for the full sample is  $\pm 3$  percentage points (pps). We discuss the following groups in this report:

- **All seniors with Rx coverage** (N=941, MOE is  $\pm 3.2$  pps.)
- **Medicare Rx coverage (both stand-alone and Advantage)** (N=400 MOE is  $\pm 4.9$  pps.)
- **Medicare stand-alone plan** (N=192 MOE is  $\pm 7.1$  pps.)
- **Medicare Advantage plan** (N=208 MOE is  $\pm 6.8$  pps.)
- **Dual eligibles** (N=101 MOE is  $\pm 9.8$  pps.)
- **Limited income** (N=145 MOE is  $\pm 8.1$  pps.)
- **Take 6+ prescriptions** (N=268 MOE is  $\pm 6$  pps.)
- **Have disability** (N=254 MOE is  $\pm 6.2$  pps.)

## Primary Rx Coverage: All Seniors 89% say they have Rx coverage—11% do not.



The primary focus of this report is on seniors who have **Medicare Rx coverage**, in both stand-alone and Medicare Advantage plans.

## Snapshot of Seniors Interviewed

<b>Gender</b>	<b>%</b>
Male	40
Female	60
<b>Age</b>	
65-74	50
75+	50
<b>Ethnicity</b>	
Caucasian	83
African-American	6
Hispanic/Latino(a)	6
Asian/Pacific Islander	2
American Indian/Native	2
<b>Take prescriptions daily</b>	88
<b>Have Rx coverage</b>	89
<b>Spend over \$30 p/month on premium</b>	42

<b>Region</b>	<b>%</b>
Northeast	19
Midwest	20
South	36
West	25
<b>Population density</b>	
Large city	21
Suburban area	27
Small town	32
Rural area	17
<b>Have disability</b>	23
<b>Have difficulty paying for prescriptions</b>	8
<b>Spend over \$50 p/month out-of-pocket</b>	31
<b>Take more than 10 Rx</b>	4



## Tracking is based on identical questions asked 6 times

	Mar. 2006	Sept. 2006	Jan. 2007	Sept. 2007	Sept. 2008	Mar. 2009
<b>Interview dates</b>	March 15 to 20	September 1 to 7	January 5 to 9	September 8 to 16	September 16 to 22	March 19 to 25
<b>Research firm</b>	KRC Research	KRC Research	KRC Research	KRC Research	KRC Research	KRC Research
<b>Sample</b>	Seniors 65 and older enrolled in Medicare	Seniors 65 and older enrolled in Medicare	Seniors 65 and older enrolled in Medicare	Seniors 65 and older enrolled in Medicare	Seniors 65 and older enrolled in Medicare	Seniors 65 and older enrolled in Medicare
<b>Number of telephone interviews</b>	896	802	1,003	1,001	1,007	1063
<b>Margin of error for total sample</b>	±3.3 percentage points	±3.5 percentage points	±3.1 percentage points	±3.1 percentage points	±3.1 percentage points	±3 percentage points
<b>Objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Experiences of seniors enrolled in a Medicare Rx plan</li> <li>Opinions and information needs of those not enrolled</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Satisfaction of enrollees</li> <li>Awareness of upcoming enrollment period and coverage gap</li> <li>Likelihood to change plans</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Satisfaction of enrollees</li> <li>Attitudes and outcomes from the second enrollment period</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Satisfaction of enrollees</li> <li>Awareness of low-income subsidy</li> <li>Likelihood to change plans</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Satisfaction of enrollees</li> <li>Advice to other seniors</li> <li>Likelihood to change plans</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Satisfaction of enrollees</li> <li>Rating of benefits and attitudes</li> </ul>

