

## 2020 Medicare Current Beneficiary Survey Early Look

In advance of the 2020 MCBS Survey File release, this Early Look presents key preliminary estimates for beneficiaries living in the community who were enrolled in Medicare in 2020.

### INTRODUCTION

Using preliminary data from the 2020 MCBS Survey File, the Early Look presents a demographic portrait of the Medicare population living in the community. It also provides preliminary estimates pertaining to selected health status and functioning, access to care, and satisfaction with care measures.

**The majority of Medicare beneficiaries living in the community are White non-Hispanic, between 65 and 84 years of age, and live in English-speaking households.**

**Table 1.** Selected demographic characteristics of Medicare beneficiaries living in the community, 2020<sup>ii</sup>

Demographic Characteristic	Response	Weighted % (SE)
<b>Age</b>	< 65 years	13.4 (0.3)
	65-74 years	49.9 (0.5)
	75-84 years	27.0 (0.3)
	85+ years	9.6 (0.2)
<b>Sex</b>	Female	54.3 (0.4)
	Male	45.7 (0.4)
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	White non-Hispanic	74.6 (0.8)
	Black non-Hispanic	10.3 (0.4)
	Hispanic	8.4 (0.6)
	Other Race/Ethnicity <sup>iii</sup>	5.9 (0.4)
<b>Language Spoken at Home</b>	English	87.8 (0.6)
	Language other than English	12.1 (0.6)
<b>Educational Attainment</b>	Less than a high school diploma	12.8 (0.5)
	High school graduate	24.9 (0.6)
	Some college/vocational school	30.3 (0.6)
	Bachelor's degree or beyond	31.8 (0.9)
<b>Veteran</b>	Yes	17.5 (0.5)
	No	82.5 (0.5)

SOURCE: Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, Medicare Current Beneficiary Survey, Preliminary Data from the Survey File, 2020.

<sup>i</sup> These preliminary estimates are produced prior to final data editing and final weighting to provide early access to the most recent information from the MCBS.

<sup>ii</sup> Totals may not sum to 100 percent due to rounding and/or missingness. Missing values (such as Don't Know and Refused) are included in the denominator to ensure that the full universe of respondents eligible for the item is represented in preliminary estimates. These estimates are based on preliminary data and subject to change in final estimate generation.

<sup>iii</sup> The "Other Race/Ethnicity" category includes other single races not of Hispanic origin or Two or More Races. See the Definitions entry for race/ethnicity for more information.

### HIGHLIGHTS

#### Preliminary Estimates from the 2020 MCBS Survey File



79% of Medicare beneficiaries report good, very good, or excellent health.



45% of Medicare beneficiaries report having one or more disabilities.



Most Medicare beneficiaries are satisfied with health care quality, ease of access, and cost.

Over three-quarters of Medicare beneficiaries living in the community report good, very good, or excellent health. Approximately 81 percent report the same or better health compared to one year ago.

**Table 2.** Self-reported health status of Medicare beneficiaries living in the community by age, 2020<sup>ii</sup>

		Total	< 65 years <sup>iv</sup>	≥ 65 years
		Weighted % (SE)	Weighted % (SE)	Weighted % (SE)
<b>Current Overall Health Status</b>	Excellent	16.3 (0.5)	4.6 (0.5)	18.1 (0.5)
	Very good	32.9 (0.5)	11.8 (0.7)	36.2 (0.6)
	Good	29.3 (0.5)	30.5 (1.2)	29.1 (0.5)
	Fair	15.7 (0.4)	35.4 (1.3)	12.7 (0.4)
	Poor	5.2 (0.2)	16.9 (0.9)	3.4 (0.2)
<b>Overall Health Status Compared to 1 Year Ago</b>	Much better	5.4 (0.2)	6.2 (0.6)	5.2 (0.3)
	Somewhat better	10.1 (0.3)	12.7 (0.9)	9.7 (0.3)
	About the same	66.0 (0.5)	54.1 (1.3)	67.8 (0.5)
	Somewhat worse	15.9 (0.4)	22.0 (1.0)	14.9 (0.4)
	Much worse	2.2 (0.2)	4.7 (0.6)	1.9 (0.1)

SOURCE: Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, Medicare Current Beneficiary Survey, Preliminary Data from the Survey File, 2020.

Almost half of Medicare beneficiaries living in the community report at least one disability. Around one-quarter report difficulties with walking or climbing stairs.

