

Examining Gaps in Low-Cost, Preventive Care for Older Americans

Findings from a National Survey

April 23, 2012 – A new survey among older Americans reveals that most adults 65 and older are not receiving recommended, low-cost preventive care that lower patients' risk of health problems. The survey asked whether respondents received seven of these recommended services in the past year. A fraction (7%) says they have received all seven services. About half have received none or only one type of service. The John A. Hartford Foundation commissioned Lake Research Partners to conduct the survey among n=1,028 adults 65 and older nationwide from February 29 through March 3, 2012. The margin of sampling error is \pm 3.1 percentage points. More details about the methodology can be found at the end of the memo.

Among the key findings are:

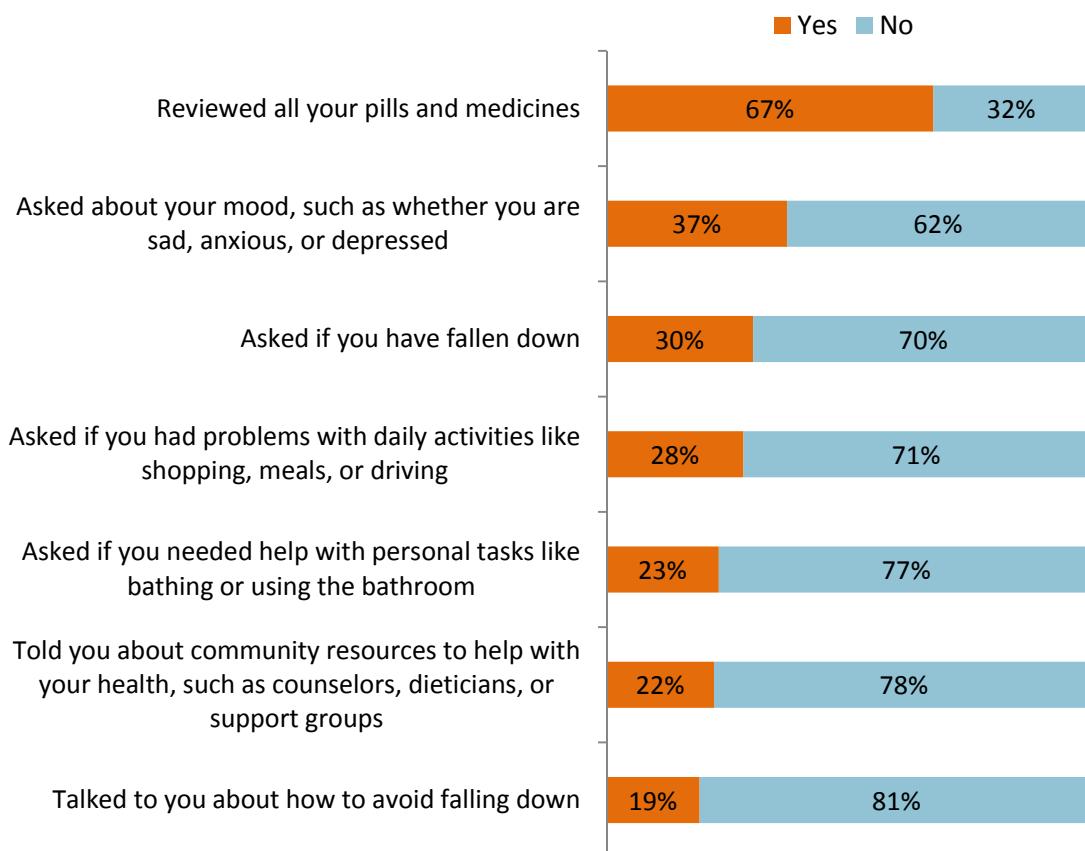
- Only 7% of older adults (65 and older) report receiving seven recommended services in the past 12 months that are part of a standard geriatric assessment.¹ Half (52%) have received none or just one of the services. Most older Americans (76%) have received fewer than half of the recommended interventions.
- Surprisingly, gaps in services extend across age categories and health status. For example, 75% of adults 80 and older say their doctor has not talked to them about how to avoid falling down. A majority (61%) of the sickest older adults – those in fair or poor health – have received fewer than half of the recommended services.
- Despite these gaps, most respondents say they are satisfied with the care they receive from their primary care physician.
- Two-thirds of older adults (68%) are unaware of the Annual Wellness Visit, a new Medicare benefit designed to promote healthy aging.
- The vast majority of respondents (93%) support geriatric training for medical and nursing students. Two thirds (67%) feel they would get better care if their health care providers had more training in geriatric care.

