

Survey Shows Most Medicare Beneficiaries Do Not Understand Prescription Drug Benefit 'Doughnut Hole' Coverage Gap

Kaiser Daily Health Policy Report
Dateline: Tuesday, November 18, 2008

Sixty-two percent of Medicare beneficiaries do not fully understand the so-called "doughnut hole" in the prescription drug benefit, and 28% do not understand the coverage gap at all or are not aware of the gap, according to a survey released on Monday by [Medco Health Solutions](#), the [AP/Seattle Post-Intelligencer](#) reports. For the telephone survey, conducted by [Directive Analytics](#) and funded by Medco, researchers interviewed 1,000 randomly selected Medicare beneficiaries nationwide.

According to the survey, 39% of Medicare beneficiaries who had reached the doughnut hole said that they had received adequate information and fully understood the coverage gap. However, 26% of Medicare beneficiaries who had reached the doughnut hole said that they received no information about the coverage gap, and 27% said that the information they received had confused them, the survey found. The survey also found that more than three-fourths of Medicare beneficiaries who had reached the doughnut hole had at least one chronic condition.

Woody Eisenberg, chief medical officer at Medco, said, "At this point the majority of members do know that there's a gap in their coverage but they don't understand how they arrive there, and there's a few different points of confusion there," adding, "People know there's a gap but there's still lots of confusion about how they get there" (Seaman, [AP/Seattle Post-Intelligencer](#), 11/18).