

2015 Survey on Prescription Drugs

AARP Research

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Objectives

- To understand consumers' prescription drug use and opinions regarding cost.
- To learn what struggles, if any, consumers face with regard to the cost of their prescription drugs.
- To gain insight into the views of 50+ adults on the regulations in place for prescription drugs and pharmaceutical companies, the influence they perceive the drug companies have over politicians and health care professionals, and what can be done to control the costs of the drugs.

Methodology

- An online survey fielded December 1-11, 2015 among a nationally representative sample of 1,834 adults age 50+.
- Additional interviews conducted to reach:
 - 400 Hispanic/Latino adults age 50+
 - 405 African-American adults age 50+.
- The data was weighted by age, gender, race, ethnicity, education, Census region, metropolitan status, household income, and primary language (Hispanics/Latinos only).
- The margin of error for the national sample of 1,834 adults age 50+ is +/- 2.8%. The margin of error among subgroups is higher.
- Percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding.

Summary of Key Findings (continued)

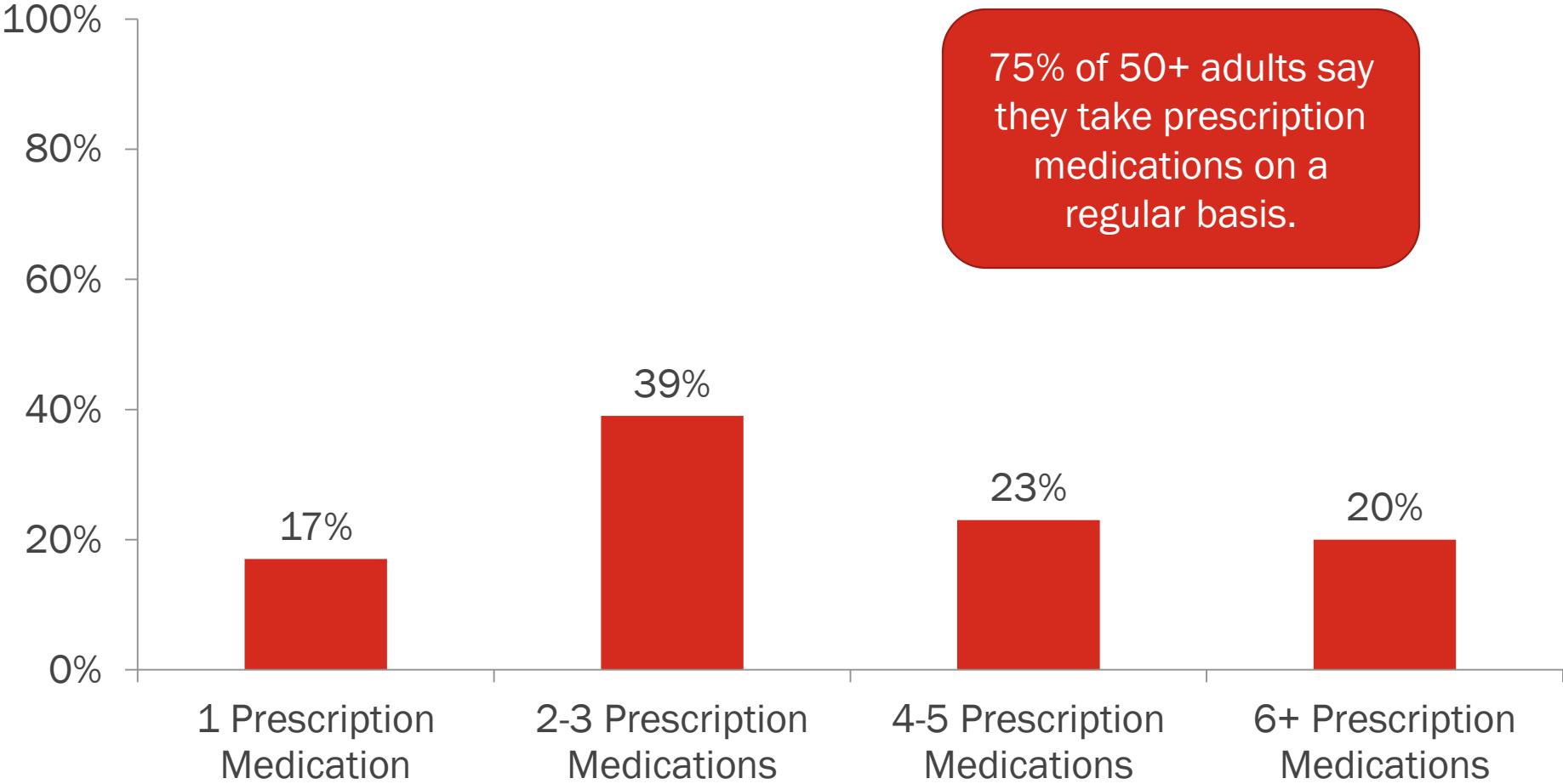
- Three-quarters of 50+ adults take prescription medication on a regular basis, the percentage is even higher for seniors.
- Overall, among adults who take prescription medications regularly:
 - Over eight in ten take at least two drugs
 - More than half of seniors take four or more drugs
 - African-American/Black adults and adults with less education and income also take more prescription medications.
- Nearly three in ten say their out-of-pocket prescription drug costs are increasing and the monthly expenditure for one-third is \$50 or more.
- For those who say their out-of-pocket drug costs are increasing, most say it is due to changes in their prescription drug coverage.
- Most 50+ adults think prescription drugs are too expensive and most say it is important for politicians to support efforts to make prescription drugs more affordable.
- Over four in ten 50+ adults are concerned about being able to afford their medication. More adults with lower incomes and lower levels of education are concerned about affording their medication.
- Adults age 50-64 are struggling more than seniors to pay for their prescription drugs:
 - More than one-quarter have decided not to fill a prescription in the last two years compared to one in six seniors; overall, the predominant reason was the cost of the drug.
 - A higher proportion report facing difficult decisions when buying prescription drugs compared to seniors (e.g., delayed filling a prescription or not filled a prescription due to cost, taken less medication to make it last longer, and skipped a dose to save money).
 - Nearly half are concerned about being able to afford their medication in the next two years compared to just over four in ten seniors.

Summary of Key Findings (concluded)

- Over half of 50+ adults believe that drug companies have a lot of influence over Congress/state legislatures and health care professionals but just over one-third believe they have influence over their own health care professional.
- 50+ adults want more regulation. Three-quarters of 50+ adults think there is not enough regulation when it comes to limiting the price of prescription drugs. Over four in ten think there is not enough regulation when it comes to making sure statements about prescription drugs are accurate and half think there is not enough regulation making sure prescription drugs are safe.
- While most 50+ adults think that pharmaceutical companies spend too much money on advertising to patients and health care professionals, less than half of African-American/Black 50+ adults feel this way.
- Over eight in ten 50+ adults think that drug companies make too much profit and that they should be required to publicly explain how they price their products.
- A large majority of 50+ adults say it should be legal to buy prescription drugs in Canada and Europe.
- Over nine in ten 50+ adults support allowing Medicare to negotiate for lower drug prices.
- Over eight in ten oppose the efforts of drug companies to delay the availability of lower-cost generic substitutes.

Use and Cost of Prescription Drugs

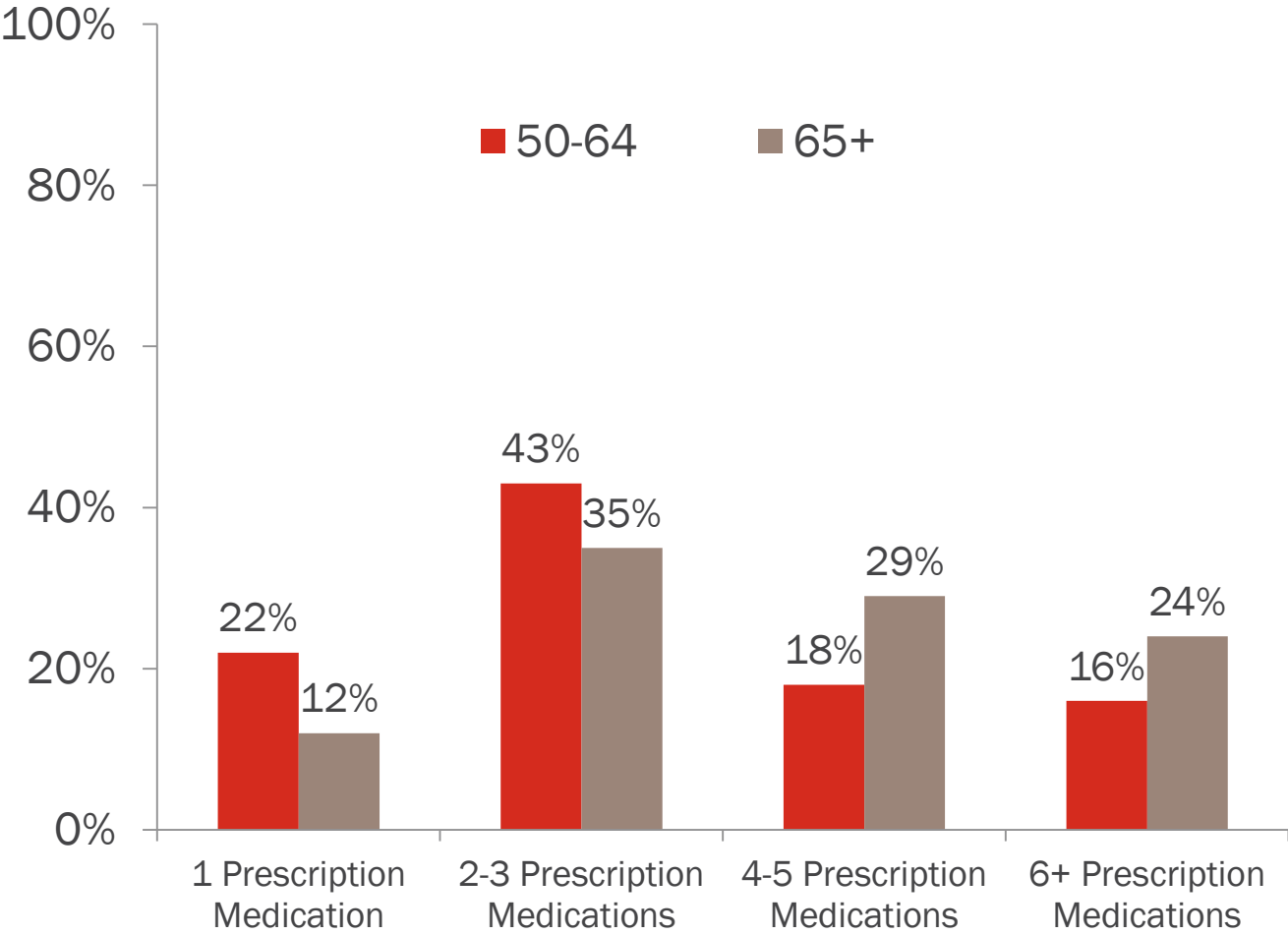
Three-quarters of 50+ adults regularly take prescription medications and over four in ten(43%) take four or more medications.



Q1: Are you currently taking prescription medications on a regular basis, i.e. daily, weekly, monthly?
Q2: Approximately how many different prescription medications do you take on a regular basis?

Not unexpectedly, over eight in ten (86%) seniors regularly take prescription medications compared to two-thirds (67%) of younger adults. Additionally, more than half (53%) of seniors take four or more regular medications compared to one-third (34%) of younger adults.

86% of seniors take prescription medications on a regular basis compared to 67% of adults 50-64



Q1: Are you currently taking prescription medications on a regular basis, i.e. daily, weekly, monthly?
Q2: Approximately how many different prescription medications do you take on a regular basis?

