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NEWS Release
1615 L Street, N.W., Suite 700
Washington, D.C. 20036
Tel (202) 419-4350
Fax (202) 419-4399

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Only 34% Favor South Dakota Abortion Ban
LESS OPPOSITION TO GAY MARRIAGE, ADOPTION AND MILITARY SERVICE

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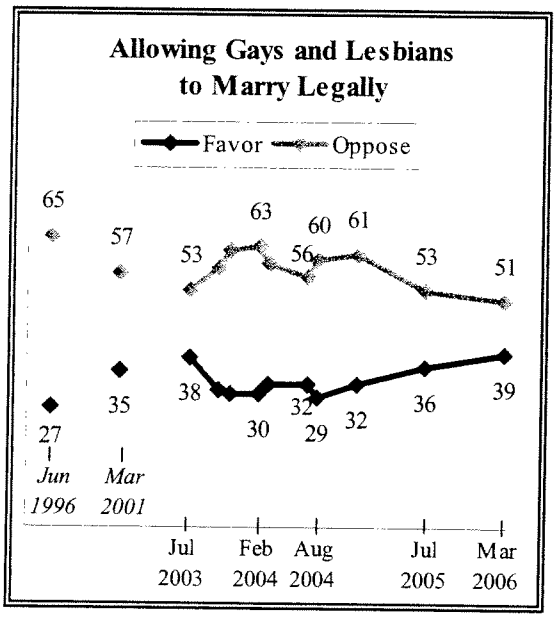
FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:
Andrew Kohut, Director
Michael Dimock, Associate Director – Research
Pew Research Center for The People & The Press
202/419-4350
http://www.people-press.org

Only 34% Favor South Dakota Abortion Ban

LESS OPPOSITION TO GAY MARRIAGE, ADOPTION AND MILITARY SERVICE

Public acceptance of homosexuality has increased in a number of ways in recent years, though it remains a deeply divisive issue. Half of Americans (51%) continue to oppose legalizing gay marriage, but this number has declined significantly from 63% in February 2004, when opposition spiked following the Massachusetts Supreme Court decision and remained high throughout the 2004 election season. Opposition to gay marriage has fallen across the board, with substantial declines even among Republicans.



These are among the results of the latest national survey by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, conducted among 1,405 adults from March 8-12. The poll also finds less opposition to gays serving openly in the military and a greater public willingness to allow gays to adopt children. A 60% majority now favors allowing gays and lesbians to serve openly in the military, up from 52% in 1994, and 46% support gay adoption, up from 38% in 1999.

Despite the fact that gay marriage initiatives are on the ballot in seven states this year, the atmosphere surrounding the issue of gay marriage has cooled off, and public intensity has dissipated compared with two years ago. "Strong" opposition to gay marriage, which surged in 2004, has ebbed to a new low. This is particularly the case among seniors, Catholics and non-evangelical Protestants. Among people age 65 and over, for example, strong opposition to gay marriage jumped from 36% in 2003 to 58% in 2004, but has fallen to 33% today. White evangelical Protestants are the only major group in which a majority still strongly opposes gay marriage, but even here the intensity of feeling has receded somewhat.

Shifting Views on Homosexual Policies

Allowing gay adoption	1999 %	2006 %
Favor	38	46
Oppose	57	48
Don't know	5	6
	100	100

Gays serving openly in military	1994 %	2006 %
Favor	52	60
Oppose	45	32
Don't know	3	8
	100	100

On another social issue, the survey also finds that by a 58%-to-34% margin most Americans

would oppose a national version of South Dakota's new law banning abortion in all cases unless the mother's life is endangered. However, supporters of such a law place a much higher priority on the issue, and are more politically active than opponents. The South Dakota law has not yet become a galvanizing issue for supporters of abortion rights. Even those who express strong opposition to abortion restrictions don't see abortion as a critical issue facing the country, while those who strongly support abortion restrictions do. As a result, proponents of a national law modeled after South Dakota's are twice as likely to have donated money, written letters, or participated in activities related to the cause over the past year as are those who would oppose such a change.

Most Oppose S.D. Abortion Ban, But Supporters More Involved

A national law like South Dakota's	Favor 34	Oppose 58	DK 8=100
	↓	↓	
Abortion is...	%	%	
A critical issue	34	25	
One among many	43	36	
Not that important	21	38	
Don't know	2	1	
	100	100	
Activism over the past year *(Donations, marches, meetings or letters)*	% 20	% 10	

The gap in intensity of feelings about the abortion issue is greatest among younger Americans. Young people who take a generally pro-life position are the most likely to say it is a critical issue for the country, and are twice as likely as young people who favor abortion access to have taken action over the past year to advocate their position.

The survey also finds the public continuing to express mixed views of Medicare's new prescription drug program. On the positive side, most (54%) who have enrolled or looked into the program say the process is easy, not difficult. But just 39% of those already enrolled or currently enrolling believe the program will end up saving them money; 18% think it will cost them more and for the rest it appears to be a wash. More generally, while a slim majority of Americans approves of the program, and more say it will be good for seniors than say it will be bad, it is the seniors themselves, as well as those age 50-64, who are the most likely to disapprove. In addition, as many as one-in-three who are eligible for the Medicare prescription drug program say they do not intend to enroll.

Medicare Rx Enrollment and Expectations*

Enrolling in program has been...	%
Easy	54
Difficult	38
Don't know	8
	100
Medicare Rx coverage will...	
Save me money	39
Cost me more	18
Same/no prescriptions	36
Don't know	7
	100

* Based on those enrolled or in the process of enrolling (N=191).

Even as health care rides high as a top national issue, the public's personal health care concerns are not substantially greater today than in the early 1990s. Personal anxiety is highest about the possible costs of a major illness or long-term care toward the end of life, as well as the loss of

insurance or benefits from job changes or employer cutbacks. Routine medical costs, including prescriptions, are less of a concern, though 44% say the cost of prescription drugs is a major problem for their family. Drug costs are of no greater concern among seniors than among younger Americans.

On the issue of the government's policy of holding suspected terrorists at Guantanamo Bay without formal charges or trial, the public is divided (44% favor, 43% oppose). There is a substantial partisan divide, with most Republicans (63%) supporting the policy, and most Democrats (57%) opposed.

Opposition to Gay Marriage Declines

After peaking during the 2004 election, opposition to allowing gays and lesbians to marry has faded in recent years. Currently, 51% oppose legalizing gay marriage, down from a recent high of 63% just two years ago in February of 2004. The percent who favor allowing gay marriage has increased from a low of 29% in August of that year to 39% today.

These figures are in keeping with the long-term trend toward acceptance of gay marriage seen in surveys leading up to the 2004 race. In June of 1996 just 27% favored legalizing gay marriage, a figure which rose to 35% in March of 2001 and 38% in the summer of 2003. This growing support fell away during the debates surrounding gay marriage that were sparked largely by the Massachusetts Supreme Court decision in February 2004, a resurgence in opposition that lasted throughout the rest of the election year.

The turnaround over the past two years is particularly distinct in the change among those who say they "strongly oppose" legalizing gay marriage. Just 28% take this position today, down from 42% in February of 2004, and the decline has been sharpest among seniors, Republicans and more moderate religious groups. Fully 58% of Americans age 65 and older strongly opposed gay marriage in 2004; only 33% are strongly opposed now. Two years ago 59% of Republicans strongly opposed gay marriage, while just 41% take this position today. And both white Catholics and non-evangelical Protestants are half as likely to strongly oppose gay marriage today as they were in 2004. Opposition remains strongest among white evangelical Protestants, 56% of whom strongly oppose legalizing gay marriage, down from 65% two years ago.

2004 Spike in Strong Opposition to Gay Marriage Recedes

Strongly oppose gay marriage	Jul 2003 %	Feb 2004 %	Mar 2006 %	*04-06 Change*
Total	30	42	28	*-14*
18-29	24	32	25	*-7*
30-49	28	38	26	*-12*
50-64	35	45	30	*-15*
65+	36	58	33	*-25*
Republican	43	59	41	*-18*
Democrat	24	34	21	*-13*
Independent	24	32	25	*-7*
Total Protestant	41	50	36	*-14*
White evangelical	56	65	56	*-9*
White mainline	21	37	18	*-19*
Total Catholic	19	35	19	*-16*
White, non-Hisp	18	36	18	*-18*
Secular	14	15	10	*-5*

In all of these cases, current attitudes are in line with both the balance of opinion and intensity of opinion in the summer of 2003, before the issue gained widespread public attention. While the issue of gay marriage is not currently high on the public's agenda, there are seven states which have gay marriage amendments on the ballot this fall.

