

Almost 13 million Americans per year skip meds due to cost

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(HealthDay)—Nearly 13 million U.S. adults a year skip or delay filling needed prescriptions due to high price tags, new research shows.

This figure includes more than 2.3 million Medicare beneficiaries and

3.8 million privately insured working-age adults who didn't get needed medications each year in 2018 and 2019 because of cost, according to a nationally representative survey of U.S. households.

"It's tragic that millions of people don't take needed [prescription drugs](#) because they can't afford them," said Katherine Hempstead, a senior policy adviser at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, which funded the [study](#).

"As we recover from COVID-19 and try to create a more equitable society, ensuring that prescription drugs are affordable must be a policy priority," Hempstead said in a news release from the Urban Institute, which conducted and published the study.

The survey also revealed that 25% of Medicare beneficiaries and 5% of privately insured adults spent more than 1% of their family income on their individual out-of-pocket prescription drug costs.

More than 3% of Medicare beneficiaries and nearly 7% of beneficiaries with unmet medication needs spent more than 10% of their [family income](#) on prescription drugs.

About 1 in 10 adults who were uninsured all or part of the year had unmet prescription drug needs, compared with 4.9% of Medicare beneficiaries, 3% of privately insured adults, and 5.6% of non-elderly adults with Medicaid.

Unmet prescription needs were highest among women, people with low incomes and those with multiple chronic health conditions, the researchers said.

"Policies to reduce drug prices, limit out-of-pocket costs, and expand [health insurance coverage](#) could help many people get the prescription

drugs they're currently unable to pay for," said lead author Michael Karpman, a senior research associate at the Urban Institute.

More information: There's more on prescription drug costs at the [Kaiser Family Foundation](#).

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