

# *The Characteristics and Perceptions of the Medicare Population*

Data from the 2001 Medicare Current Beneficiary Survey

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# Table Of Contents

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<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Data Highlights .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Section 1. The Medicare Population in 2000 .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Section 2. Health Status .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Section 3. Community Beneficiaries' Physician User Rates .....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Section 4. Medicare Expenditures .....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Section 5. Beneficiaries' Health Care.....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Section 6. Membership in Health Maintenance Organizations (HMOs) .....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Section 7. Beneficiaries' Views on Medicare Information .....</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Section 8. Medicare Dually Eligible Population .....</b>	<b>37</b>
 <b>Detailed Tables from the Medicare Current Beneficiary Survey Data .....</b>	 <b>41</b>
 <b>Section 1. Who is in the Medicare population?</b>	
Table 1.1 Age, Gender, and Race/Ethnicity of Medicare Beneficiaries, by Residence Status, 2001 .....	43
Table 1.2 Demographic and Socioeconomic Characteristics of Medicare Beneficiaries, by Age and by Gender and Age, 2001 .....	47
Table 1.3 Demographic and Socioeconomic Characteristics of Medicare Beneficiaries, by Race/Ethnicity and Age, 2001 .....	50
Table 1.4a Demographic and Socioeconomic Characteristics of Non-institutionalized Medicare Beneficiaries, by Living Arrangement and Age, 2001 .....	53
Table 1.4b Demographic and Socioeconomic Characteristics of Non-institutionalized Male Medicare Beneficiaries, by Living Arrangement and Age, 2001 .....	55
Table 1.4c Demographic and Socioeconomic Characteristics of Non-institutionalized Female Medicare Beneficiaries, by Living Arrangement and Age, 2001 .....	57
Table 1.5 Demographic and Socioeconomic Characteristics of Institutionalized Medicare Beneficiaries, by Age, 2001 .....	59
Table 1.6 Demographic and Socioeconomic Characteristics of Non-institutionalized Medicare Beneficiaries, by Insurance Coverage, 2001 .....	61

# Table Of Contents

---

## Section 2. How healthy are Medicare beneficiaries?

Table 2.1 Perceived Health and Functioning of Medicare Beneficiaries, by Age and by Gender and Age, 2001 .....	64
Table 2.2 Self-Reported Health Conditions and Risk Factors of Medicare Beneficiaries, by Age and by Gender and Age, 2001 .....	66
Table 2.3 Perceived Health and Functioning of Medicare Beneficiaries, by Race/Ethnicity and Age, 2001 .....	68
Table 2.4 Self-Reported Health Conditions and Risk Factors of Medicare Beneficiaries, by Race/Ethnicity and Age, 2001 .....	70
Table 2.5a Perceived Health and Functioning of Non-institutionalized Medicare Beneficiaries, by Living Arrangement and Age, 2001 .....	72
Table 2.5b Perceived Health and Functioning of Institutionalized Medicare Beneficiaries, by Age, 2001 .....	74
Table 2.6a Self-Reported Health Conditions and Risk Factors of Non-institutionalized Medicare Beneficiaries, by Living Arrangement and Age, 2001 .....	76
Table 2.6b Reported Health Conditions and Risk Factors of Institutionalized Medicare Beneficiaries, by Age, 2001 .....	78
Table 2.7 Perceived Health and Functioning of Non-institutionalized Medicare Beneficiaries, by Insurance Coverage, 2001 .....	80
Table 2.8 Self-Reported Health Conditions and Risk Factors of Non-institutionalized Medicare Beneficiaries, by Insurance Coverage, 2001 .....	82
Table 2.9 Demographic and Socioeconomic Characteristics of Non-institutionalized Medicare Beneficiaries, by Preventive Services, 2001 .....	84
Table 2.10 Demographic and Perceived Health Status and Functioning of Medicare Beneficiaries, by Reasons for Not Receiving a Mammogram, 2001 .....	87
Table 2.11 Demographic and Perceived Health Status and Functioning of Medicare Beneficiaries, by Reasons for Not Receiving a Pap Smear, 2001 .....	90
Table 2.12 Demographic, Perceived Health Status and Functioning of Medicare Beneficiaries, by Reasons for Not Receiving a Prostate Exam, 2001 .....	93

## Section 3. What health care services do Medicare beneficiaries receive?

Table 3.1 Outpatient Hospital User Rates for Non-institutionalized Medicare Beneficiaries, by Insurance Coverage, and by Demographic, Socioeconomic, and Health Characteristics, 2001 .....	96
Table 3.2 Physician Services User Rates for Non-institutionalized Medicare Beneficiaries, by Insurance Coverage, and by Demographic, Socioeconomic, and Health Characteristics, 2001 .....	100