Public Divided over Gay Adoption

The balance of public opinion on the issue of gay adoption has shifted significantly over the past seven years. In 1999, most Americans (57%) opposed allowing gays and lesbians to adopt children, while just 38% were in favor. Today, the public is divided about evenly – the percent who favor allowing gay adoption has grown to 46% while 48% are opposed.

The partisan gap over this issue, however, has grown substantially during this time period, as Democrats and independents have become more supportive of allowing gay adoptions while Republicans remain mostly opposed. Currently, 55% of Democrats favor letting gays and lesbians adopt children, as do 52% of independents, while just 30% of Republicans take this view.

There is a dramatic difference of opinion over gay adoption within both party coalitions as well. By nearly four-to-one (77% to 20%) most conservative Republicans oppose allowing gay adoption, while moderate and liberal Republicans are divided almost evenly (48% oppose, 43% favor). Similarly, there is a general consensus among liberal Democrats that gay adoption should be allowed (76% vs. 19% who are opposed) while conservative and moderate Democrats are split evenly (46% favor, 49% oppose).

Growing Support for Allowing Gay and Lesbian Adoption

	1999		*2006*		*Change*
	Fav	Opp	Fav	Opp	*Favor*
	%	%	%	%	
Total	38	57	46	48	*+8*
Men	33	62	41	52	*+8*
Women	43	53	50	44	*+7*
White	39	57	46	48	*+7*
Black	38	58	37	58	*-1*
18-29	49	46	58	38	*+9*
30-49	44	51	47	46	*+3*
50-64	30	66	44	49	*+14*
65+	21	75	32	62	*+11*
College grad	55	41	55	37	*0*
Some college	41	55	49	45	*+8*
HS grad or less	30	64	38	56	*+8*
Northeast	45	49	57	35	*+12*
Midwest	35	60	44	51	*+9*
South	31	65	35	60	*+4*
West	50	48	53	38	*+3*
Republicans	28	70	30	65	*+2*
Conservative	--	--	20	77	--
Moderate/Liberal	--	--	43	48	--
Democrats	44	53	55	40	*+11*
Conserv./Mod.	--	--	46	49	--
Liberal	--	--	76	19	--
Independent	45	50	52	42	*+7*
Protestant	30	66	36	59	*+6*
White evangelical	19	77	22	75	*+3*
White mainline	42	55	49	44	*+7*
Black Protestant	38	58	35	60	*-3*
Catholic	45	50	55	37	*+10*
White, non-Hisp.	43	51	56	37	*+13*
Secular	61	35	66	28	*+5*

White evangelical Protestants remain strongly opposed to allowing gay marriage: 75% say this is unacceptable while 22% approve, virtually unchanged from 1999. Meanwhile, the balance of opinion among Catholics has shifted notably – currently 55% favor allowing gays and lesbians to adopt while 37% are opposed. Seven years ago, 50% of Catholics opposed this idea, while 45% were in favor.

When age is taken into account, younger people remain the most open to the idea of gay adoption – most people under age 30 favor allowing gay adoption (by a margin of 58% to 38%) while most people 65 and older are opposed (by a 62% to 32% margin). Those between 30 and 64 are divided almost evenly.

Two-to-One Support for Allowing Gays in the Military

The public supports a policy of allowing gays and lesbians to serve openly in the military by a margin of 60% to 32%. This represents significantly broader support for this inclusive policy than in 1994, when 52% favored allowing gays to serve openly and 45% were opposed.

Support has grown in most segments of society, particularly among young people – those under age 30 favor an open policy by three-to-one (72% to 23%). But the balance of opinion has shifted in favor of allowing open service across all age groups.

Regionally, the South has seen the biggest change in opinion on this issue. In 1994 the South was the only region in which a majority of residents (55%) opposed allowing gays and lesbians to serve openly. Today, just 35% in the South take this position, while 58% support open service.

Republicans are divided on the issue – 46% favor allowing gays to serve openly and 46% are opposed. A majority of conservative Republicans oppose such a policy, while moderate and liberal Republicans favor it by a wide margin (62%-29%). Democrats of all ideological groups tend to favor allowing gays in the military, though liberal Democrats are nearly universal in their support (85%-9%). Independents also favor the policy by a 66%-to-30% margin.

More Support for Allowing Gays to Serve Openly in the Military

	1994		*2006*		*Change*
	Fav	Opp	Fav	Opp	*Favor*
	%	%	%	%	
Total	52	45	60	32	*+8*
Men	44	54	55	37	*+11*
Women	59	37	66	26	*+7*
18-29	56	43	72	23	*+16*
30-49	56	42	62	30	*+6*
50-64	47	50	59	35	*+12*
65+	41	50	47	39	*+6*
College grad	61	38	71	21	*+10*
Some college	58	40	69	27	*+11*
HS grad or less	46	50	50	40	*+4*
Northeast	62	36	66	27	*+4*
Midwest	53	43	61	32	*+8*
South	42	55	58	35	*+16*
West	56	41	61	29	*+5*
Republicans	39	60	46	46	*+7*
Conservative	30	69	36	58	*+6*
Moderate/Liberal	54	45	62	29	*+8*
Democrats	60	36	70	23	*+10*
Conserv./Mod.	57	39	64	29	*+7*
Liberal	71	27	85	9	*+14*
Independent	55	42	66	30	*+5*
Protestant	45	52	53	38	*+8*
White evangelical	32	66	43	47	*+11*
White mainline	55	42	63	30	*+8*
Catholic	58	39	67	26	*+9*
White, non-Hisp.	58	39	66	29	*+8*
Secular	72	26	74	22	*+2*

South Dakota's Abortion Ban

News about South Dakota's new law banning all abortions unless the mother's life is in danger drew the very close attention of just one-in-five Americans (21%) – fully a quarter (26%) say they didn't follow it closely at all. In terms of public attention, the story ranked far below news from Iraq (43% followed very closely), the ports deal (41%), post-Katrina rebuilding (36%) and Vice President Cheney's hunting accident (31%). Both pro-life and pro-choice Americans were equally uninterested in the story, though on both sides of the issue those who feel strongly about abortion paid closer attention.

By a 58% to 34% margin, most Americans oppose the idea of extending South Dakota's near total ban on abortion nationwide. Public reactions to the law follow a pattern similar to that on other questions about abortion: No gender gap emerges, and only a slight difference of opinion is seen across age groups, with seniors more supportive of further restrictions on abortion than those under age 65. College graduates, as well as residents of the Northeast and West express more opposition to such a restriction on access to abortions than do either those without a college degree or people residing in the Midwest and South. However, across all of these groups, majorities say they would oppose extending this law beyond South Dakota.

South Dakota's Abortion Ban Becoming a National Law

	Favor	Oppose	DK
	%	%	%
Total	34	58	8=100
Men	35	58	7=100
Women	34	57	9=100
White	37	56	7=100
Black	30	64	6=100
18-29	35	58	7=100
30-49	32	63	5=100
50-64	36	57	7=100
65+	41	45	14=100
College grad	24	70	6=100
Some college	35	57	8=100
HS grad or less	40	51	9=100
Northeast	29	63	8=100
Midwest	40	54	6=100
South	37	56	7=100
West	30	60	10=100
Republicans	51	43	6=100
Conservative	65	31	4=100
Moderate/Liberal	30	61	9=100
Democrats	28	66	6=100
Conserv./Mod.	34	60	6=100
Liberal	12	81	7=100
Independent	28	63	9=100
Protestant	40	52	8=100
White evangelical	59	36	5=100
White mainline	28	63	9=100
Black Protestant	28	65	7=100
Catholic	34	54	12=100
White, non-Hisp.	35	55	10=100
Secular	16	82	2=100
Attend church			
Weekly or more	49	44	7=100
Monthly/Yearly	28	63	9=100
Seldom/Never	20	72	8=100

Republicans Divided over Abortion Ban

Ideology and religion are the factors most closely associated with views on this issue. Just over half of Republicans (51%) favor expanding a law like South Dakota's to the nation, but this masks a severe division of opinion within the party – conservative Republicans favor this idea by two- to-one (65% to 31%) while moderate and liberal Republicans oppose it by about the same margin (61% to 30%). There is also a divide among

Democrats, but not nearly as sizeable – 34% of conservative and moderate Democrats favor this kind of abortion ban at the national level compared with just 12% of liberal Democrats, with majorities in both groups opposing the idea.

