The Commonwealth Fund
2008 International Health Policy Survey
in Eight Countries

Cathy Schoen and Robin Osborn
The Commonwealth Fund

November 2008
2008 International Health Policy Survey

- Telephone survey of “sicker” adults in 8 countries*
- Analysis of adults with at least one chronic condition (hypertension, heart disease, diabetes, arthritis, lung problems, depression, cancer)
- Final samples: Australia (593), Canada (1,956), France (851), Germany (867), Netherlands (736), New Zealand (518), United Kingdom (933), and United States (1,007)
- Conducted from March to May 2008 by Harris Interactive and subcontractors, and The Center for Quality of Care Research in the Netherlands
- Cofunded in Canada, France, Germany, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom

* Initially screened adults met at least one of the following criteria: health is fair or poor; serious illness in past 2 years; hospitalized or had major surgery in past 2 years.
# 2008 Survey Profile of Sicker Adults with Any Chronic Condition

Base: Adults with any chronic condition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>AUS</th>
<th>CAN</th>
<th>FR</th>
<th>GER</th>
<th>NETH</th>
<th>NZ</th>
<th>UK</th>
<th>US</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age 50 or older</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has 2+ chronic conditions (out of 7)</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health care use in past 2 years:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospitalized</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major surgery</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saw 4+ doctors</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking 4+ prescription medications regularly</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data collection: Harris Interactive, Inc.
Source: 2008 Commonwealth Fund International Health Policy Survey of Sicker Adults.
Health System Views and Costs
# Overall Views of the Health Care System in Eight Countries

Base: Adults with any chronic condition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>AUS</th>
<th>CAN</th>
<th>FR</th>
<th>GER</th>
<th>NETH</th>
<th>NZ</th>
<th>UK</th>
<th>US</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Only minor changes needed</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundamental changes needed</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebuild completely</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data collection: Harris Interactive, Inc.
Source: 2008 Commonwealth Fund International Health Policy Survey of Sicker Adults.
## Perception of Inefficient or Wasteful Care

Base: Adults with any chronic condition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>AUS</th>
<th>CAN</th>
<th>FR</th>
<th>GER</th>
<th>NETH</th>
<th>NZ</th>
<th>UK</th>
<th>US</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Doctor recommended treatment you thought had little or no benefit</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often/sometimes felt time was wasted due to poorly organized care</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Either/both experiences</em></td>
<td>38</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data collection: Harris Interactive, Inc.
Source: 2008 Commonwealth Fund International Health Policy Survey of Sicker Adults.
Out-of-Pocket Medical Costs in Past Year

Base: Adults with any chronic condition

Percent

Under US $500

AUS 43
CAN 57
FR* 48
GER 57
NETH 72
NZ 61
UK 81
US 31

More than US $1,000

AUS 25
CAN 20
FR* 5
GER 13
NETH 8
NZ 14
UK 4
US 41

* 44 percent of French respondents were unable to estimate out-of-pocket costs.

Data collection: Harris Interactive, Inc.
Source: 2008 Commonwealth Fund International Health Policy Survey of Sicker Adults.
Access
## Cost-Related Access Problems in Past Two Years

Base: Adults with any chronic condition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>AUS</th>
<th>CAN</th>
<th>FR</th>
<th>GER</th>
<th>NETH</th>
<th>NZ</th>
<th>UK</th>
<th>US</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Did <em>not</em> fill Rx or skipped doses</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did <em>not</em> visit a doctor when had a medical problem</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did <em>not</em> get recommended test, treatment, or follow-up</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Any of the above access problems because of cost</em></td>
<td>36</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Length of Time with Regular Doctor or Place

Base: Adults with any chronic condition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>AUS</th>
<th>CAN</th>
<th>FR</th>
<th>GER</th>
<th>NETH</th>
<th>NZ</th>
<th>UK</th>
<th>US</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Has regular doctor or place of care</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With regular doctor or place for five years or more*</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Base includes those with and without a regular doctor or place of care.