**Table 3.** Disabilities among Medicare beneficiaries living in the community by age, 2020<sup>ii</sup>

		Total	< 65 years <sup>iv</sup>	≥ 65 years
		Weighted % (SE)	Weighted % (SE)	Weighted % (SE)
<b>Serious Difficulty Reported with...</b>				
<i>Walking or Climbing Stairs</i>		26.2 (0.5)	47.1 (1.3)	22.9 (0.5)
<i>Concentrating, Remembering, or Making Decisions</i>		15.6 (0.4)	42.0 (1.3)	11.5 (0.4)
<i>Dressing or Bathing</i>		9.7 (0.3)	22.1 (1.2)	7.8 (0.3)
<i>Doing Errands</i>		15.9 (0.4)	38.0 (1.5)	12.4 (0.4)
<i>Hearing</i>		16.0 (0.4)	11.2 (0.8)	16.8 (0.5)
<i>Seeing</i>		7.5 (0.3)	13.1 (1.0)	6.6 (0.3)
<b>Disability Status</b>				
<i>Two or More Disabilities</i>		23.9 (0.5)	51.2 (1.6)	19.6 (0.5)
<i>One Disability</i>		21.5 (0.4)	26.2 (1.2)	20.8 (0.4)
<i>No Disability</i>		54.5 (0.6)	22.5 (1.2)	59.4 (0.7)

SOURCE: Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, Medicare Current Beneficiary Survey, Preliminary Data from the Survey File, 2020.

Most Medicare beneficiaries living in the community report no trouble or delays in accessing health care and are satisfied with health care quality, ease of access, and cost.

**Table 4.** Selected access to and satisfaction with care measures for Medicare beneficiaries living in the community by age, 2020<sup>ii</sup>

		Total	< 65 years <sup>iv</sup>	≥ 65 years
		Response	Weighted % (SE)	Weighted % (SE)
<b>Trouble Getting Care</b>	Yes		8.3 (0.3)	17.1 (1.2)
	No		91.7 (0.3)	82.9 (1.2)
<b>Delayed Care Due to Cost</b>	Yes		6.8 (0.3)	18.1 (1.2)
	No		93.2 (0.3)	81.9 (1.2)
<b>Satisfaction with General Care<sup>v</sup></b>	Satisfied		94.9 (0.2)	90.8 (0.8)
	Dissatisfied		4.6 (0.2)	8.4 (0.8)
<b>Satisfaction with Ease of Access to Doctor<sup>v</sup></b>	Satisfied		95.5 (0.2)	91.3 (0.7)
	Dissatisfied		3.9 (0.2)	8.1 (0.7)
<b>Satisfaction with Cost<sup>v</sup></b>	Satisfied		86.4 (0.4)	77.0 (1.1)
	Dissatisfied		12.4 (0.4)	21.3 (1.1)

SOURCE: Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, Medicare Current Beneficiary Survey, Preliminary Data from the Survey File, 2020.

<sup>iv</sup> Eligible for Medicare due to certain disabling conditions or End-Stage Renal Disease

<sup>v</sup> Responses of "Not Applicable" (indicating the beneficiary did not receive the type of health care over the past year) are excluded from the denominator of these estimates.

## WHAT'S NEW

The 2020 Early Look now features breakouts by age (under 65 years, 65 years and over).

While not featured in this Early Look, the 2020 MCBS Survey File release will include one new segment containing COVID-19 rapid response survey data collected in Winter 2021. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the MCBS implemented three rapid response surveys collecting information related to Medicare beneficiaries' experiences with the COVID-19 pandemic in Summer 2020, Fall 2020, and Winter 2021. CMS published three data snapshots shortly after each data collection at <https://www.cms.gov/Research-Statistics-Data-and-Systems/Research/MCBS/Data-Briefs>. COVID-19 rapid response survey data collected in Summer 2020 and Fall 2020 were released with the 2019 MCBS Survey File.

## DEFINITIONS

In addition to providing definitions of key terms, this section describes the construction of the analytic variables used to create the Early Look preliminary estimates. These analytic variables may differ from the variables in the MCBS Survey File (for example, as a result of recoding into new categories).

**Access to care:** This refers to indicators of having access to health care services and of how access may impact health behaviors, such as whether a beneficiary has difficulty obtaining needed care or has delayed health care due to cost.

**Beneficiary:** Beneficiary refers to a person receiving Medicare services who may or may not be participating in the MCBS. Beneficiary may also refer to an individual selected from the MCBS sample about whom the MCBS collects information.<sup>vi</sup>

**Community interview:** Survey administered for beneficiaries living in the community (i.e., not in a long-term care facility such as a nursing home) during the reference period covered by the MCBS interview. An interview may be conducted with the beneficiary or a proxy.