White evangelical Protestants are the only major religious group to favor a broad abortion ban like South Dakota's – 59% favor this becoming a national law while 36% are opposed. The balance of opinion among other Protestants, Catholics and seculars is against this type of proposal.

Abortion Issue More Important to Opponents

Americans differ not only over how the issue of abortion should be legislated, but how important an issue it is for the country. Just over a quarter (28%) of Americans consider abortion to be a critical issue facing the country, and another 38% say it is one among many important issues. Nearly a third, however, (32%) say abortion is not that important compared to other issues.

On both sides, those with strong views are more likely to say abortion is a critical issue, but there is a sizable intensity gap with those taking a pro-life position rating the issue as far more important. For example, one in three (34%) supporters of extending the South Dakota ban to the rest of the nation say abortion is a critical issue for the country, compared with 25% of those who would oppose extending the ban.

Abortion a More Critical Issue for Its Opponents

	Abortion is...[1]			
	A critical issue	One among many	Not that important	DK
	%	%	%	%
Total	28	38	32	2=100
Make S.D. ban national law				
Favor	34	43	21	2=100
Oppose	25	36	38	1=100
Restrict abortion[2]				
Favor	34	41	23	2=100
Strongly	**48**	36	13	3=100
Not strongly	24	45	30	1=100
Oppose	24	36	38	2=100
Strongly	29	38	**31**	2=100
Not strongly	20	35	**43**	2=100

[1] "A critical issue facing the country, one among many important issues, or not that important compared to other issues"
[2] "Making it more difficult for a woman to get an abortion."

The intensity gap is even starker when strong supporters and opponents of restricting abortion are compared. When asked whether they favor or oppose making it more difficult for a woman to get an abortion, 15% of Americans strongly favor making it more difficult while 24% strongly oppose such a move. While fewer in number, these strong abortion opponents rate the issue as far more important. Nearly half (48%) of those who strongly favor making it more difficult to get an abortion say it is a critical issue for the country. This compares to just 29% of people who strongly oppose making abortion more difficult. Just as starkly, 31% of strong supporters of a woman's right to choose say the issue is "not that important compared to other issues." Only 13% of strong abortion opponents say the same.

Intensity Gap among Young, Women

Younger people are among those most likely to consider abortion a critical issue. Fully 35% of those under 30 say it is critical, compared with 26% of people age 30 and over. This disparity is strongest on the pro-life side of the debate – 45% of young abortion opponents rate it as a critical issue, far more than among older abortion foes. As a result, the intensity gap between supporters and opponents of abortion rights is most extreme among younger people. Young people who take a generally pro-life position are 14-points more likely to rate it as a critical issue than young people who do not want to see abortion restricted further (45% vs. 31%). This same difference in the importance given to the abortion issue can be seen among older Americans groups as well, though the gap is less extreme.

Female and Young Abortion Opponents Most Concerned

	% saying abortion is a "critical issue" among...			
	All	Pro-life[1]	Pro-choice[1]	*Intensity gap*
	%	%	%	
Total	28	34	24	*+10*
Men	25	29	23	*+6*
Women	30	**38**	25	*+13*
18-29	35	**45**	31	*+14*
30-49	24	31	21	*+10*
50-64	28	32	25	*+7*
65+	26	29	24	*+5*

[1] "Pro-life" refers to those who favor making it more difficult for a woman to get an abortion. "Pro-choice" refers to those saying they oppose making it more difficult.

Women who favor further restrictions on abortion also stand out for the emphasis they place on the issue. Fully 38% of women who want more limits on abortion access say it is a critical issue for the country, compared with just 25% of women who oppose greater restrictions.

Abortion Opponents Also More Vocal

More than one-in-ten (13%) Americans say they have expressed their views on abortion in the past year through activities such as donating money to groups, participating in marches or rallies, or writing letters to the news media or their representatives. Those seeking to restrict abortions are the most likely to be performing these activities, reflecting the critical importance they place on the issue.

Abortion Opponents More Vocal

	Activism over past year[1]		
	Yes	No	DK
	%	%	%
Total	13	86	1=100
Make S.D. ban national law			
Favor	20	80	0=100
Oppose	10	89	1=100
Restrict abortion[1]			
Favor	18	82	*=100
Strongly	**27**	73	0=100
Not strongly	12	88	*=100
Oppose	11	89	*=100
Strongly	16	84	0=100
Not strongly	8	92	1=100

[1] "Donating money to groups, participating in marches or meetings, or writing letters to the news media or your representatives"

[2] "Making it more difficult for a woman to get an abortion."

Those who support the South Dakota ban becoming a national law are twice as likely to have actively expressed their views than are those who oppose it. Similarly, over a

quarter (27%) of those who strongly favor abortion restrictions say they engage in this level of activism. This compares to just 16% of Americans who strongly oppose making abortion access more difficult.

Pro-Life Women Most Active

Women seeking more restrictions on abortion stand out as one of the groups most engaged in the debate. More than one-in-five (21%) pro-life women report actively expressing their views on abortion through donations, activities or letter writing in the past year. Only 13% of women who oppose abortion restrictions have taken similar steps. On both sides of the issue, men are less likely to have done anything to express their views.

The pro-choice movement has done a better job of activating older supporters than it has among the young. Just 8% of young people who oppose broader abortion restrictions have taken action to express their opinion, compared with 17% of those age 65 and over who share their views. This results in a sizeable activism gap among younger generations. In both the 18-29 and 30-49 age ranges, abortion rights opponents are twice as likely as their more pro-choice counterparts to have taken part in group activities, made donations, or written letters.

Pro-Life Women Most Active on Issue

	% actively expressing abortion views among...			
	All	Pro-life[1]	Pro-choice[1]	*Activism gap*
	%	%	%	
Total	13	18	11	*+7*
Men	11	15	9	*+6*
Women	16	21	13	*+8*
18-29	12	16	8	*+8*
30-49	14	20	10	*+10*
50-64	14	19	12	*+7*
65+	15	16	17	*-1*

[1] "Pro-life" refers to those who favor making it more difficult for a woman to get an abortion. "Pro-choice" refers to those saying they oppose making it more difficult.

Medicare Rx: Good, but Some Concerns

Public views on Medicare's new prescription drug program remain largely unchanged from December, when the enrollment process was just getting underway. Currently, 51% approve of the new Medicare coverage of prescription drugs for seniors, while 32% disapprove. The program continues to receive far more backing from younger people than their elders. People under age 30 support the program by nearly three-to-one (64% approve, 22% disapprove), while among people age 50 and older about as many disapprove as approve.

People who are eligible for the program hold roughly the same views as those who are not. Just over half (53%) of those who have either enrolled or started looking into their options approve of the program, while 37% disapprove.

Medicare Prescription Drug Plan Continues to Draw Support

	Approve	Dis-approve	DK
	%	%	%
Mar 2006	51	32	17=100
Dec 2005	48	30	22=100
Dec 2003*	55	27	18=100
Age			
18-29	64	22	14=100
30-49	52	28	20=100
50-64	40	44	16=100
65+	44	41	15=100
Eligible for coverage?			
Yes	47	38	15=100
Started enrolling	53	37	10=100
No	51	32	17=100
Helping someone	53	42	5=100

* December 2003 survey conducted just after Congress passed the prescription drug law.

While more approve than disapprove of the new Medicare drug program, people volunteer criticism more frequently than praise when asked to describe their first impression of the program in their own words. The two specific problems cited most frequently are that the new program is complicated (mentioned by 18% of Americans) and that it will be costly for both seniors and the government (7%). Other negative comments are more general, such as that it's "a mess," it is "chaos" or that "it stinks." Overall, by more than two-to-one (48% vs. 18%) people are more likely to cite negative than positive aspects of the program when offering their top-of-the-mind impressions.

