



KRC RESEARCH

# Survey of Physicians About Pharmaceutical and Biotech Research Company Activities and Information

*Nationally representative survey of 508 physicians*

*Survey commissioned by*

**P/RMA**

**March 2011**

## Objective

The purpose of the research was to learn about physicians' opinions about and uses of information related to prescription drugs provided by a variety of sources, including pharmaceutical and biotech research companies and their representatives.

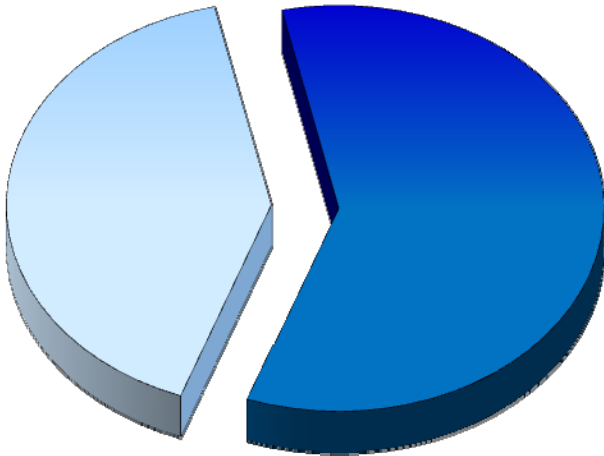
## Method

|                                  |  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <b>Sample size and mode</b>      | <b>508 <u>telephone</u> interviews</b>   |
| <b>Interview dates</b>           | <b>Dec. 23, 2010 - Jan. 31, 2011</b>   |
| <b>Design and sampling frame</b> | <b>A nationally representative probability sample of <u>office- and hospital-based physicians who diagnose and treat patients</u> randomly selected from American Medical Association's Physician Masterfile, listing over 800,000 physicians.</b> |
| <b>Margin of error</b>           | <b>±4.4 percentage points at the 95% confidence level</b>  |

## Overview of Physician Practice Areas

### 42% Primary Care

- Family and general practice
- Internal medicine
- Pediatrics
- Ob/Gyn

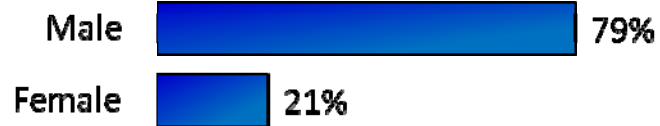


### 58% Specialists

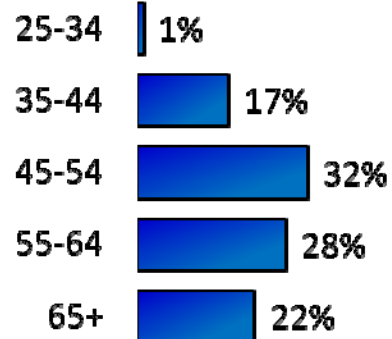
- Anesthesiology
- Allergy and immunology
- Cardiology and cardiac surgery
- Dermatology
- Emergency medicine
- Endocrinology
- Gastroenterology
- General surgery
- Hematology/oncology
- Infectious disease
- Nephrology
- Neurology
- Ophthalmology
- Orthopedic surgery
- Orthopedic surgery
- Otolaryngology
- Physical medicine and rehabilitation
- Plastic and reconstructive surgery
- Psychiatry
- Pulmonary disease
- Radiation oncology
- Rheumatology
- Surgery
- Urology

