
New Roper Survey:

Improving Access to Medicines May Encourage Uninsured Americans to Be More Proactive About Their Overall Health, but Change Is Needed to Overcome Other Barriers

Purpose of Survey

Roper Public Affairs conducted a nationwide survey on behalf of Pfizer Inc to better understand the impact of Pfizer's patient assistance programs on health behaviors of participants as well as the challenges faced by the uninsured. Pfizer's patient assistance programs provide Pfizer medicines for free or at a savings to qualifying patients without prescription coverage.

The survey was conducted among 1,400 people ages 18 to 64 and included people with insurance; people without insurance who do not participate in patient assistance programs; and people without insurance who participate in Pfizer's patient assistance program, **Pfizer Helpful Answers™**. Responses were compared across groups.

Synopsis of Key Findings

- 9 in 10 Pfizer Helpful Answers participants say they “always” or “usually” take their medicines as prescribed by their doctors, versus only half of the uninsured not participating in the program
- 6 in 10 Pfizer Helpful Answers participants report that since enrolling in the program, they visit the doctor more regularly for check-ups, compared with 3 in 10 of the uninsured not participating in the program
- 6 in 10 Pfizer Helpful Answers participants indicate that they keep informed about the latest health information, twice the rate of the uninsured who do not participate in the program
- 9 in 10 Pfizer Helpful Answers participants agree that participating in the program makes them feel more optimistic about their health

Recommended Action: Develop policies that ensure all Americans have access to needed care

While these results demonstrate that patient assistance programs help to break down some of the barriers to better health care, more needs to be done. Long-term policy solutions are required to ensure all Americans have insurance coverage to access needed care, including preventive care so that conditions are addressed before they become critical and more costly to treat.

Background

Uninsured Americans have difficulty accessing health care: Nearly 46 million people in the United States under the age of 65 – or approximately 1 in 6 people – lacked health insurance coverage in 2004, an increase of more than 6 million since 2000.¹ The lack of insurance often results in people waiting until conditions become critical – and more difficult and costly to treat – before seeking care.

Lack of insurance places burden on health system: The widespread lack of insurance has had a significant economic impact on the United States. The costs of uncompensated care – defined as the total amount of health care services provided to patients that is not paid by public or private insurance, or out-of-pocket by patients – was estimated to be \$41 billion in 2004, more than half of which was paid by the federal government.² In addition, the potential economic gain from uninterrupted coverage for all Americans has been estimated to be between \$65 and \$130 billion per year.³

Patient assistance programs help uninsured people get prescription medicines: Patient prescription assistance programs help address one challenge for the uninsured – getting access to the medicines prescribed by their doctors. Many pharmaceutical companies, including Pfizer, help patients in need get their medicines. Pfizer's patient assistance program is called **Pfizer Helpful Answers™**.

Key Findings Among Those Surveyed

The results of the national survey underscore how programs like Pfizer Helpful Answers (PHA) may be a catalyst for uninsured people to better manage their health and seek preventive care.

1 PHA participants are often those most in need.

Although Pfizer Helpful Answers has programs for people of any age or income, PHA participants generally have lower incomes and suffer from more medical conditions than the overall uninsured population. About half indicate that they have been without insurance for 5 or more years, and 6 in 10 say health care expenses have been “very difficult” to pay in the past year.

2 Participants take the medicines as prescribed by their doctors.

9 in 10 PHA participants report they “always” or “usually” take their medicines as prescribed by their doctor. By contrast, only half of the group of uninsured who do not participate in patient assistance programs report similar compliance levels.

3 Participants see their doctors more regularly.

6 in 10 PHA participants indicate that, since joining the program, they visit their doctor more regularly for check-ups. By contrast, only 3 in 10 of the uninsured who do not participate in patient assistance programs report that they receive regular check-ups.

4 Participants take steps in their daily lives to prevent illness.

More than 7 in 10 PHA participants diagnosed with high cholesterol and/or high blood pressure say they monitor the condition(s) regularly. These rates are statistically higher than those reported by the uninsured diagnosed with the same condition(s). Six in ten PHA participants also report that they keep informed about the latest health information, more than twice the rate of the uninsured who do not participate in patient assistance programs.

5 Participants feel less stress and financial pressure, fostering a more optimistic outlook.

3 in 4 PHA participants strongly agree that the program “helped to make my life less stressful” and agree that the program “took some financial pressure off me.” Additionally, nearly all PHA participants agree that using the program “helped me feel more optimistic about my health.”

Recommended Action: Develop long-term policies to expand health care coverage for all Americans

For the nearly 46 million uninsured Americans, difficulty in accessing medicines is just one of the barriers to improved health. This survey suggests that improving access to prescription medicines for uninsured Americans may help foster healthier behaviors. However, other significant barriers to better health care remain: 7 in 10 of the uninsured surveyed say they do not get regular check-ups because they do not have insurance and the doctor visits are too expensive. Six in ten also say that they do not have a primary care doctor. Long-term policy solutions are required to ensure all Americans have insurance coverage to access needed care, including preventive care so that conditions are addressed before they become critical and more costly to treat.

All stakeholders will need to work together to successfully address the needs of uninsured Americans. In the meantime, Pfizer is committed to helping Americans who live without coverage gain access to the medicines they need so they can better manage their health.

More Information About Patient Assistance Programs

For information on more than 475 public and private patient assistance programs, including Pfizer Helpful Answers, contact the Partnership for Prescription Assistance at 1-888-4PPA-NOW or at www.PPARx.org. If uninsured people you know need more information about how to get help paying for their Pfizer medicines, they can visit www.PfizerHelpfulAnswers.com or call 1-866-706-2400.

About Pfizer Helpful Answers: Pfizer Helpful Answers helps Americans without prescription coverage gain access to Pfizer medicines for free or at a savings. People of any age or income level who do not have prescription coverage are eligible to apply for the program, and those in the most need may qualify for free Pfizer medicines. In 2005 alone, Pfizer helped 2.1 million patients in the United States obtain access to 14.9 million Pfizer prescriptions valued at \$1.2 billion.⁴ Pfizer is committed to educating people about its assistance programs. Outreach efforts range from broad-reach advertising to local awareness-building events.

About this Study: A total of 1,402 interviews were completed. All respondents were between the ages of 18 and 64. All interviews were conducted by telephone (CATI) at a GfK interviewing facility. All interviews were conducted 3/14-4/19, 2006. Data reported for the insured, uninsured, and PHA participants can be projected to the national target population within a +/- 5 percentage point margin of error at a 95% confidence level. For more information about the study, log on to www.PfizerHelpfulAnswers.com/survey.

Notes

1. US Census Bureau. *Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2004*. August 2005, pp. 18, 60.
2. Kaiser Commission on Medicaid and the Uninsured. *The Uninsured: A Primer*. January 2006, p. 9.
3. Institute of Medicine. *Hidden Costs, Value Lost*. June 2003, p. 64.
4. Calculated using wholesale acquisition cost for programs offering free medicines and amount of savings provided to patients for programs offering savings.