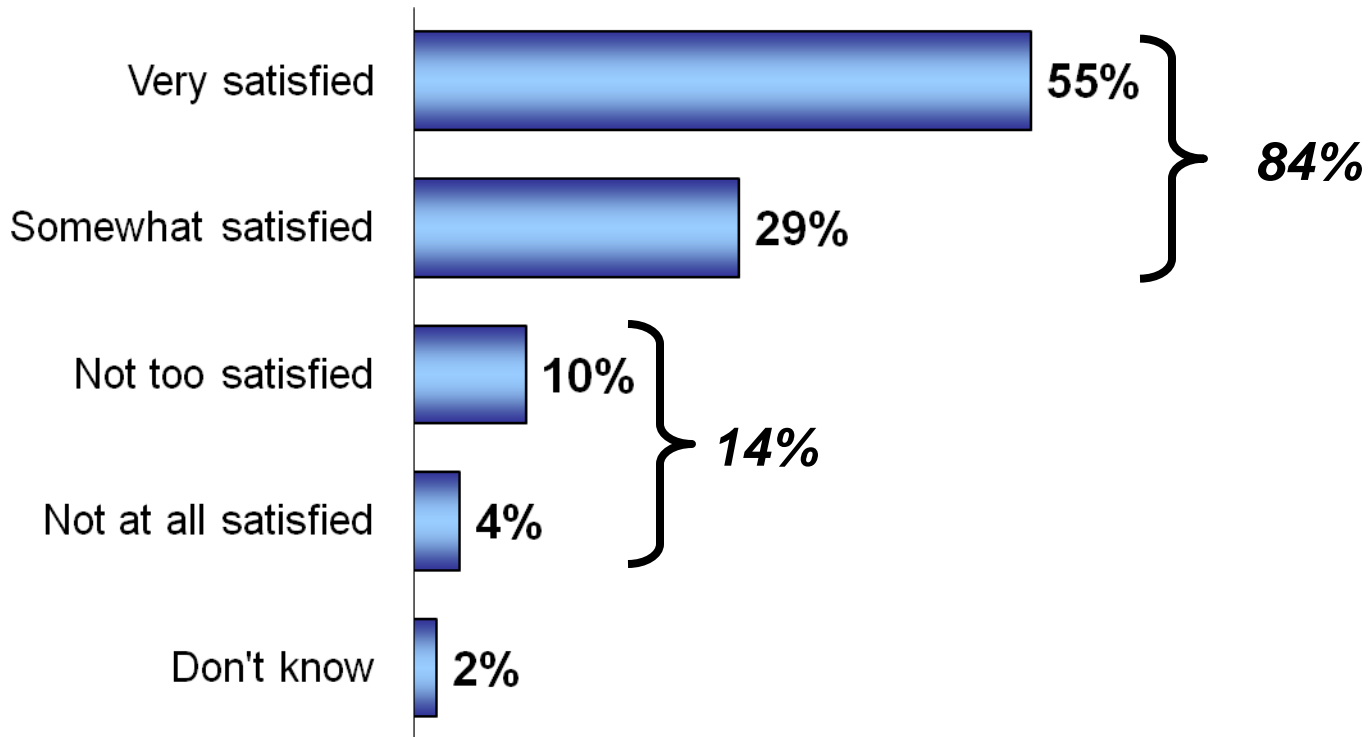
## Presentation

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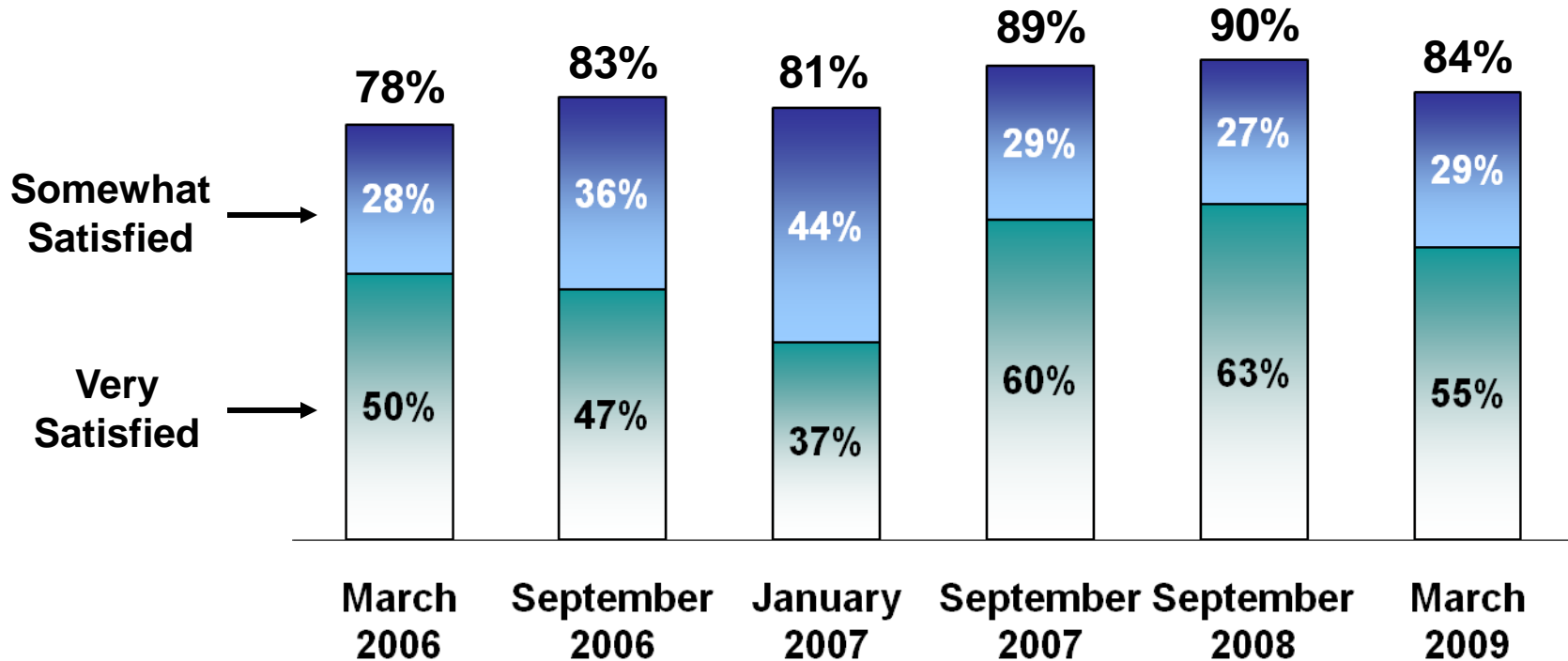
# More than 8 in 10 seniors with Medicare Rx say they're satisfied with their prescription drug coverage.

*Overall, how satisfied are you with your prescription drug coverage?*



Since September 2006, more than 8 in 10 seniors with Medicare Rx have reported being satisfied with their prescription drug coverage. More than half have reported being very satisfied since September 2007.

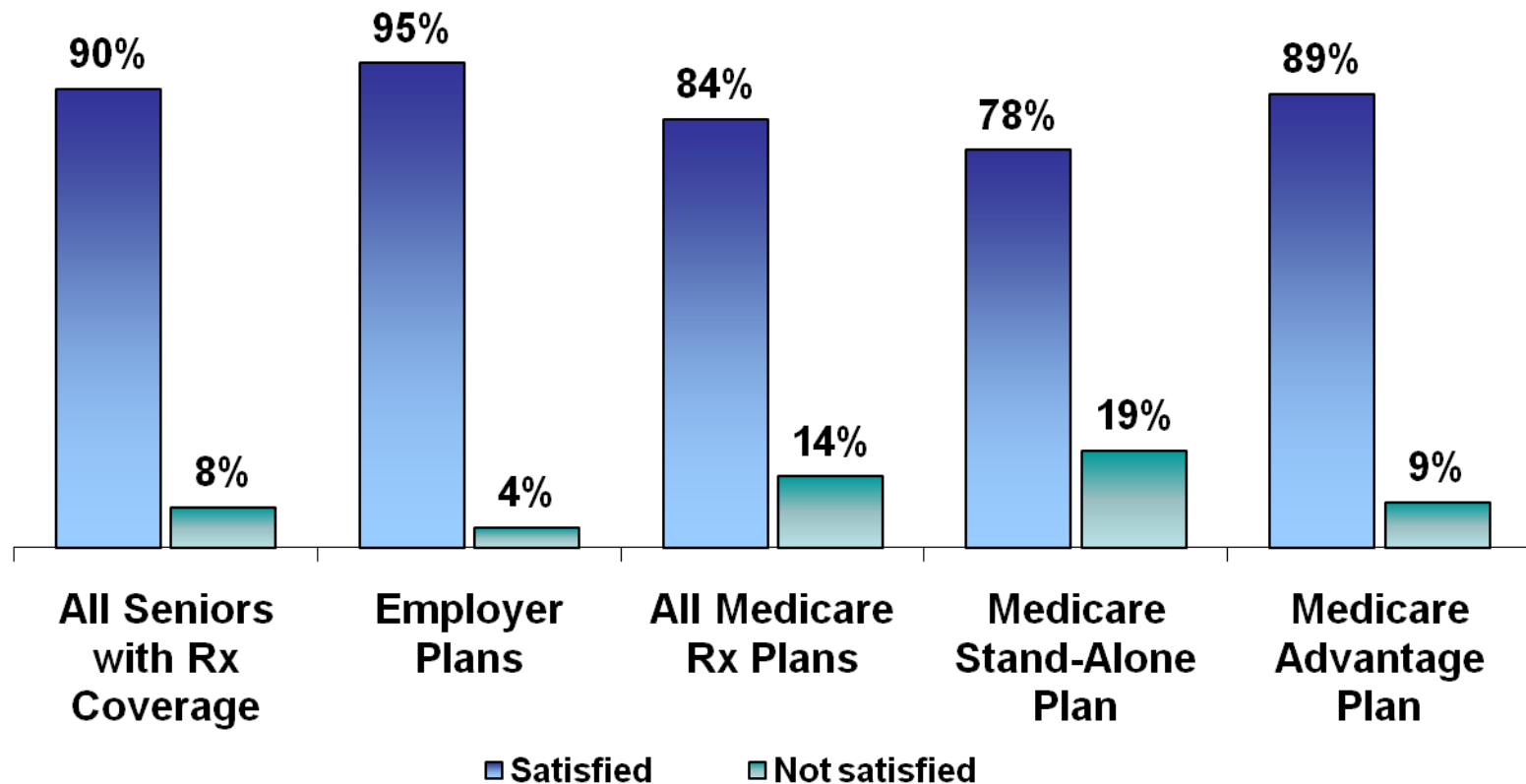
*Overall, how satisfied are you with your prescription drug coverage?*





