



CALIFORNIA
HEALTHCARE
FOUNDATION

SNAPSHOT

Just Looking:

Consumer Use of the Internet to Manage Care

2008

Introduction

A recent Pew Internet and American Life survey showed that 80 percent of consumers search the Internet for health-related information. Yet their relationship to health information on the Web remains a passive one for most. Relatively few patients tap the Internet to manage their care, including scheduling appointments with their doctors, filling prescriptions, or using ratings information to make choices about their doctors or hospitals.

The California HealthCare Foundation commissioned Harris Interactive to survey the state's consumers to gain insight into who the seekers of health information are, what kind of information they use, and what actions they take after seeing that information.

KEY FINDINGS INCLUDE:

- Overall, more Californians are using the Internet than in 2004, especially to locate information about their insurance plan.
- In 2007, 56 percent of respondents went online to find specific information about medical conditions or prescription drugs. But only 13 percent of that group made provider appointments online in the last year and 12 percent reported filling prescriptions online.
- Despite increased overall use of the Web to access health materials, only 26 percent of Internet users surveyed sought out ratings information on physicians or other health care professionals.
- Twenty-three percent of all respondents saw online hospital ratings information in 2007. However, only 1 percent actually made a change in their health care decisions based on the ratings.

These survey findings illustrate that although a large majority of Californians see the Internet as an important source for health-related information, most are still not taking advantage of it as a tool to manage their health.

Internet Use to Manage Care

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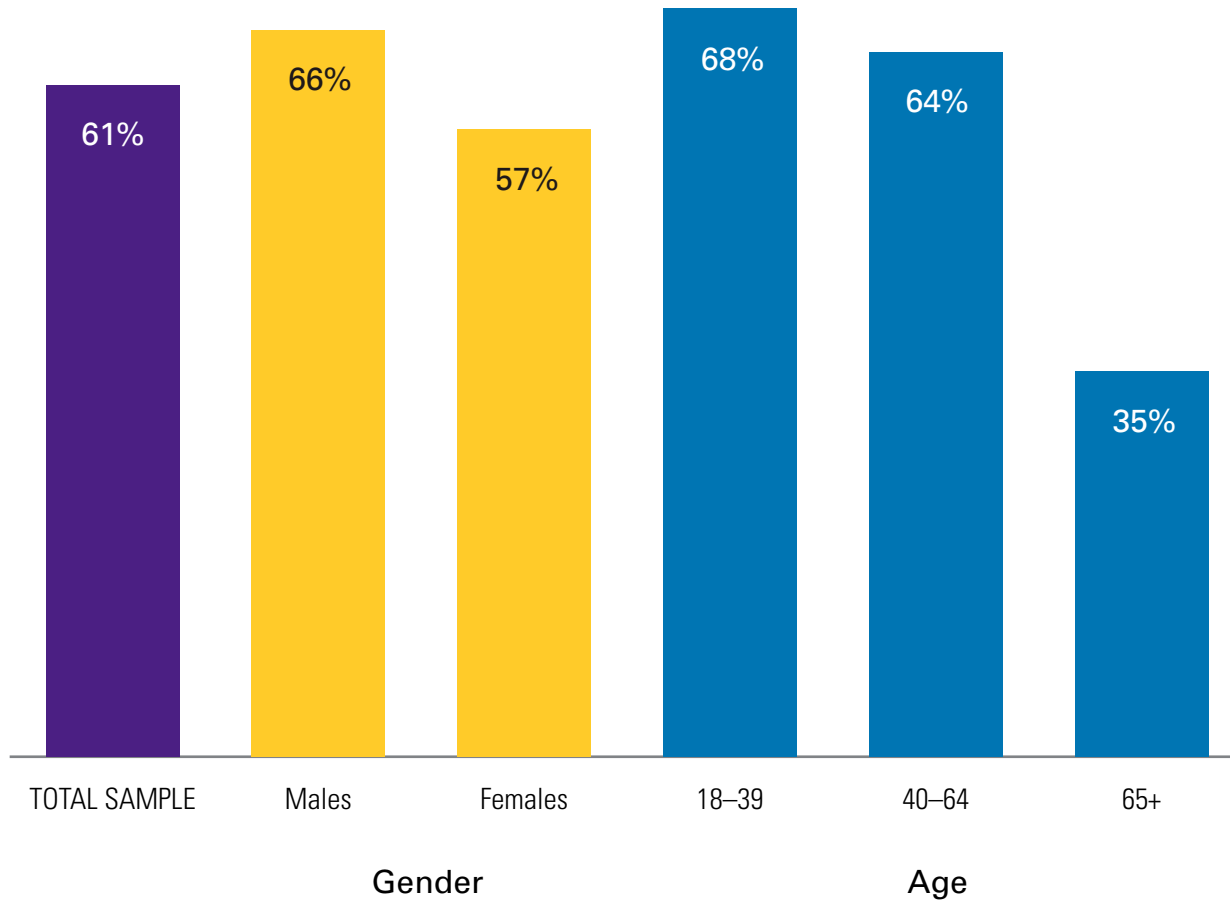
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Internet Access, by Gender and Age, California, 2007