Impressions of Medicare Drug Program

Percent Saying...	Total	65+
Complicated/Confusing	18	19
General negative (A mess/Chaos/Stinks)	16	24
Costly/Expensive	7	7
Will be helpful seniors	5	4
Limits on drug choices	2	1
Scam/Drug company boondoggle	2	1
Unfair/Inequitable	1	1
Timely/necessary	1	2
Not enough	2	2
Big government/Socialism	1	2
Tone of Impressions...		
Negative/Criticism	48	56
Positive/Praise	18	20
Neutral/Descriptive	10	9

Seniors (ages 65 and older), regardless of their enrollment status, hold similar impressions ofthe prescription drug program as does the general public. In particular, they are no more likely to criticize it for being confusing or costly. While there

are more negative assessments from seniors, they tend to be general statements such as that the system is "a mess."

The public's sense of who is helped and hurt by the new program has not shifted significantly from December. On balance, more say the program will be good for seniors (50%) than bad for seniors (33%). However, it is drug companies that are seen as the clear winners. There is somewhat more pessimism about the costliness of the program today – 48% believe it will end up being bad for the federal budget deficit, up from 42% in December.

Is the Prescription Drug Plan Good or Bad for...

	Good	Bad	(Vol.) No effect	DK
	%	%	%	%
Drug companies	59	19	1	21=100
Seniors on Medicare	50	33	*	17=100
The financial stability of Medicare	37	38	1	24=100
The federal budget deficit	27	48	3	22=100

Experiences with Medicare Enrollment

Most seniors (87%) say they are eligible for the new Medicare prescription drug program. Among all eligible, about half (52%) say they have taken steps to enroll in the program. Another 13% haven't looked into it yet and a third say they don't plan to enroll at all. People's experiences with the enrollment process vary greatly. In particular, those who have already finished enrolling tend to be satisfied with both the process itself and the likelihood that it will help them. By comparison, people who have looked into it but haven't formally enrolled yet appear to be more skeptical that they will end up doing well under the new plan, though the number of respondents in this category is quite small (N=66).

About Half of Eligible Americans Report Having Taken Steps to Enroll

	%
Already enrolled	34
Learning about options	18
Haven't looked into it yet	13
Don't plan to enroll	33
Don't know	2
	100
Number of cases	(369)

So Far, Most Say Process is Easy

By a 54% to 38% margin, more people who have enrolled or looked into enrolling say the process is easy, not difficult. But there is a big difference of opinion between these two groups. Those who have already finished found the process to be easy by two-to-one (64% to 32%) while those still investigating their options tend to say the process is difficult (50%) or not easy (35%). This gap is not necessarily surprising – if the process was difficult it would take a person longer to finish, while those for whom it was easy are already done.

Among those who are not eligible for the program, one in five have helped a close friend or family member in the enrollment process. These helpers tend to find the process to be more difficult. This could be for a variety of reasons, such as that the seniors who are facing the most difficult enrollment choices may be the most likely to have asked for help.

Experiences With Medicare Enrollment

	All enrollees[1]	Fini-shed	Still looking	Helped someone[2]
Enrolling is...	%	%	%	%
Easy	54	64	35	37
Difficult	38	32	50	60
Don't know	8	4	15	3
	100	100	100	100
Used Medicare website				
Yes	24	26	20	37
No	73	71	77	61
Don't know	3	3	3	2
	100	100	100	100
How many options?				
One	14	15	12	7
Two/Three	29	26	34	46
More	37	41	31	40
4-9	17	18	15	24
10-29	3	4	2	5
30+	5	7	1	4
More, but DK	12	12	13	7
Don't know	20	18	23	7
	100	100	100	100
Number of cases	(191)	(125)	(66)	(220)

[1] Includes those already enrolled and those who are still looking at their options.

[2] Non-eligible people who have helped a friend or family member with their Medicare enrollment.

A third of people enrolling in Medicare's prescription drug program (35%) say they have gotten help during the enrollment process – 27% specifically said they got help from friends or family, while another 8% volunteered that the help came from other sources.

Choosing Coverage Options

When asked how many coverage options they had to choose from, one-in-five who are enrolled or enrolling couldn't say, and another 14% said they only had one option to choose from. Among those who could recall their choices, the median number of plan options enrollees report having available to them is three, meaning half say they had three or fewer choices, while the other half had three or more.

Affordability was far and away the most frequently mentioned concern for people in choosing a drug plan under Medicare. Asked to describe, in their own words, the main thing they were looking for in a plan, 63% of enrollees, whether already enrolled or still in the process, cited costs, including concerns about co-pays, deductibles and premiums. One-in-four enrollees specifically mentioned looking at the coverage provided by the plans, what drugs are covered and finding a plan that fits their own medical needs.

What Enrollees are Looking For

Main consideration...	All enrollees[1] %	Helped someone[2] %
Cost/Affordability/Prices	63	52
Drugs covered/Fits my needs	25	33
Convenience/Simplicity	3	6
Reputation/Service	2	1
Other	6	8
Don't know	5	5
Number of cases	(191)	(220)

Figures add to more than 100% because respondents could give more than one response.

[1] Includes those already enrolled and those who are still looking at their options.

[2] Non-eligible people who have helped a friend or family member with their Medicare enrollment asked about the person they helped.

People who helped someone else to enroll also report costs as the biggest factor affecting their friend's or family member's choice, though drug coverage is mentioned somewhat more often by this group. Relatively few in either group say they prioritized such factors as convenience, simplicity, the company's reputation or service in terms of personal help or assistance when choosing a drug plan.

About a quarter (24%) of people enrolling in the prescription drug program say that either they or someone helping them has used the Medicare website to help them learn about their options. This includes 40% of enrollees who themselves are internet users, and 17% of those who do not use the internet and may in this case have gotten help from friends or family.

People who are helping someone else to enroll are more likely to have turned to Medicare's website (37% report using it). As these helpers are younger, their internet use is significantly higher in general.

Solving the Enrollment Puzzle

Overall, 43% of Americans who are enrolled or enrolling say they are very confident they have picked or will be able to choose the prescription drug plan that best fits their needs. Those who have already finished the process of enrolling are the most confident – 57% say they are very confident and another 22% somewhat confident. Those still learning about their options are less optimistic that they will solve the puzzle – just 18% feel very confident they will be able to locate the plan that best fits their needs, 43% are somewhat confident, and more than a third are either not too confident (19%) or not at all confident (17%).

Satisfaction With Medicare Choice

	All enrollees[1]	Fini-shed	Still looking	Helped someone[2]
Confident picked best plan for you	%	%	%	%
Very	43	57	18	28
Somewhat	29	22	43	46
Not too	11	6	19	15
Not at all	12	9	17	8
Don't know	5	6	3	3
	100	100	100	100
Effect on you				
Will save money	39	48	21	42
Will cost more	18	18	18	25
About the same	26	24	30	25
Don't know	7	3	15	7
(No prescriptions)	10	7	16	1
	100	100	100	100
Number of cases	(191)	(125)	(66)	(220)

[1] Includes those already enrolled and those who are still looking at their options.

[2] Non-eligible people who have helped a friend or family member with their Medicare enrollment asked about the person they helped.

Those who have already finished are also the most optimistic about the program's effect on their own prescription drug costs. Nearly half (48%) say the new program will save them money over what they paid before, while 18% believe it will cost them more. Those still investigating their options take a more mixed view – only 21% think they will end up ahead, while 18% feel it will end up costing them more. How many prescriptions a person currently has is unrelated to expectations about cost savings – those who report having five or more regular prescriptions themselves are no more or less likely to foresee savings from the program than do those with fewer prescriptions.

Costs, Not Availability, Are Biggest Medical Problem

Just over half of Americans report that the possibility of paying for the costs of long-term care in a nursing home is a major problem for them and their family, and just as many see paying for the costs of a major illness as a major problem. These top the list of personal medical problems Americans point to as having a major impact on their lives. About half also cite the possibility of losing insurance if they lose or change jobs as a major problem, and the same number worry a lot that their employer might cut back on health care benefits or make them pay a larger share of the costs.

