

# NATIONAL SURVEY OF HEALTHCARE CONSUMERS: END-OF-LIFE CARE

JULY 2010



THOMSON REUTERS™

# SURVEY OVERVIEW

Each year, the *Thomson Reuters PULSE™ Healthcare Survey* collects information about health-related behavior and attitudes from more than 100,000 U.S. households. This nationally representative telephone survey is conducted in 11 waves (each a standalone market research study) conducted sequentially throughout the year. Many healthcare topics are covered, including use of medical services, health status, insurance coverage, lifestyle, and current issues. The survey is self-funded and the data it generates are used in Thomson Reuters information products for healthcare professionals, particularly strategic planning and marketing managers in hospitals.

The results depicted below represent responses from 3,013 survey participants interviewed from June 1-13, 2010. The margin of error is 1.8 percent.



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The survey asked respondents about their efforts to proactively communicate their preferences regarding end-of-life care in the event they suffer a serious illness or accident. Over half said they had made their wishes known. Nearly three-quarters of people over 65 and about a third of individuals under 35 had voiced their wishes.

- Most people (87 percent) chose informal communication to make their end-of-life care choices known. Sixty percent said they had created a living will, and 50 percent chose a healthcare power of attorney. Younger people tended to choose informal communication, while people over 65 tended to use a living will or a healthcare power of attorney.
- Most of the respondents who took formal steps — particularly those in higher income brackets — received legal assistance preparing their documents.
- One in 10 of those interviewed had made a medical decision for another person in the last 12 months. In over half of those cases where a medical decision was made, a legal resource such as a living will or medical directive was available. Over half also received counseling from a healthcare professional or support group. Counseling was rated helpful by 80 percent of those receiving it.

## SURVEY DATA

Responses in **RED** are statistically significant.

**QUESTION 1: Have you made your wishes known for healthcare treatment to prolong your life in the event you are unable to communicate due to a serious illness or accident? (The results represent the percentage of people who answered yes.)**

### COMMUNICATED WISHES

| Age          | Percent      |
|--------------|--------------|
| < 35         | 37.8%        |
| 35 - 64      | 59.0%        |
| 65+          | 72.0%        |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>56.9%</b> |

| Income          | Percent      |
|-----------------|--------------|
| < \$25k         | 44.7%        |
| \$25k - \$49.9k | 52.8%        |
| \$50k - \$99.9k | 64.6%        |
| \$100k+         | 66.8%        |
| <b>Total</b>    | <b>56.9%</b> |

| Education           | Percent      |
|---------------------|--------------|
| High School or Less | 49.2%        |
| Some College        | 58.7%        |
| College+            | 63.1%        |
| <b>Total</b>        | <b>56.9%</b> |



**QUESTION 2: How did you communicate this? Did you:**

- a) Have an informal communication such as a talk with family, friends, or loved ones?
- b) Create a living will/medical directive?
- c) Create a healthcare power of attorney?
- d) Create some other document?

**TYPE OF COMMUNICATION**

|                     | Informal Communication | Living Will/<br>Medical Directive | Healthcare Power of Attorney |
|---------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <b>Age</b>          |                        |                                   |                              |
| <35                 | 94.4%                  | 40.2%                             | 35.8%                        |
| 35 - 64             | 88.0%                  | 56.4%                             | 43.1%                        |
| 65+                 | 81.3%                  | 80.4%                             | 75.7%                        |
| <b>Total</b>        | <b>87.3%</b>           | <b>59.9%</b>                      | <b>50.1%</b>                 |
| <b>Income</b>       |                        |                                   |                              |
| <\$25k              | 90.8%                  | 56.2%                             | 44.0%                        |
| \$25k - \$49.9k     | 87.6%                  | 59.0%                             | 50.5%                        |
| \$50k - \$99.9k     | 88.5%                  | 58.2%                             | 47.5%                        |
| \$100k+             | 83.7%                  | 57.5%                             | 52.6%                        |
| <b>Total</b>        | <b>87.3%</b>           | <b>59.9%</b>                      | <b>50.1%</b>                 |
| <b>Education</b>    |                        |                                   |                              |
| High School or Less | 90.3%                  | 54.2%                             | 48.8%                        |
| Some College/Assoc  | 86.6%                  | 60.8%                             | 48.6%                        |
| College+            | 85.6%                  | 63.7%                             | 52.4%                        |
| <b>Total</b>        | <b>87.3%</b>           | <b>59.9%</b>                      | <b>50.1%</b>                 |

**QUESTION 3: During the preparation of this/these document(s), did you receive assistance from:**

- a) A healthcare professional?
- b) A legal professional?
- c) The Internet/computer software?

**TYPE OF ASSISTANCE**

|                     | Healthcare Professional | Legal Professional | Internet/<br>Software |
|---------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Age</b>          |                         |                    |                       |
| <35                 | 34.4%                   | 51.6%              | 7.9%                  |
| 35 - 64             | 25.7%                   | 59.0%              | 14.3%                 |
| 65+                 | 24.7%                   | 66.2%              | 5.0%                  |
| <b>Total</b>        | <b>26.4%</b>            | <b>60.4%</b>       | <b>10.6%</b>          |
| <b>Income</b>       |                         |                    |                       |
| <\$25k              | 31.6%                   | 42.3%              | 11.3%                 |
| \$25k - \$49.9k     | 26.4%                   | 56.5%              | 4.7%                  |
| \$50k - \$99.9k     | 22.5%                   | 63.1%              | 12.7%                 |
| \$100k+             | 29.2%                   | 76.6%              | 17.3%                 |
| <b>Total</b>        | <b>26.4%</b>            | <b>60.4%</b>       | <b>10.6%</b>          |
| <b>Education</b>    |                         |                    |                       |
| High School or Less | 25.4%                   | 51.9%              | 3.5%                  |
| Some College/Assoc  | 26.3%                   | 54.7%              | 10.7%                 |
| College+            | 27.2%                   | 71.9%              | 15.8%                 |
| <b>Total</b>        | <b>26.4%</b>            | <b>60.4%</b>       | <b>10.6%</b>          |