## Demographic Profile of Physicians

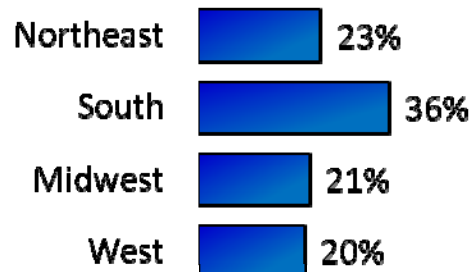
### Gender



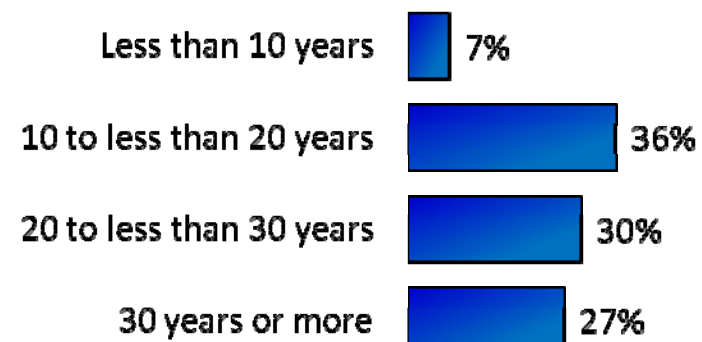
### Age



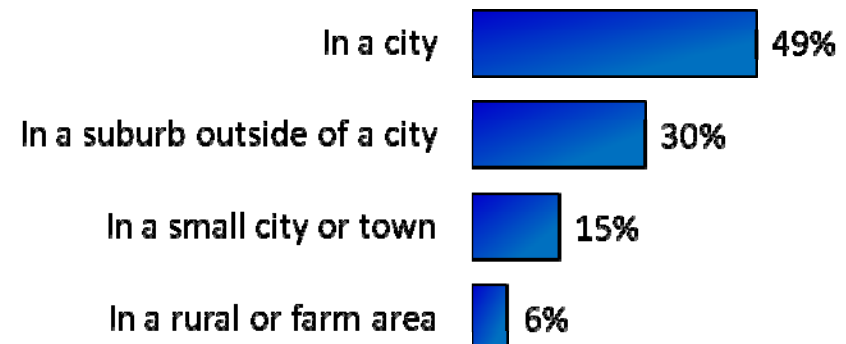
### Region



### Years in practice



### Practice location





## Key Findings

## Summary of Key Findings

1. Most physicians consider advances in treatments and cures among things working best in U.S. healthcare today.
2. Physicians consider a wide range of factors when making prescribing decisions. By far, they make decisions based on their clinical knowledge, experience, and each patient's unique situation.
3. To stay informed about medicines, physicians review and integrate information from many sources—particularly Continuing Medical Education courses and articles in peer-reviewed medical journals.
4. Most physicians recognize and value contributions made by pharmaceutical and biotech companies, but they do not use this information in isolation. Most find information from these sources up-to-date, useful, and reliable.
5. Pharmaceutical company sponsored educational programs are well attended, and most find information provided at these events to be up-to-date, useful, and reliable.