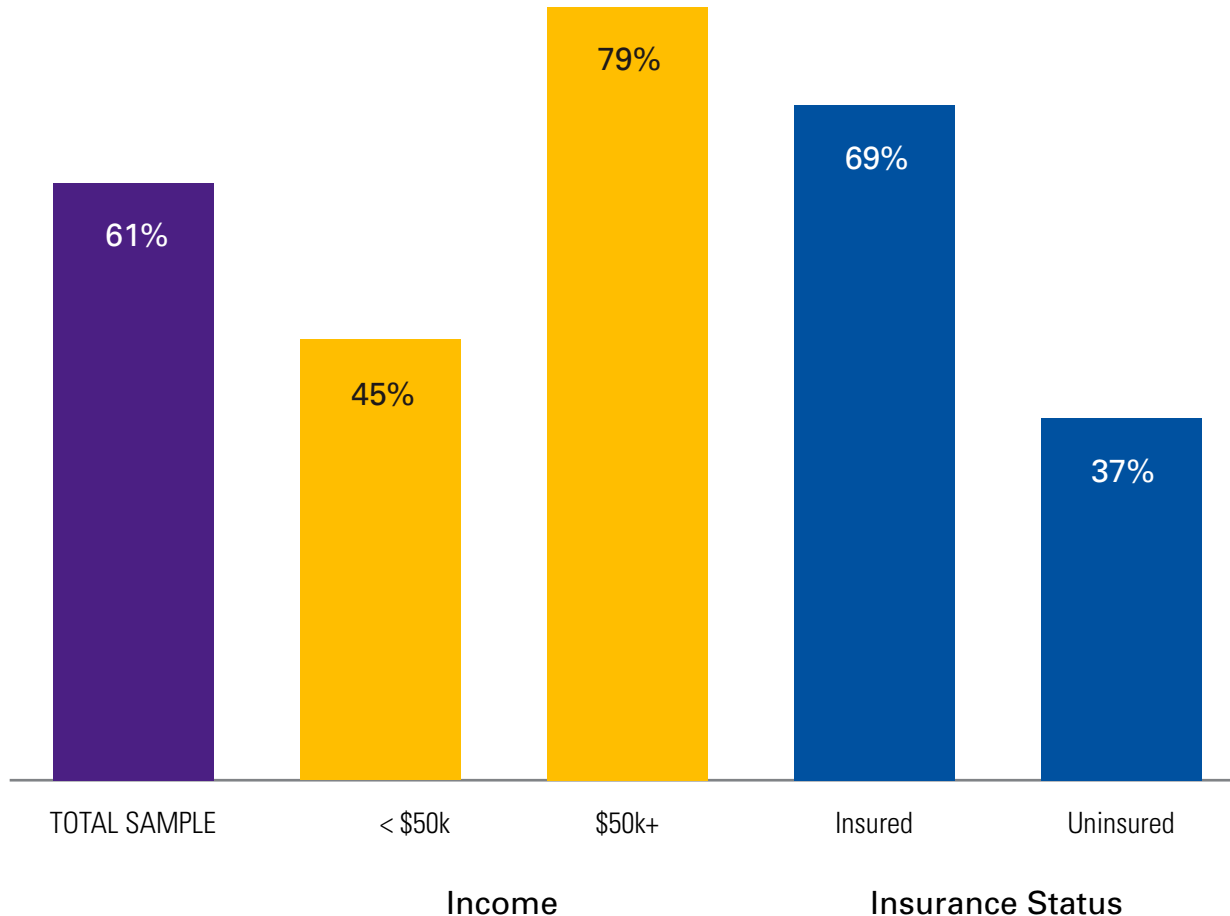
Internet Use to Manage Care Access

Though in general almost two thirds of the California population reports having access to the Internet, there continues to be a gap for certain populations

Seniors, in particular, are less likely than others to have Internet access.

Source: The California General Public Survey, conducted by Harris Interactive between November 5 and December 17, 2007.