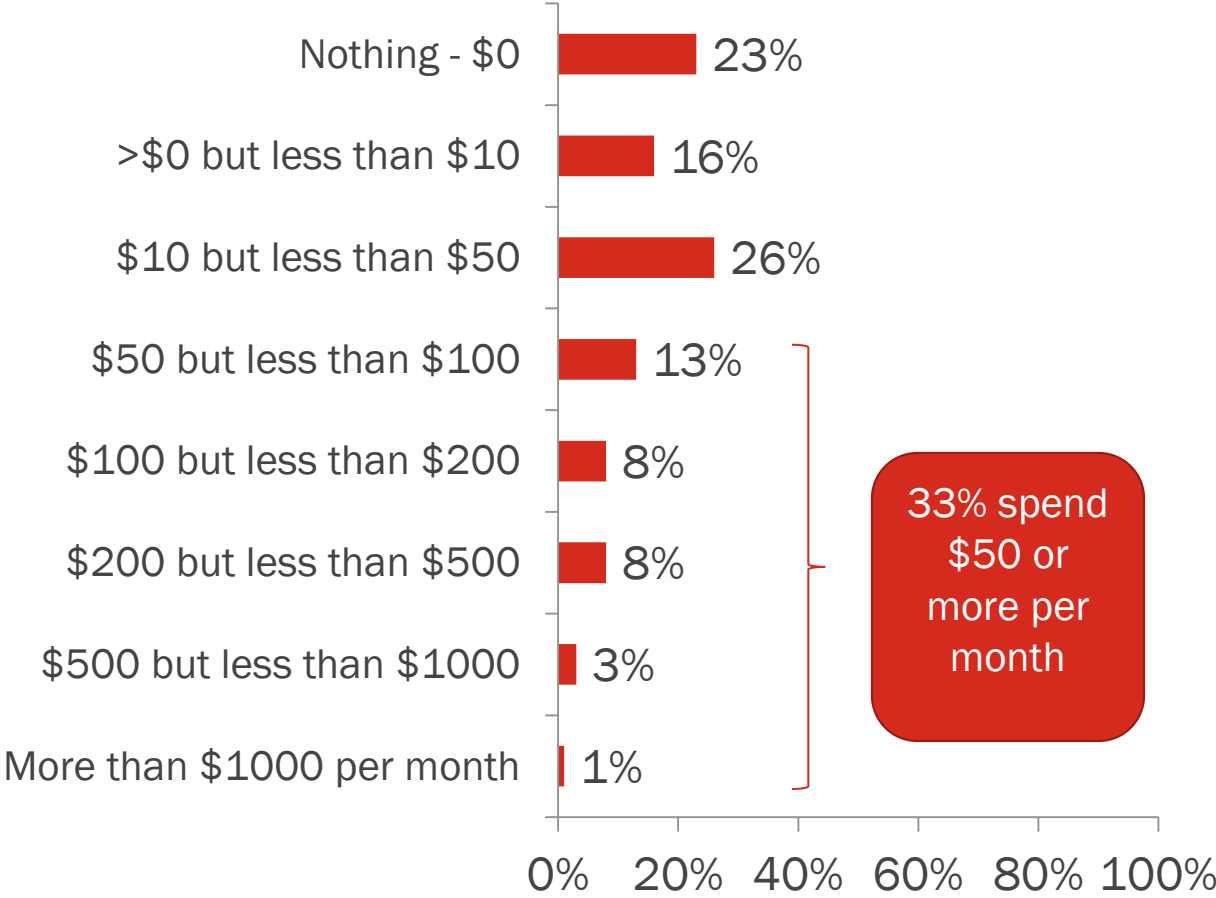
Minority populations, lower income and less educated 50+ adults tend to take more medications.

Number of prescription medications taken on a regular basis	All 50+ Adults	Race/ Ethnicity		Education			Income			
		AA/B	H/L	HS or Less	Some College	BA or more	<\$40K	\$40K-\$74,999	\$75K-\$99,999	>\$100K
1	17%	11%	15%	13%	19%	22%	12%	20%	18%	20%
2-3	39%	39%	40%	38%	41%	40%	35%	38%	45%	43%
4-5	23%	23%	21%	24%	22%	24%	26%	23%	22%	22%
6 or more	20%	28%	23%	26%	17%	14%	27%	18%	16%	14%
Subtotal: 4 or more	43%	51%	44%	50%	39%	38%	53%	41%	38%	36%

Q1: Are you currently taking prescription medications on a regular basis, i.e. daily, weekly, monthly?
 Q2: Approximately how many different prescription medications do you take on a regular basis?

One-third of 50+ adults spend \$50 or more per month on prescription medications and nearly three in ten (29%) say the costs are increasing.

Amount spent per month on prescription drugs



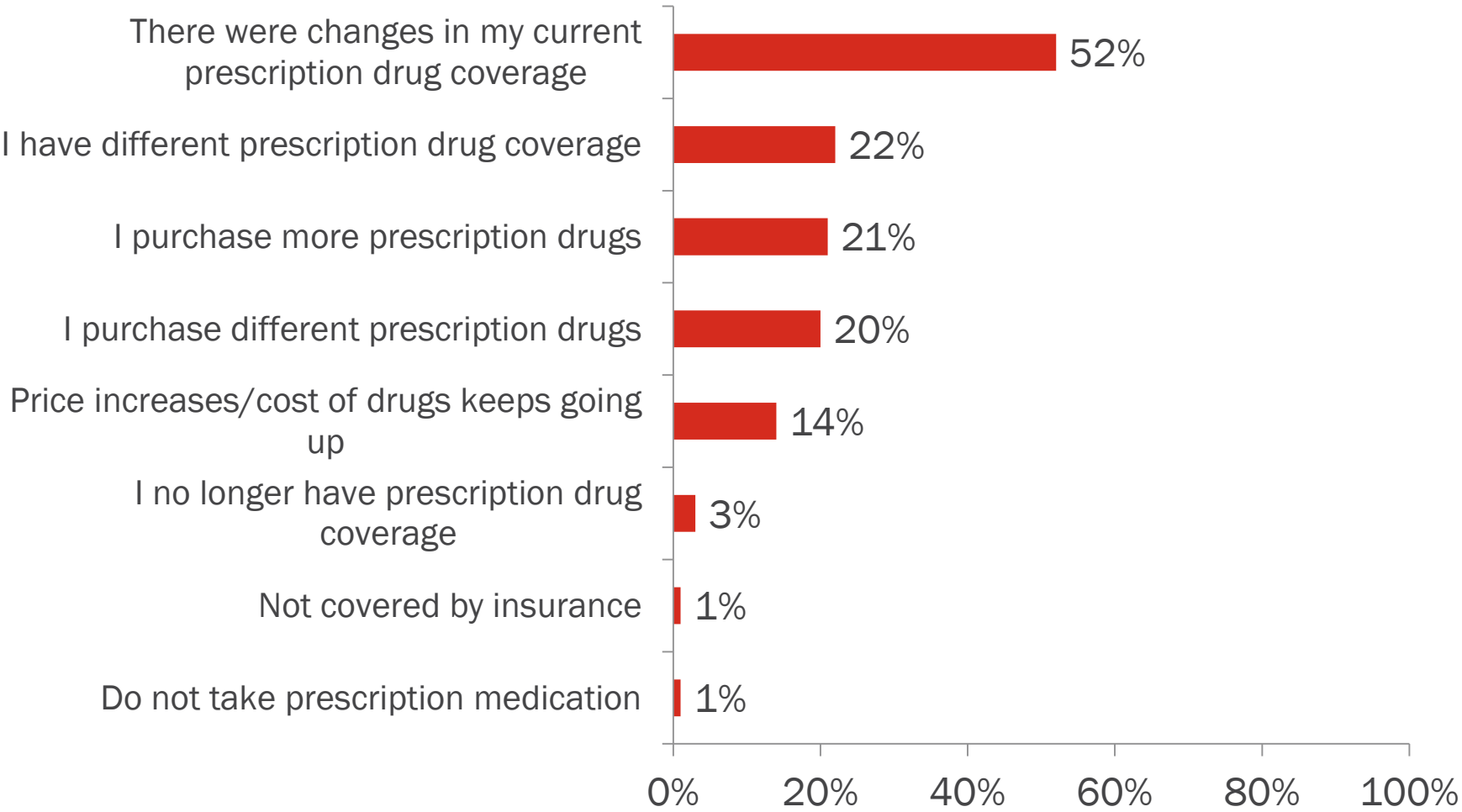
50+ adults say their out-of-pocket prescription drug costs are:

- Staying the same – 64%
- Increasing – 29%
- Decreasing – 5%

33% spend \$50 or more per month

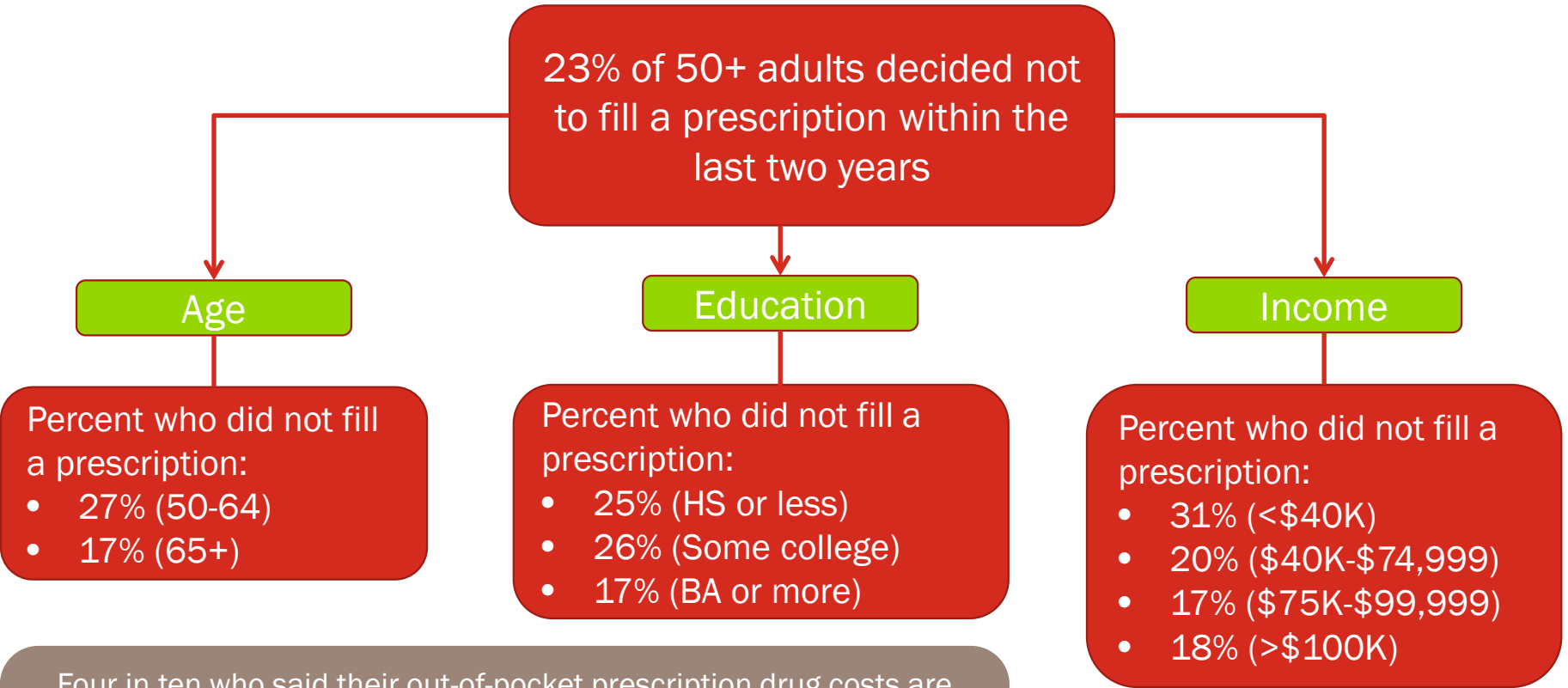
Q3: In the past 12 months, approximately how much have you spent out of your own pocket for prescription drugs?
Q4: Thinking about what you currently pay in out-of-pocket prescription drug costs, would you say this amount is increasing, decreasing, or it has remained the same?