¹ These services include an annual medication review, a falls risk assessment and history, depression screening, a discussion of their ability to perform routine daily tasks and activities without help, among others.

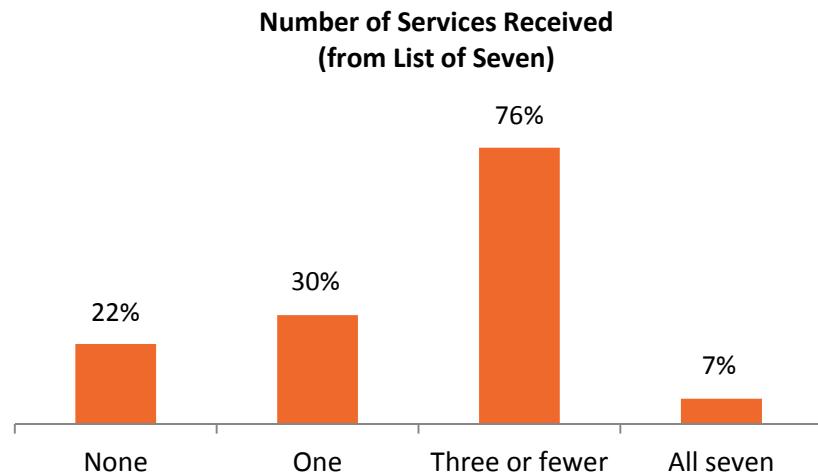
Key Findings

Many older adults say their doctor has reviewed their medications with them in the past 12 months; fewer than half report receiving a number of other services. Two thirds of older adults (67%) say their doctor or another health care provider has sat down with them to review all of their pills and medications. They are much less likely to report receiving other assessments, such as being asked about their mood (37%), whether they have fallen down (30%), and whether they have difficulty doing personal tasks at home (23%).

In Past 12 Months, Has Your Doctor or Health Care Provider...



In the past year, half of older Americans say they have received only one or none of these standard assessments. Nearly one in four (22%) has received none of these. Three quarters (76%) have received three or fewer services. A small minority (7%) say they have received all seven services.



Gaps in services extend across age cohorts. Nearly half of Americans 80 and older (47%) say they have received none or only one of the standard assessments. A majority of those 80 and older also say their health care provider has not talked to them about how to avoid falling down – only 23% report having this discussion.

% Saying “yes, in past 12 months”	Total	Age 65-69	Age 70-79	80+
MD reviewed pills/meds	67%	70%	66%	66%
MD asked about mood	37%	40%	34%	36%
MD asked if fallen down	30%	30%	25%	37%
MD asked about daily activities (IADLs)	28%	30%	25%	30%
MD asked about personal tasks (ADLs)	23%	25%	17%	29%
MD told you about community resources	22%	26%	17%	25%
MD talked to you about avoiding falls	19%	20%	15%	23%
Yes to all 7	7%	10%	4%	8%
Yes to 1 or none	52%	55%	53%	47%

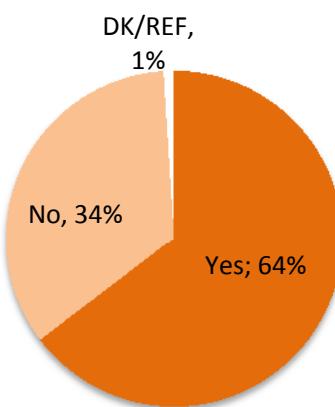
Gaps persist among the sickest adults. Fourteen percent of those who say they are in fair or poor health have received all seven types of care in the past 12 months. Fewer than half of the sickest adults (33%) say their health care provider directed them to community resources, or asked how they are dealing with personal tasks (37%).