Internet Access, by Income and Insurance Status, California, 2007



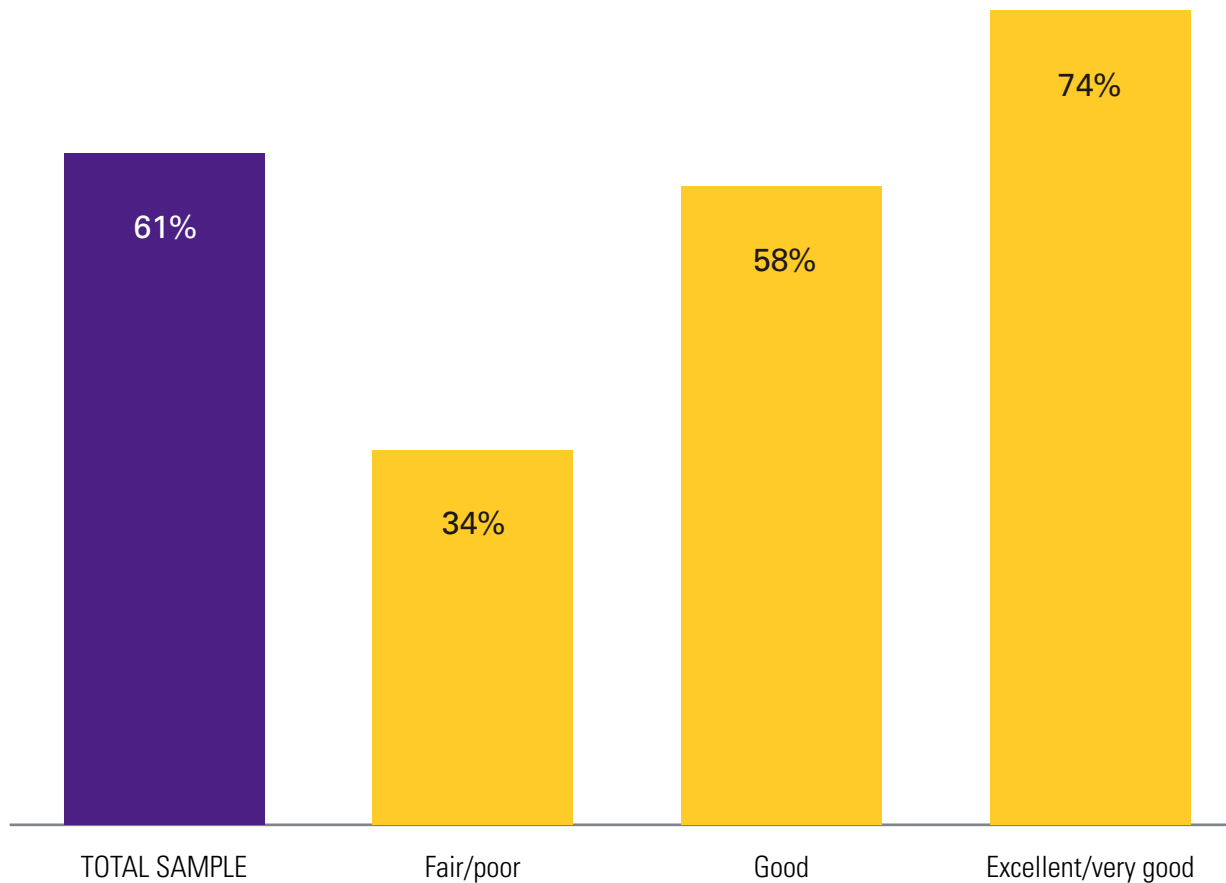
Source: The California General Public Survey, conducted by Harris Interactive between November 5 and December 17, 2007.

Internet Use to Manage Care Access

Californians with lower incomes and those without insurance are less likely than others to have Internet access.

These segments of the public likely have the greatest need for information that can help them manage their health, particularly in the case of the uninsured, who may not have regular access to health care.