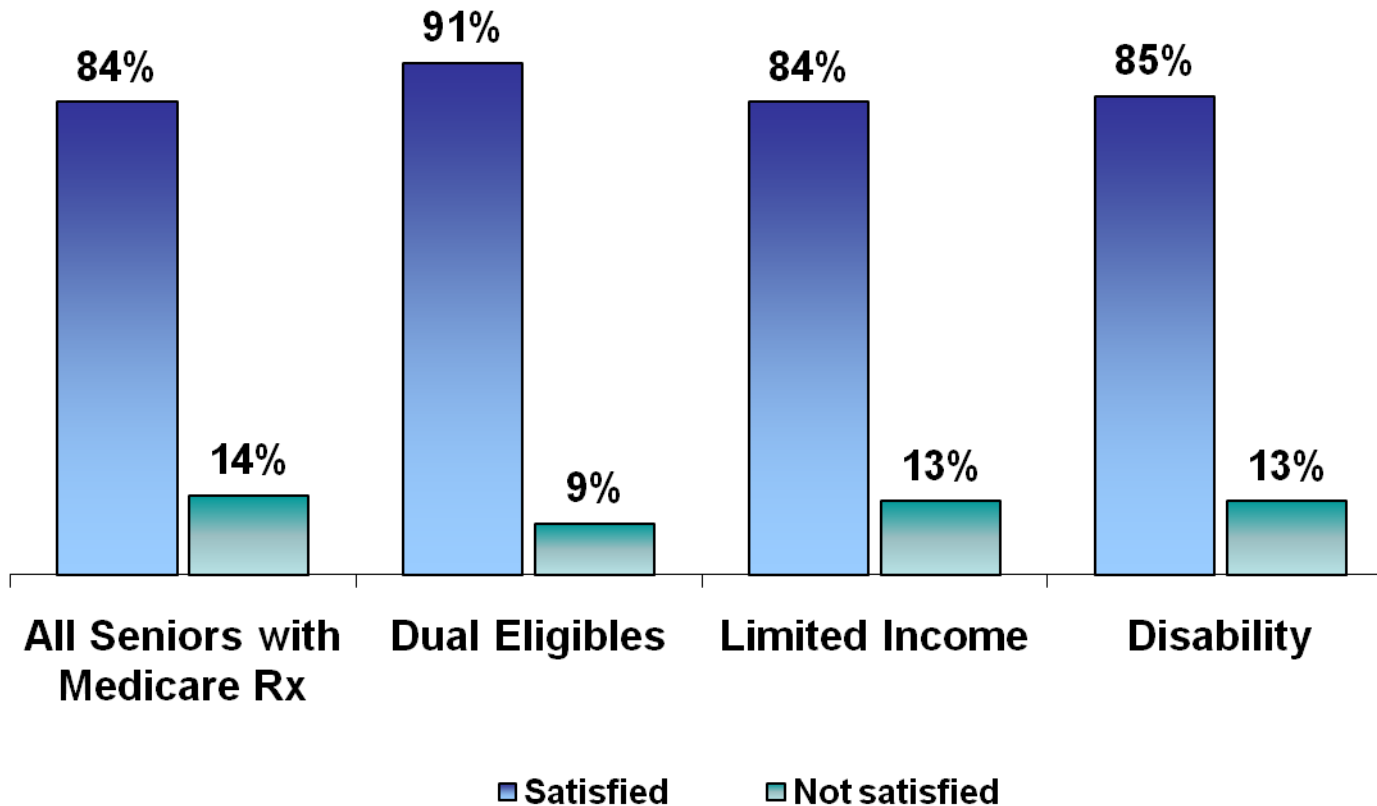
## Seniors with Medicare Rx coverage report similar levels of satisfaction as those with other kinds of plans.