Changes in prescription drug coverage is the most common reason for an increase in out-of-pocket costs cited by over half (52%) of 50+ adults. About one in seven (14%) say their increase in out-of-pocket costs is due to an increase in the cost of the drugs.



Q5: The list below includes possible reasons why your out of pocket costs for prescription drugs may be increasing. Please check all the reasons that apply to you.

About one-quarter (23%) of 50+ adults did not fill a prescription they were given within the last two years. More adults under 65, with some college or less, and a household income under \$40,000 per year said they did not fill a prescription within the last two years.



Four in ten who said their out-of-pocket prescription drug costs are increasing chose not to fill a prescription compared to 16% who said their costs have stayed the same or decreased. Nearly four in ten (38%) with fair/poor health chose not to fill a prescription compared to 14% with excellent/very good health.

Q6: In the last two years, did you ever decide not to fill a prescription that your doctor had given you?

For 50+ adults who chose not to fill a prescription within the last two years, cost is the number one reason.

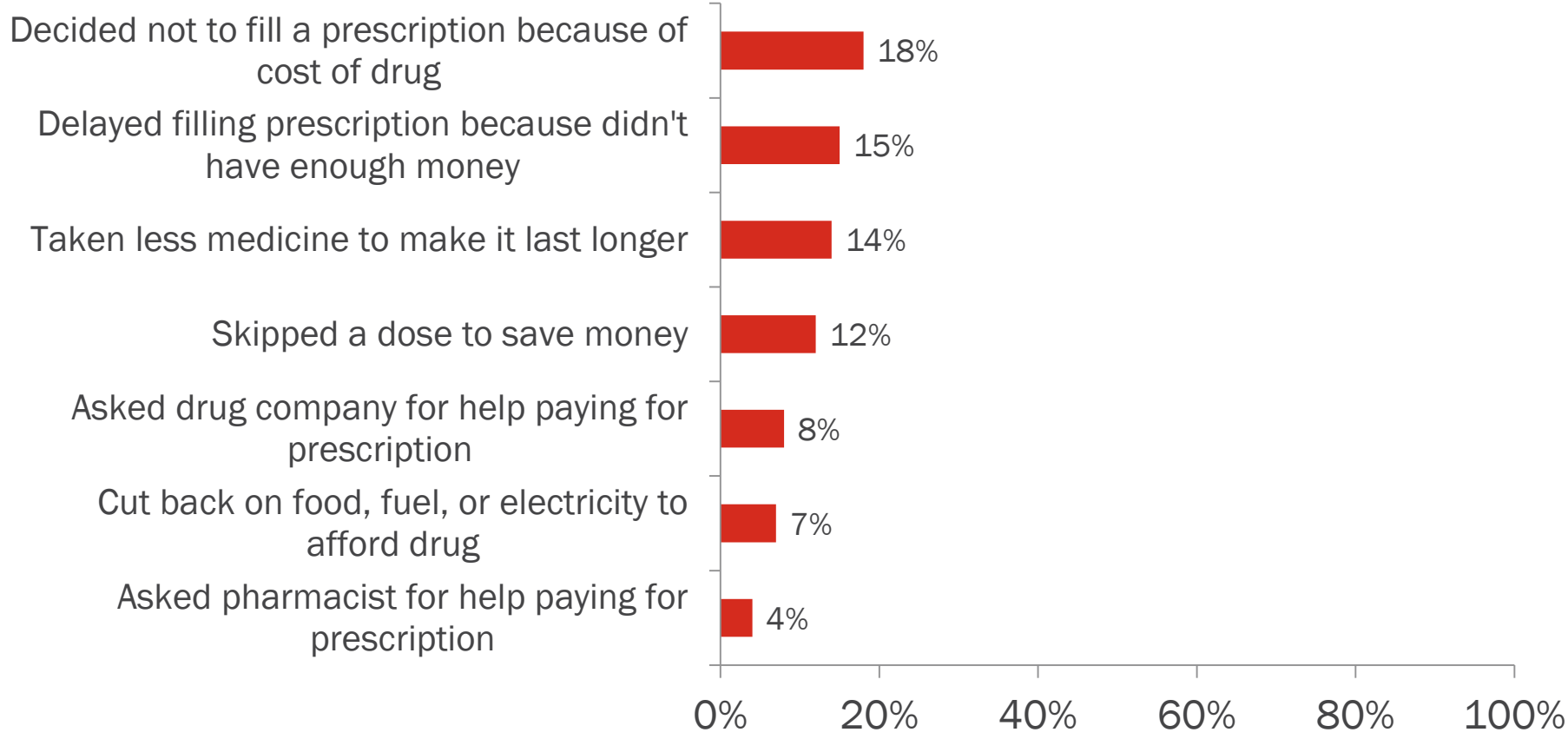
44% of 50+ adults with a Bachelor's Degree or more thought the drug wasn't necessary compared to only 22% of those with HS or less.

Top Ten Reasons 50+ Adults Chose Not to Fill a Prescription in the Last Two Years	
Reason Prescription Was Not Filled	Percent
Cost of the drug – 32% said this was the MAIN reason	55%
Did not think drug was necessary	28%
Side effects of drug	24%
I don't like taking prescription drugs	19%
Drug concerned me	19%
Used/looked into other treatments	18%
Drug did not help	16%
Condition improved	14%
Thought drugs wouldn't help much	13%
Already taking too many prescription drugs	13%

Q7: People may choose to not fill prescriptions for many reasons. Which of the following reasons apply to you? You may select all that apply
 Q8: Which is the MAIN reason that you didn't fill your prescription?

Fewer than one in five 50+ adults have been faced with difficult decisions when buying prescription medications.

Percent who said “yes” they have been faced with the following decisions

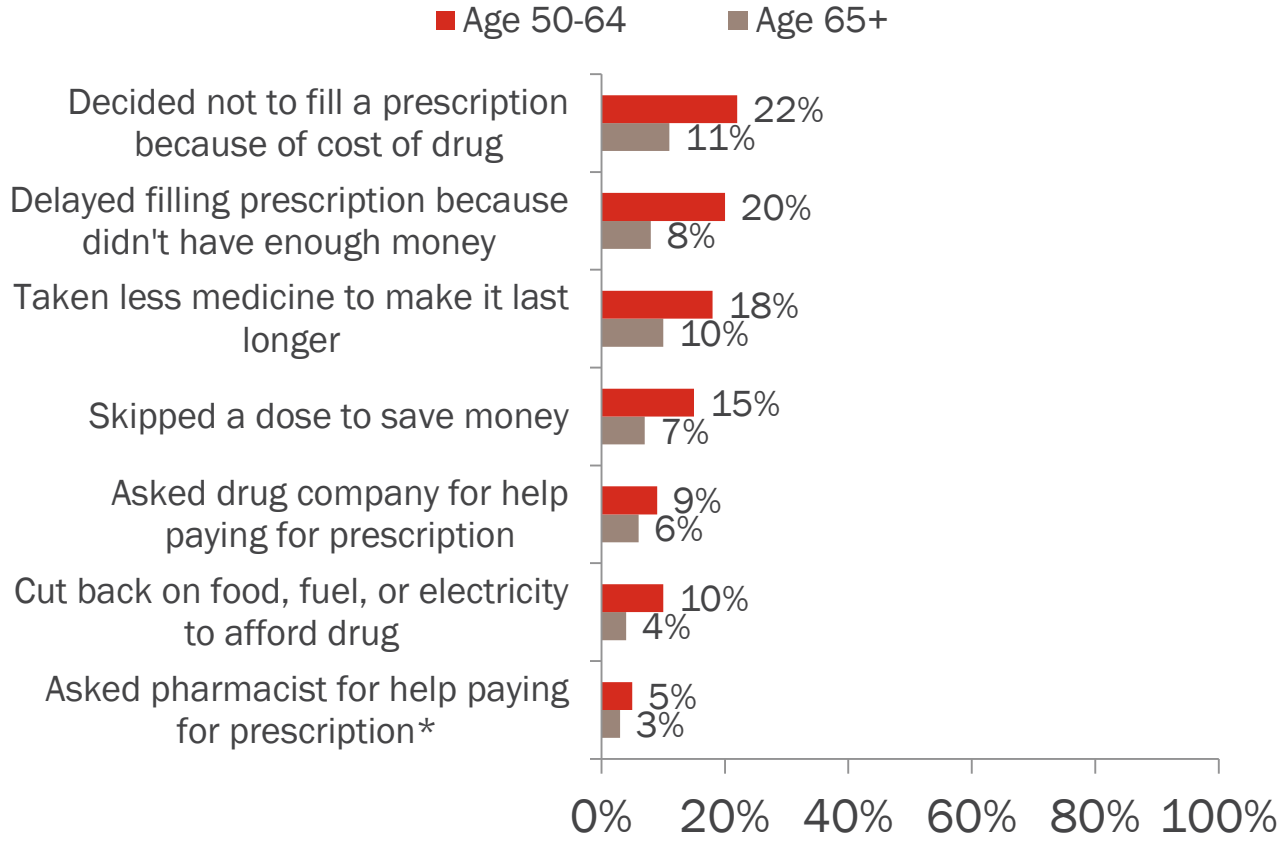


Q9: Many people face difficult decisions when buying prescription drugs. In the past 12 months, have you or someone in your house hold...

Adults age 50-64 are struggling more with the cost of drugs than seniors.

- Additional characteristics of 50+ adults who are likely to face difficult decisions when buying prescription drugs include adults who:
- Earn less than \$40K per year
 - Have a high school education or less
 - Regularly take prescription medications
 - Find that their out-of-pocket prescription costs are increasing
 - Rate their health as either fair or poor

Percent who have been faced with difficult decisions when buying prescription drugs

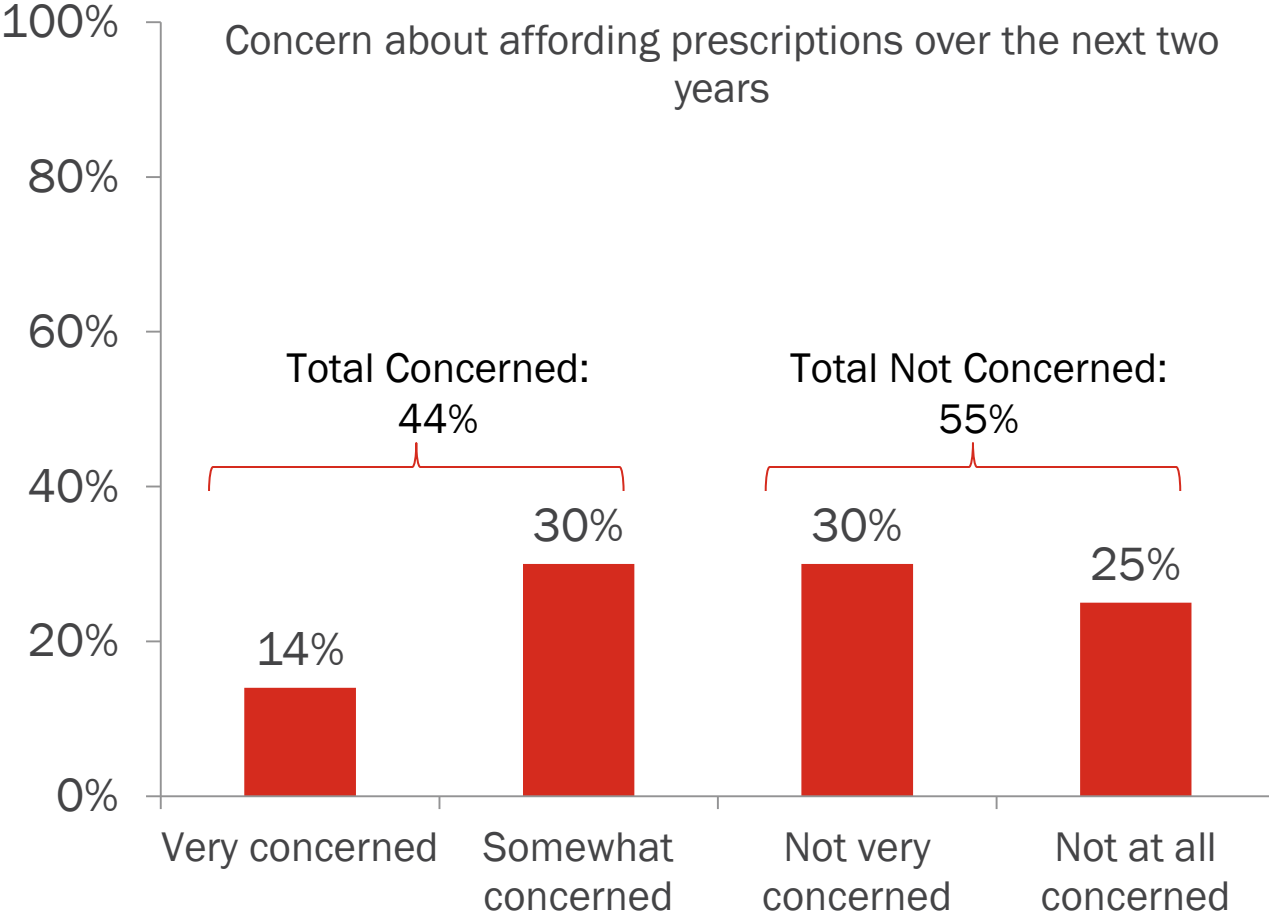


Q9: Many people face difficult decisions when buying prescription drugs. In the past 12 months, have you or someone in your house hold...