## Section 4. How much does the Medicare population spend on health care and who pays for their care?

Table 4.1 Benefit Payments of Medicare Beneficiaries, by Age, Gender, Race/Ethnicity, and Residence Status, 2001 .....	104
Table 4.2 Benefit Payments of Medicare Beneficiaries, by Demographic and Socioeconomic Characteristics, and by Gender and Age, 2001 .....	108
Table 4.3 Benefit Payments of Medicare Beneficiaries, by Demographic and Socioeconomic Characteristics, and by Race/Ethnicity and Age, 2001 .....	111
Table 4.4a Benefit Payments of Non-institutionalized Medicare Beneficiaries, by Demographic and Socioeconomic Characteristics, and by Living Arrangement and Age, 2001 .....	114

# Table Of Contents

---

Table 4.4b Benefit Payments of Non-institutionalized Male Medicare Beneficiaries, by Demographic and Socioeconomic Characteristics, and by Living Arrangement and Age, 2001 .....	116
Table 4.4c Benefit Payments of Non-institutionalized Female Medicare Beneficiaries, by Demographic and Socioeconomic Characteristics, and by Living Arrangement and Age, 2001 .....	118
Table 4.5 Benefit Payments of Institutionalized Medicare Beneficiaries, by Demographic and Socioeconomic Characteristics, and by Age, 2001 .....	120
Table 4.6 Benefit Payments of Non-institutionalized Medicare Beneficiaries, by Demographic and Socioeconomic Characteristics, and by Insurance Coverage, 2001 .....	122

## **Section 5. What is the Medicare population's access to care and how satisfied are they with their care?**

Table 5.1 Indicators of Access to Care for Non-institutionalized Medicare Beneficiaries, by Age and by Gender and Age, 2001 .....	125
Table 5.2 Measures of Satisfaction with Care for Non-institutionalized Medicare Beneficiaries, by Age and by Gender and Age, 2001 .....	127
Table 5.3 Measures of Propensity to Seek Care for Non-institutionalized Medicare Beneficiaries, by Age and by Gender and Age, 2001 .....	129
Table 5.4 Indicators of Access to Care for Non-institutionalized Medicare Beneficiaries, by Race/Ethnicity and Age, 2001 .....	131
Table 5.5 Measures of Satisfaction with Care for Non-institutionalized Medicare Beneficiaries, by Race/Ethnicity and Age, 2001 .....	133
Table 5.6 Measures of Propensity to Seek Care for Non-institutionalized Medicare Beneficiaries, by Age and by Gender and Age, 2001 .....	135
Table 5.7 Indicators of Access to Care for Non-institutionalized Medicare Beneficiaries, by Living Arrangement and Age, 2001 .....	137
Table 5.8 Measures of Satisfaction with Care for Non-institutionalized Medicare Beneficiaries, by Living Arrangement and Age, 2001 .....	139
Table 5.9 Measures of Propensity to Seek Care for Non-institutionalized Medicare Beneficiaries, by Living Arrangement and Age, 2001 .....	141
Table 5.10 Indicators of Access to Care for Non-institutionalized Medicare Beneficiaries, by Health Status, 2001 .....	143
Table 5.11 Measures of Satisfaction with Care for Non-institutionalized Medicare Beneficiaries, by Health Status, 2001 .....	145
Table 5.12 Measures of Propensity to Seek Care for Non-institutionalized Medicare Beneficiaries, by Health Status, 2001 .....	147
Table 5.13 Indicators of Access to Care for Non-institutionalized Medicare Beneficiaries, by Insurance Coverage, 2001 .....	149
Table 5.14 Measures of Satisfaction with Care for Non-institutionalized Medicare Beneficiaries, by Insurance Coverage, 2001 .....	151
Table 5.15 Measures of Propensity to Seek Care for Non-institutionalized Medicare Beneficiaries, by Insurance Coverage, 2001 .....	153

## **Section 6. How do Medicare Beneficiaries enrolled in Risk HMOs compare to those in Fee-For-Service?**

Table 6.1 Age, Gender, and Race/Ethnicity of Medicare Beneficiaries, by HMO Status, 2001 .....	155
Table 6.2 Demographic and Socioeconomic Characteristics of Medicare Beneficiaries, by HMO Status, 2001 .....	159
Table 6.3 Perceived Health and Functioning of Medicare Beneficiaries, by HMO Status, 2001 .....	162
Table 6.4 Self-Reported Health Conditions and Risk Factors of Medicare Beneficiaries, by HMO Status, 2001 .....	164

## **Section 7. How well do Medicare Beneficiaries understand the Medicare program?**

Table 7.1 Beneficiaries= Satisfaction with Their Ability Understand the Medicare Program, by Demographic, Socioeconomic, and Health Characteristics, 2001 .....	166
Table 7.2 Where Medicare Beneficiaries Find Information About the Medicare Program, by Demographic, Socioeconomic, and Health Characteristics, 2001 .....	170

