Seniors Speak Up for Pharmacy Choice; Sound Off on Mail Order Pharmacy Troubles

The following are comments provided by hundreds of patients as part of a national survey gauging seniors’ attitudes toward mail order pharmacy and prescription drug plans that require the use of mail order pharmacies:

“I now am required to use a mail order pharmacy. Service is poor, we travel, they mail it to the wrong address (I give clear and precise directions on where drugs are to be mailed). You never know for sure when or if your drugs will arrive. Long waits on the telephone. Almost impossible to talk to a real person. I much prefer using a local pharmacy or chain pharmacy due to the past poor experiences with mail order.”

“It [mandatory mail] would take away my right to choose which pharmacy I would use. I now use a local, family owned pharmacy. I know everyone there and I feel good about supporting a local small business in my community.”

“I used mail order for a time. My order was lost. I had to get new prescriptions filled at a local pharmacy. I never received that lost order. I learned later, it went to a city with a similar name. Mail order was not worth the trouble it caused me. At times you need a prescription filled immediately and not have to wait days or weeks to receive it by mail.”

“It [loss of local pharmacy] would upset me very much. I would miss the personal relationship I have with my pharmacist. I can ask him questions and get information concerning adverse reactions. Timing of my medication and I trust him. It’s a one to one relationship.”

“It is very important to keep and maintain viable community pharmacies. Rx customers need choices to have access to a local pharmacy.”

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1 About the Survey: The survey was conducted by MENTORx on behalf of the National Community Pharmacists Association to survey the attitudes of Medicare-eligible Americans toward the implementation of mandatory mail-order pharmacy services in their prescription benefit plans. The survey was mailed to a random sample of 6,500 Medicare beneficiaries and results are based on the 669 completed surveys returned during the data collection period of November-December 2012. The average age for respondents was 72.4 with women submitting 57% of the completed surveys. Overall, the returned surveys represent 644 zip codes in 43 states.
“When a prescription is needed right away, if my neighborhood pharmacy were closed - how would I get meds quickly? Also, we have experienced waste because a medication was discontinued and we have recently received a refill.”

“I tried mail order. When I received a bad order of insulin pen needles (missing the actual needles), the mail order pharmacy would not help me. Told me to complain to needle manufacturer. Would not send me more needles. The doctor got me through a 3 week waiting period before I could get another refill. So mail order was fine and saved me on cost until I had a problem. No savings is worth that problem of no meds and no help from mail order pharmacy.”

“I have had problems with Rx amounts when doctor instructed more than what is considered ‘normal’ usage. Mail order has limited the amounts to what they consider normal usage, without consulting the doctor.”

“Do not like auto refills as they send drugs not needed any longer and they are not returnable.”

“[If my community pharmacy closed] I would stop taking my medications because I wouldn’t trust mail order pharmacies.”

“I had an incident with a pharmacy network which handles my union’s drug plan. I had one prescription that cost around $320.00 for a 90 day supply and I had a co-pay around $70.00 and when the cost dropped considerably my pharmacy received around $45.00 and the pharmacy told me to check what was going on, because I was getting ripped off. I contacted them so the next time my co-pay was down to where it should have been. I never received an explanation or apology! How long would I have been paying the $70 with them handling everything?”

“My rural postal delivery is made to a box 600 ft from my house. Since delivery times are not consistent, I could not be alert to the prescription arrival. I cannot see the box from my house. I have experienced not receiving my mail order prescription when they were ordered in sufficient time. Thank God for my local pharmacist.”

“Tried it - worst mistake I ever made toward my health. [The mail order company] talked a pretty picture but failed in every respect of delivery - meds left in 115 degrees heat of mailbox for days at a time - no
results when I complained via phone, not to mention I had to speak with a non-English speaking person - total frustration. You’ll not get me on board!”

“We had mail order at one time. Getting our meds was like pulling teeth. You never knew if they would receive by the time you needed them. I strongly oppose mail order."

“I live in a hot and humid place. I am not always home on time or sometimes travel out of town for a couple of days and when I get home my medicines that I used to get mailed have been sitting in the HOT mailbox. Once my ointment had burst out of its container and made a mess in my mailbox. My pill bottles are wet inside with humidity. It is not safe to take those pills. Mail order should only be an option not a requirement!!!!”

“I would have to go through the whole process of learning how to get my medicine if I have questions there would be no one to talk to. If I had to order by mail I am afraid the package would be stolen from my front porch because we have a lot of that in this neighborhood.”

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