eHealth

Majority of Americans Would Not Change Health Insurance Plans to Save $100 per Month if It Meant Losing Their Doctor: eHealth Survey Finds

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eHealth Launches "Physician Finder" Tool on eHealthMedicare.com

MAYNARD, MA, Nov 08, 2011 (MARKETWIRE via COMTEX) -- For approximately three-out-of-four Americans (72 percent), having access to their existing primary care physician is a very important factor (54%), or the most important factor (19%) they use to select a health insurance plan. The data come from a randomized phone survey of 1,014 adults conducted by Opinion Research Corporation and sponsored by eHealth, Inc. (NASDAQ: EHTH). eHealth is the parent company of eHealthInsurance.com, eHealthMedicare.com and PlanPrescriber.com.

The survey also found that, among the Medicare-eligible population (those age 65 and over), being able to choose a plan with their existing physician was more important than it was to those under the age of 65. Nearly four-in-five (77%) people age 65 and older said that being able to choose a plan with their doctor was very important (55%), or the most important factor (22%) they used to select a health insurance plan.

Question: How important is it to be able to see your current doctor, when picking an insurance plan?

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*Total population  Important (net):    Population           Important (net):
surveyed           92%                 surveyed, ages 65    90%
                                       and over
                   ------------------                       ------------------
                   Most/Very Important                      Most/Very Important
                   (subnet): 73%                            (subnet): 77%
                   ------------------                       ------------------
                   Most Important: 19%                      Most Important: 22%
                   ------------------                       ------------------
                   Very Important: 54%                      Very Important: 55%
                   ------------------                       ------------------
                   Somewhat Important:                      Somewhat Important:
                   19%                                      13%
                   ------------------                       ------------------
                   Not Important: 9%                        Not Important: 9%
                                                            ------------------
                                                            Don't know: 1%
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To help Medicare-eligible consumers find the plans supported by their doctor, eHealth has added its popular search tool on eHealthInsurance.com (the "Plans with Your Doctor" tool) to eHealthMedicare.com. The new "Plans with Your Doctor" tool is available now for eHealthMedicare customers during the 2012 Annual Enrollment Period for a number of select Medicare plans.

"By clicking on the 'Plans with Your Doctor' tab, customers are able to enter their doctor's name into the tool and immediately see a list of Medicare plans that their physician will accept," said Bruce Telkamp, Senior Vice President for eHealth, Inc. "Without this tool, a customer would have to go to each insurance company's web site individually to try to determine whether or not their physician was available under the plan they're interested in. This tool is very popular on eHealthInsurance.com, so it seemed wise to offer it to our Medicare customers as well."

According to the survey, when asked if they were willing to change doctors in order to potentially save up to $100 each month, 79% of seniors said no, compared to 73% of all respondents. But, when asked if they would be willing to change plans in order to potentially save over $100 per month, 63% of seniors still said they would not change plans, while only 48% of the total population said they would pass up the potential savings.

Question: "Would change your primary care doctor if it enabled you to save..."

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*Total Population  Yes (net): 48%      *Population          Yes (net): 30%
surveyed                               surveyed, ages 65
                                       and over
                   ------------------                       ------------------
                   $100 or less                             $100 or less
                   (net):22%                                (net):12%
                   ------------------                       ------------------
                   $25/ month: 9%                           $25/ month: 7%
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          -------------------                     -------------------
          $50/ month: 7%                          $50/ month: 2%
          -------------------                     -------------------
          $75/ month: 3%                          $75/ month: 1%
          -------------------                     -------------------
          $100/ month: 4%                         $100/ month: 2%
          -------------------                     -------------------
          Over $100/month:                        Over $100/ month:
          25%                                     16%
          -------------------                     -------------------
          No: 48%                                 No: 63%
          -------------------                     -------------------
          Don't know: 3%                          Don't know: 8%
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"This survey shines a light on an important Medicare plan selection criteria that is not strictly correlated with the plan's cost to the enrollee," said Gary Lauer, CEO of eHealth, Inc. "This survey also shows how much people value their primary care physician. As we enter the heart of Medicare's Annual Enrollment Period (AEP), it becomes increasingly important to make it easy for people to find a Medicare plan that maintains their access to their doctor."

Survey Methodology Data presented here is a summary of findings from a telephone survey conducted by Opinion Research Corporation among a random national sample of 1,014 adults living in private households in the continental United States. The data provided here is a subset of the complete survey data. A full copy of the survey results is available upon request. Interviewing for this survey was completed by Opinion Research Corporation during the period of August 22 and August 29, 2011. *Numbers may not always total up to 100% due to rounding.

Medicare has neither reviewed nor endorsed this information.

About eHealth eHealth, Inc. (NASDAQ: EHTH) is the parent company of eHealthInsurance, the nation's leading online source of health insurance for individuals, families and small businesses. Through the company's website, www.eHealthInsurance.com, consumers can get quotes from leading health insurance carriers, compare plans side by side, and apply for and purchase health insurance. eHealthInsurance offers thousands of individual, family and small business health plans underwritten by more than 180 of the nation's leading health insurance companies. eHealthInsurance is licensed to sell health insurance in all 50 states and the District of Columbia, making it the ideal model of a successful, high-functioning health insurance exchange. Through eHealth's technology solutions (www.eHealthTechnology.com), is also a leading provider of health insurance exchange technology. eHealth provides a suite of hosted e-commerce solutions that enable health plan providers, resellers and government entities to market and distribute products online. eHealth, Inc. also provides online tools to help seniors navigate Medicare health insurance options through PlanPrescriber.com (www.planprescriber.com) and eHealthMedicare.com (www.eHealthMedicare.com). For more news and information about health insurance, health reform and Medicare, visit eHealth's consumer blog: Get Smart - Get Covered.

Image Available: http://www2.marketwire.com/mw/frame_mw?attachid=1792874

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