

Most Baby Boomers Overestimate Breadth and Depth of Public Safety Net for Disabled Workers

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<?xml version="1.0"?> Most Baby Boomers Overestimate Breadth and Depth of Public Safety Net for Disabled Workers WASHINGTON, May 5

WASHINGTON, May 5 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- Most baby boomers overestimate the breadth and depth of the public safety net available for workers who suffer a disability, according to a new survey conducted by Harris Interactive on behalf of America's Health Insurance Plans (AHIP). Baby boomers believe public programs provide disability benefits to more people than they actually do and most overestimate the amount of benefits available.

(Logo: <http://www.newscom.com/cgi-bin/prnh/20040830/AHIPLOGO>)

"Baby boomers believe they have more disability income protection than they actually do, giving them a false sense of security against the financial risks of disability," said Karen Ignagni, President and CEO of AHIP.

The survey assessed boomers' knowledge about public disability income programs, such as Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Workers Compensation. Nearly half of baby boomers believe incorrectly that a working adult would qualify for SSDI benefits if he or she were unable to work at their current job, but could still work at another job that pays less money. More than a third of baby boomers believe a worker is qualified if he or she can work no more than twenty hours a week, and one-in-four say they do not know what the qualifications are. In reality, workers are only eligible for SSDI benefits if they are unable to do any work for which they would earn \$1,000 or more per month.

Only one-in-five baby boomers correctly estimated the average monthly SSDI benefit for a disabled worker to be about \$1,000 a month. Eighteen percent overestimated the benefit and a significant number of baby boomers (43 percent) said they did not know how much the average monthly SSDI benefit was.

While a majority of baby boomers (60 percent) accurately stated that job-related illnesses and injuries are qualifications for Workers' Compensation, many incorrectly believe this coverage is also available to individuals who suffer a disability in other situations. Many baby boomers believe people can qualify for Workers' Compensation benefits if they suffer a disability that prevents them from working at their previous job (26 percent), forces them to work at a job that pays less than their current job (10 percent), or if they can only work part-time (9 percent).

Thirty-six percent of baby boomers did not know how much of their current income Workers' Compensation benefits would replace and one-in-five overestimated benefits. Only twenty-four percent of baby boomers accurately stated that Workers' Compensation replaces two-thirds of a worker's pre-disability income.

"Baby boomers know very little about the public disability safety net available for workers who suffer a disability," said Humphrey Taylor, Chairman of the Harris Poll.

The survey also assessed baby boomers knowledge of the length of time it takes to receive SSDI benefits. Thirty-four percent estimated that the length of time to receive benefits was shorter than it generally is, and more than a third (35 percent) said they didn't know how long the process takes. The average length of time it takes for a person who files a SSDI claim to be accepted or denied, including any appeals, is approximately 500 days, or more than 17 months.

A memo outlining the survey findings is available here: <http://www.ahip.org/content/default.aspx?docid=23188>. The survey questionnaire can be found here: <http://www.ahip.org/content/default.aspx?docid=23187>.

This is the second in a series of surveys assessing baby boomers' awareness of and knowledge about disability income protection. More information about these surveys is available at www.YourIncomeAtRisk.org.

America's Health Insurance Plans - Providing Health Benefits to More Than 200 Million Americans

Harris Interactive conducted an online survey on behalf of AHIP between March 14 - 18 among a nationwide sample of 2,387 adults aged 18 and older, including 827 Baby Boomers aged 44 - 62. Data were weighted to be representative of the total U.S. adult population that is online on the basis of region, age within gender,

education, household income and race/ethnicity, and for propensity to go online. No estimates of theoretical sampling error can be calculated; a full methodology is available.

SOURCE America's Health Insurance Plans

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