August 2019

Rx Companies: Putting Profit over People

A survey of adults ages 50 and older on experiences with prescription drug prices

Rx companies have too much influence on health care providers

When asked how much influence prescription drug companies have over various entities, doctors, hospitals/healthcare facilities and pharmacists were the top three entities in which adults age 50+ say prescription drug companies have a lot or some influence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Entity</th>
<th>Influence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Doctors</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospitals</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pharmacists</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congressional Democrats</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>News/Media</td>
<td>62%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Drug manufacturers, government, and insurance companies are collectively seen as contributing to high prescription drug prices.

Top five cited
‘Drug companies charging too much’ stated most often as reason for rising health care costs

Four in ten (40%) say drug companies charging too much for their products is the main reason for rising healthcare costs in the country. Two in ten (21%) say rising health care costs are the result of government not stepping in to regulate, negotiate or control costs. One in ten (11%) say the rising health care costs can be attributed to health care insurance companies.

Who’s Responsible For Rising Health Care Costs?

- Drug Companies: 40%
- Government: 21%
- Health Insurance companies: 11%

Most say drug companies make too much profit and are not concerned enough about helping people

Most (78%) say drug companies spend too much on marketing their product and drug companies are too concerned about making profits rather than helping people.

Widespread Sentiment: Rx Companies Are Focused on Profit, Not on Helping People

- Pharmaceutical or drug companies are too concerned about making profits, and not concerned enough about helping people: 78%
- Pharmaceutical or drug companies are equally concerned about profit and helping people: 20%

Majority say drug companies make too much profit and are more concerned about making profits and not concerned enough about helping people.
Implications

Given that the vast majority of Americans age 50-plus take medications daily (79%), efforts to address high prescription drug prices are very important to this population. While most agree the advancement of prescription drug development has made the lives of people better, the overall perception is that drug companies focus more on profit rather than on helping people. Drug companies’ focus on profit is most often cited as the reason for rising healthcare costs. A large majority believe drug companies wield undue influence over the medical community.

Methodology

This survey of 1,103 adults age 50 and older was conducted by the nonpartisan and objective research organization NORC at the University of Chicago on behalf of AARP. For this national survey, data were collected using the AmeriSpeak Panel. AmeriSpeak, the probability-based panel of NORC, is designed to be representative of the U.S. household population. The survey was conducted online and by telephone between February 15 and March 4, 2019. The data are weighted by gender, race, age, Hispanic ethnicity, marital status, census division, age, and income to benchmarks from the March 2018 Current Population Survey (CPS).