Internet Access by Health Status, California, 2007



Internet Use to Manage Care Access

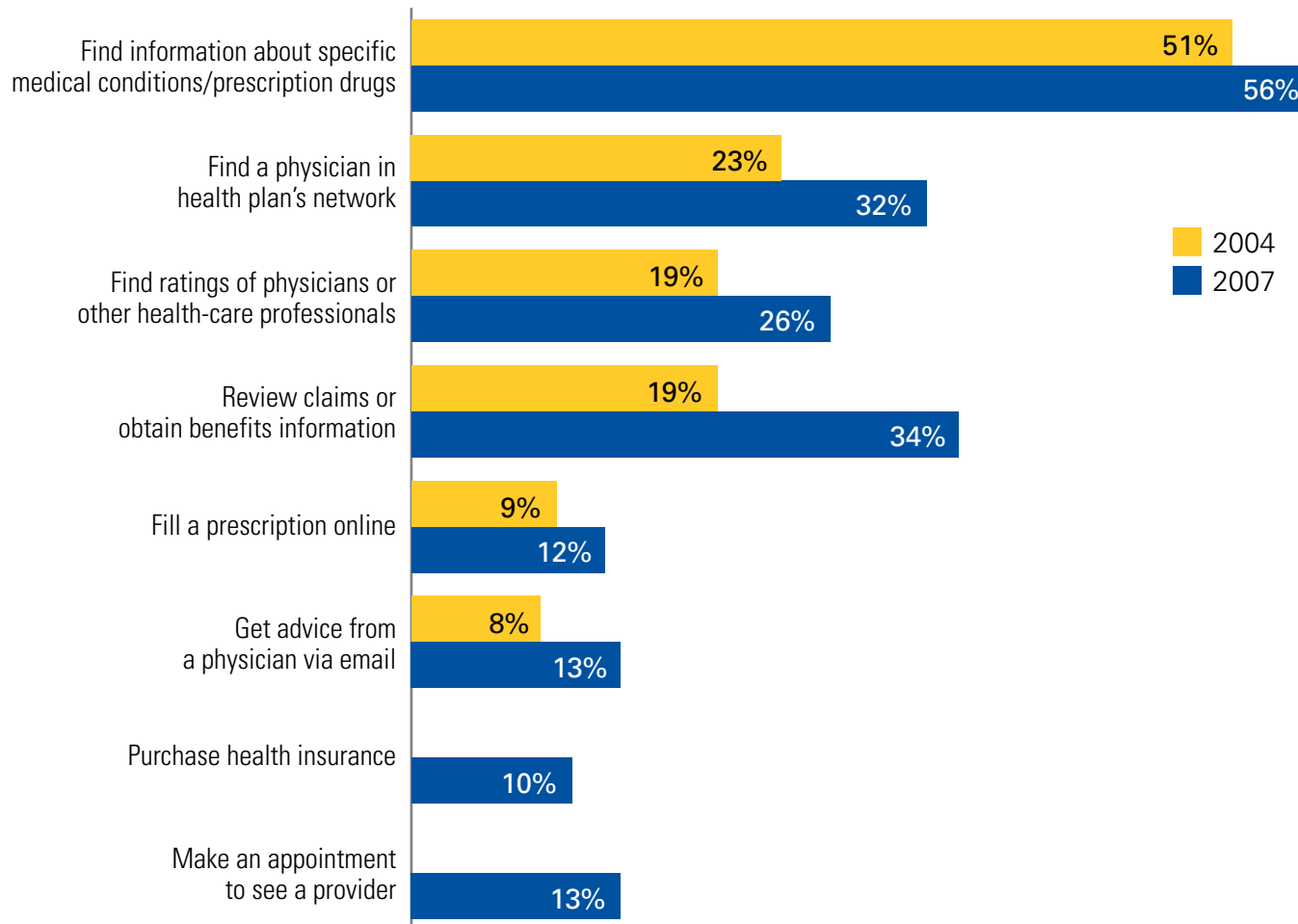
Californians in poorer health are less likely than those in better health to have Internet access.

Californians in excellent or very good health are more than twice as likely to have Internet access as those in fair or poor health.

Source: The California General Public Survey, conducted by Harris Interactive between November 5 and December 17, 2007.

Use of Internet for Care-related Purposes, California, 2004 vs. 2007

% of Internet users who use it sometimes/often to...