* Results are not statistically significant

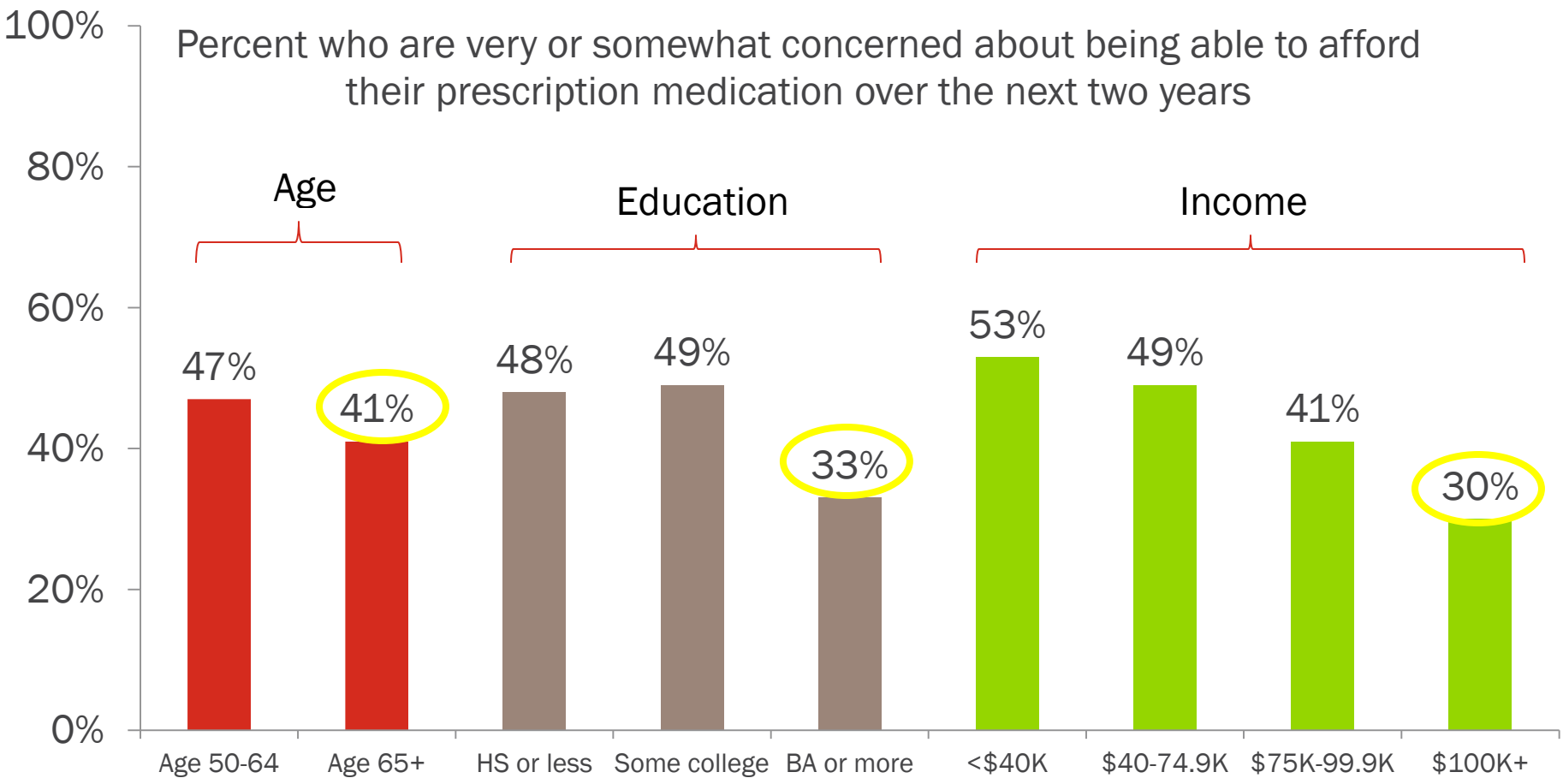
About four in ten 50+ adults expressed concern about affording their prescription drugs in the next two years and over eight in ten (81%) think the costs of these drugs are too high.

Costs of prescription drugs are:
Too high (81%)
Right price (17%)
Too low (<0.5%)



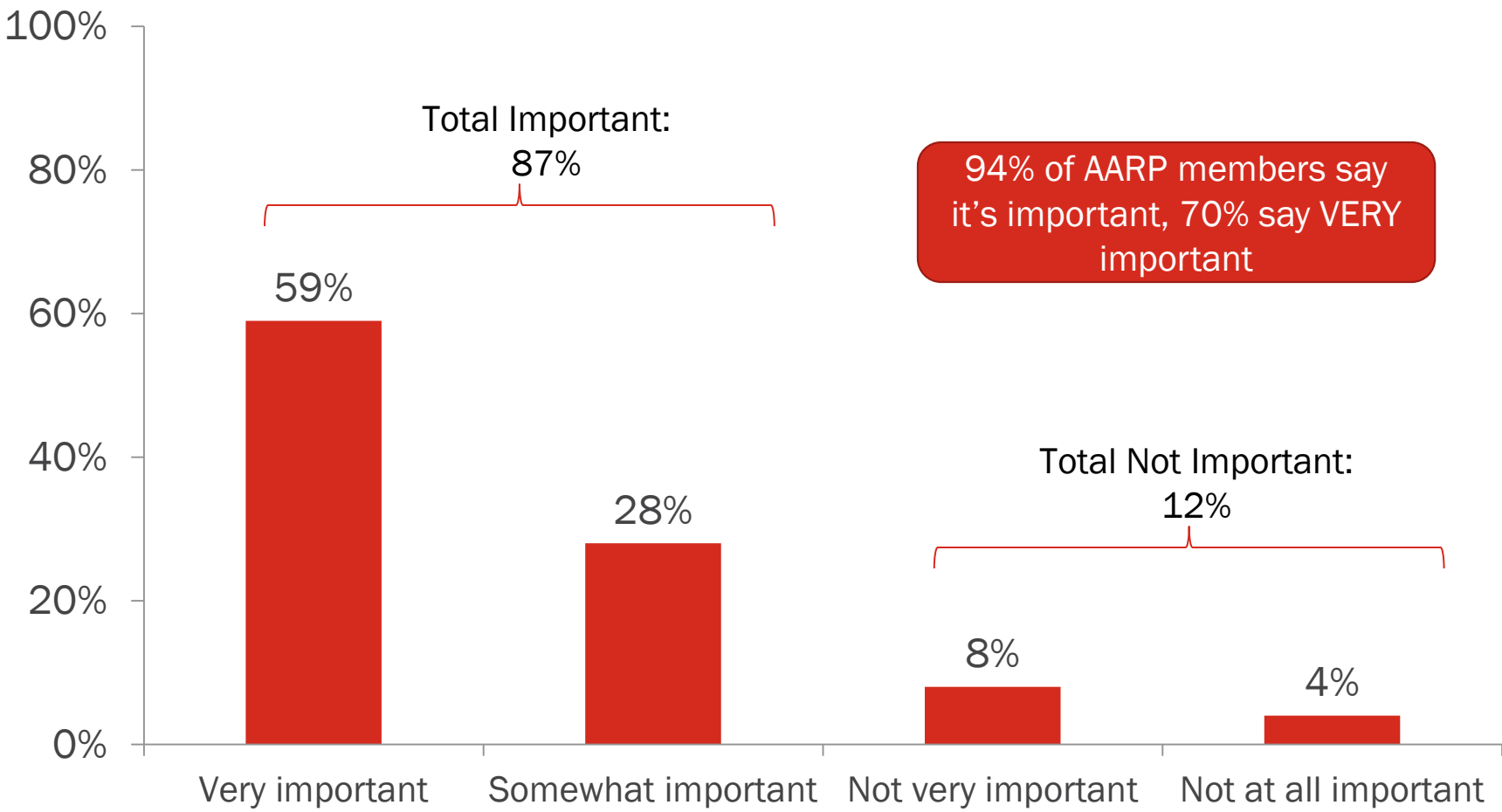
Q10: How concerned are you about being able to afford the cost of needed prescription drugs over the next two years?
Q11: Do you think the costs of prescription drugs are...?

About half (48%) of 50+ adults with a high school education or less and over half (53%) of those with an income under \$40,000 per year are concerned about paying for their medication compared to those with more education and income.



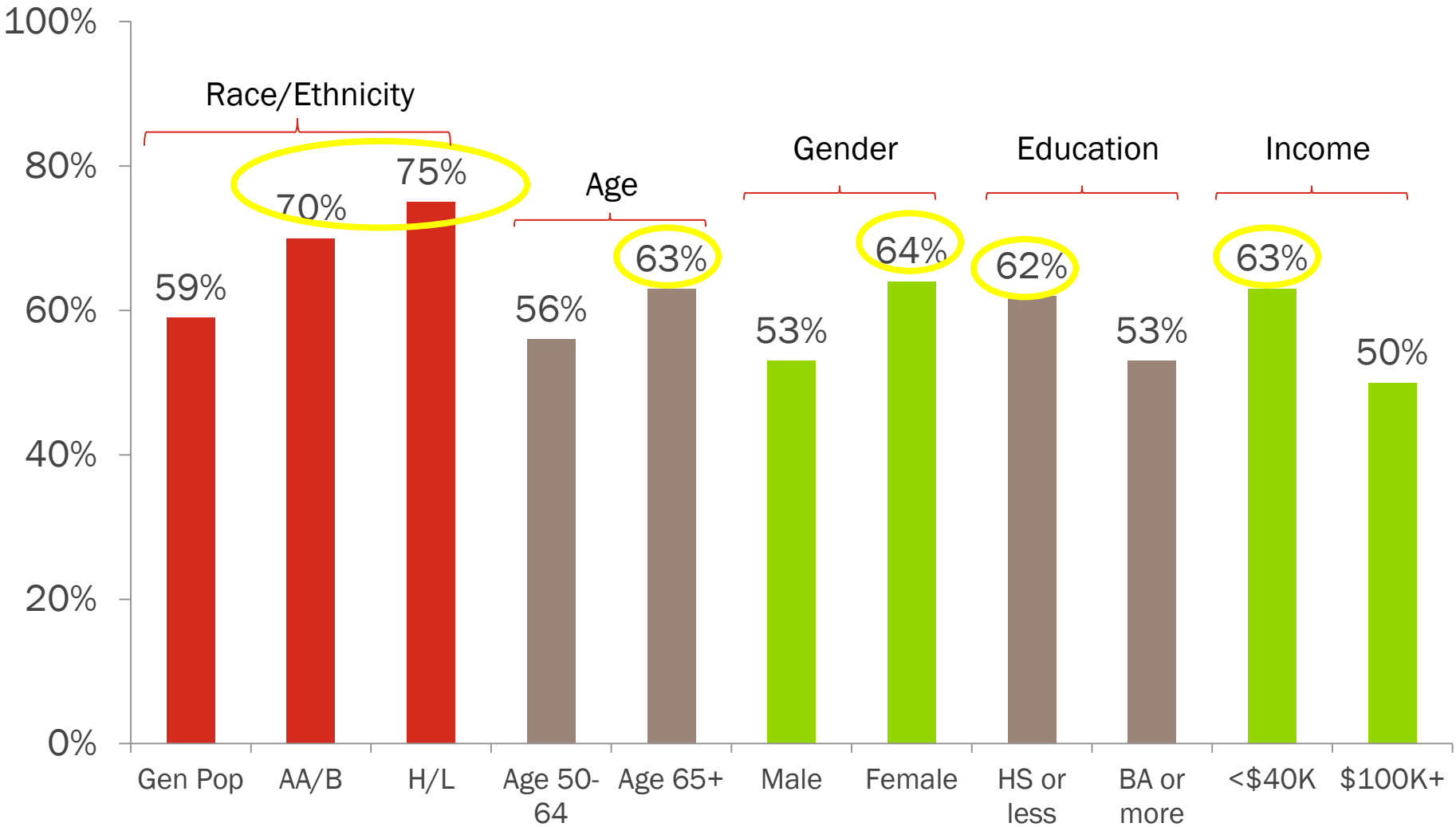
Q10: How concerned are you about being able to afford the cost of needed prescription drugs over the next two years?