% Saying “Yes, in past 12 months”	Total	Excellent/very good	Good	Fair/Poor
MD reviewed pills/meds	67%	64%	68%	70%
MD asked about mood	37%	25%	38%	52%
MD asked if fallen down	30%	19%	32%	45%
MD asked about daily activities (IADLs)	28%	18%	32%	42%
MD asked about personal tasks (ADLs)	23%	12%	27%	37%
MD told you about community resources	22%	12%	27%	33%
MD talked to you about avoiding falls	19%	11%	20%	32%
Yes to all 7	7%	2%	10%	14%
Yes to 1 or none	52%	60%	52%	40%

We also find gaps in care when looking by other health measures. Among those with 10 or more doctor visits in the past year, 57% say a health care provider has not talked to them about preventing falls. Close to one in four older adults (23%) with the greatest prescription use – five or more medications – say a health care provider has not done a review of medications in the past year.

Some feel their doctors and specialists do not talk to one another enough. One third of older Americans (34%) feel their doctors and specialists do not talk to each other enough about their care.

Do you feel your doctors and specialists talk to each other enough about your care?

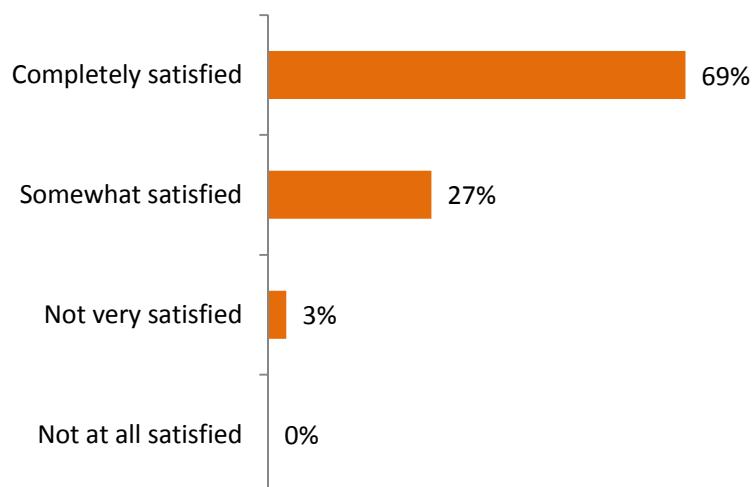


Despite wanting doctors and specialists to communicate more, only 8% of older adults say they have heard conflicting advice from two different doctors.

Despite gaps in care, a majority of older adults say they are satisfied with the care provided by their primary doctor. The vast majority of older adults (93%) say they have a primary care doctor they see regularly. Among these, 69% say they are completely satisfied with the care they receive from that doctor, and another 27% say they are somewhat satisfied.

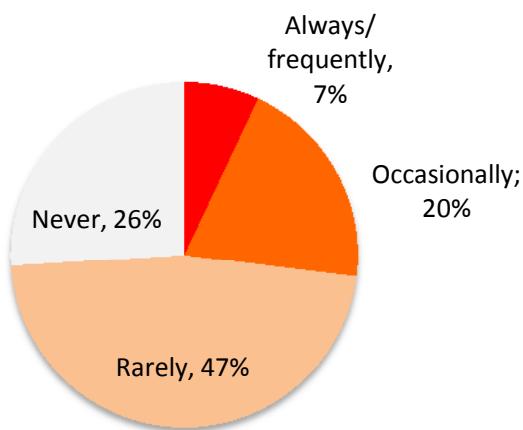
How satisfied are you with the care you get from your primary care provider?