"Major" Medical Care Problems

Percent saying each is a "major problem"	Apr 1993 %	Jun 1994 %	Mar 2006 %
Possibility of long term care costs	68	64	55
Paying for a major illness	63	51	54
Possibility of losing insurance with job change/loss	59	50	52
Possibility employer will cut benefits	53	42	51
Paying for prescription drugs	--	--	44
Paying for routine care	40	32	38
Quality of hospital care in community	23	15	26
Availability of care in your community	20	--	25

Some concerns are less widespread than they were in the early 1990s both before and during the period in which Bill Clinton's health care reform proposal was being debated. Long- term costs of nursing home or elderly care were a much greater concern in the 1990s than they are today, and in 1993 more Americans said the costs of a major illness was a major problem for them.

Other concerns have shifted in a less uniform way. Currently, 51% say the possibility of employer benefit cuts is a major problem for them and their family. This is up from 42% in the summer of 1994, and about even with the 53% who saw this as a major problem in April of 1993.

Access to health care is less widely viewed as a major problem. About one-in-four (26%) rate the quality of hospital care in their community as a major problem in their lives – this too is up from 15% in 1994 but about even with the 23% who rated this as a major problem in 1993. The availability of medical care is a major problem for 25% of Americans.

Public Divided over Guantanamo Policy

Americans are divided evenly over whether they favor (44%) or oppose (43%) the government's policy of holding suspected terrorists at Guantanamo Bay without formal charges or trial. Not surprisingly, there is a sizeable party divide on this issue, with 63% of Republicans supporting the policy and 57% of Democrats opposed. Unlike many issues related to Iraq and foreign policy where independents align more closely with Democrats, on this question independents are divided evenly, with 44% in favor and 45% opposed.

U.S. Policy of Holding Suspected Terrorists at Guantanamo Bay Without Formal Charges

	Favor	Oppose	DK
	%	%	%
Total	44	43	13=100
Republicans	63	26	11=100
Democrats	31	57	12=100
Independent	44	45	11=100
Men	52	40	8=100
Women	37	46	17=100
White	47	41	12=100
Black	30	61	9=100
18-29	40	45	15=100
30-49	48	44	8=100
50-64	46	41	13=100
65+	38	43	19=100
College grad	46	47	7=100
Some college	47	42	11=100
HS grad or less	41	42	17=100
Northeast	38	48	14=100
Midwest	48	40	12=100
South	45	41	14=100
West	43	45	12=100
Protestant	44	41	15=100
White evangelical	51	34	15=100
White mainline	45	41	14=100
Black Protestant	28	59	13=100
Catholic	48	43	9=100
White, non-Hisp.	49	42	9=100
Secular	37	52	11=100

Aside from politics, the most substantial differences of opinion over Guantanamo Bay fall along racial and gender lines. Blacks oppose the Guantanamo policy by two-to-one (61%-30%) while whites lean in favor by a 47%-to-41% margin. Men also favor the policy by a 52%-to-40% margin, while women are more likely to oppose it (46%) than to be in favor (37%). Women are also twice as likely as men not to have made up their minds either way.

There are no substantial differences of opinion across generations, education levels, or religious backgrounds, other than that non-religious seculars are the least supportive among major religious groups (aside from black Protestants). There is somewhat more opposition to the Guantanamo policy in the Northeast, reflecting the presence of more Democrats in that region.

ABOUT THIS SURVEY

Results for this survey are based on telephone interviews conducted under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates International among a nationwide sample of 1,405 adults, 18 years of age or older, from March 8-12, 2006. For results based on the total sample, one can say with 95% confidence that the error attributable to sampling is plus or minus 3 percentage points. For results based on form 1 (N=710) and form 2 (N=695) the sampling error is plus or minus 4 percentage points.

In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

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The Pew Research Center for the People & the Press is an independent opinion research group that studies attitudes toward the press, politics and public policy issues. We are sponsored by The Pew Charitable Trusts and are one of six projects that make up the Pew Research Center, a nonpartisan "fact tank" that provides information on the issues, attitudes and trends shaping America and the world.

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All of the Center's research and reports are collaborative products based on the input and analysis of the entire Center staff consisting of:

Andrew Kohut, Director
Jodie Allen, Senior Editor
Scott Keeter, Director of Survey Research
Carroll Doherty and Michael Dimock, Associate Directors
Carolyn Funk and Richard Wike, Senior Project Directors
Nilanthi Samaranayake, Peyton Craighill, Nicole Speulda and Courtney Kennedy, Project Directors
Kate DeLuca, Research Assistant

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PEW RESEARCH CENTER FOR THE PEOPLE & THE PRESS
MARCH 2006 NEWS INTEREST INDEX
FINAL TOPLINE
March 8-12, 2006
N = 1,405

QUESTIONS 1-9 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED

ASK ALL:

Q.10 Now I will read a list of some stories covered by news organizations this past month. As I read each item, tell me if you happened to follow this news story very closely, fairly closely, not too closely, or not at all closely. **[INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE. OBSERVE FORM SPLITS]**

		Very Closely	Fairly Closely	Not too Closely	Not at all Closely	DK/ Ref
a.	News about the current situation in Iraq	43	38	12	6	1=100
b.	The debate over an Arab-owned company possibly running U.S. ports[1]	41	27	13	18	1=100
c.	Rebuilding efforts in areas affected by Hurricane Katrina	36	42	14	7	1=100
ASK FORM 1 ONLY [N=710]:						
d.F1	Vice President Dick Cheney's hunting accident	31	32	20	16	1=100
e.F1	Reports about the financial links between lobbyists and members of Congress	16	20	30	32	2=100
ASK FORM 2 ONLY [N=695]:						
f.F2	Outbreaks of bird flu in different parts of the world	21	36	24	19	*=100
g.F2	Iran's nuclear research program	24	31	22	22	1=100
ASK ALL:						
h.	South Dakota's new law banning all abortions unless the mother's life is in danger	21	32	20	26	1=100

NOTE: TRENDS FOR CERTAIN ITEMS IN QUESTION 10 ARE AVAILABLE IN THE MARCH 15TH RELEASE

[1] From March 8-9 the story was worded "The possibility that an Arab-owned company might be allowed to run U.S. ports."

Q.11 Recently, South Dakota passed a law that bans abortion in all cases except to save the life of the mother. Would you favor or oppose a law like this at the national level?

34	Favor
58	Oppose
8	Don't know/Refused
100	

Q.12 Do you think the issue of abortion is **[READ]**

28	A critical issue facing the country
38	One among many important issues
32	Not that important compared to other issues
2	**[VOL. DO NOT READ]** Don't know/Refused
100	

Q.13 Over the past year, have you, yourself, done anything to express your views on abortion, such as by donating money to groups, participating in marches or meetings, or writing letters to the news media or your representatives?

13	Yes
86	No
1	Don't know/Refused
100	

QUESTIONS 14-18 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED:

NO QUESTIONS 19 THROUGH 24

ASK ALL:

Q.25 As I list some programs and proposals that are being discussed in this country today, please tell me whether you strongly favor, favor, oppose, or strongly oppose each. The first one is... **(READ AND RANDOMIZE; OBSERVE FORM SPLITS)**.