Data collection: Harris Interactive, Inc.
Source: 2008 Commonwealth Fund International Health Policy Survey of Sicker Adults.
Access to Doctor When Sick or Needed Care

Base: Adults with any chronic condition

Percent

Same-day appointment

6+ days wait or never able to get appointment

Data collection: Harris Interactive, Inc.
Source: 2008 Commonwealth Fund International Health Policy Survey of Sicker Adults.
Difficulty Getting Care After Hours Without Going to the Emergency Room

Base: Adults with any chronic condition who needed after-hours care
Percent reported very/somewhat difficult getting care on nights, weekends, or holidays without going to ER

Data collection: Harris Interactive, Inc.
Source: 2008 Commonwealth Fund International Health Policy Survey of Sicker Adults.
ER Use in Past Two Years

Base: Adults with any chronic condition

Any ER use

Used ER for condition treatable by regular doctor, if available

Data collection: Harris Interactive, Inc.
Source: 2008 Commonwealth Fund International Health Policy Survey of Sicker Adults.
Wait Time for Specialist Appointment

Base: Adults with any chronic condition who needed to see a specialist in past 2 years

Percent

Less than 4 weeks

AUS 45
CAN 40
FR 55
GER 68
NETH 69
NZ 45
UK 42
US 74

Two months or longer

AUS 29
CAN 42
FR 23
GER 20
NETH 25
NZ 33
UK 33
US 10

Data collection: Harris Interactive, Inc.
Source: 2008 Commonwealth Fund International Health Policy Survey of Sicker Adults.
Care Coordination and Transitions
# Coordination Problems with Medical Tests or Records in Past Two Years

Base: Adults with any chronic condition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>AUS</th>
<th>CAN</th>
<th>FR</th>
<th>GER</th>
<th>NETH</th>
<th>NZ</th>
<th>UK</th>
<th>US</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Test results/records not available at time of appointment</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duplicate tests: doctors ordered test that had already been done</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Either/both coordination problems</em></td>
<td>23</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data collection: Harris Interactive, Inc.
Source: 2008 Commonwealth Fund International Health Policy Survey of Sicker Adults.
Coordination Problems with Medical Tests or Records, by Number of Doctors Seen

Base: Adults with any chronic condition
Percent reported any medical test/record coordination problems* in past 2 years

- **1 or 2 doctors**
- **4 or more doctors**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>1 or 2 doctors</th>
<th>4 or more doctors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AUS</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAN</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FR</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GER</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NETH</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NZ</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Test results/medical records not available at time of appointment and/or doctors ordered medical test that had already been done.

Data collection: Harris Interactive, Inc.
Source: 2008 Commonwealth Fund International Health Policy Survey of Sicker Adults.
Coordination of Specialist Care

Base: Adults with any chronic condition who saw specialist in past 2 years
Percent for whom specialist did NOT have information about medical history

Data collection: Harris Interactive, Inc.
Source: 2008 Commonwealth Fund International Health Policy Survey of Sicker Adults.
# Gaps in Hospital Discharge Planning and Transitional Care

Base: Adults with any chronic condition who were hospitalized in past 2 years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent did NOT</th>
<th>AUS</th>
<th>CAN</th>
<th>FR</th>
<th>GER</th>
<th>NETH</th>
<th>NZ</th>
<th>UK</th>
<th>US</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Know who to contact for questions about condition or treatment</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receive instructions about symptoms and when to seek further care</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receive written plan for care after discharge</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have arrangements made for follow-up visits with any doctor</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Any discharge gaps</strong></td>
<td>61</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data collection: Harris Interactive, Inc.  
Source: 2008 Commonwealth Fund International Health Policy Survey of Sicker Adults.
Failure to Discuss Medications at Discharge

Base: Adults with chronic condition hospitalized in past 2 years and given new medications

Percent said prior medications *not* discussed at discharge

Data collection: Harris Interactive, Inc.
Source: 2008 Commonwealth Fund International Health Policy Survey of Sicker Adults.
Readmitted to Hospital or Went to ER from Complications During Recovery

Base: Adults with any chronic condition who were hospitalized
Percent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AUS</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAN</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FR</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GER</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NETH</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NZ</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data collection: Harris Interactive, Inc.
Source: 2008 Commonwealth Fund International Health Policy Survey of Sicker Adults.
Safety: Prescription Medications, Medical Care, and Lab Tests
Doctors Did Not Regularly Review All Medications in Past Two Years

Base: Adults with any chronic condition and taking Rx medications regularly
Percent reported doctors or pharmacists sometimes/rarely/never reviewed and discussed all medications they were using

Data collection: Harris Interactive, Inc.
Source: 2008 Commonwealth Fund International Health Policy Survey of Sicker Adults.
“Near Misses”: Pharmacist Alerted Medication Patient Was About to Fill Might Be Harmful

Base: Adults with any chronic condition and taking Rx medications regularly
Percent reported pharmacist told them prescription they were about to fill might be harmful because of other medications they were taking

Data collection: Harris Interactive, Inc.
Source: 2008 Commonwealth Fund International Health Policy Survey of Sicker Adults.
## Medical, Medication, or Lab Test Errors in Past Two Years

Base: Adults with any chronic condition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>AUS</th>
<th>CAN</th>
<th>FR</th>
<th>GER</th>
<th>NETH</th>
<th>NZ</th>
<th>UK</th>
<th>US</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wrong medication or dose</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical mistake in treatment</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incorrect diagnostic/lab test results*</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delays in abnormal test results*</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any medical, medication, or lab errors</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Among those who had blood test, x-rays, or other tests.