(N = 976 who have regular primary care MD)



Some older adults leave their doctor's office with unanswered questions or unsure what to do. About one in four (27%) says they at least occasionally leave their doctor then realize they did not get all of their questions answered. Forty-two percent of adults with 10 or more doctor visits in the past year say the same.

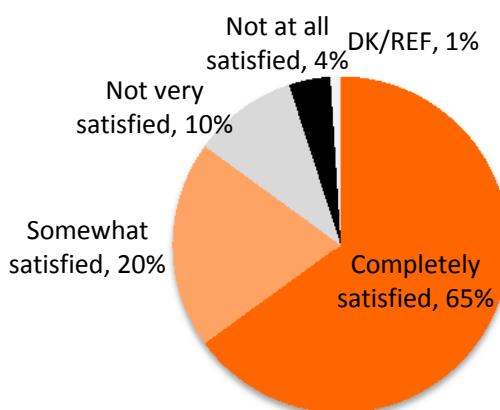
How often do you leave the doctor's office and realize you did not get all of your questions answered?



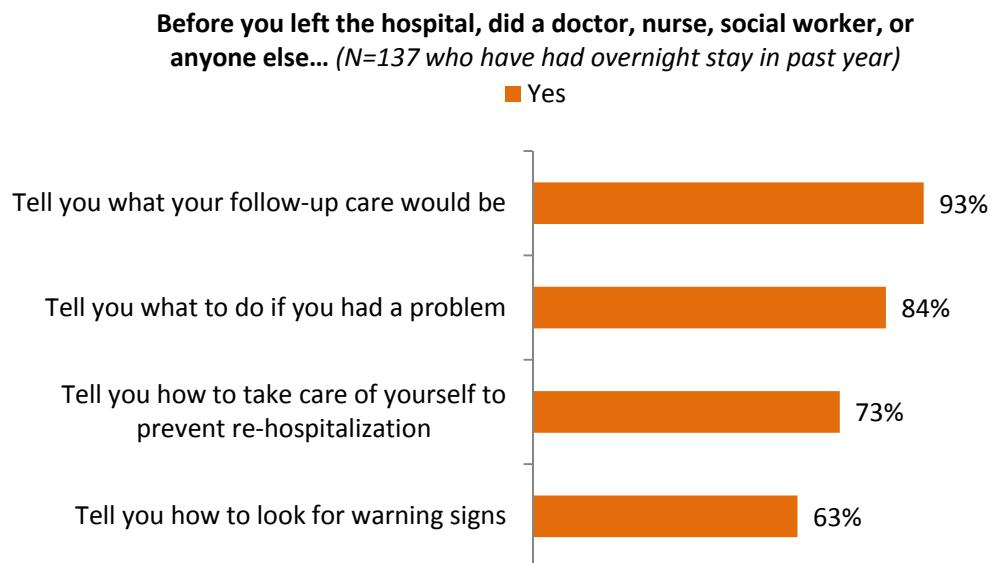
Fourteen percent of older adults say they at least occasionally leave their doctor's office unsure about what to do. Forty-five percent say this never happens, and 41% say it happens rarely.

Older adults who have received hospital care report high levels of satisfaction. Fifteen percent of respondents say they have had an overnight stay in the hospital in the past year. Among these adults, 65% say they were completely satisfied with their care, and 20% say they were somewhat satisfied.

**Thinking about your last overnight stay in a hospital, how satisfied were you with the care you received there?
(N=137 who have had overnight stay in past year)**



A majority of those with an overnight hospital stay say they left the hospital with information about follow-up care (93%) and instructions about what to do if they had a problem (84%). Close to three quarters (73%) say they were told how to take care of themselves to prevent re-hospitalization. Fewer (63%) left the hospital being told how to look for warning signs.



Most older Americans are not aware of the Annual Wellness Visit (AWV), a new benefit to Medicare patients that started in January 2011. The following description of the AWV was presented to respondents to gauge whether or not they are aware of the new benefit:

Beginning last year, in January 2011, everyone with Medicare is eligible for a free Annual Wellness Visit to talk about how they could improve their health and prevent future health problems.

