

Simplifying Medicare plan finder improves plan selection

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(HealthDay)—Simplifying an internet-based decision support tool

provided by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services to help older adults make good plan choices in the Medicare prescription drug (Part D) program could result in selection of lower-cost plans, according to a study published in the August issue of *Health Affairs*.

Noting that the internet-based decision support [tool](#) (Plan Finder) has had limited effect because the tool is complex and difficult to interpret, Brian E. McGarry, Ph.D., from Harvard Medical School in Boston, and colleagues examined the effect of simplifying the default amount of [financial information](#) provided on Plan Finder on people's ability to select low-cost plans.

The researchers found that reducing the amount of financial information displayed resulted in selection of lower-cost plans; this was not accompanied by a decrease in the average plan quality or pharmacy network size but did correlate with an increase in the take-up of convenience options, including mail-order pharmacy.

"These modifications to the current Plan Finder design have the potential to improve the tool's usability and beneficiaries' plan choices in the Part D market," the authors write.

One author disclosed financial ties to the health care industry.

More information: [Abstract/Full Text \(subscription or payment may be required\)](#)

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