Nearly nine in ten (87%) 50+ adults think it is important for politicians – especially those running for president -- to support efforts to control prescription drug costs.



Q12: How important is it to you that politicians – especially those running for President – support efforts to make prescription drugs more affordable?

More African-American/Black and Hispanic/Latino 50+ adults believe it's very important for politicians to support making prescription drugs more affordable.

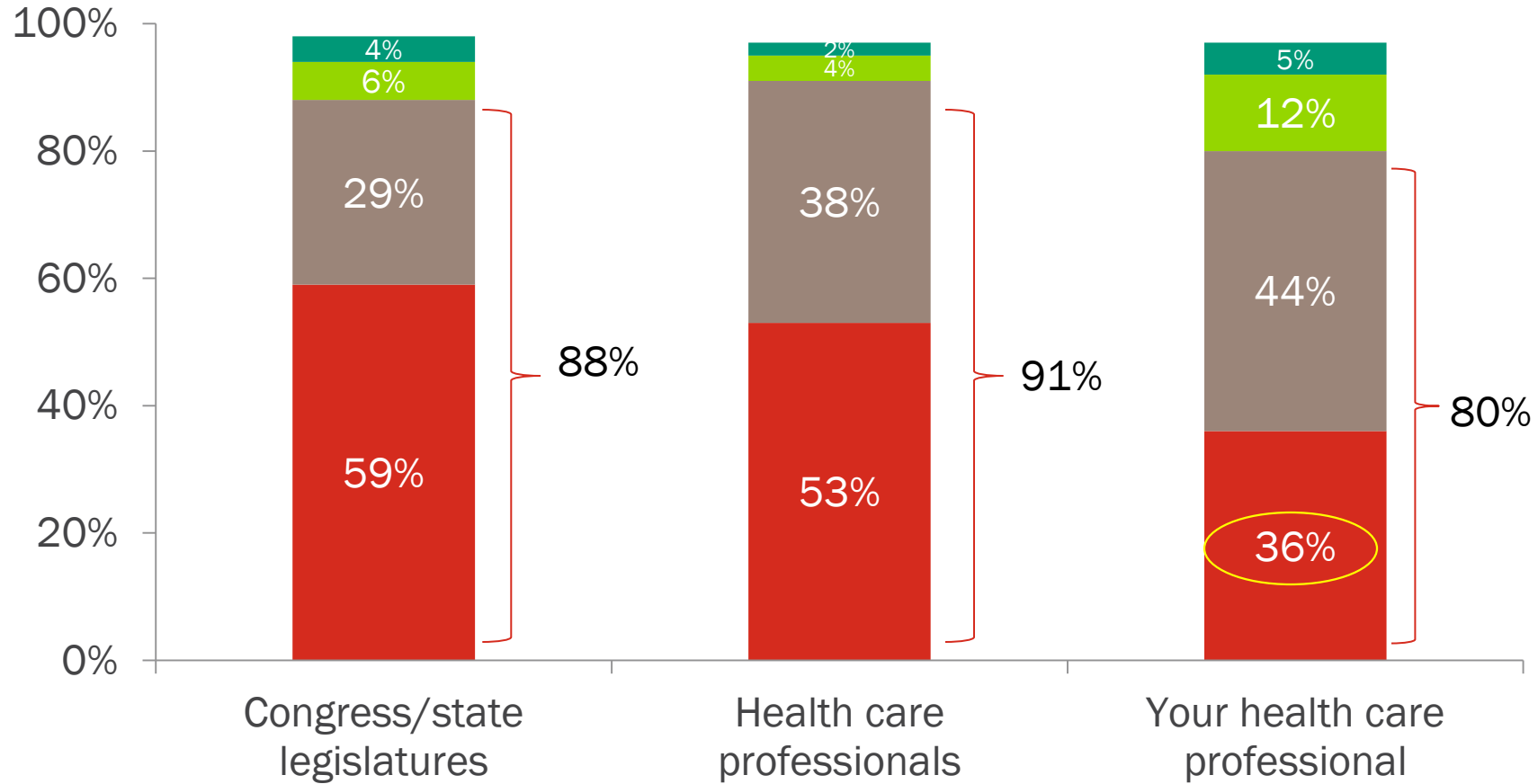


Q12: How important is it to you that politicians – especially those running for President – support efforts to make prescription drugs more affordable?

Influence of Prescription Drug Companies

Most 50+ adults believe drug companies have at least some influence over politicians and health care professionals, in general, but believe they have less influence over their own health care professional.

■ A lot of influence ■ Some influence ■ Only a little influence ■ No influence at all



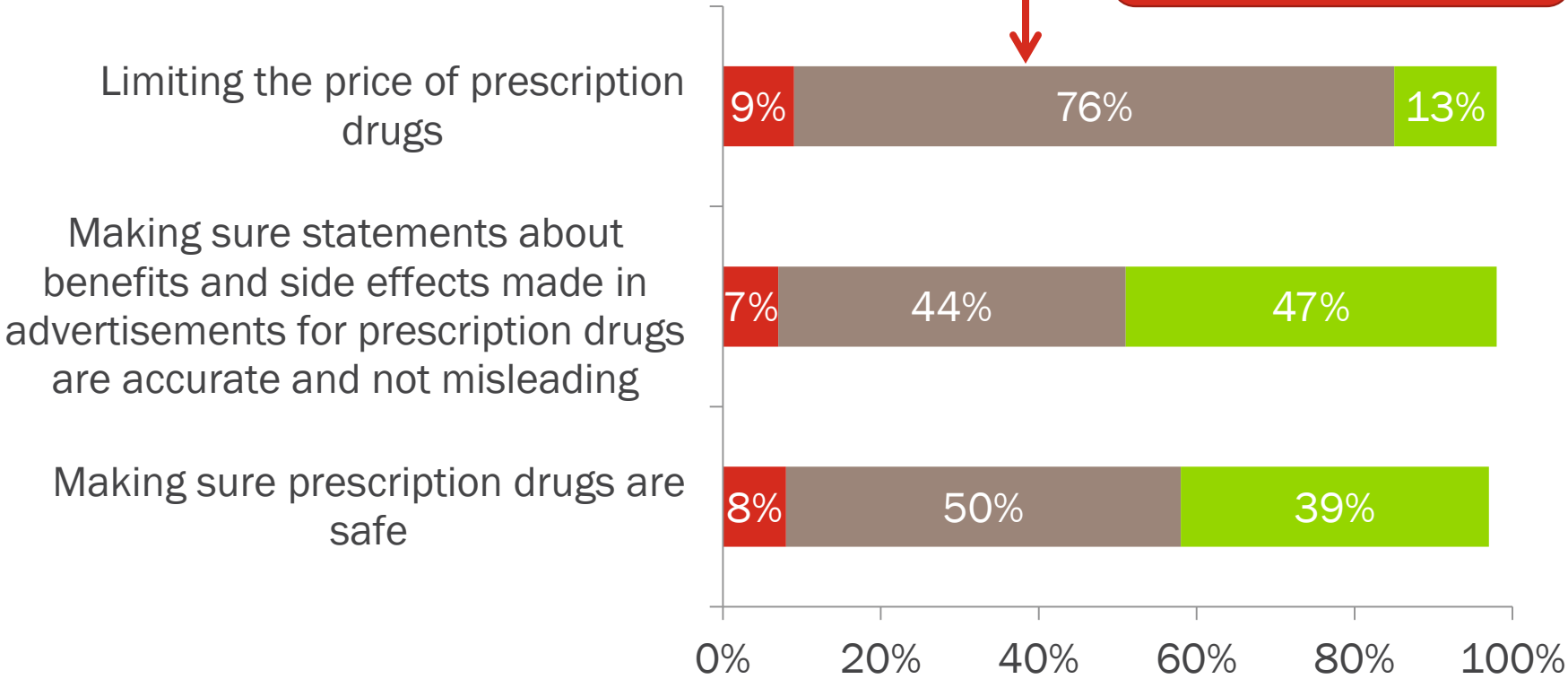
Q13: How much influence do you think prescription drug companies have over members of Congress and state legislatures?
 Q14: How much influence do you think prescription drug companies have over what drugs health care professionals prescribe?
 Q15: How much influence do you think prescription drug companies have over what your health care professional prescribes?

Government Regulation of Prescription Drugs

Three-quarters (76%) of 50+ adults believe there should be more government regulation limiting the price of prescription drugs and half believe there should be more regulation to make sure these drugs are safe. Few see too much regulation on prescription drugs.

■ Too much regulation
 ■ Not as much as there should be
 ■ Right amount of regulation

84% of AARP members say there is not as much regulation as there should be



Q16: We would like to get your opinion of current government regulation of prescription drugs. For each area below, do you think there is too much regulation, not as much regulation as there should be, or about the right amount of regulation?

African American/Black 50+ adults and adults with less education and income are more likely to believe that more regulation is needed.