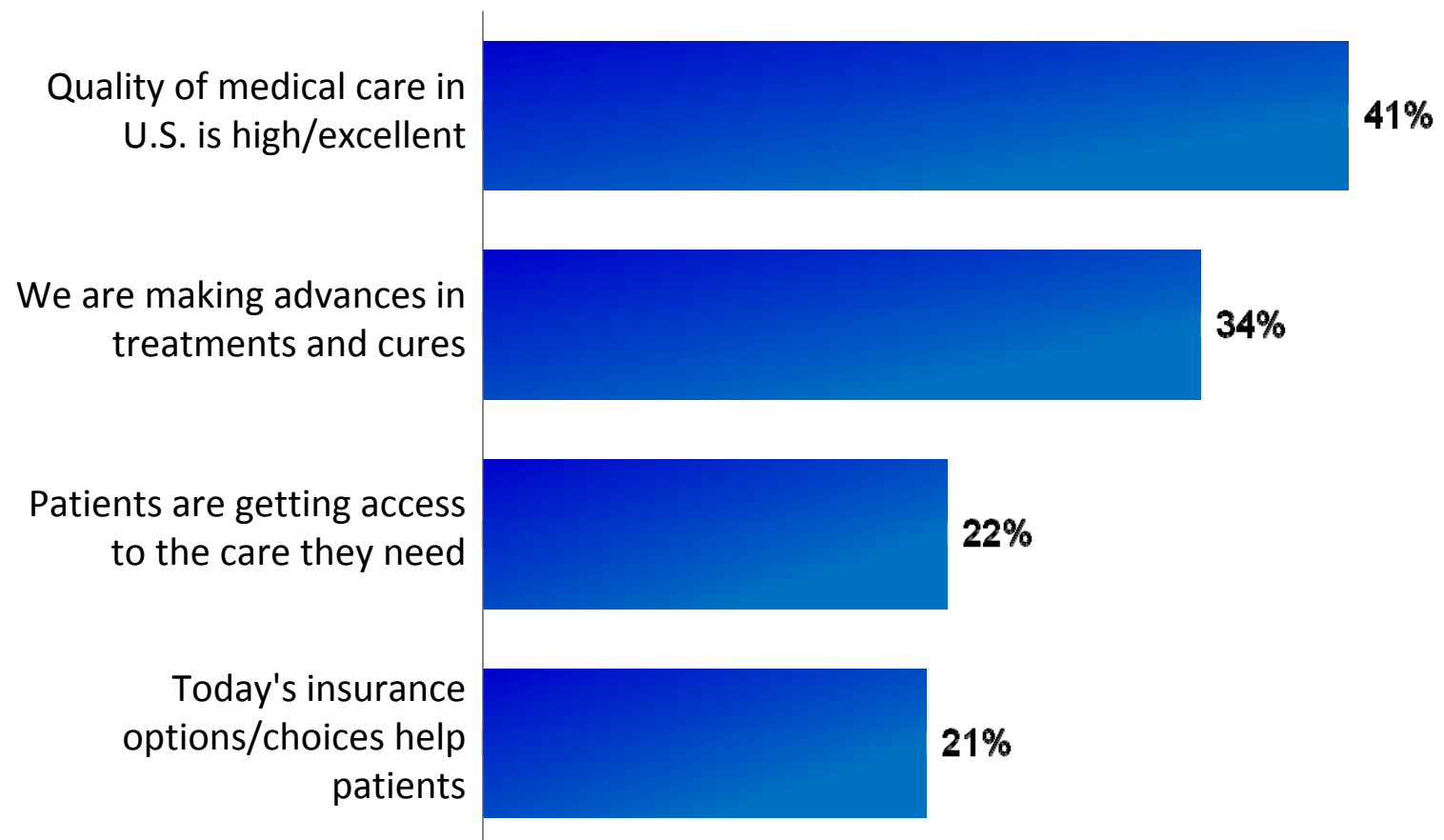
## Finding #1

**Most physicians consider advances in treatments and cures among things working best in U.S. healthcare today.**

- Unaided, quality of care and advances in treatments and cures top the list of what's working best in healthcare today. However, only 1 in 10 specifically mention advanced medicines and treatments.
- 91% said there has been progress in treating disease with prescription medications over the decade—48% said a lot.

## What is working best in healthcare today? Quality of care, treatments and cures, access, and choice.

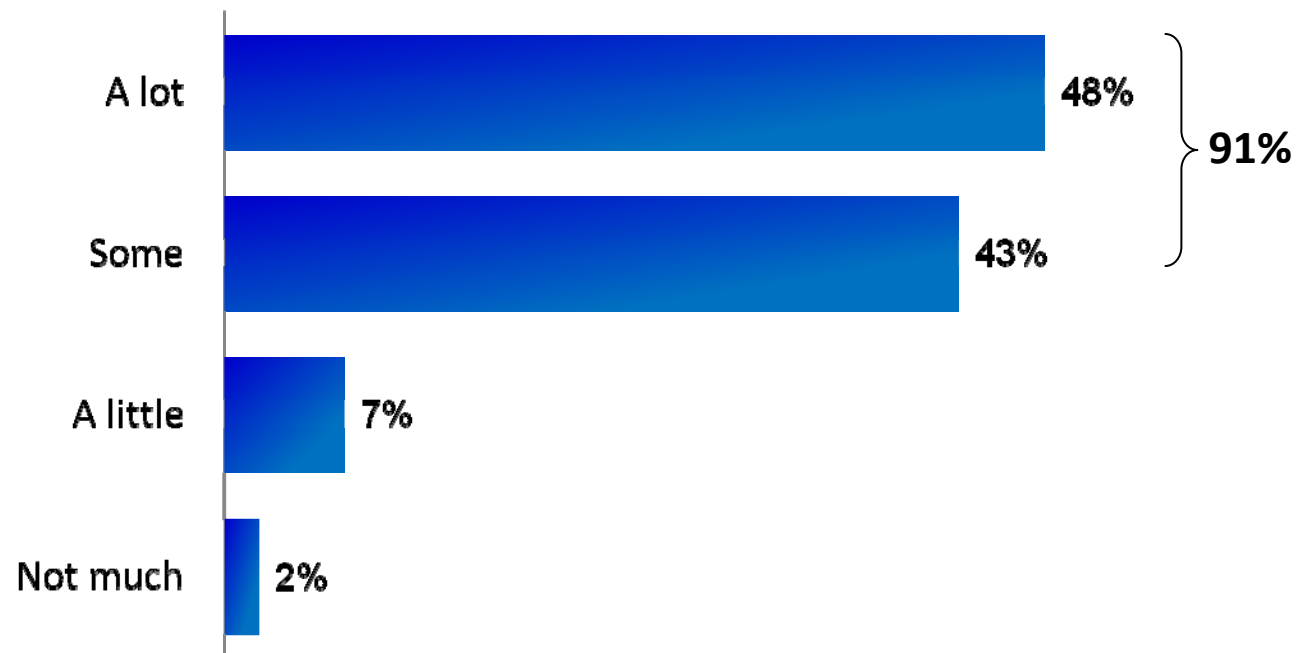
*What would you say are the one or two things that are working best in U.S. healthcare today? (Unaided, multiple response)*





