

Consumers Rank Top Health Issues for 2002 in New AmerisourceBergen Survey

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Survey Focuses on Government Health Priorities, Ways to Finance Prescription Plan for Seniors, and How to Handle Prescription Fraud

What are the top three health issues that government should address in 2002? Reducing the costs of prescription medications led the list with 32 percent of survey respondents, followed by universal health insurance and a prescription drug benefit program for seniors, which tied at 25 percent. As for who should fund a prescription drug benefit program for seniors, respondents favored a shared approach, with 63 percent saying it should be paid for by drug manufacturers, pharmacies, insurance companies and taxpayers.

That's according to the AmerisourceBergen Index, which polled 1,039 people nationwide on a range of topics including the kinds of health screening programs pharmacists should offer customers, how pharmacists should investigate potentially fraudulent prescriptions and other subjects. The quarterly survey was conducted by Opinion Research Corporation International on behalf of AmerisourceBergen, the largest pharmaceutical services company in the United States dedicated solely to the pharmaceutical supply chain.

Handling Fraudulent Prescriptions

Survey respondents were also asked what pharmacists should do when confronted with a prescription that they suspect may be fraudulent. Nearly three-quarters (73%) said the pharmacist should contact the doctor to confirm the prescription's authenticity. Only 10 percent said they should refuse to fill the prescription and 7 percent said the pharmacist should call the police or question the patient.

Selecting a Pharmacy

Why choose a particular pharmacy? As in past AmerisourceBergen Indexes conducted in 2001, convenience beat out other options, with 34 percent of respondents selecting this answer. Next were accepting a person's insurance card (25%), competitive pricing (14%) and staff availability and knowledge (13%). And while consumers expressed confidence about the quality of the medications purchased in the United States, their faith did not carry over to prescription products purchased outside the country via the Internet. Nearly nine out of ten respondents (87%) said they would not purchase prescription drugs from another country over the Internet.

The majority of consumers expressed confidence in generic medications, with more than three-quarters of respondents in a survey released today saying they are just as effective as their brand-name counterparts. The same held true for store-brand nonprescription products. More than half the survey respondents (56%) said they would choose a lower-priced, store-brand medication over a brand-name over-the-counter product.

Screening Program Preferences

Lastly, consumers were asked what screening programs they would like to see at their local pharmacies. Blood pressure and cholesterol screenings led the list at 27 percent and 22 percent, respectively. Next were diabetes screenings (16%), vision or glaucoma exams (10%), and bone density screenings (7%).

About the AmerisourceBergen Index

The AmerisourceBergen Index is a quarterly survey of trends, purchasing behaviors and opinions about pharmacists and their customers. The first survey was conducted in May 2001.

About AmerisourceBergen

AmerisourceBergen (NYSE: ABC) is the largest pharmaceutical services company in the United States dedicated solely to the pharmaceutical supply chain. It is the leading distributor of pharmaceutical products and services to the hospital systems/acute care market, alternative care facilities, independent community pharmacies, and regional chains. The Company is also a leader in the institutional pharmacy marketplace. With approximately \$35 billion in annualized operating revenues, AmerisourceBergen is headquartered in Valley Forge, PA, and employs more than 13,000 people serving over 25,000 customers.

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