**Disabilities:** Serious difficulty with 1) walking or climbing stairs, 2) concentrating, remembering, or making decisions due to a physical, mental, or emotional condition, 3) dressing and bathing, 4) doing errands, 5) hearing, and 6) seeing. Beneficiaries who had no serious difficulties with these activities were included in the category "No disability." Beneficiaries who had a serious difficulty in one area were categorized as having "One disability" and those who had a serious difficulty in more than one area were categorized as having "Two or more disabilities."

**Education:** Education refers to the highest level of education that a beneficiary has completed, as reported by the respondent.

**Health status:** Self-rated general health compared to 1) other people of the same age and 2) his or her general health from one year prior.

**Race/ethnicity:** Hispanic origin and race are two separate and distinct categories. Persons of Hispanic origin may be of any race or combination of races. Hispanic origin includes persons of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central and South American, or Spanish origin. For the MCBS, responses to beneficiary race and ethnicity questions are reported by the respondent. More than one race may be reported. For conciseness, the text, tables, and figures in this document use shorter versions of the terms for race and Hispanic or Latino origin specified in the Office of

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<sup>vi</sup> <https://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Medicare-General-Information/MedicareGenInfo/index.html>.

Management and Budget 1997 Standards for Data on Race and Ethnicity. Beneficiaries reported as White and not of Hispanic origin were coded as White non-Hispanic; beneficiaries reported as Black/African American and not of Hispanic origin were coded as Black non-Hispanic; beneficiaries reported as Hispanic, Latino/Latina, or of Spanish origin, regardless of their race, were coded as Hispanic. The “Other Race/Ethnicity” category includes other single races not of Hispanic origin (including American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander), or Two or More Races.

**Respondent:** Respondent refers to a person who answers questions for the MCBS; for Community interviews, this person can be the beneficiary, a proxy, or a staff member located at a facility where the beneficiary resides (i.e., the facility respondent).

**Satisfaction with care:** The questions about satisfaction with care represent the respondent’s general opinion of all medical care received in the year preceding the interview.

- General care refers to the rating of the overall quality of medical care received by the beneficiary.
- Ease of access to doctor refers to the rating of the ease and convenience of getting to a doctor or other health professional from the beneficiary’s residence.
- Cost refers to the rating of the out-of-pocket costs the beneficiary paid for medical care.

The respondent rates satisfaction along a four-point satisfaction scale. “Very satisfied” and “Satisfied” are collapsed into a “Satisfied” response. “Dissatisfied” and “Very dissatisfied” are collapsed into “Dissatisfied.”

**Veteran:** A beneficiary reported as ever having served in the armed forces.

## DATA SOURCES AND METHODS

These preliminary estimates are based on data from the 2020 MCBS, a nationally representative, longitudinal survey of Medicare beneficiaries sponsored by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) and directed by the Office of Enterprise Data and Analytics (OEDA). The MCBS is the most comprehensive and complete survey available on the Medicare population and is essential in capturing data not otherwise collected through operations and administration of the Medicare program.

MCBS Limited Data Sets (LDS) are available to researchers with a data use agreement (DUA). Requests for the MCBS LDS files must be made through the CMS DUA tracking system known as the Enterprise Privacy Policy Engine (EPPE). Information on ordering MCBS files from CMS, including instructions for accessing and using EPPE to make a request, can be obtained through CMS’ LDS website at <https://www.cms.gov/Research-Statistics-Data-and-Systems/Files-for-Order/Data-Disclosures-Data-Agreements/DUA - NewLDS>. MCBS Public Use Files (PUFs) are available to the public as free downloads and can be found through CMS’ PUF website at <https://www.cms.gov/Research-Statistics-Data-and-Systems/Downloadable-Public-Use-Files/MCBS-Public-Use-File>.

For details about the MCBS sample design, survey operations, and data files, please see the most recent *MCBS Methodology Report* and *Data User’s Guides* available on the CMS MCBS website at <https://www.cms.gov/Research-Statistics-Data-and-Systems/Research/MCBS>.

The universe for the 2020 MCBS Early Look included all Medicare beneficiaries living in the community who completed a Community interview in the fall 2020 round of data collection. The final dataset included 13,730 beneficiaries (weighted N= 57,336,744). To account for the complex sample design, standard errors were generated using the balanced repeated replication method with a series of replicate weights.

The MCBS is authorized by section 1875 (42 USC 139511) of the Social Security Act and is conducted by NORC for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The OMB Number for this survey is 0938-0568.

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