*Overall, how satisfied are you with your prescription drug coverage?*



## Seniors with difficult circumstances are as satisfied as other seniors.

*Overall, how satisfied are you with your prescription drug coverage?*

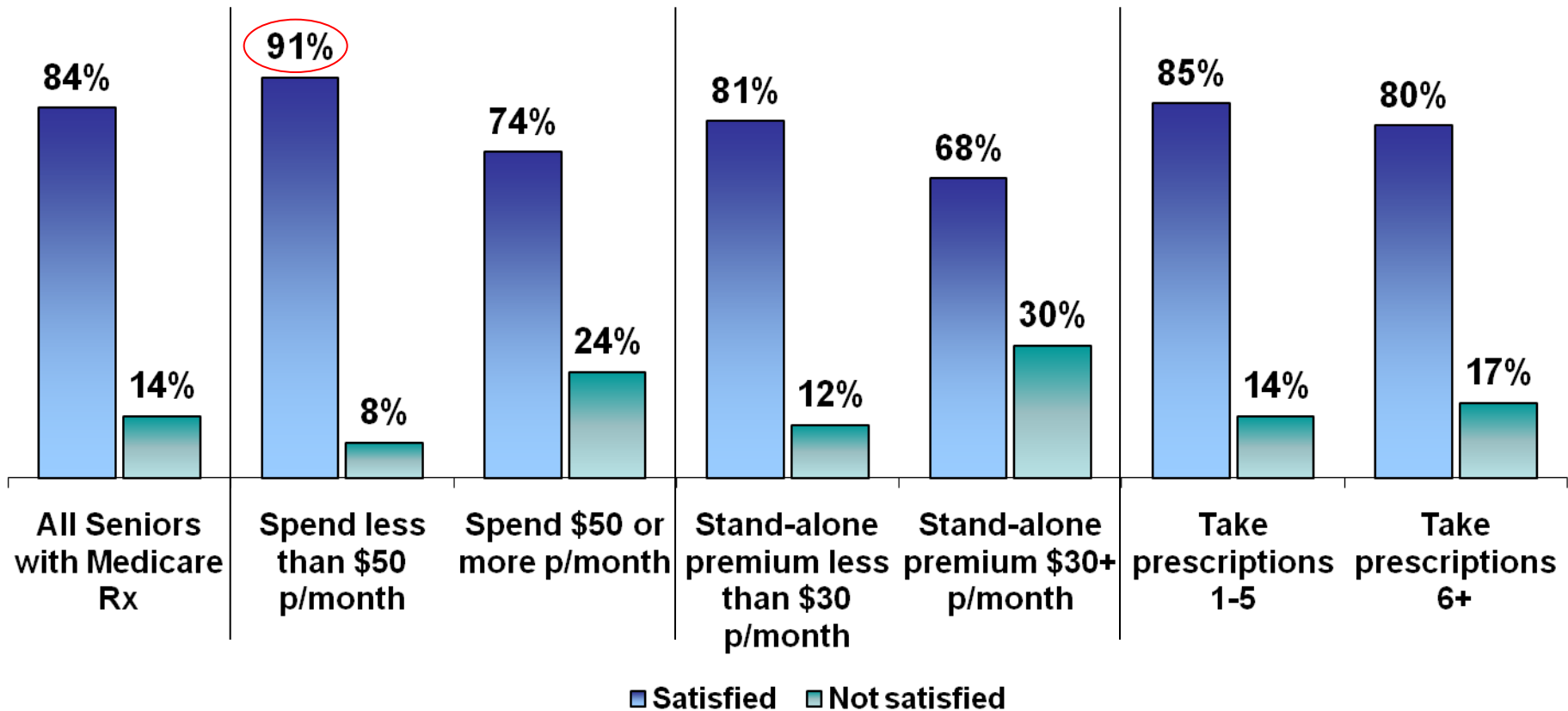


*Limited income is defined as \$15,000 if single and \$20,000 if married.*



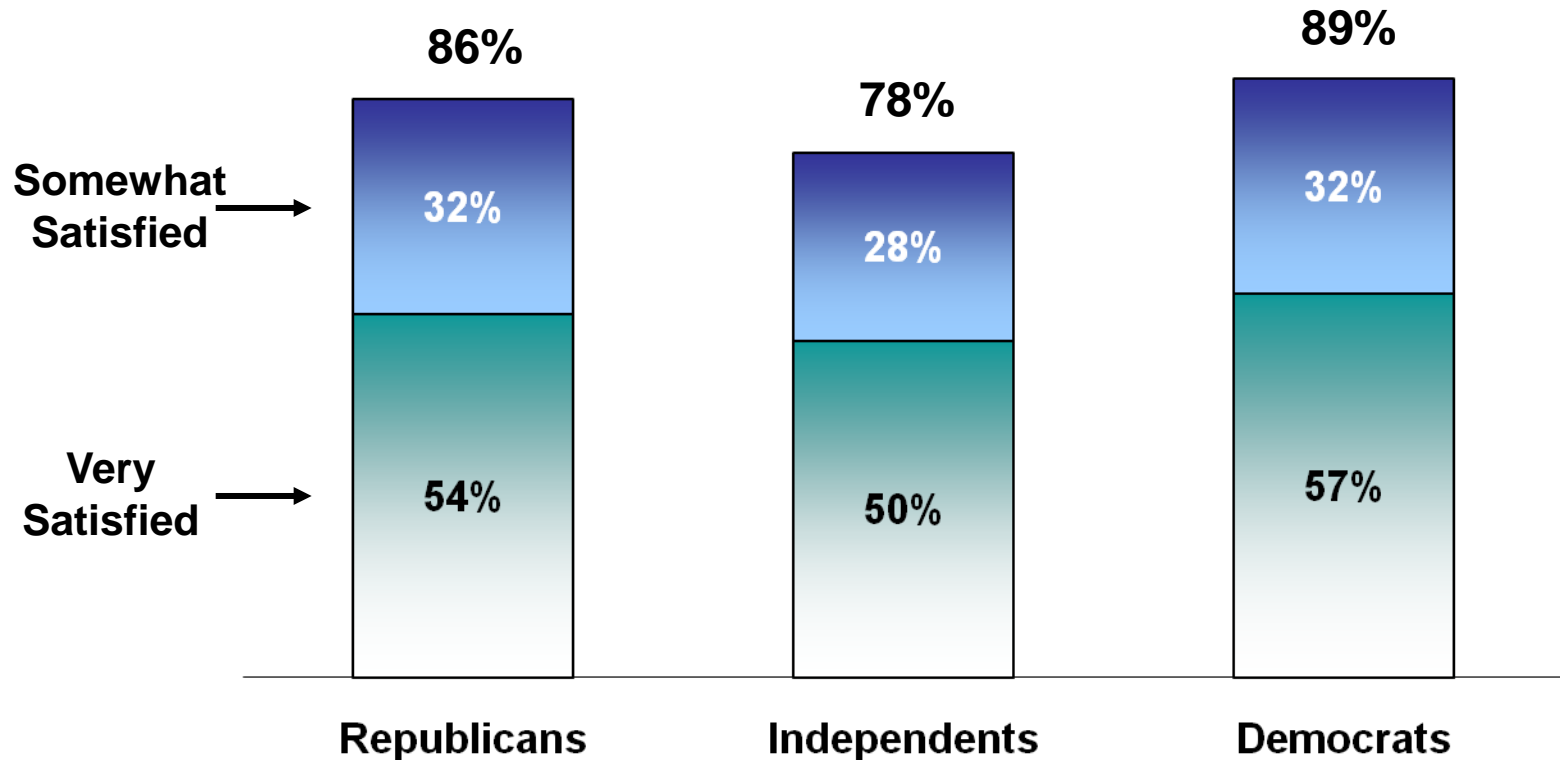
Satisfaction is *highest* among seniors who spend the least amount of money on out-of-pocket costs each month.

Overall, how satisfied are you with your prescription drug coverage?



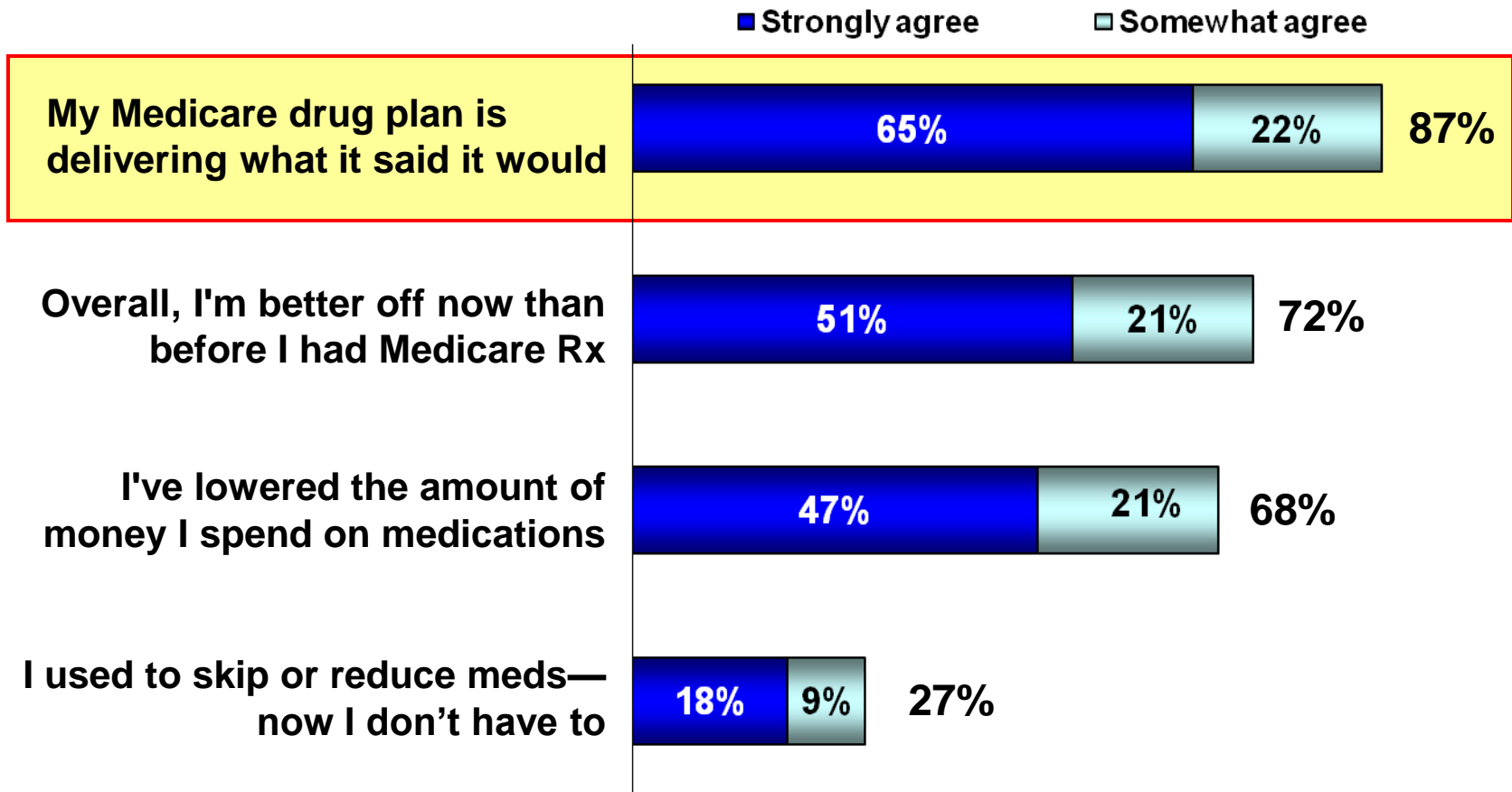
Across party lines, seniors are satisfied with their coverage.  
 Democrats are most satisfied these days.

*Overall, how satisfied are you with your prescription drug coverage?*



A majority of seniors agree that their Medicare Rx plan is delivering what it said it would when they signed up.