Demographic Group	Percent who say there is not as much regulation as there should be		
	Ensuring prescription drugs are safe to use	Ensuring statements made about prescription drugs are accurate and not misleading	Limiting the price of prescription drugs
General population	50%	44%	76%
African-American/Black	66%	53%	73%
Hispanic/Latino	46%	44%	58%
Male	45%	42%	74%
Female	54%	46%	77%
HS or less	56%	49%	75%
Some college	52%	44%	77%
BA or more	39%	36%	76%
<\$40K	54%	48%	72%
\$40K-\$74,999	55%	49%	80%
\$75K-\$99,999	53%	41%	77%
\$100K or more	38%	35%	77%

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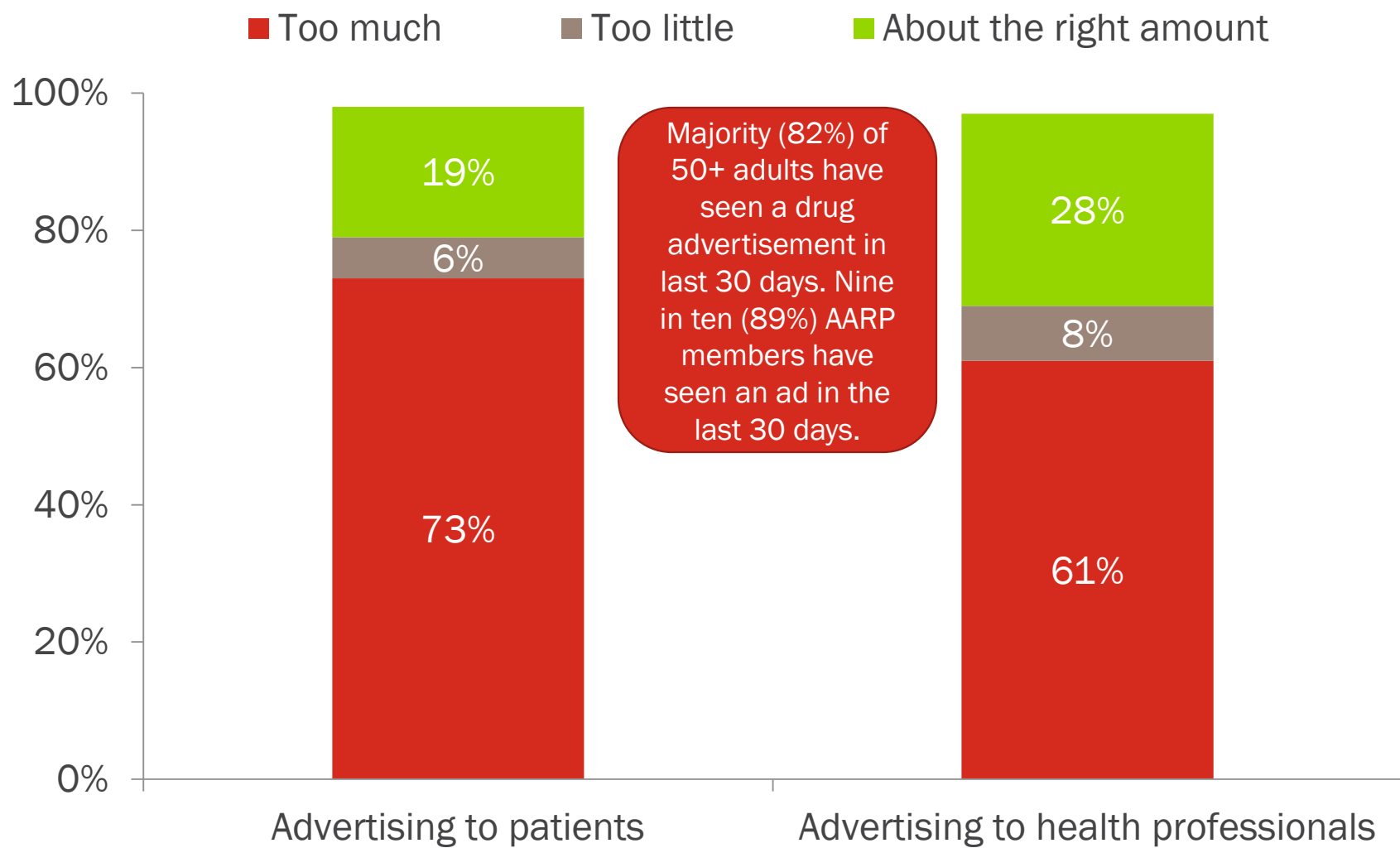
50+ adults who rate their health less favorably say there is not as much regulation as there should be when it comes to ensuring prescription drugs are safe to use and that statements about prescription drugs are accurate. Adults with increasing out-of-pocket costs say more regulation is needed to limit the cost of the drugs.

Demographic Group	Percent who say there is not as much regulation as there should be		
	Ensuring prescription drugs are safe to use	Ensuring statements made about prescription drugs are accurate and not misleading	Limiting the price of prescription drugs
Out-of-pocket prescription drug costs			
Increasing	51%	46%	81%
Decreasing/staying the same	50%	43%	74%
Health status			
Excellent/very good	42%	39%	75%
Good	55%	47%	76%
Fair/poor	56%	49%	79%

Q16: We would like to get your opinion of current government regulation of prescription drugs. For each area below, do you think there is too much regulation, not as much regulation as there should be, or about the right amount of regulation?

Prescription Drug Advertisements

Most adults have seen a drug advertisement recently and a majority think that pharmaceutical companies spend too much money on advertising.



Q17: Have you seen or heard any advertisements for prescription drugs in the past 30 days?
Q18: Do you think pharmaceutical companies spend too much, too little, or about the right amount of money on advertising to patients?
Q19: Do you think pharmaceutical companies spend too much, too little, or about the right amount of money on advertising to health professionals?

50+ adults with a higher level of education and income are more likely to think that pharmaceutical companies spend too much on advertising. African-American/Black and Hispanic/Latino adults are less likely to say drug companies spend too much on advertising.

Demographic Group	Percent who have seen ads for prescription drugs in last 30 days	Percent who think pharmaceutical companies spend too much on advertising to patients	Percent who think pharmaceutical companies spend too much on advertising to health care professionals
General population	82%	73%	61%
African-American/Black	75%	44%	42%
Hispanic/Latino	68%	55%	48%
HS or less	75%	65%	55%
Some college	88%	75%	66%
BA or more	86%	83%	66%
<\$40K	76%	64%	55%
\$40K-\$74,999	82%	72%	61%
\$75K-\$99,999	86%	77%	59%
\$100K or more	88%	83%	70%

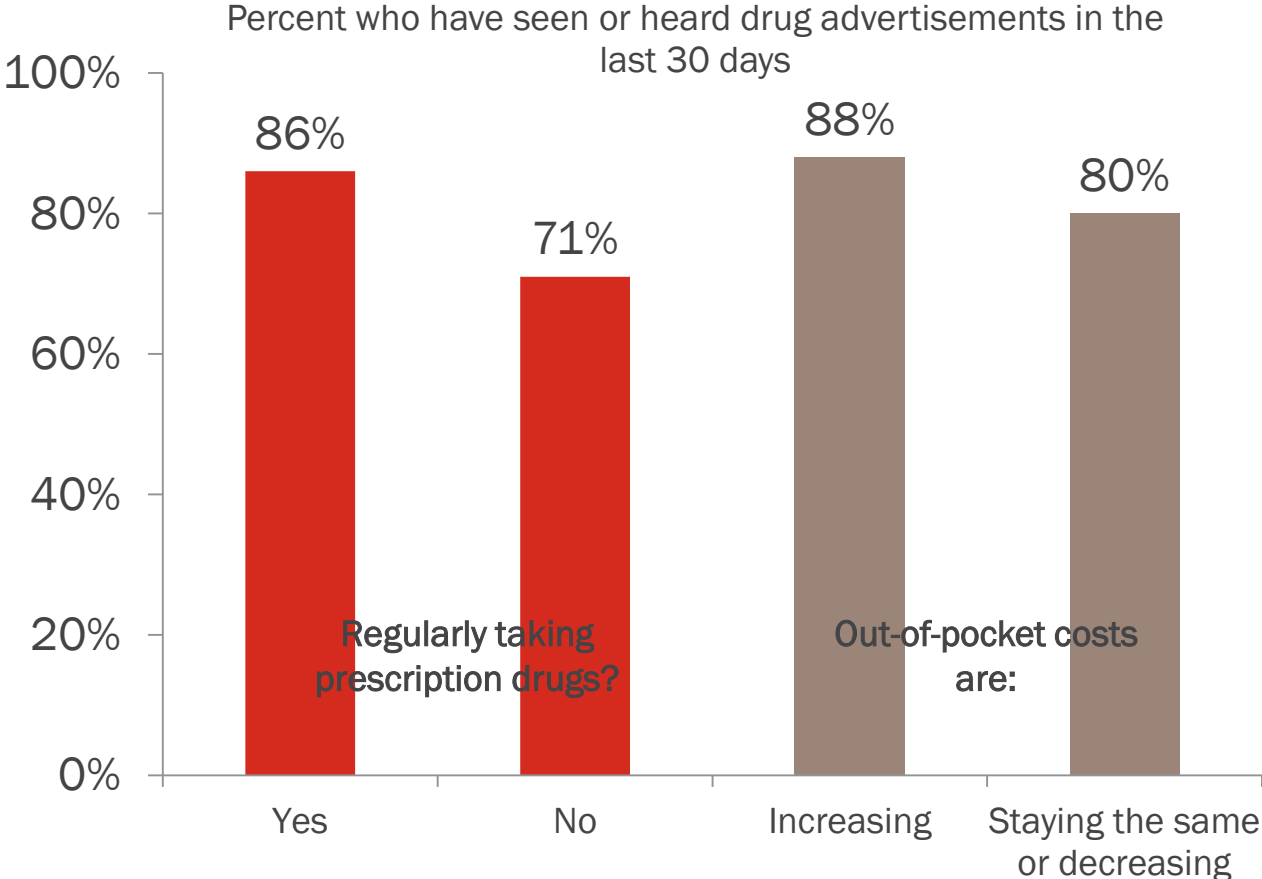
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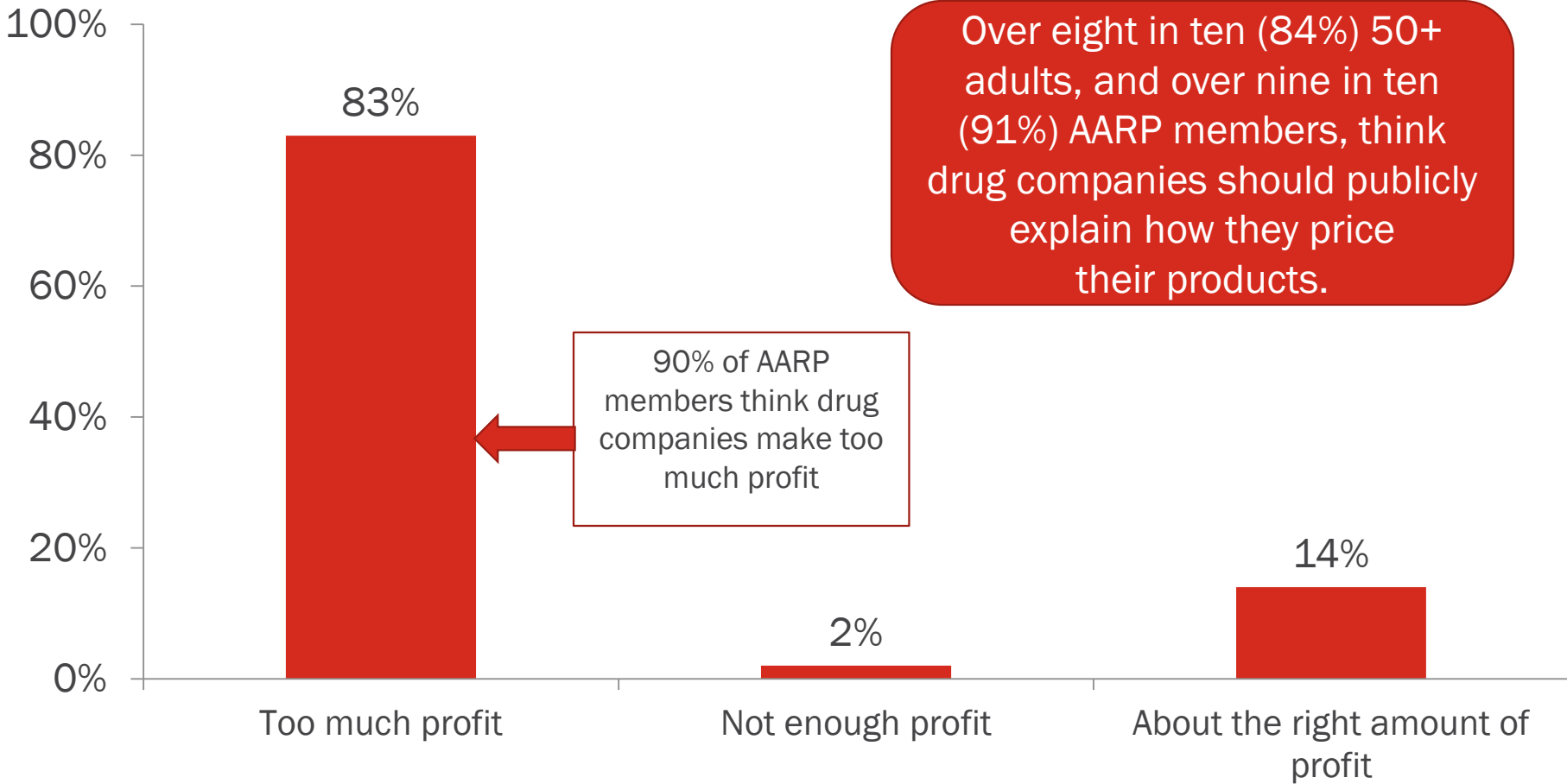
50+ adults who take prescription drugs on a regular basis and whose out-of-pocket drug costs are increasing, pay more attention to prescription drug advertisements.