**QUESTION 4: During the past 12 months, were you involved in making a medical decision for a friend, family member, or loved one who was incapable of making the decision themselves due to illness or injury? (The results represent the percentage of people who answered yes.)**

**MADE DECISION FOR ANOTHER**

| <b>Age</b>   | <b>Percent</b> |
|--------------|----------------|
| <35          | 11.1%          |
| 35 - 64      | 10.4%          |
| 65+          | 9.6%           |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>10.4%</b>   |

| <b>Income</b>   |              |
|-----------------|--------------|
| < \$25k         | 11.2%        |
| \$25k - \$49.9k | 12.2%        |
| \$50k - \$99.9k | 8.3%         |
| \$100k+         | 10.3%        |
| <b>Total</b>    | <b>10.4%</b> |

| <b>Education</b>    |              |
|---------------------|--------------|
| High School or Less | 9.6%         |
| Some College        | 11.8%        |
| College+            | 9.8%         |
| <b>Total</b>        | <b>10.4%</b> |

**QUESTION 5: Was there a legal document such as a living will or medical directive available to guide the decision? (The results represent the percentage of people who answered yes.)**

**LEGAL DOCUMENT AVAILABLE**

| <b>Age</b>   | <b>Percent</b> |
|--------------|----------------|
| <35          | 42.6%          |
| 35 - 64      | 54.3%          |
| 65+          | 72.2%          |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>54.8%</b>   |

| <b>Income</b>   |              |
|-----------------|--------------|
| < \$25k         | 42.3%        |
| \$25k - \$49.9k | 58.9%        |
| \$50k - \$99.9k | 61.0%        |
| \$100k+         | 57.2%        |
| <b>Total</b>    | <b>54.8%</b> |

| <b>Education</b>    |              |
|---------------------|--------------|
| High School or Less | 50.1%        |
| Some College        | 54.1%        |
| College+            | 60.5%        |
| <b>Total</b>        | <b>54.8%</b> |



**QUESTION 6: Did you or anyone involved in making the medical decision receive counseling/ assistance from a healthcare professional or support group during the time the decision was being made? (The results represent the percentage of people who answered yes.)**

**RECEIVED COUNSELING**

| Age          | Percent      |
|--------------|--------------|
| <35          | 60.3%        |
| 35 - 64      | 49.5%        |
| 65+          | 52.5%        |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>52.6%</b> |

| Income          | Percent      |
|-----------------|--------------|
| < \$25k         | 54.6%        |
| \$25k - \$49.9k | 45.1%        |
| \$50k - \$99.9k | 56.7%        |
| \$100k+         | 67.2%        |
| <b>Total</b>    | <b>52.6%</b> |

| Education           | Percent      |
|---------------------|--------------|
| High School or Less | 42.9%        |
| Some College        | 56.7%        |
| College+            | 57.3%        |
| <b>Total</b>        | <b>52.6%</b> |

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**QUESTION 7: On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is "Not at All Helpful" and 5 is "Very Helpful," how helpful was the counseling/assistance you received?**

**HELPFULNESS OF COUNSELING**

|                     | 1: Not at All Helpful | 2           | 3            | 4            | 5: Very Helpful |
|---------------------|-----------------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|-----------------|
| <b>Age</b>          |                       |             |              |              |                 |
| <35                 | 0.0%                  | 0.0%        | 23.4%        | 42.8%        | 33.8%           |
| 35 - 64             | 1.6%                  | 1.7%        | 13.3%        | 27.1%        | 56.3%           |
| 65+                 | 2.6%                  | 3.0%        | 22.0%        | 26.4%        | 46.0%           |
| <b>Total</b>        | <b>1.4%</b>           | <b>1.5%</b> | <b>17.5%</b> | <b>31.1%</b> | <b>48.5%</b>    |
| <b>Income</b>       |                       |             |              |              |                 |
| <\$25k              | 0.6%                  | 2.1%        | 15.5%        | 29.4%        | 52.4%           |
| \$25k - \$49.9k     | 0.0%                  | 4.0%        | 26.6%        | 27.9%        | 41.5%           |
| \$50k - \$99.9k     | 0.0%                  | 0.0%        | 15.6%        | 20.6%        | 63.7%           |
| \$100k+             | 5.0%                  | 0.0%        | 8.7%         | 38.4%        | 47.9%           |
| <b>Total</b>        | <b>1.4%</b>           | <b>1.5%</b> | <b>17.5%</b> | <b>31.1%</b> | <b>48.5%</b>    |
| <b>Education</b>    |                       |             |              |              |                 |
| High School or Less | 0.0%                  | 2.1%        | 27.4%        | 21.9%        | 48.5%           |
| Some College/Assoc  | 0.0%                  | 2.4%        | 17.4%        | 29.9%        | 50.3%           |
| College+            | 4.0%                  | 0.0%        | 10.2%        | 39.5%        | 46.3%           |
| <b>Total</b>        | <b>1.4%</b>           | <b>1.5%</b> | <b>17.5%</b> | <b>31.1%</b> | <b>48.5%</b>    |