Data collection: Harris Interactive, Inc.
Source: 2008 Commonwealth Fund International Health Policy Survey of Sicker Adults.
Medical, Medication, or Lab Test Errors Occurred Outside Hospital

Base: Adults with chronic condition who reported any error, past 2 years*

Percent reported error occurred outside hospital

* Experienced medical mistake; medication error; and/or lab test error or delay.

Data collection: Harris Interactive, Inc.
Source: 2008 Commonwealth Fund International Health Policy Survey of Sicker Adults.
Any Medical, Medication, or Lab Test Errors, by Number of Doctors Seen

Base: Adults with any chronic condition
Percent reported any errors in past 2 years*

* Experienced medical mistake; medication error; and/or lab test error or delay.

Data collection: Harris Interactive, Inc.
Source: 2008 Commonwealth Fund International Health Policy Survey of Sicker Adults.
Chronic Care Management
Patient Engagement in Care

Base: Adults with any chronic condition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>AUS</th>
<th>CAN</th>
<th>FR</th>
<th>GER</th>
<th>NETH</th>
<th>NZ</th>
<th>UK</th>
<th>US</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regular doctor <em>always</em> tells you about treatment options and involves you in decisions*</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your clinician gives you a written plan to manage care at home</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Role of Nurse in Care Management

Base: Adults with any chronic condition
Percent said nurse is regularly involved in management of condition

Data collection: Harris Interactive, Inc.
Source: 2008 Commonwealth Fund International Health Policy Survey of Sicker Adults.
Diabetics Who Received Recommended Preventive Care Services

Base: Adults with diabetes
Percent received all four diabetes services*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AUS</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAN</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FR</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GER</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NETH</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NZ</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Hemoglobin A1c checked in past six months; feet examined for sores or irritations in past year; eye exam for diabetes in past year; and cholesterol checked in past year.

Data collection: Harris Interactive, Inc.
Source: 2008 Commonwealth Fund International Health Policy Survey of Sicker Adults.
U.S. Adults with Chronic Conditions, Insured All Year Compared with Uninsured

- Medical, medication, or lab test errors: 44 uninsured, 30 insured all year
- Inefficient care or wasted time: 54 uninsured, 43 insured all year
- Medical test or record coordination problems: 38 uninsured, 33 insured all year
- Wait 6+ days or never got appointment: 37 uninsured, 18 insured all year
- Access problems because of costs: 82 uninsured, 43 insured all year

Data collection: Harris Interactive, Inc.
Source: 2008 Commonwealth Fund International Health Policy Survey of Sicker Adults.
Summary of Findings

• Experiences of chronically ill often reflect national insurance designs and primary care systems
  – Cost-sharing and coverage gaps limit access and adherence to recommended care
  – Strong primary care orientation is linked to better access and less duplication (e.g., Netherlands, U.K., N.Z.)
  – U.S. is outlier on financial barriers to care

• Poor care coordination a shared concern
  – High readmissions rates symptoms of poor transition care
  – Gaps in information flows across care sites undermine quality

• Chronically ill at high safety risk
  – Failures to review complex medication regimens are common
  – Safety risks multiply with number of doctors involved
  – Laboratory and diagnostic test delays are a concern
  – Most errors occur outside of hospital
Toward a High Performing Health System: Need for System Innovations

- Integrated systems of care for patients with chronic conditions
- Strong focus on engaging patients
- Alternative provider payment strategies, e.g., “Bundled” payments and P4P
- Electronic information systems and telehealth technology
- Investment in primary care workforce
- Population/community focus on health and disease prevention
Cofunders

- Canada: Health Council of Canada; Ontario Health Quality Council; Commissaire à la Santé et au Bien-être du Québec
- France: Haute Autorité de Santé
- Germany: Institute for Quality and Efficiency in Health Care
- Netherlands: Ministry for Health, Welfare, and Sport; Center for Quality of Care Research (WOK)
- United Kingdom: The Health Foundation
Acknowledgments


With appreciation to:

• Coauthors: Sabrina How, Michelle Doty, and Jordon Peugh

• Survey development and administration: Harris Interactive and Associates

• Survey administration in the Netherlands: Center for Quality of Care Research (WOK), Radboud University Nijmegen