50+ adults experiencing an increase in their out-of-pocket prescription costs say that pharmaceutical companies spend too much on advertising to patients (79% vs 71%) and health care professionals (70% vs 58%)



Q17: Have you seen or heard any advertisements for prescription drugs in the past 30 days?
Q18: Do you think pharmaceutical companies spend too much, too little, or about the right amount of money on advertising to patients?
Q19: Do you think pharmaceutical companies spend too much, too little, or about the right amount of money on advertising to health professionals?

A large majority of 50+ adults think drug companies make too much profit and should be required to explain their drug pricing.



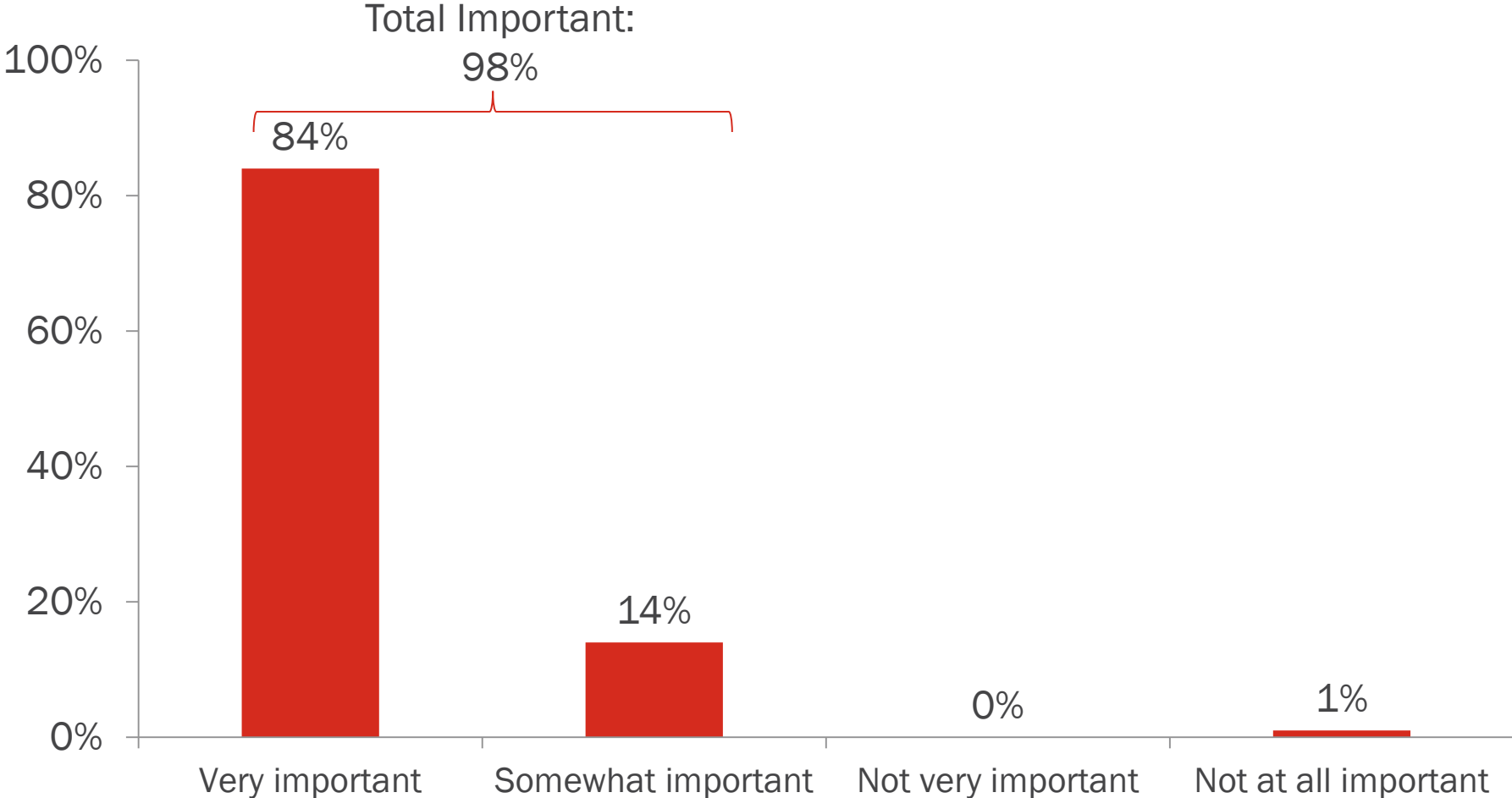
Q20: In general, do you think pharmaceutical or drug companies make too much profit, not enough profit, or about the right amount of profit?
Q21: Do you think drug manufacturers should be required to publicly explain how they price their products?

50+ adults who regularly take prescription drugs, have increasing out-of-pocket costs, have decided not to fill a prescription, and who rate their health less favorably are more likely to believe drug companies make too much profit and say they should explain their product pricing.

Demographic group		Percent of adults who think drug companies make too much profit	Percent of adults who think drug companies should publicly explain their product pricing
Regularly takes prescription medications	Yes	84%	87%
	No	79%	75%
Out-of-pocket drug costs	Increasing	88%	88%
	Staying same/decreasing	81%	82%
Decided not to fill a prescription	Yes	91%	89%
	No	81%	83%
Health rating	Fair/poor	90%	92%
	Good	82%	85%
	Excellent/very good	81%	80%

Q20: In general, do you think pharmaceutical or drug companies make too much profit, not enough profit, or about the right amount of profit?
 Q21: Do you think drug manufacturers should be required to publicly explain how they price their products?

Virtually all 50+ adults say it is important for consumers and health professionals to be able to compare the safety and effectiveness of prescription drugs.



Q22: How important is it to you for consumers and health professionals to have access to information that compares the safety and effectiveness of prescription drugs?

Overall, eight in ten 50+ adults say it should be legal to buy prescription drugs from Canada and Europe. Differences were seen by age, gender, and education level.

Who says it should be legal to buy prescription medications overseas?

More seniors (83%) compared to those age 50-64 (78%).

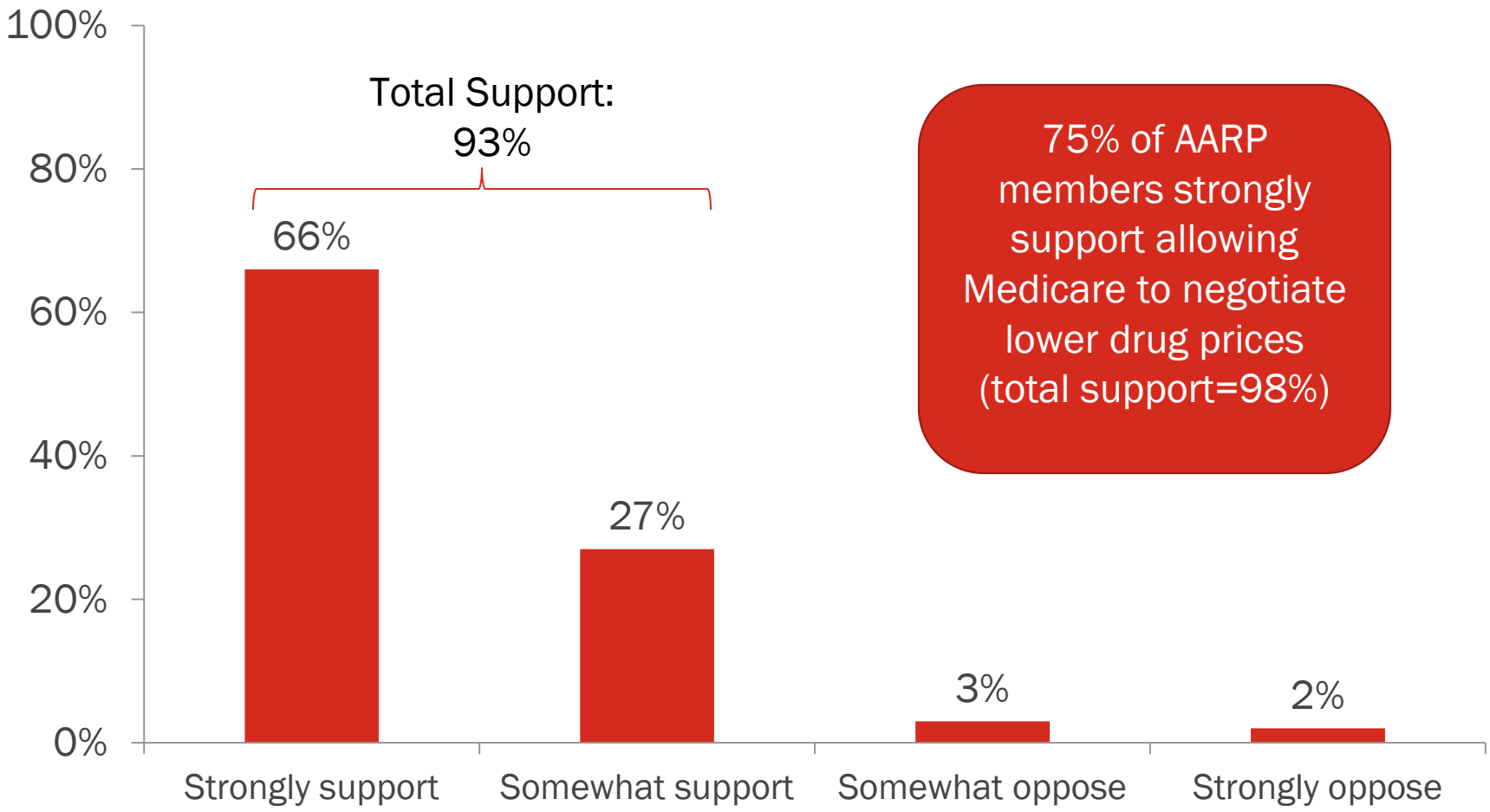
More men (85%) than women (77%).

More 50+ adults (84%) with a Bachelor's degree or more compared to adults with a high school education or less (77%).

More 50+ adults (86%) who are experiencing an increase in their out-of-pocket drug costs compared to adults whose costs are staying the same or decreasing (78%).