		------ FAVOR ------			----- OPPOSE -------			
		Net	*Strongly Favor*	*Favor*	Net	*Strongly Oppose*	*Oppose*	Don't know
a.	The death penalty for persons convicted of murder	65	*27*	*38*	27	*8*	*19*	8=100
	July, 2005	68	*32*	*36*	24	*8*	*16*	8=100
	Mid-July, 2003	64	*28*	*36*	30	*10*	*20*	6=100
	March, 2002	67	*33*	*34*	26	*9*	*17*	7=100
	March, 2001	66	*30*	*36*	27	*10*	*17*	7=100
	September, 1999	74	*41*	*33*	22	*7*	*15*	4=100
	June, 1996	78	*43*	*35*	18	*7*	*11*	4=100

		------ FAVOR ------			----- OPPOSE -------			
		Net	*Strongly Favor*	*Favor*	Net	*Strongly Oppose*	*Oppose*	Don't know
b.	Making it more DIFFICULT for a woman to get an abortion	37	*15*	*22*	56	*24*	*32*	7=100
	December, 2004	36	*19*	*17*	55	*29*	*26*	9=100
	Early February, 2004	36	*17*	*19*	58	*30*	*28*	6=100
	November, 2003	35	*19*	*16*	57	*29*	*28*	8=100
	August, 2003[2]	36	*17*	*19*	57	*30*	*27*	7=100
	May, 1993	32	*15*	*17*	60	*35*	*25*	8=100
	May, 1992	30	--	--	62	--	--	8=100
	May, 1990	38	*21*	*17*	55	*29*	*26*	7=100
	May, 1987	41	*18*	*23*	51	*33*	*18*	8=100
	May, 1985	47	--	--	49	--	--	4=100
ITEMS c. AND d. HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE								
e.	The U.S. government's policy of holding suspected terrorists at Guantanamo Bay without formal charges or trials	44	*15*	*29*	43	*12*	*31*	13=100
f.	Allowing gays and lesbians to adopt children	46	*14*	*32*	48	*26*	*22*	6=100
	September, 1999	38	*10*	*28*	57	*30*	*27*	5=100
ASK FORM 1 ONLY [N=710]:								
g.F1	Allowing gays and lesbians to marry legally	39	*10*	*29*	51	*28*	*23*	10=100
	July, 2005	36	*13*	*23*	53	*31*	*22*	11=100
	December, 2004	32	*14*	*18*	61	*38*	*23*	7=100
	August, 2004	29	*8*	*21*	60	*35*	*25*	11=100
	July, 2004	32	*10*	*22*	56	*33*	*23*	12=100
	March, 2004	32	*10*	*22*	59	*35*	*24*	9=100
	Early February, 2004	30	*9*	*21*	63	*42*	*21*	7=100
	November, 2003	30	*10*	*20*	62	*41*	*21*	8=100
	October, 2003	31	*9*	*21*	58	*33*	*25*	12=100
	Mid-July, 2003	38	*10*	*28*	53	*30*	*23*	9=100
	March, 2001	35	*8*	*27*	57	*34*	*23*	8=100
	June, 1996	27	*6*	*21*	65	*41*	*24*	8=100
ASK FORM 2 ONLY [N=695]:								
h.F2	Allowing gays and lesbians to serve openly in the military	60	*20*	*40*	32	*13*	*19*	8=100
	July, 2005	58	*15*	*43*	32	*15*	*17*	10=100
	July, 1994	52	*16*	*36*	45	*26*	*19*	3=100

QUESTIONS 26-29 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED
QUESTIONS 30-31 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

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[2] In August 2003 and earlier the question was worded: "Changing the laws to make it more difficult for a woman to get an abortion."

On a different subject...

ASK ALL:

Q.32 As I read from a list, tell me whether or not the item I read is a major problem for you and your family. First... **(READ AND RANDOMIZE; OBSERVE FORM SPLITS)** is this a major problem for you or not a major problem?

		Major Problem	Not a Major Problem	Don't Know
a.	Paying for the cost of routine medical care	38	61	1=100
	June, 1994	32	67	1=100
	April, 1993	40	60	*=100
b.	Paying for the cost of a major illness	54	44	2=100
	June, 1994	51	47	2=100
	April, 1993	63	36	1=100
ASK FORM 1 ONLY [N=710]:				
c.F1	The possibility of paying the cost of long term care in a nursing home for you or a member of your family	55	43	2=100
	June, 1994	64	32	4=100
	April, 1993	68	29	3=100
ASK FORM 2 ONLY [N=695]:				
c.F2	Paying for the cost of long term care in a nursing home for you or a member of your family	50	48	2=100
ASK FORM 1 ONLY [N=710]:				
d.F1	The possibility that your employer may cut back on health care benefits or make you pay a larger share of the costs	51	45	4=100
	June, 1994	42	52	6=100
	April, 1993	53	42	5=100
ASK FORM 2 ONLY [N=695]:				
d.F2	Your employer cutting back on health care benefits or making you pay a larger share of the costs	52	45	3=100
ASK FORM 1 ONLY [N=710]:				
e.F1	The possibility that you might lose your insurance if you lose or change jobs	52	45	3=100
	June, 1994	50	46	4=100
	April, 1993	59	37	4=100
ASK FORM 2 ONLY [N=695]:				
e.F2	Losing your insurance if you lose or change jobs	63	36	1=100
ASK ALL:				
f.	The availability of medical care in your community	25	74	1=100
	April, 1993	20	79	1=100
g.	The quality of hospital care in your community	26	71	3=100
	June, 1994	15	83	2=100
	April 1993	23	75	2=100
h.	Paying for the costs of prescription drugs	44	55	1=100

ASK FORM 1 ONLY [N=710]:

Q.33F1 Thinking about the country as a whole, do you think we spend too much, too little or the right amount on health care?

		June 1994	April 1993
26	Too much	38	36
57	Too little	40	49
9	Right amount	13	8
8	Don't know/Refused	9	7
100		100	100

ASK FORM 2 ONLY [N=695]:

Thinking about the country as a whole,

ROTATE Q.34AF2 AND Q.34BF2:

Q.34AF2 Do you think the government spends too much, too little or the right amount on health care?

11	Too much
70	Too little
11	Right amount
8	Don't know/Refused **(VOL.)**
100	

Q.34BF2 Do you think the average American spends too much, too little or the right amount on health care?

65	Too much
17	Too little
12	Right amount
6	Don't know/Refused **(VOL.)**
100	

ASK ALL:

Q.35 There is now a new Medicare law that includes some coverage of prescription drug costs for seniors. Overall, would you say you strongly approve, approve, DISapprove, or strongly disapprove of the way Medicare will now cover prescription drug costs?

		Dec 2005[3]	Dec 2003[4]
12	Strongly approve	13	12
39	Approve	35	43
22	Disapprove	20	17
10	Strongly disapprove	10	10
17	Don't know/Refused **(VOL.)**	22	18
100		100	100

[3] In December 2005 the question did not include the words "for seniors."

[4] In December 2003 the question was worded "As you may know, Congress passed a new Medicare law that includes some coverage of prescription drug costs and changes the way Medicare covers other medical expenses for senior citizens. Overall, would you say you strongly approve, approve, DISapprove, or strongly disapprove of these recent changes?"

Q.36 Please tell me what first comes to mind when you think about the new Medicare prescription drug program… just the first word or thought that comes to mind. **(OPEN-END. PROBE ONCE IF RESPONDENT ANSWERS "DON'T KNOW". ACCEPT UP TO TWO RESPONSES, BUT DO NOT PROBE FOR SECOND RESPONSE).**

		Dec 2005
48	**NEGATIVE EVALUATIONS (NET)**	**44**
18	Complicated/confusing	14
7	Costly/Expensive **(SUB-NET)**	9
6	*– Cost generally*	*4*
1	*– Costly to seniors/high deductible/loss of prior coverage/can't afford it*	*3*
0	*– Cost to government/inefficient/deficits/higher taxes*	*2*
2	Not enough drug choices/limited options	2
2	Doesn't go far enough	3
2	Scam/boondoggle/drug company/corporate scheme	3
1	Unfair/inequitable	3
1	Big government/socialism/welfare/bureaucracy	2
16	Other negatives	9
18	**POSITIVE EVALUATIONS (NET)**	**20**
5	Helpful/helps seniors	6
1	Timely/necessary/"About time"	2
1	Saves money/efficient	1
1	Affordability of drugs/cheaper drugs	1
*	Helps low income/poor	1
11	Other positives	10
10	**NEUTRAL EVALUATIONS (NET)**	**10**
2	Better than nothing/could be better	1
2	Mentions parents/grandparents/older people	4
1	Good step, but not enough	2
1	Not eligible/doesn't affect me/don't want it	1
4	Other Neutral/Mixed	3
5	All other mentions	7
19	Nothing/Don't know	19

ASK FORM 2 ONLY [N=695]:

Q.37F2 On balance, do you think the new Medicare prescription drug plan will be very good, good, bad, or very bad for **[READ AND RANDOMIZE]**?