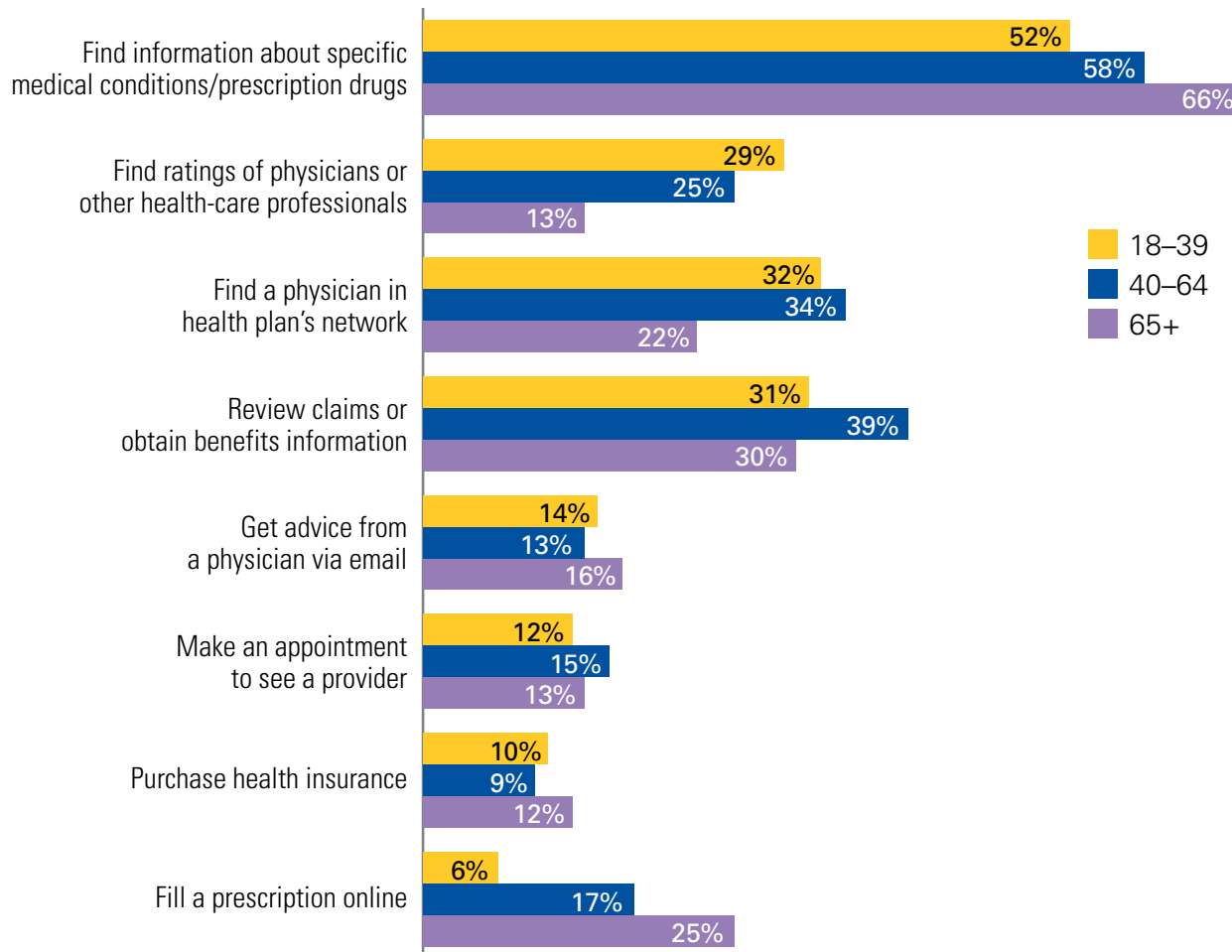
Source: The California General Public Survey, conducted by Harris Interactive between November 5 and December 17, 2007.

Internet Use to Manage Care Care-related Purposes

Overall, more Californians were using the Internet in 2007 as a source of information about their condition or doctor, but minor gains were seen in the percent of people who took action online to manage their health. While more than half of respondents sought information on a condition or drug, few filled prescriptions or sought advice from their doctors.

Use of Internet for Care-related Purposes, by Age, California, 2007

% of Internet users who use it sometimes/often to...



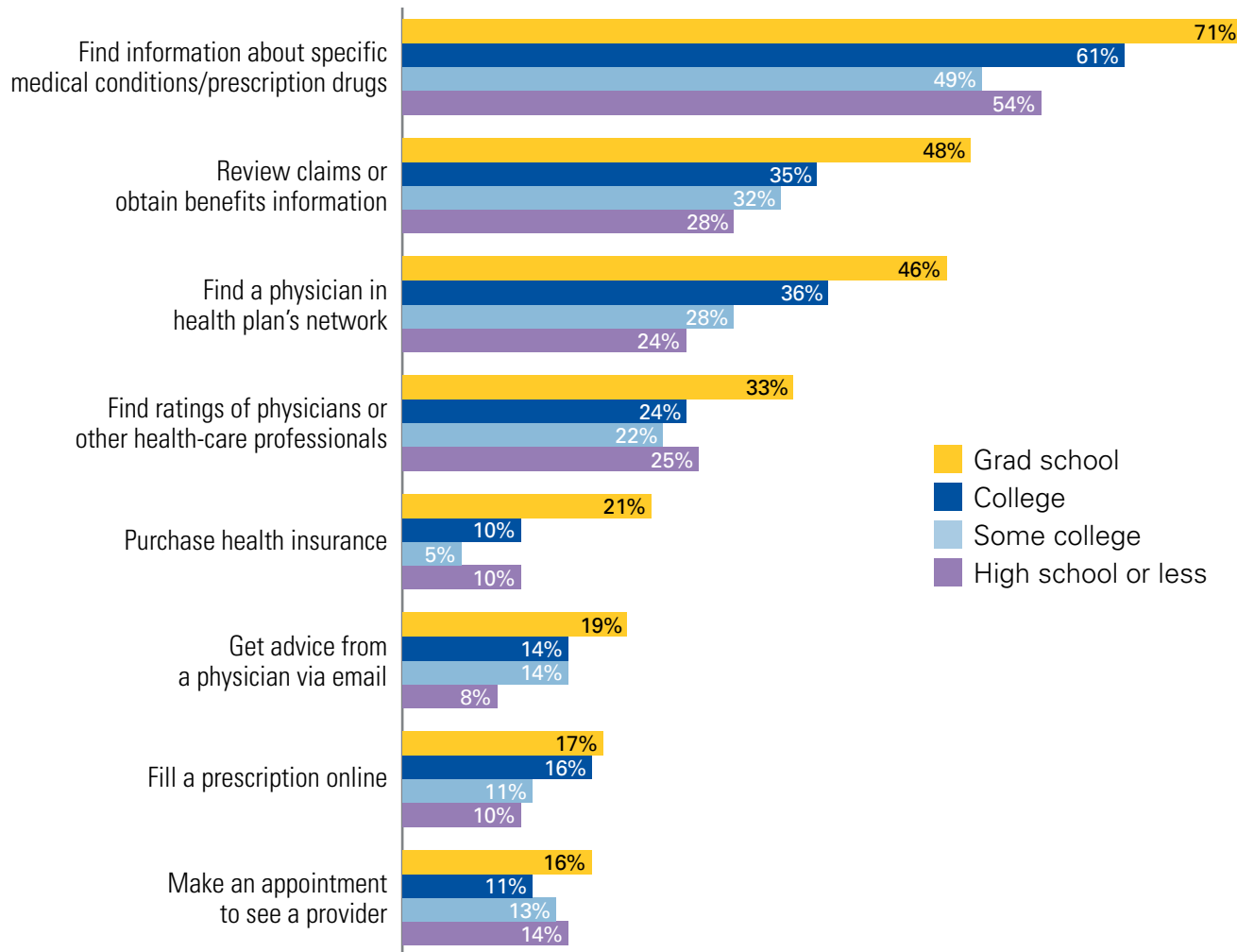
Internet Use to Manage Care Care-related Purposes