*Seven in ten say they're better off now than before they had Medicare Rx.*

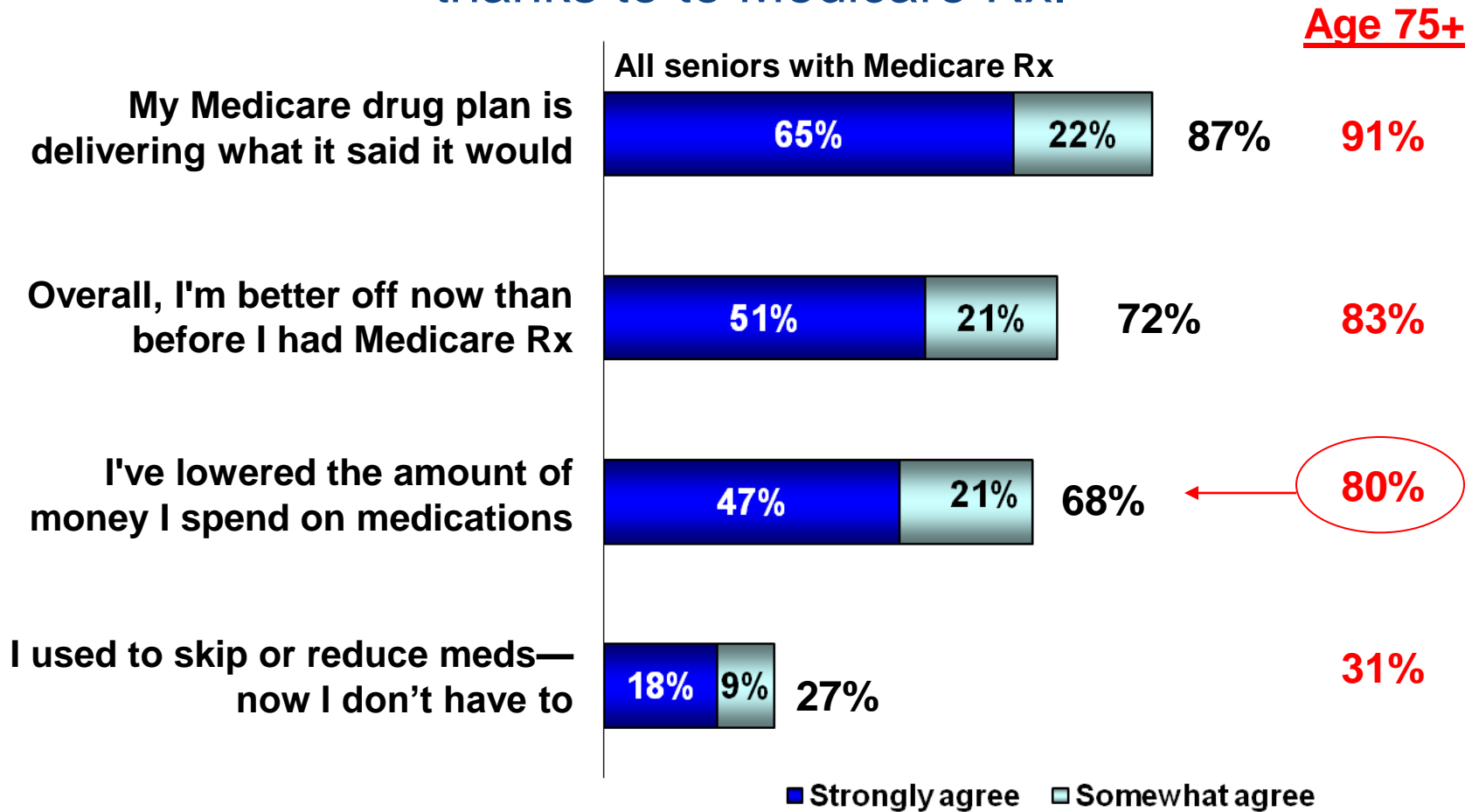


*I'm going to read you some statements to hear how you feel now that you have enrolled in a Medicare prescription drug plan. For each one, tell me if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree.*

## Seniors' feelings towards the Rx benefit remain very positive.

	Mar 2006	Sept 2006	Jan 2007	Sept 2007	Sept 2008	Mar 2009
Feel fortunate that I'm covered	N/A	N/A	N/A	96	97	93
Feel peace of mind	78	82	83	94	97	91
Feel a sense of relief	77	81	80	N/A	N/A	N/A
I'm better off than before I had Medicare Rx	66	69	67	68	78	72
I've lowered costs on Rx medicines	59	61	58	65	71	68
Feel frustrated with my coverage	33	35	35	28	22	26
Feel nervous about my coverage	28	26	25	19	23	23

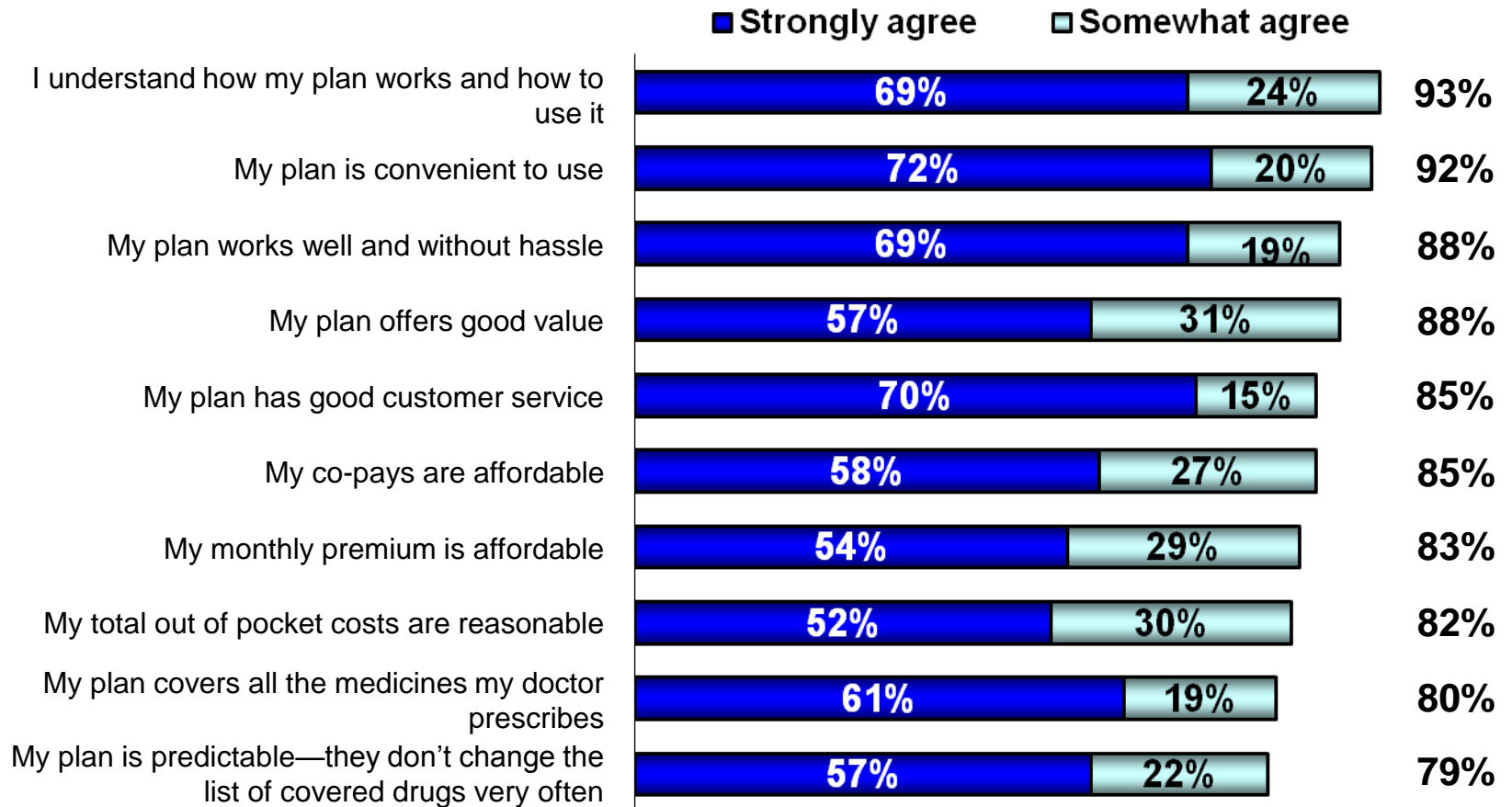
# Older seniors are more likely to report being better off thanks to Medicare Rx.