## More than 9 in 10 say at least some progress has been made in treating disease with Rx meds—nearly half say a lot.

*Turning to the topic of prescription medicines, over the last decade, do you think there has been a lot of progress in treating disease with prescription medicines, some progress, a little progress, or not much progress?*



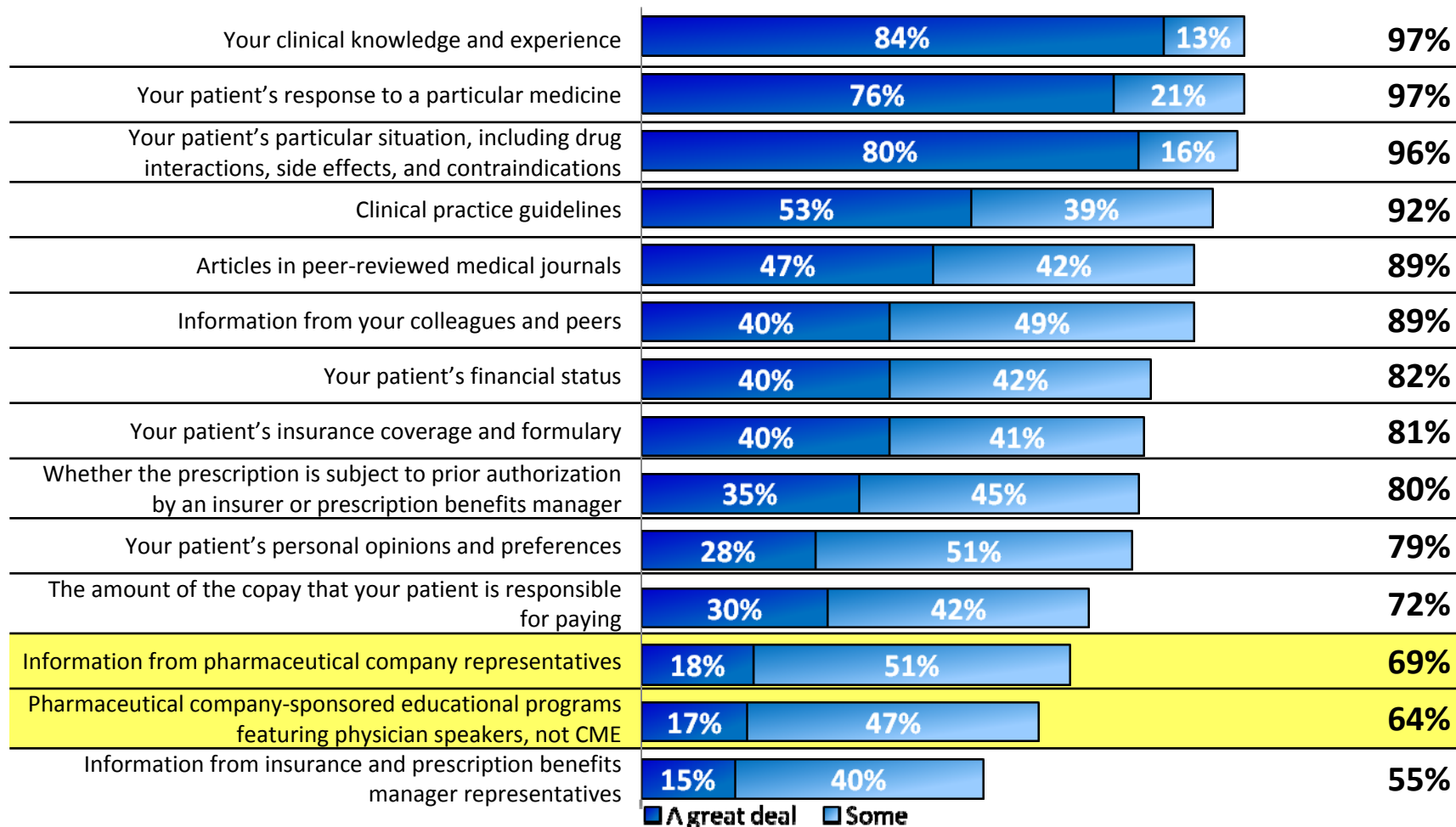
## Finding #2

**Physicians consider a wide range of factors when making prescribing decisions. By far, they make decisions based on their clinical knowledge, experience, and each patient's unique situation.**