Although respondents over the age of 65 are generally less likely to use the Internet to get information on health care, there are two areas where seniors far exceed use rates of the younger population: finding information on medical conditions and drugs, and filling prescriptions online.

Source: The California General Public Survey, conducted by Harris Interactive between November 5 and December 17, 2007.

Use of Internet for Care-related Purposes, by Education, California, 2007

% of Internet users who use it sometimes/often to...



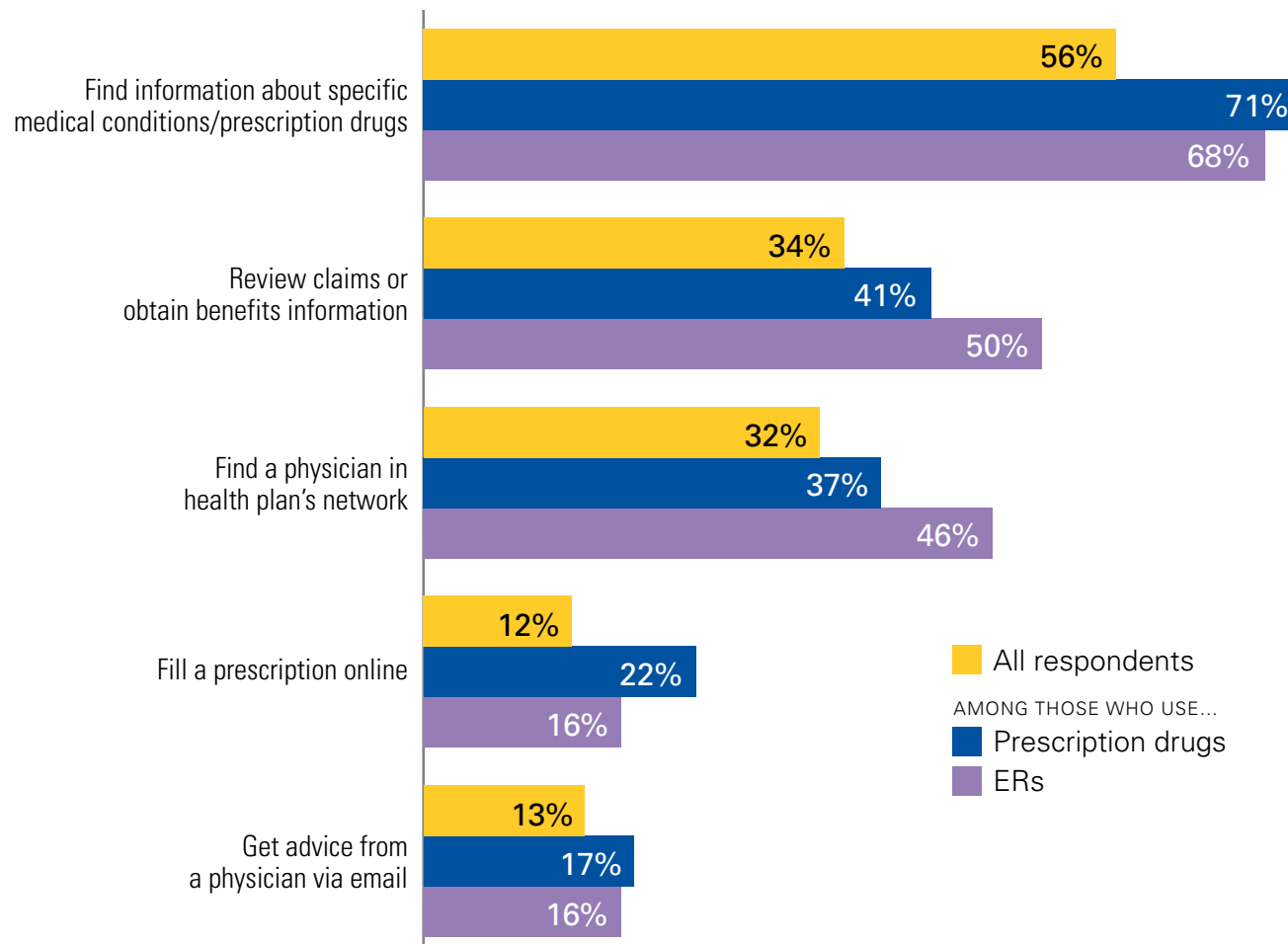
Internet Use to Manage Care Care-related Purposes