   Statistically significant difference at the 95% confidence level

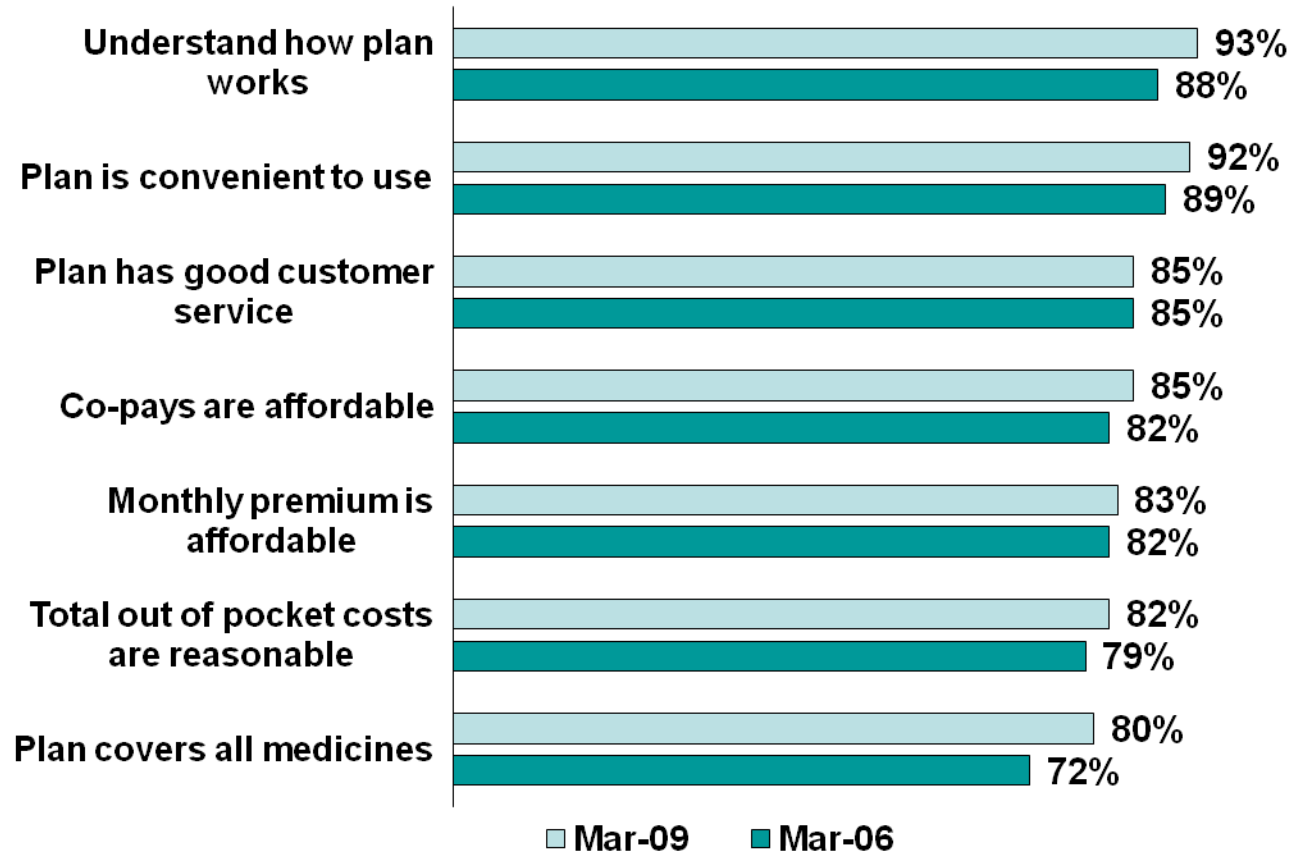
*I'm going to read you some statements to hear how you feel now that you have enrolled in a Medicare prescription drug plan. For each one, tell me if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree.*

# Most seniors understand how their plans works and feel they are convenient and without hassle.



*I'm going to read you some statements that may or may not describe your opinions about your Medicare prescription drug plan. For each one, tell me if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree.*

The trends are positive. Seniors give as high or higher ratings now as they did at the start of Medicare Rx.

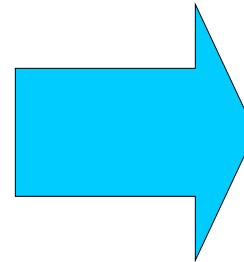
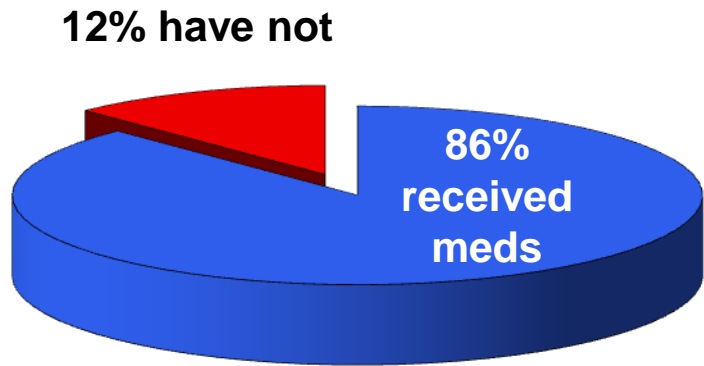


*I'm going to read you some statements that may or may not describe your opinions about your Medicare prescription drug plan. For each one, tell me if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree.*



Nearly all seniors who are using their plans and have received medications, say their plans works well.

*Have you received any medicines through your Medicare prescription drug plan?*



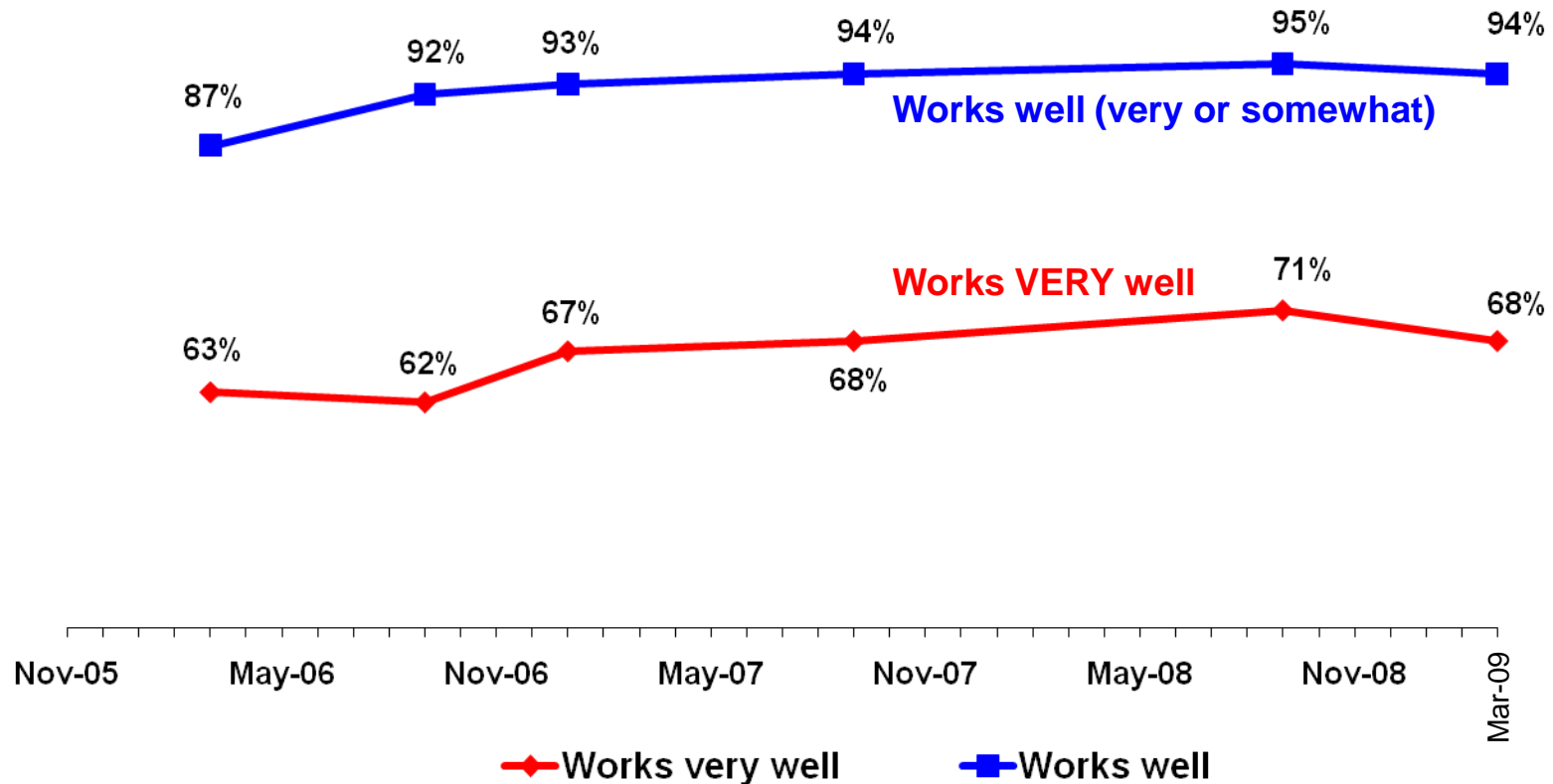
*IF RECEIVED MEDS:  
And, how well has your prescription drug plan worked for you?*