		Very Good	Good	Bad	Very bad	**(VOL)** Not much affected	DK/ ref.
a.F2	Seniors on Medicare	12	38	22	11	*	17=100
	December, 2005	11	42	21	9	1	16=100
b.F2	Drug companies	19	40	15	4	1	21=100
	December, 2005	22	36	17	3	3	19=100
c.F2	The financial stability of Medicare	5	32	28	10	1	24=100
	December, 2005	5	36	28	7	2	22=100
d.F2	The federal budget deficit	4	23	34	14	3	22=100
	December, 2005	4	23	30	12	6	25=100

ASK ALL:

Q.38 Are you yourself eligible for the new Medicare prescription drug program?

		Dec 2005
21	Yes, eligible for new Medicare program	22
72	No, not eligible	71
7	Don't know/Refused	7
100		100

IF 'YES' (1 IN Q.38) ASK [N=369]:

Q.39 Have you already enrolled in the new Medicare prescription drug program, are you still learning about your options, have you not looked into it yet, or don't you plan to enroll?

34	Already enrolled
18	Learning about options
13	Haven't looked into it yet
33	Don't plan to enroll
2	Don't know/Refused
100	

IF 'NO' OR 'DK' (2,9 IN Q.38) ASK [N=1,036]:

Q.40 Have you helped a close friend or family member in learning about THEIR options under the new Medicare program, or not? **[IF YES:** Are you currently helping someone, or have they already enrolled?**]**

20	Yes, helped close friend or family member
8	Yes, currently helping
12	Yes, already enrolled/not helping anymore
*	Yes, both **(VOL.)**
79	No
1	Don't know/Refused
100	

IF ENROLLED/LEARNING (1,2 IN Q.39) ASK [N=191]:

Q.41 (Did you have/Have you had) any help from family or friends in learning about the program, or not?

27	Yes, family or friends
8	Yes other help **(VOL.)**
64	No
1	Don't know/Refused
100	

IF HELPED/HELPING (1,2,3 IN Q.40) READ:
I have a few questions about the help you gave someone with this program. If you have helped more than one person, think about the person that you've worked with the most RECENTLY when answering.

NOTE: QUESTIONS 42 THROUGH 50 WERE ASKED OF BOTH PEOPLE WHO ARE THEMSELVES "ALREADY ENROLLED" OR "LEARNING ABOUT OPTIONS" IN Q.39 AS WELL AS PEOPLE WHO "HAVE HELPED A CLOSE FRIEND OR FAMILY MEMBER" IN Q.40. SLIGHT DIFFERENCES IN QUESTION WORDING ACROSS THESE TWO GROUPS ARE SHOWN BELOW.

Q.42a/b (Was/Is) the process of enrolling in the new prescription drug program **[READ]**

Enrolled or enrolling	Helping friend or family	
34	8	Very easy
20	29	Fairly easy
14	30	Fairly difficult --OR–
24	30	Very difficult
8	3	Don't know/Refused **[VOL.]**
100	100	
N=(191)	**(220)**	

Q.43a About how many different prescription drug plans (did/do) you have to choose from… one, two, three, or more than that? **[IF "More" ASK:** "About how many options were there?"**]**
Q.43b About how many different prescription drug plans (did/do) the person you helped have to choose from… one, two, three, or more than that? **[IF "More" ASK:** "About how many options were there?"**]**

Enrolled or enrolling	Helping friend or family	
14	7	One
11	17	Two
18	29	Three
37	40	More than three
17	*24*	*4-9*
3	*5*	*10-29*
5	*4*	*30+*
12	*7*	*More than three, but don't know how many*
20	7	Don't know/Refused
100	100	
N=(191)	**(220)**	

Q.44a What (was/is) the main thing you (were/are) looking for in choosing a prescription drug plan?
Q.44b What (was/is) the main thing the person you helped (was/is) looking for in choosing a prescription drug plan? **[OPEN END]**

Enrolled or enrolling	Helping friend or family	
63	52	Cost/Affordability/Cheapest/Lowest copay-deductible-premiums
25	33	Coverage/Drug options/Fits my needs/Formulary
3	6	Convenience/Simplicity
2	1	Reputation of company/Service & help
1	0	Least change for me from before
1	0	Had no choices/Plan was chosen for me
2	0	Nothing/Not looking for anything
2	8	Other
5	5	Don't know/Refused
N=(191)	**(220)**	

Q.45a Did you, or someone helping you, use the official Medicare website to compare plans, or not?
Q.45b Did you, or the person you helped, use the official Medicare website to compare plans, or not?

Enrolled or enrolling	Helping friend or family	
24	37	Yes
73	61	No
3	2	Don't know/Refused
100	100	
N=(191)	**(220)**	

Q.46a How confident are you that you (were/will be) able to choose the prescription drug plan that best fits your needs? **[READ]**
Q.46b How confident are you that the person you helped (was/will be) able to choose the prescription drug plan that best fits their needs? **[READ]**

Enrolled or enrolling	Helping friend or family	
43	28	Very confident
29	46	Somewhat confident
11	15	Not too confident
12	8	Not at all confident
5	3	Don't know/Refused
100	100	
N=(191)	**(220)**	

Q.47a About how many different prescription drugs do you take on a regular basis?
Q.47b As best you know, about how many different prescription drugs does this person take on a regular basis?

Enrolled or enrolling	Helping friend or family	
10	1	None
7	2	One
13	7	Two
13	10	Three
45	60	4 to 9
10	15	10 to 19
1	2	20 or more
1	3	Don't know/Refused
100	100	
N=(191)	**(220)**	

IF HAS PRESCRIPTIONS (1 – 100 IN Q.47a/b) ASK [N=383]:

Q.48a Compared to what you (were/are) paying for prescriptions (before/now), do you think the new program will save you money, cost you more, or will prescriptions be about the same for you as they were before?

Q.48b Compared to what this person (was/is) paying for prescriptions (before/now), do you think the new program will save them money, cost them more, or will prescriptions be about the same for them as they were before?

IF "SAVES MONEY" (1 IN Q.48a/b) ASK:

Q.49a Do you think it will save you a lot or only a little?

Q.49b Do you think it will save them a lot or only a little?

IF "COSTS MORE" (2 IN Q.48a/b) ASK:

Q.50a Do you think it will cost you a lot more or only a little more?

Q.50b Do you think it will cost them a lot more or only a little more?

Enrolled or enrolling	Helping friend or family	
43	43	Saves money
26	*18*	*A lot*
14	*25*	*Only a little*
3	*0*	*Don't know/Refused*
20	26	Costs more
14	*13*	*A lot*
6	*11*	*Only a little*
*	*2*	*Don't know/Refused*
29	27	About the same
8	4	Don't know/Refused
100	100	
N=(171)	**(212)**	

QUESTIONS 51-75 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED

Now, just a few questions for statistical purposes only.

ASK ALL:

PARTY In politics TODAY, do you consider yourself a Republican, Democrat, or Independent?

	Republican	Democrat	Independent	(VOL) No Preference	(VOL) Other Party	Don't know
March, 2006	28	34	30	4	*	4=100
February, 2006	30	33	31	3	*	3=100
January, 2006	28	32	32	5	*	3=100
December, 2005	29	34	31	4	*	2=100
Late November, 2005	27	34	29	5	1	4=100
Early November, 2005	28	34	31	5	*	2=100
Late October, 2005	29	33	31	5	*	2=100
Early October, 2005	26	34	34	4	*	2=100
September 8-11, 2005	31	32	33	3	*	1=100
September 6-7, 2005	27	33	33	4	*	3=100
July, 2005	31	34	29	4	*	2=100
June, 2005	30	32	32	4	*	2=100
Mid-May, 2005	30	34	29	4	*	3=100
Late March, 2005	29	32	36	2	*	1=100
Mid-March, 2005	30	34	29	4	*	3=100
Yearly Totals						
2005	30	33	31	4	*	2=100
2004	30	33	30	4	*	3=100
2003	30	31	31	5	*	3=100
2002	30	31	30	5	1	3=100
2001	29	34	29	5	*	3=100
2001 Post-Sept 11	*31*	*32*	*28*	*5*	*1*	*3=100*
2001 Pre-Sept 11	*28*	*35*	*30*	*5*	*	*2=100*
2000	28	33	29	6	*	4=100
1999	27	33	34	4	*	2=100
1998	28	33	32	5	*	2=100
1997	28	33	32	4	1	2=100

	Republican	Democrat	Independent	No Preference/ Other/DK
1996	29	33	33	5=100
1995	32	30	34	4=100
1994	30	32	34	4=100
1993	27	34	34	5=100
1992	28	33	35	4=100
1991	31	32	33	4=100
1990	31	33	30	6=100

	Rep	Dem	Independent/ No Pref/Oth/DK
1989	33	33	34=100
1987	26	35	39=100

IF ANSWERED 3, 4, 5 OR 9 IN PARTY, ASK:
PARTYLN As of today do you lean more to the Republican Party or more to the Democratic Party?