Overall, respondents with higher education are much more likely than others to use the Internet for care-related activities.

Source: The California General Public Survey, conducted by Harris Interactive between November 5 and December 17, 2007.

Use of Internet for Care-related Purposes, by Prescription Drug and ER Use, California, 2007

% of Internet users who use it sometimes/often to...



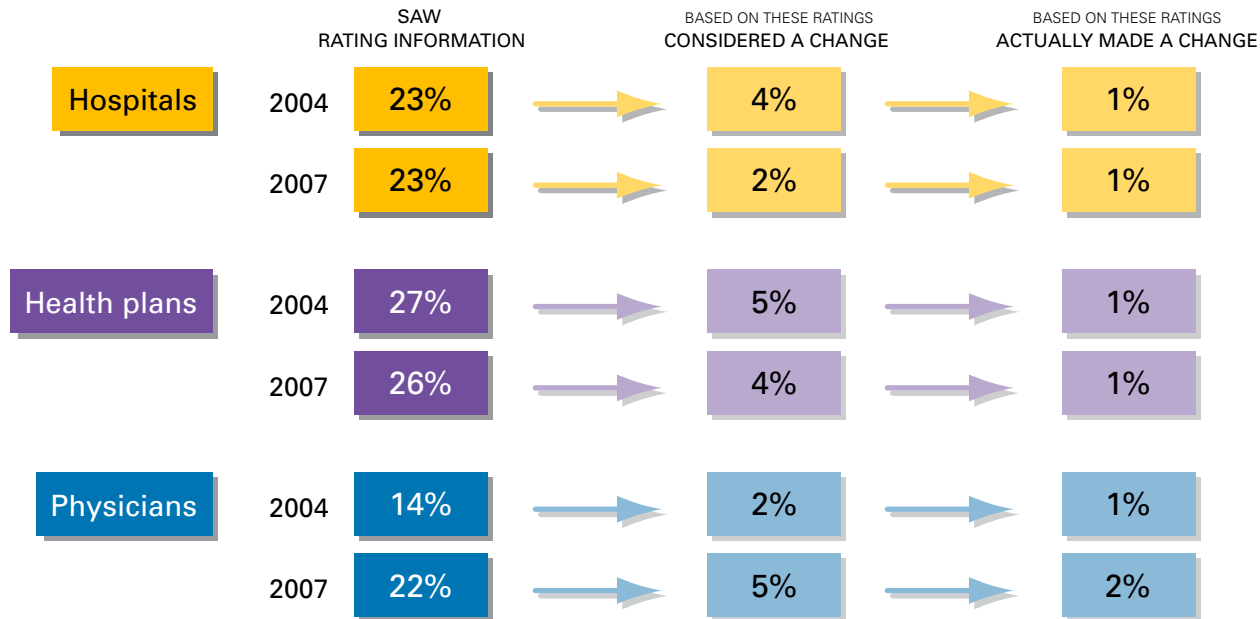
Internet Use to Manage Care Care-related Purposes

Those with regular prescription drug needs and those who have used the emergency room in the recent past report greater use rates for both information seeking and care-related purposes.

Source: The California General Public Survey, conducted by Harris Interactive between November 5 and December 17, 2007.

Awareness and Use of Ratings, California, 2004 vs. 2007

Among all respondents, those who...