**94% works well**  
**68% very well**  
**26% somewhat well**

**5% doesn't work well**  
**3% not too well**  
**2% not well at all**

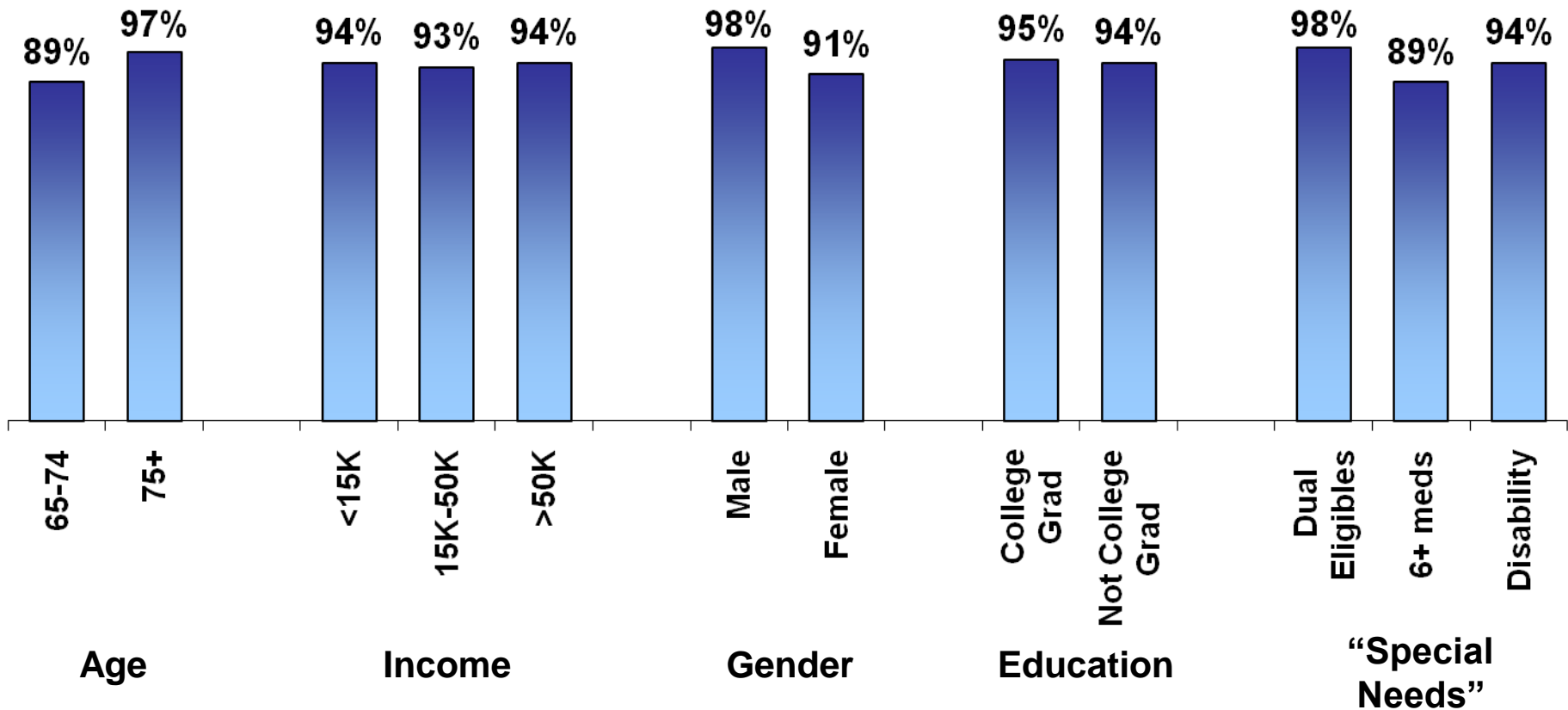
The plan rating trend has been consistent and directionally upward since the program started.

*IF RECEIVED MEDICINES: How well has your prescription drug plan worked for you?*



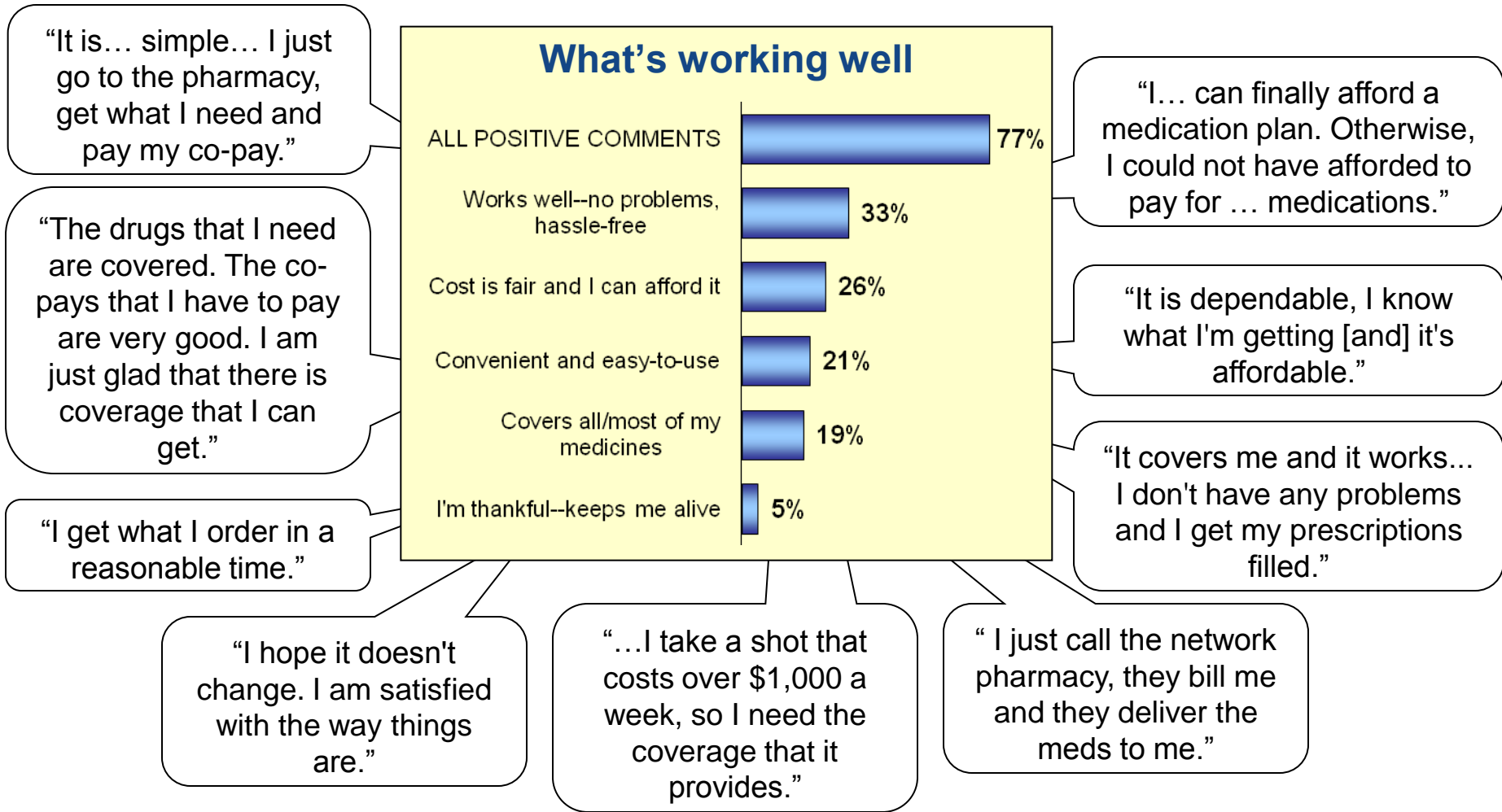
# Across demographic groups, there is agreement that the plans work well.