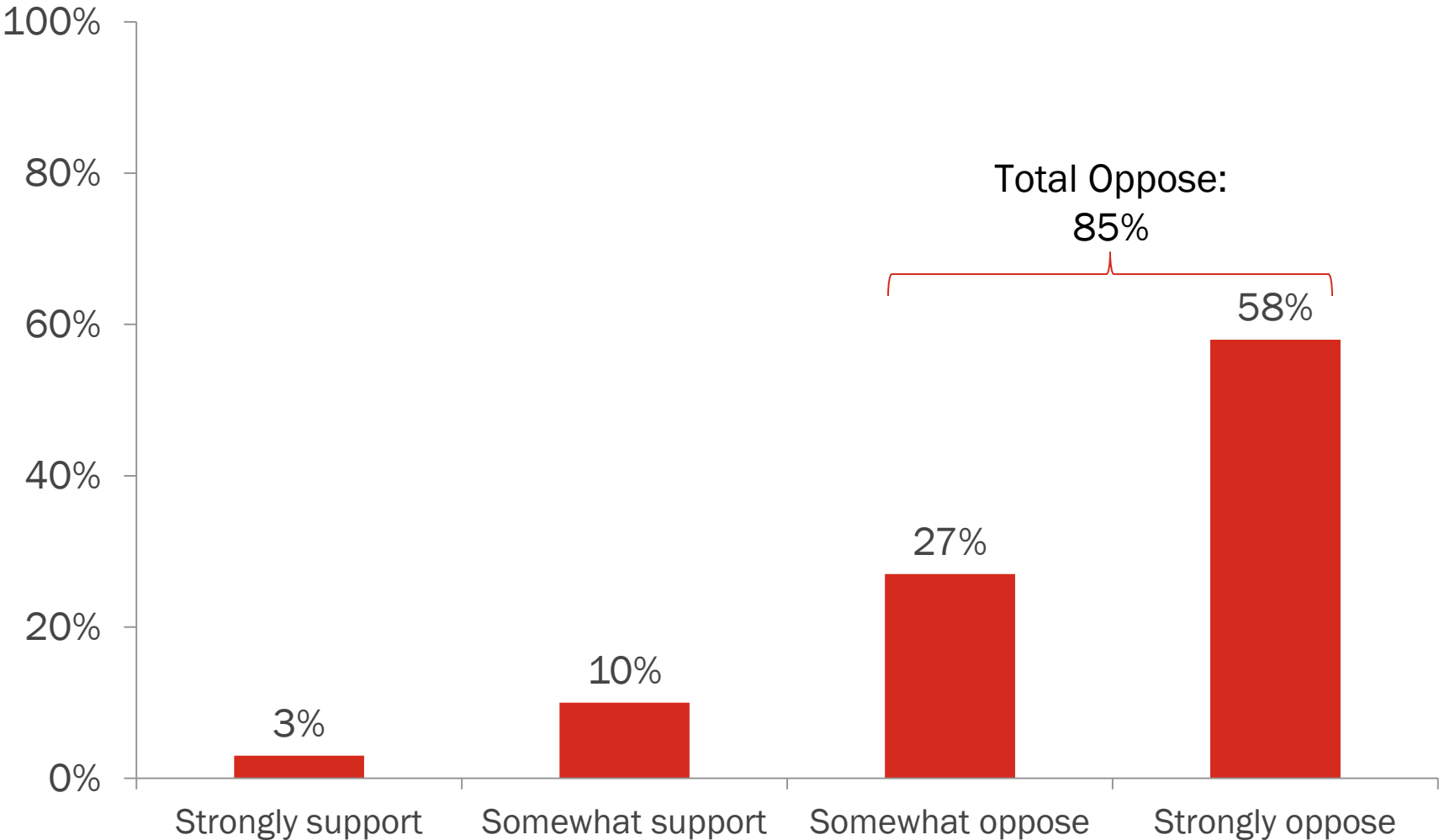
Q23: Currently U.S. law bans people from buying prescription drugs from Canada or Europe. Some people believe that the laws should be changed to all Americans to order prescription drugs from other countries as long as they are as safe and effective as those bought in the U.S.. Do you believe that it should be legal for people in the U.S. to order drugs from Canada and Europe or not?

Two-thirds (66%) of 50+ adults strongly support allowing Medicare to negotiate for lower drug costs.



Q24: Currently Medicare is prohibited by law from negotiating prescription drug prices with pharmaceutical companies. Some policymakers have proposed allowing Medicare to use its bargaining power to negotiate lower prices for prescription drugs. Do you support or oppose allowing Medicare to use its bargaining power to negotiate lower prices for prescription drugs?

There is little support (13%) for drug companies to delay the availability of lower-cost generic substitutes.



Q25: Some drug companies with patents that are nearing expirations enter into agreements with other drug companies that delay generic versions of these drugs from becoming available. Do you support or oppose such agreements?

Demographics (continued)

D1. Are you registered to vote at your current address, or not?

Yes	87%
No	11%

D2. Would you say that you always vote in presidential elections, usually vote, sometimes vote, rarely vote, or never vote?

Always	74%
Usually	9%
Sometimes	4%
Rarely	3%
Never	9%

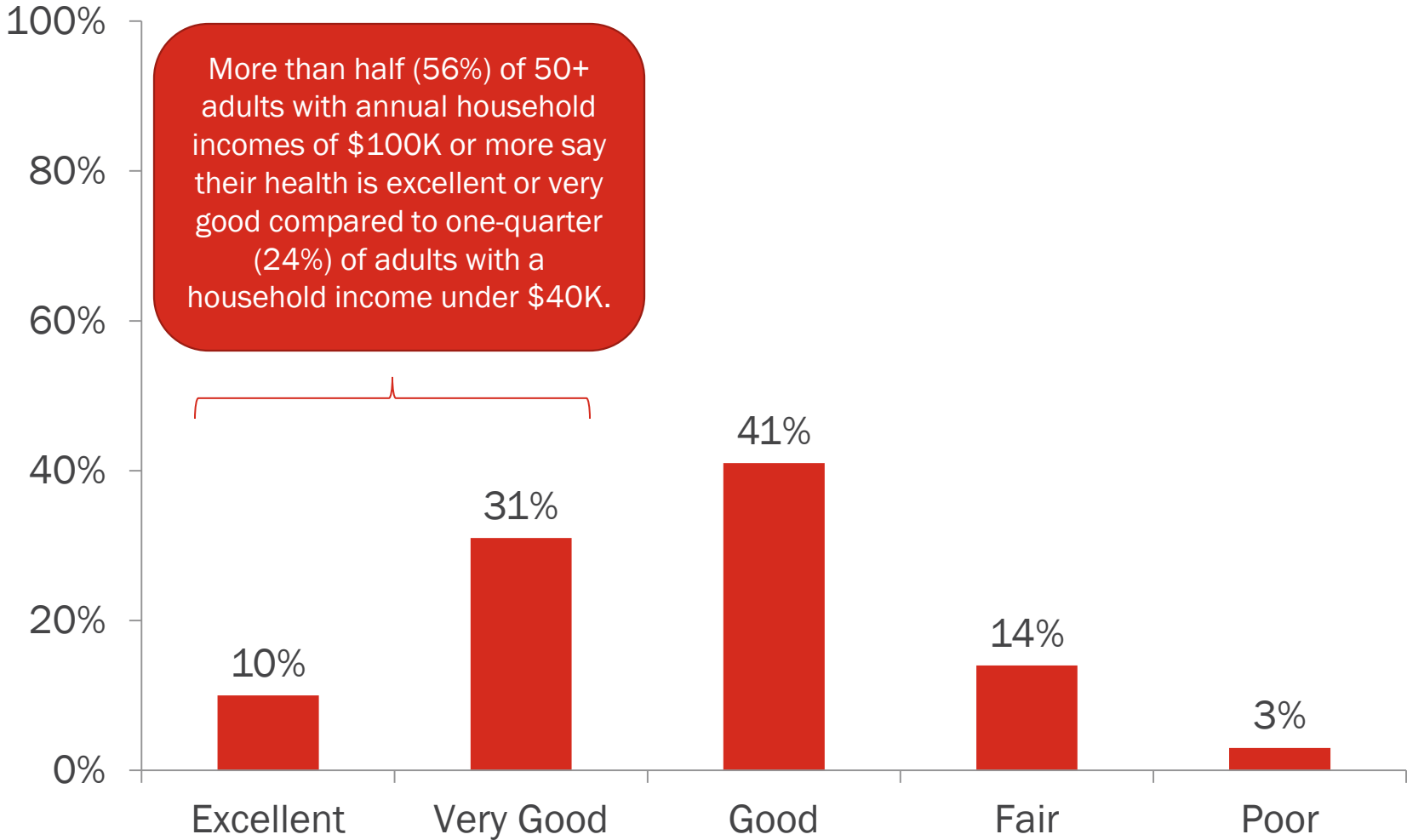
D3. Regardless of how you might have voted in the past, what do you usually consider yourself – a Democrat, a Republican, or some other party?

A Republican	29%
A Democrat	38%
An Independent	24%
Other	6%

D4. Are you or your spouse, currently, a member of AARP?

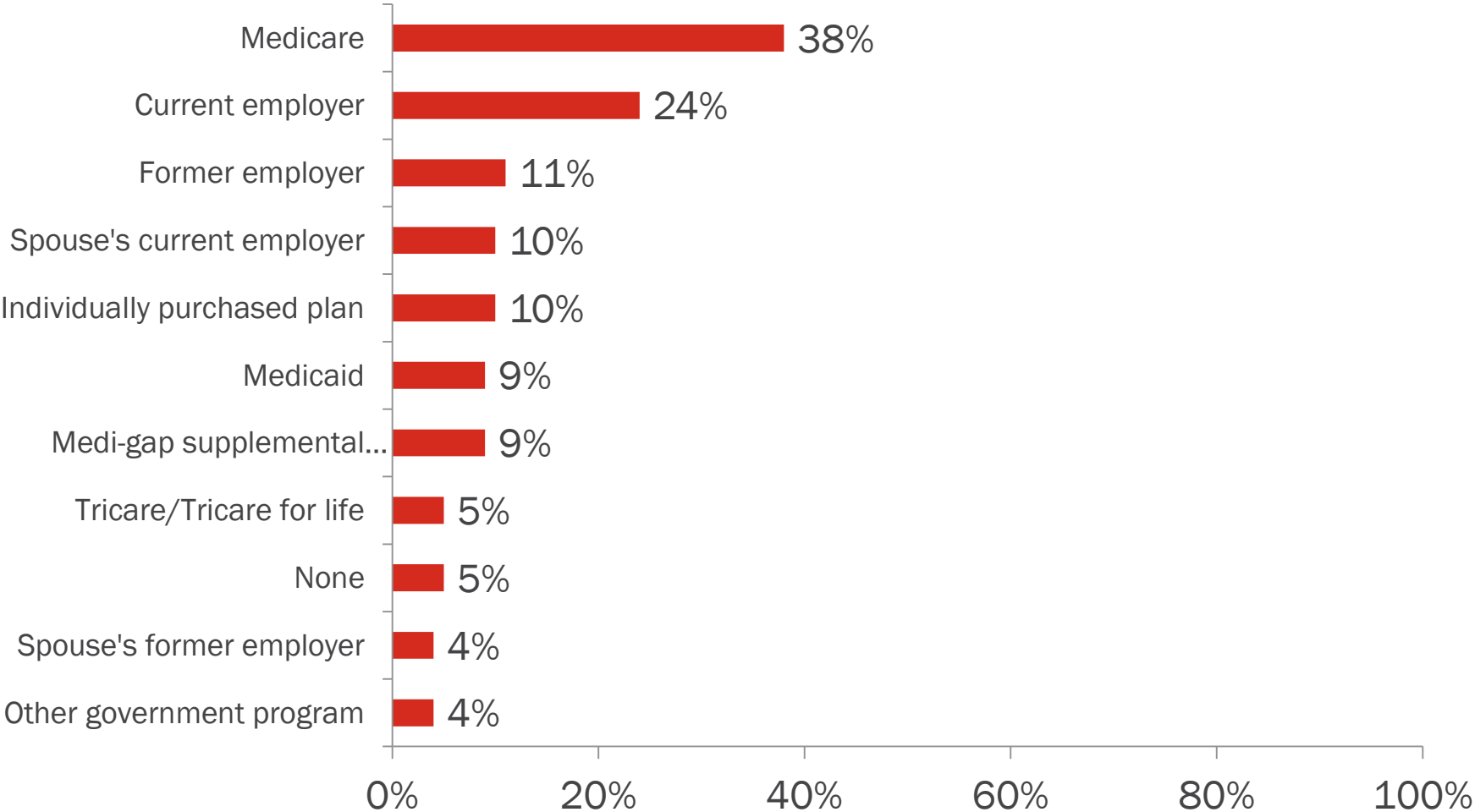
Yes	41%
No	59%

Most 50+ adults rate their health as good or better.



D5:Overall, how would you rate your health? Would you say it is.....

Type of health insurance



D6: Which of the following best describes your sources for health coverage? (Multiple responses allowed)

Demographics (concluded)

Gender

Male	47%
Female	53%

Age

50-64	57%
65 and over	42%

Race/Ethnicity

White, non-Hispanic	74%
Black, non-Hispanic	10%
Other, non-Hispanic	5%
Hispanic	10%
2+ Races, non-Hispanic	1%

Education

Less than high school	12%
High school	33%
Some college	26%
Bachelors degree or higher	29%

Income

Less than \$40k	37%
\$40K to less than \$74,999	24%
\$75K to less than \$99,999	14%
\$100K or more	26%