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## Majority of U.S. Adults Think it is a Good Idea to Forbid Direct-to-Consumer Advertising for New Prescription Drugs When They First Come to Market

*More adults favor a mandatory rather than a voluntary ban*

Legislators and the pharmaceutical industry itself are considering some form of moratorium on direct-to-consumer advertising for new prescription drugs for a specified time period after a new drug comes to market. Findings from a new survey suggest that such requirements would be viewed favorably by many Americans; a 51 to 25 percent majority of U.S. adults tend to agree that it is a good idea to forbid direct-to-consumer advertising for new prescription drugs for some period of time after the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved a new drug so that doctors have time to become familiar with it.

Support for such requirements may be driven in part by public concerns about the FDA's ability to appropriately oversee prescription drug advertising to consumers. Majorities of adults believe the FDA is doing only a fair or poor job of ensuring that direct-to-consumer advertising for prescription drugs provides complete and accurate information about the risks and benefits of the medication (61%) and of deciding which prescription drugs can and cannot be advertised directly to consumers (69%).

These are some of the results of a Harris Interactive online survey of 2,207 U.S. adults conducted between July 6 and 8, 2005 for The Wall Street Journal Online's Health Industry Edition.

### Support for mandatory vs. voluntary limitations

More adults say they would favor a mandatory rather than a voluntary ban on direct-to-consumer advertising for new prescription drugs. Specifically:

- More than one-third (35%) would favor a mandatory ban on direct-to-consumer advertising for all new prescription drugs approved by the FDA for some limited period of time.
- Sixteen percent (16%) would favor a voluntary ban on direct-to-consumer advertising for new prescription drugs approved by the FDA so that each pharmaceutical company could decide when to begin advertising to consumers.

# Health-Care Poll

**TABLE 1**

**Public Perceptions Of FDA Oversight Of Prescription Drug Advertising To Consumers**

“Based on what you know or have heard, how good of a job do you think the FDA (U.S. Food and Drug Administration) does on...?”

Base: All Adults

		Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Not Sure
Ensuring that direct-to-consumer advertising for prescription drugs provides complete and accurate information about the risks and benefits of the medication	%	8	27	36	25	3
Deciding which prescription drugs can and cannot be advertised directly to consumers	%	5	20	36	33	6

Note: Percentages may not add up exactly to 100% due to rounding.

**TABLE 2**

**Public Support For Limitations On Advertising For New Prescription Drugs**

“Which one of these statements about direct-to-consumer advertising for new prescription drugs approved by the FDA do you tend to agree with more?”

Base: All Adults

	Total	Take Rx Drugs on Regular Basis	Adults 65 and Older
	%	%	%
It is a good idea to forbid direct-to-consumer advertising for new prescription drugs for some period of time after the FDA has approved a new drug so that doctors have time to become familiar with the drug.	51	51	55
It is not a good idea to forbid direct-to-consumer advertising for new prescription drugs approved by the FDA because this is how many patients learn about new treatments that might be right for them.	25	26	19
Not sure	24	23	27

Note: Percentages may not add up exactly to 100% due to rounding.

# Health-Care Poll

**TABLE 3**

**Support For Mandatory vs. Voluntary Limitations Of Advertising For New Drugs**

"If you could decide, which one of the following would you be most likely to agree with?"

Base: All Adults

	Total	Take Rx Drugs on Regular Basis	Adults 65 and Older
	%	%	%
<b>Would Favor (Net)</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>47</b>
Would favor a mandatory ban on direct-to-consumer advertising for all new prescription drugs approved by the FDA for some limited period of time	35	37	41
Would favor a voluntary ban on direct-to-consumer advertising for new prescription drugs approved by the FDA so that each pharmaceutical company could decide when to begin advertising to consumers	16	15	6
Would oppose any ban on direct-to-consumer advertising for new prescription drugs approved by the FDA	23	24	20
Not sure	25	25	33

Note: Percentages may not add up exactly to 100% due to rounding.

Downloadable PDFs of Wall Street Journal Online/Harris Interactive Health-Care Polls are posted at [http://www.harrisinteractive.com/news/newsletters\\_wsj.asp](http://www.harrisinteractive.com/news/newsletters_wsj.asp).

### Methodology

Harris Interactive conducted this online survey within the United States between July 6 and 8, 2005 among a nationwide cross section of 2,207 adults, ages 18 years and over. Figures for age, gender, race/ethnicity, education, income and region were weighted where necessary to align with population proportions. Propensity score weighting was also used to adjust for respondents' propensity to be online.

Though this online sample is not a probability sample, in theory, with probability samples of this size, Harris Interactive estimates with 95 percent certainty that the overall results have a sampling error of plus or minus 3 percentage points of what they would be if the entire U.S. adult population had been polled with complete accuracy. Sampling error for the sub-sample results of adults aged 65 and over (373) and adults who take one or more prescription drugs on a regular basis (1,284) is higher and varies. Unfortunately, there are several other possible sources of error in polls or surveys that are probably more serious than theoretical calculations of sampling error. This includes refusals to be interviewed (nonresponse), question wording and question order, and weighting. It is impossible to quantify the errors that may result from these factors.

*These statements conform to the principles of disclosure of the National Council on Public Polls.*

# Health-Care Poll

## About the Survey

The Wall Street Journal Online/Harris Interactive Health-Care Poll is an exclusive poll that is published in the award-winning Health Industry Edition of The Wall Street Journal Online at [www.wsj.com/health](http://www.wsj.com/health).

## About The Wall Street Journal Online

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## About Dow Jones & Company

In addition to The Wall Street Journal and its international and online editions, Dow Jones & Company (NYSE: DJ; [dowjones.com](http://dowjones.com)) also publishes Barron's and the Far Eastern Economic Review, Dow Jones Newswires, Dow Jones Indexes and the Ottaway group of community newspapers. Dow Jones is co-owner with Reuters Group of Factiva, with Hearst of SmartMoney and with NBC of the CNBC television operations in Asia and Europe. Dow Jones also provides news content to CNBC and radio stations in the U.S.

## About Harris Interactive

Harris Interactive Inc. ([www.harrisinteractive.com](http://www.harrisinteractive.com)), the 15th largest market research firm in the world, is a Rochester, NY-based global research company that blends premier strategic consulting with innovative and efficient methods of investigation, analysis and application. Known for *The Harris Poll*<sup>®</sup> and for pioneering Internet-based research methods, Harris Interactive conducts proprietary and public research to help its clients achieve clear, material and enduring results.

Harris Interactive combines its intellectual capital, databases and technology to advance market leadership through its U.S. offices and wholly owned subsidiaries, HI Europe in London ([www.hieurope.com](http://www.hieurope.com)), Novatris in Paris ([www.novatris.com](http://www.novatris.com)), and through an independent global network of affiliate market research companies. EOE M/F/D/V.

To become a member of the Harris Poll Online<sup>SM</sup> and be invited to participate in future online surveys, visit [www.harrispollonline.com](http://www.harrispollonline.com).



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