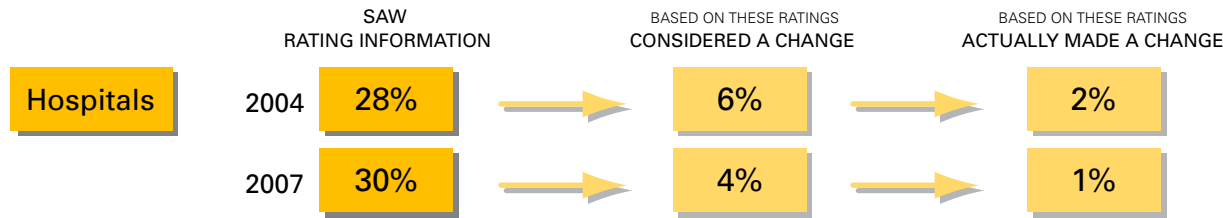
Internet Use to Manage Care Ratings

Less than a third of respondents have seen quality ratings information. Even among those who are aware of such ratings, less than five percent either considered or actually made a change based on the information.

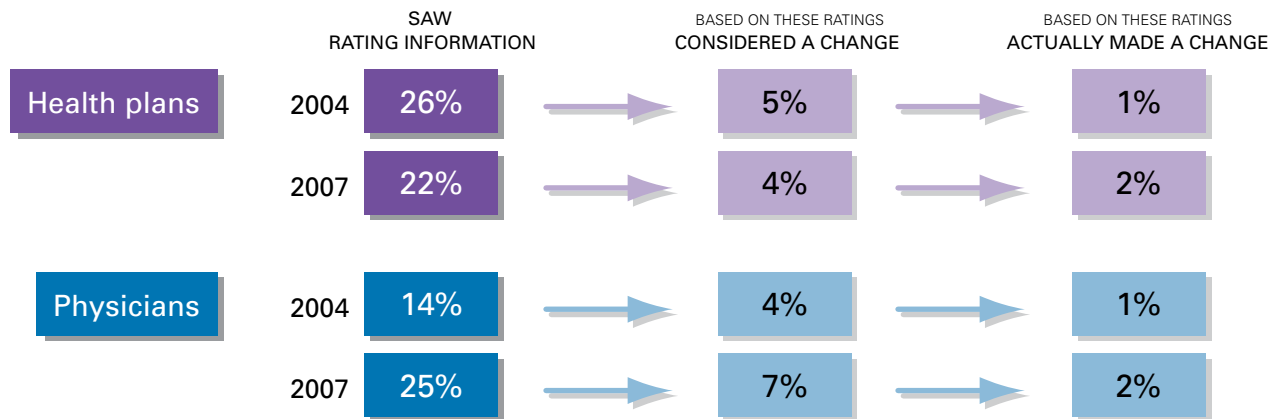
Source: The California General Public Survey, conducted by Harris Interactive between November 5 and December 17, 2007.

Awareness and Use of Ratings, by Health Status, California, 2004 vs. 2007

Among those hospitalized in last 2 years, those who...



Among those in fair/poor health, those who...



Internet Use to Manage Care Ratings

Even among respondents with fair or poor health, awareness of ratings sites for hospital, health plans and physicians remained below 30 percent in 2007.

Among those who had seen such sites, very low percentages considered or actually made a change as a result of seeing ratings information.

Source: The California General Public Survey, conducted by Harris Interactive between November 5 and December 17, 2007.

Respondent Profile: Demographics, California, 2007

CATEGORY	% OF RESPONDENTS n=1,007
Gender	
Male	49%
Female	51%
Age	
18–39	44%
40–64	42%
65+	14%
Mean	43%
Race/Ethnicity	
White	45%
Hispanic	29%
Black/African American	5%
All Others (excludes “Decline to Answer”)	11%
Education	
High school/less	41%
Some college (includes Associate’s)	25%
College	17%
Graduate school	9%
Income	
Less than 25K	13%
25K–34.9K	7%
35–49.9K	10%
50–74.9K	15%
75K+	33%

Source: The California General Public Survey, conducted by Harris Interactive between November 5 and December 17, 2007.

Acknowledgments / Methodology

The California General Public Survey was conducted by telephone using random digital dialing of sample purchased by Harris Interactive. The survey was conducted between November 5 and December 17, 2007.

- Out of the 1,096 Californian adults who responded to the study, 92 percent (n=1,007) qualified for and completed the 20 minute telephone survey.
- Demographic data were weighted to produce a representative sample of the general population of California.

Internet Use to Manage Care

GIVE US YOUR FEEDBACK

Was the information provided in this report of value? Are there additional kinds of information or data you would like to see included in future reports of this type? Is there other research in this subject area you would like to see? We would like to know.



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