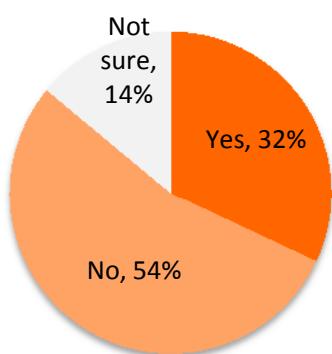
The Annual Wellness Visit is a new, special visit with no co-pays or deductibles.

In this visit, the doctor does not do a physical exam – you keep all of your clothes on! This doctor's visit is just for the doctor (or other health care provider) to talk to you and ask you questions about:

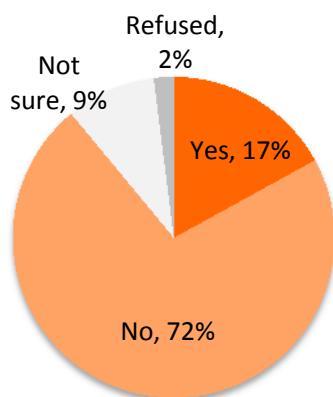
- If you are up-to-date with the preventive screenings and shots you need
- Who are all of the doctors and health care providers involved in your care
- Any problems you are having in your daily life
- Helping you make a plan for how people or groups in your community could help you with your health.

Almost one third of older adults (32%) have heard of the AWV; 68% have not or are unsure. About one in six (17%) say they have had their AWV, although there may be some confusion. Women 65 to 69 years old (26%) are most likely to say they have had an AWV.

Have you heard about this Annual Wellness Visit?

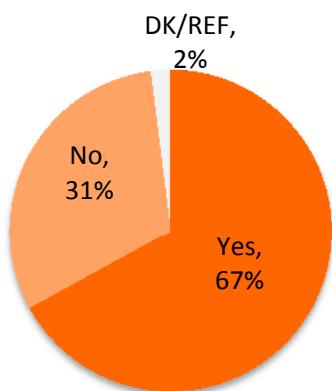


In the past 12 months, have you had your free Annual Wellness Visit?

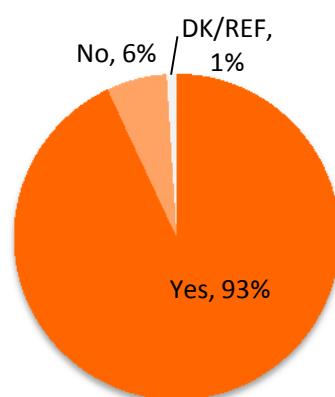


When asked about geriatric training for health care providers, nearly all support training and most feel they would get better care. After hearing that medical and nursing students must be trained in caring for children, 93% say medical and nursing students should be required to receive training in caring for older adults. Two thirds (67%) think they would get better care from their health care providers if they had more training in caring for older adults. Those with more exposure to health care providers are more likely to think geriatric training would improve care (e.g., 75% of those with five or more doctor visits in the past year vs. 63% of those with one or two visits).

Do you think you would get better care from your doctors, nurses, social workers, and other health professionals, if they had more training in caring for older people?



All medical students and nursing students must take classes and be trained in caring for children. Do you think medical and nursing students should also be required to take classes in caring for older people?



Most older adults are unaware that a shortage of geriatric providers exists: 55% say they have not heard about the shortage, and 16% are not sure. Twenty-nine percent say they have heard something about a shortage.

Detailed Methodology

Lake Research Partners conducted this survey among n=1,028 adults 65 and older nationwide from February 29 through March 2, 2012, using Knowledge Networks (KN). KN has the only probability-based online panel of Americans in the country. If a household recruited for the panel does not have internet access or a computer, KN provides both. Data from KN's panel has been published in numerous peer-reviewed academic journals, such as the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA), by major national news organizations, such as the Associated Press, and used by academic and government research institutions across the country. For more information, see:

<http://www.knowledgenetworks.com/ganp/>