	Republican	Democrat	Refused to lean
March, 2006	11	14	13=38%
February, 2006	11	16	10=37%
January, 2006	10	16	14=40%
December, 2005	10	16	11=37%
Late November, 2005	9	13	17=39%
Early November, 2005	11	14	13=38%
Late October, 2005	11	15	12=38%
Early October, 2005	11	18	11=40%
September 8-11, 2005	10	18	9=37%
September 6-7, 2005	10	15	15=40%
July, 2005	9	15	11=35%
June, 2005	10	16	12=38%
Mid-May, 2005	9	13	14=36%
Late March, 2005	13	17	9=39%
December, 2004	14	12	9=35%
August, 2003	12	16	14=42%
August, 2002	12	13	13=38%
September, 2000	11	13	15=39%
Late September, 1999	14	15	16=45%
August, 1999	15	15	12=42%

LESBIAN, GAY, & BISEXUAL CONCERNS

APA POLICY STATEMENT

Sexual Orientation, Parents, & Children

Adopted by the APA Council of Representatives July 28 & 30, 2004.

RESEARCH SUMMARY

Lesbian and Gay Parents

Many lesbians and gay men are parents. In the 2000 U. S. Census, 33% of female same-sex couple households and 22% of male same-sex couple households reported at least one child under the age of 18 living in the home. Despite the significant presence of at least 163,879 households headed by lesbian or gay parents in U.S. society, three major concerns about lesbian and gay parents are commonly voiced (Falk, 1994; Patterson, Fulcher & Wainright, 2002). These include concerns that lesbians and gay men are mentally ill, that lesbians are less maternal than heterosexual women, and that lesbians' and gay men's relationships with their sexual partners leave little time for their relationships with their children. In general, research has failed to provide a basis for any of these concerns (Patterson, 2000, 2004a; Perrin, 2002; Tasker, 1999; Tasker & Golombok, 1997). First, homosexuality is not a psychological disorder (Conger, 1975). Although exposure to prejudice and discrimination based on sexual orientation may cause acute distress (Mays & Cochran, 2001; Meyer, 2003), there is no reliable evidence that homosexual orientation per se impairs psychological functioning. Second, beliefs that lesbian and gay adults are not fit parents have no empirical foundation (Patterson, 2000, 2004a; Perrin, 2002). Lesbian and heterosexual women have not been found to differ markedly in their approaches to child rearing (Patterson, 2000; Tasker, 1999). Members of gay and lesbian couples with children have been found to divide the work involved in childcare evenly, and to be satisfied with their relationships with their partners (Patterson, 2000, 2004a). The results of some studies suggest that lesbian mothers' and gay fathers' parenting skills may be superior to those of matched heterosexual parents. There is no scientific basis for concluding that lesbian mothers or gay fathers are unfit parents on the basis of their sexual orientation (Armesto, 2002; Patterson, 2000; Tasker & Golombok, 1997). On the contrary, results of research suggest that lesbian and gay parents are as likely as heterosexual parents to provide supportive and healthy environments for their children. Return to top of the page

Children of Lesbian and Gay Parents

As the social visibility and legal status of lesbian and gay parents has increased, three major concerns about the influence of lesbian and gay parents on children have been often voiced (Falk, 1994; Patterson, Fulcher & Wainright, 2002). One is that the children of lesbian and gay parents will experience more difficulties in the area of sexual identity than children of heterosexual parents. For instance, one such concern is that children brought up by lesbian mothers or gay fathers will show disturbances in gender identity and/or in gender role behavior. A second category of concerns involves

aspects of children's personal development other than sexual identity. For example, some observers have expressed fears that children in the custody of gay or lesbian parents would be more vulnerable to mental breakdown, would exhibit more adjustment difficulties and behavior problems, or would be less psychologically healthy than other children. A third category of concerns is that children of lesbian and gay parents will experience difficulty in social relationships. For example, some observers have expressed concern that children living with lesbian mothers or gay fathers will be stigmatized, teased, or otherwise victimized by peers. Another common fear is that children living with gay or lesbian parents will be more likely to be sexually abused by the parent or by the parent's friends or acquaintances.

Results of social science research have failed to confirm any of these concerns about children of lesbian and gay parents (Patterson, 2000, 2004a; Perrin, 2002; Tasker, 1999). Research suggests that sexual identities (including gender identity, gender-role behavior, and sexual orientation) develop in much the same ways among children of lesbian mothers as they do among children of heterosexual parents (Patterson, 2004a). Studies of other aspects of personal development (including personality, self-concept, and conduct) similarly reveal few differences between children of lesbian mothers and children of heterosexual parents (Perrin, 2002; Stacey & Biblarz, 2001; Tasker, 1999). However, few data regarding these concerns are available for children of gay fathers (Patterson, 2004b). Evidence also suggests that children of lesbian and gay parents have normal social relationships with peers and adults (Patterson, 2000, 2004a; Perrin, 2002; Stacey & Biblarz, 2001; Tasker, 1999; Tasker & Golombok, 1997). The picture that emerges from research is one of general engagement in social life with peers, parents, family members, and friends. Fears about children of lesbian or gay parents being sexually abused by adults, ostracized by peers, or isolated in single-sex lesbian or gay communities have received no scientific support. Overall, results of research suggest that the development, adjustment, and well-being of children with lesbian and gay parents do not differ markedly from that of children with heterosexual parents. Return to top of the page

Resolution

WHEREAS APA supports policy and legislation that promote safe, secure, and nurturing environments for all children (DeLeon, 1993, 1995; Fox, 1991; Levant, 2000);

WHEREAS APA has a long-established policy to deplore "all public and private discrimination against gay men and lesbians" and urges "the repeal of all discriminatory legislation against lesbians and gay men" (Conger, 1975);

WHEREAS the APA adopted the Resolution on Child Custody and Placement in 1976 (Conger, 1977, p. 432)

WHEREAS Discrimination against lesbian and gay parents deprives their children of benefits, rights, and privileges enjoyed by children of heterosexual married couples;

WHEREAS some jurisdictions prohibit gay and lesbian individuals and same-sex couples from adopting children, notwithstanding the great need for adoptive parents (Lofton v. Secretary, 2004);

WHEREAS there is no scientific evidence that parenting effectiveness is related to parental sexual orientation: lesbian and gay parents are as likely as heterosexual parents to provide supportive and healthy environments for their children (Patterson, 2000, 2004; Perrin, 2002; Tasker, 1999);

WHEREAS research has shown that the adjustment, development, and

psychological well-being of children is unrelated to parental sexual orientation and that the children of lesbian and gay parents are as likely as those of heterosexual parents to flourish (Patterson, 2004; Perrin, 2002; Stacey & Biblarz, 2001);

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the APA opposes any discrimination based on sexual orientation in matters of adoption, child custody and visitation, foster care, and reproductive health services;

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the APA believes that children reared by a same-sex couple benefit from legal ties to each parent;

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the APA supports the protection of parent-child relationships through the legalization of joint adoptions and second parent adoptions of children being reared by same-sex couples;

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that APA shall take a leadership role in opposing all discrimination based on sexual orientation in matters of adoption, child custody and visitation, foster care, and reproductive health services;

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that APA encourages psychologists to act to eliminate all discrimination based on sexual orientation in matters of adoption, child custody and visitation, foster care, and reproductive health services in their practice, research, education and training (American Psychological Association, 2002);

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the APA shall provide scientific and educational resources that inform public discussion and public policy development regarding discrimination based on sexual orientation in matters of adoption, child custody and visitation, foster care, and reproductive health services and that assist its members, divisions, and affiliated state, provincial, and territorial psychological associations.

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Phone: 202-336-6050 • TDD/TTY: 202-336-6123
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