# Table Of Contents

---

## **Section 8. How do Dual Eligible Medicare Beneficiaries compare to Non-Dual Eligible Medicare Beneficiaries?**

Table 8.1 Age, Gender, and Race/Ethnicity of Medicare Beneficiaries, by Dual Eligible Status, 2001 .....	174
Table 8.2 Age, Gender, and Race/Ethnicity of Medicare Beneficiaries, by Insurance Status, 2001 .....	177
Table 8.3 Demographic and Socioeconomic Characteristics of Medicare Beneficiaries, by Dual Eligible Status, 2001 .....	181
Table 8.4 Demographic and Socioeconomic Characteristics of Medicare Beneficiaries, by Insurance Status, 2001 .....	184
Table 8.5 Perceived Health and Functioning of Medicare Beneficiaries, by Dual Eligible Status, 2001 .....	187
Table 8.6 Perceived Health and Functioning of Medicare Beneficiaries, by Insurance Status, 2001 .....	189
Table 8.7 Self-Reported Health Conditions and Risk Factors of Medicare Beneficiaries, by Dual Eligible Status, 2001 .....	191
Table 8.8 Self-Reported Health Conditions and Risk Factors of Medicare Beneficiaries, by Insurance Status, 2001 .....	193

## **Appendix A. Technical Documentation for the Medicare Current Beneficiary Survey .....**

### **Overview .....**

Sample design .....

Survey operations .....

### **MCBS public use files .....**

Access to Care .....

Cost and Use .....

The Sample .....

### **Access to care file statistics .....**

Sampling Error .....

Variance Estimation (using the replicate Weights) .....

## **Appendix B. Definitions of Terms and Variables .....**

# **INTRODUCTION**

*The Characteristics and Perceptions of the Medicare Population: Data from the 2001 Medicare Current Beneficiary Survey* is the sixth in a series of source books based on the Medicare Current Beneficiary Survey (MCBS) Access to Care data file. The focus of this series is the socioeconomic and demographic characteristics of the Medicare population, their health status, their secondary health insurance, and their access to and satisfaction with Medicare services.

The MCBS is a continuous, multipurpose survey of a nationally representative sample of more than 16,000 Medicare beneficiaries designed to aid CMS's administration, monitoring and evaluation of the Medicare program. The survey is focused on health care use, cost and sources of payment. Data from the MCBS enables CMS to determine sources of payment for all medical services used by Medicare beneficiaries, including co-payments, deductibles, and noncovered services; develop reliable and current information on the use and cost of services not covered by Medicare (such as prescription drugs and long-term care); ascertain all types of health insurance coverage and relate coverage to use of services and to sources of payment; and monitor the personal and financial effects of changes in the Medicare program. Additionally, the MCBS is the only source of multidimensional person-based information about the characteristics of the Medicare population and their access to and satisfaction with Medicare services.

Data from the MCBS are released to the public in two annual data file series: the "Access to Care" series and the "Cost and Use" series. The Access to Care files--available for calendar years 1991 through 2001--contain information collected in the fall interview on beneficiary

access to medical providers, satisfaction with their health care, indicators of their health status and functioning, secondary health insurance coverage, and demographic and financial information. The Access to Care files also provide Medicare program expenditures for the entire calendar year. The Cost and Use files--available for calendar years 1992 through 2000--include much of the data from the Access to Care files, e.g., demographic information, beneficiary health status and functioning and secondary health insurance coverage. However, the focus of the Cost and Use files is total personal health care use and expenditures for all health care services used by the Medicare population by sources of payment.

*The Characteristics and Perceptions of the Medicare Population* series is based upon the Access to Care file series. The data from the Access to Care files have been augmented and adjusted, as described in Technical Appendix A, to represent the entire Medicare population, i.e., individuals who were enrolled for any portion of 2001. This series of source books differs from those derived from the Cost and Use files (*Health and Health Care of the Medicare Population*) in several significant ways. First, because it is based upon the Access to Care files, *The Characteristics and Perceptions of the Medicare Population* series will be more current than source books based upon the Cost and Use files. Second, the socioeconomic and demographic data may differ slightly from those produced from the Cost and Use files, due to the sampling as well as the methodologies used for composing the ever-enrolled population. Finally, this series will not cover the detailed health care use, expenditures and payment sources of the Medicare population. Instead, summary Medicare benefit payment data will be provided.





**TABLES FROM  
THE MEDICARE CURRENT  
BENEFICIARY SURVEY**

**2001 ACCESS TO CARE**

## **APPENDIX**

# **A**

## **TECHNICAL DOCUMENTATION FOR THE MEDICARE CURRENT BENEFICIARY SURVEY**

**APPENDIX**  
**B**

**DEFINITIONS OF TERMS AND VARIABLES**

# **Data Highlights**

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