



Zogby International



The American System for Advancing Senior Health

For Immediate Release:

April 29, 2008

Contacts:

Fritz Wenzel, Zogby International
315-624-0200, ext.229, fritz@zogby.com

Jeff Vaughan, ASASH
610-533-4264, jv@voncom.com

Zogby Poll: As Boomers Retire, Crisis Looms in Specialized Medical Care

New Survey from The American System for Advancing Senior Health (ASASH™) Shows Knowledge is (Healing) Power in the Hands of Older Patients

UTICA, New York – With millions of “Baby Boomers” across America preparing for retirement, the first annual Senior Health Index™ by ASASH (American System for Advancing Senior Health) conducted by Zogby International polling shows seven out of eight Boomers believe it is important that their physician has specialized training in dealing with older patients, but a majority of them say they cannot find such a doctor.

Nearly nine in 10 women (88%) said it was important to have a physician with senior care expertise, and the data suggests that seniors are less confident they are receiving appropriate care when they don’t know if their doctors have such training. Indeed, 26% – one in four women – said they believe that their health may have suffered because their physician did not have such expertise.

The comprehensive nationwide survey of adults aged 55 and older showed that there is concern about the senior health training received by their medical providers because they believe their health needs are significantly different than those of younger patients. Nearly half – 45% – said they are likely to seek a different healthcare provider in order to obtain better results, and 45% said they believe it is possible to obtain better care than they are now receiving.

This as the medical field faces a severe crisis in dealing with older patients. An April 2008 report from the Institute of Medicine (“Retooling for an Aging America: Building the Health Care Workforce”) shows that there are not enough specialists in geriatric medicine, that training of the nation’s medical providers to care for America’s growing senior health population is insufficient, that specialists working in the field are underpaid and that the government’s Medicare program fails to provide for team care that many elderly patients need.

“The Senior Health Index by ASASH shows that more than 50% of consumers aged 55 and older feel that they are the ones most able to improve the quality of their care beyond its current level,”

said David Dierk, president of ASASH. “People are seeking ways to take action in light of the crisis that the Institute of Medicine study revealed. The goal of ASASH is to improve outcomes for seniors by providing consumers and their healthcare professionals with accurate, actionable health information, services and tools.”

“We are seeing the Baby Boomers use the Internet to take a much more activist role in almost every aspect of their lives,” said Pollster John Zogby. “We have had a dramatic increase in their participation in online polling, for instance, and they tell us that the Internet is playing an important role in getting the latest information about everything from healthcare to politics to travel, leisure, money management, and just about every other subject.”

According to the Senior Health Index by ASASH, one in every three respondents said they need more help with their healthcare decisions, and 71% said they want to be able to find more information about their own healthcare. This may be in part because most people – 88% – want to be in control of their healthcare decisions, and half said they believe they themselves are in the best position to help improve the quality of their health.

89% said that if they could find a credible source of information about their health and healthcare – specifically tailored to seniors – they would access it. Large majorities said they believe such information would help them better communicate with their physicians, follow treatment guidelines with confidence, use the overall healthcare system more effectively, lead a more healthy life in general, and do so while living at their own home. A large majority said they also believe such an information source would give them the confidence to talk to their healthcare provider with confidence about new treatment options that might be available for them.

The Institute of Medicine study also showed that quality care for older Americans may also be difficult to obtain because of Medicare’s low reimbursement rates to providers and because of the program’s emphasis on treating short-term health problems rather than managing chronic conditions and encouraging preventive measures to keep health problems at bay.

According to the Senior Health Index by ASASH, more than half of the respondents aged 55 to 64 – 53% – said they believe the country at large does not understand or care about the health challenges senior citizens face. Among those aged 65 and older, 40% said the same.

The pair of Zogby interactive online surveys was conducted for ASASH March 14-17, 2008. The survey of 3,110 adults included 610 respondents aged 55-64 and 2,500 respondents aged 65 and older. The survey of respondents aged 55-64 carries a margin of error of +/- 4.1 percentage points. The survey of adults aged 65 and older carries a margin of error of +/- 2.0 percentage points.

-Z-

About ASASH

The American System for Advancing Senior Health (ASASH™) (www.asash.net) empowers seniors to live healthier, more fulfilling lives by providing them with credible health information and services across a variety of formats. Backed by senior health experts from a range of backgrounds, ASASH is designed to help the 66 million Americans in the 55-and-older demographic and their healthcare professionals confidently navigate the complexity of the senior healthcare system. As a result, ASASH provides seniors and their healthcare professionals with accurate and actionable health information under the brand name “NueLife” (in Greek numerals, “Nu” = 50 and “E” = 5). NueLife initiatives will include *NueLife Journal* for consumers, NueLife.com for seniors, NueLifePro.com for senior health professionals, and the annual Advancing Senior Health Conference™ for health plan providers and senior health professionals. The System also includes the professional journals *Assisted Living Consult* and *Medicare Patient Management* and community-based educational seminars for consumers, known as “NueLife On Location,” which are currently being developed.