How well has your prescription drug plan worked for you?  
*Summary of "Well" (very or somewhat)*

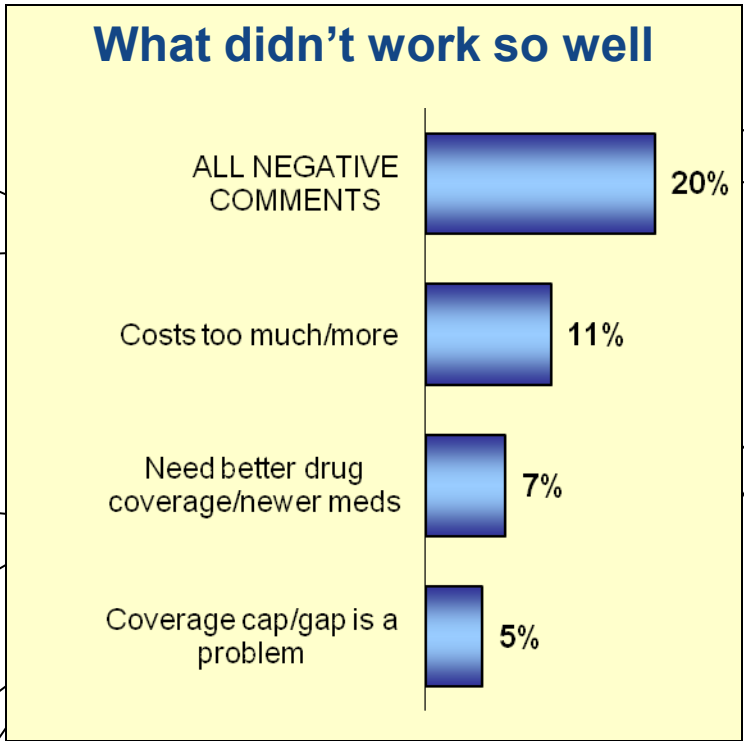


Base: Medicare Rx enrollees who received medicines

# Seniors said that smooth operations and fair prices are reasons why they feel their plans are working well.



# Seniors who are unhappy with their plans said it was because of high costs and inadequate coverage.



“A lot of the drugs they cover very well ,especially the generic drugs. But, the name brand drugs are not covered well or not covered at all.”

“I have problems with non-generic brands. The prices are too high. Some of medicines are affordable; ... the non-generics are not affordable.”

“They keep raising costs of the plan. They cover less medicines or if they cover them, they jack the prices up so I can't afford them.”

“...In three months, I have already reached the donut hole... and I don't have enough income to pay my bills plus the medication.”

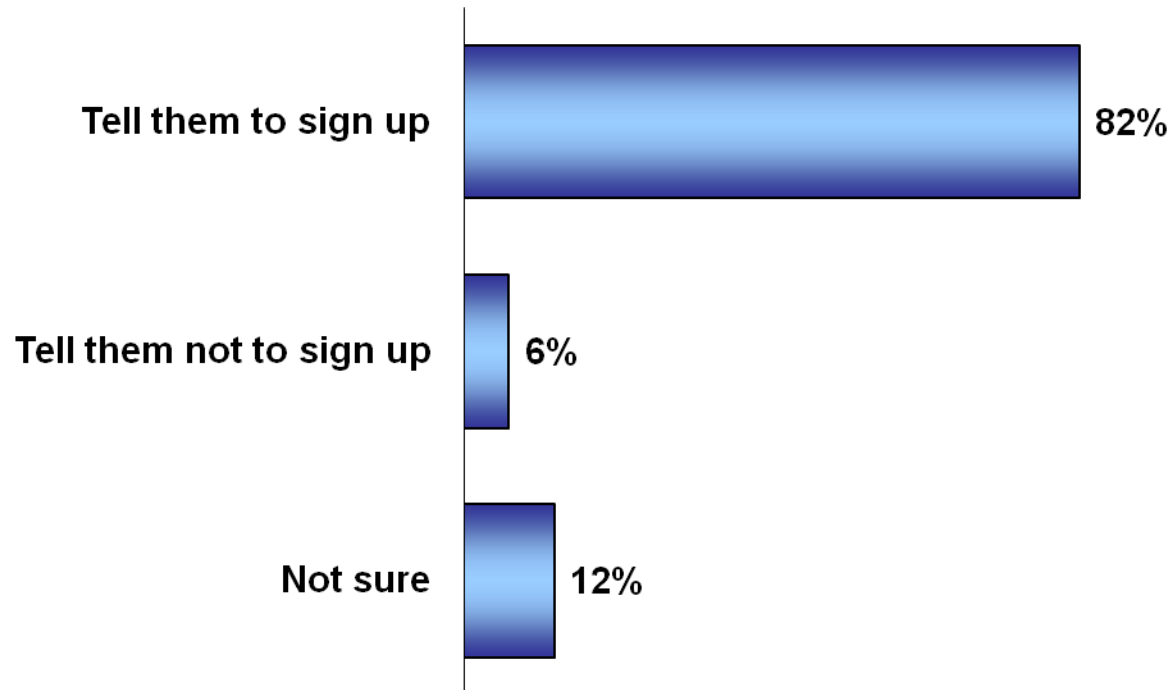
“The name brands aren't covered... I am allergic to some generics and have to pay a lot more for the name brand.”

“I think it works fine until I hit the donut hole.”

“I just wish it would cover more and be a little cheaper.”

## Most seniors with Medicare Rx say they would recommend the program to a friend.

*If you were giving advice to someone who is enrolling in Medicare for the first time, would you tell them to sign up for a Medicare prescription drug plan, or not?*



Base: Those enrolled in a Medicare plan (Stand-Alone or Medicare Advantage)

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## Conclusions

- In the eyes of most Medicare Rx beneficiaries, the Medicare Rx program is a success story. The benefit is delivering what it promised and many are saving money.
  - Overall satisfaction has grown from 78% to 84% (6 points) since early 2006; those very satisfied have increased from 50% to 55% (5 points);
  - 93% feel fortunate to have Part D and 91% say it gives them peace of mind;
  - 92% say their plan is convenient;
  - 88% say their plan offers good value—68% say they've lowered their prescription drug spending;
  - 87% say their plan is delivering what it said it would;
  - 82% would advise other seniors to sign up for the program;
  - 80% say it covers their doctor-prescribed medicines—61% strongly agree;
  - 72% feel better off now that they have Part D—up 6 points since 2006; and,
  - Almost three in ten now get medications they once had to skip or ration.
- The main criticism among those who are not satisfied relates to cost and coverage—some plans have a formulary that is too limited for some seniors' needs.

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