- Physicians also draw from professional sources and literature, such as Clinical Practice Guidelines and articles in peer-reviewed journals.
- They value information from pharmaceutical and biotech company representatives and pharmaceutical company-sponsored educational programs featuring physicians speakers as one source of information among many—but these sources are not in the top-tier.
- There is some pressure from insurers and pharmacies to affect their prescribing decisions. Over the last year, two in three said they have been asked by these groups to change a prescription they wrote for a patient.

## Factors Physicians Consider in Prescribing

Now I'm going to read you a list of factors you might consider when prescribing medications for a patient after you've diagnosed them. For each one, please tell me how much that influences your prescribing decision—a great deal, some, not very much, or not at all. First...



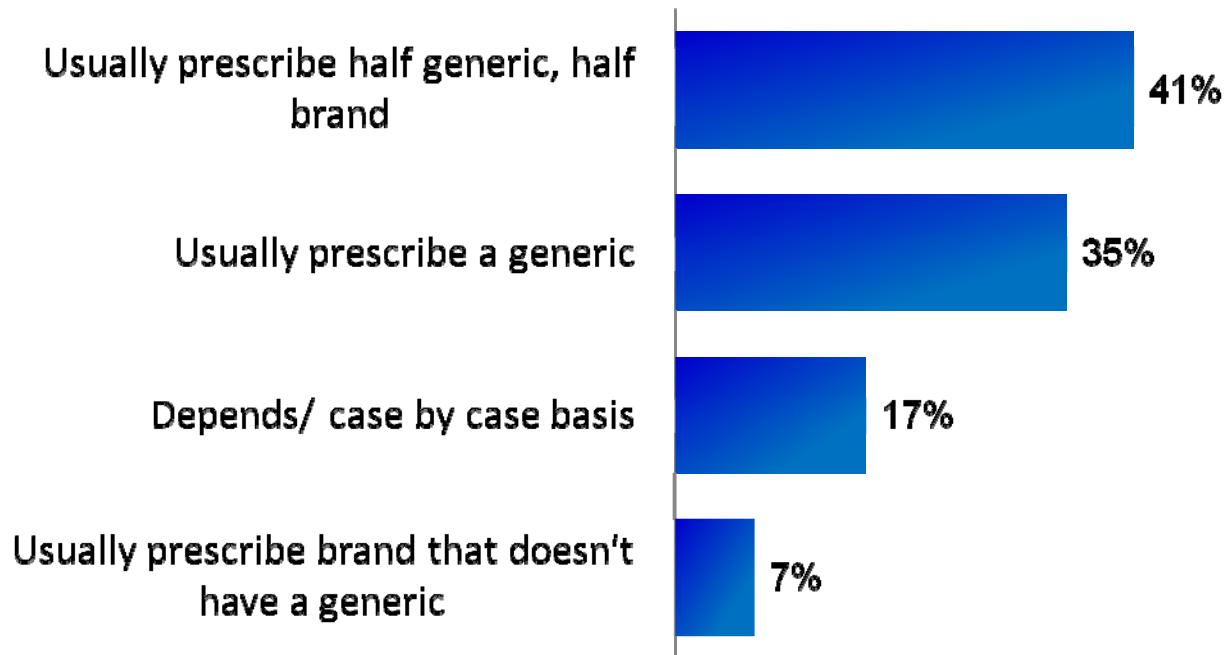
## Nearly 2 in 3 physicians said they have been asked by an insurer or pharmacy to switch to a different drug than the one they prescribed.

*In the past year, have you been contacted by an insurer or pharmacy asking you to switch a prescription drug to a different one—meaning another drug, not a generic copy of the drug you prescribed?*



**A third usually prescribe a generic, while most others say they usually prescribe half and half or decide on a case by case basis.**  
***Few say they usually prescribe a brand drug that doesn't have a generic equivalent.***

*When you prescribe from within a class of drugs that includes some drugs that are brand-only and some that are generic, which of the following statements best describes the drug you are most likely to select:*



## Finding #3

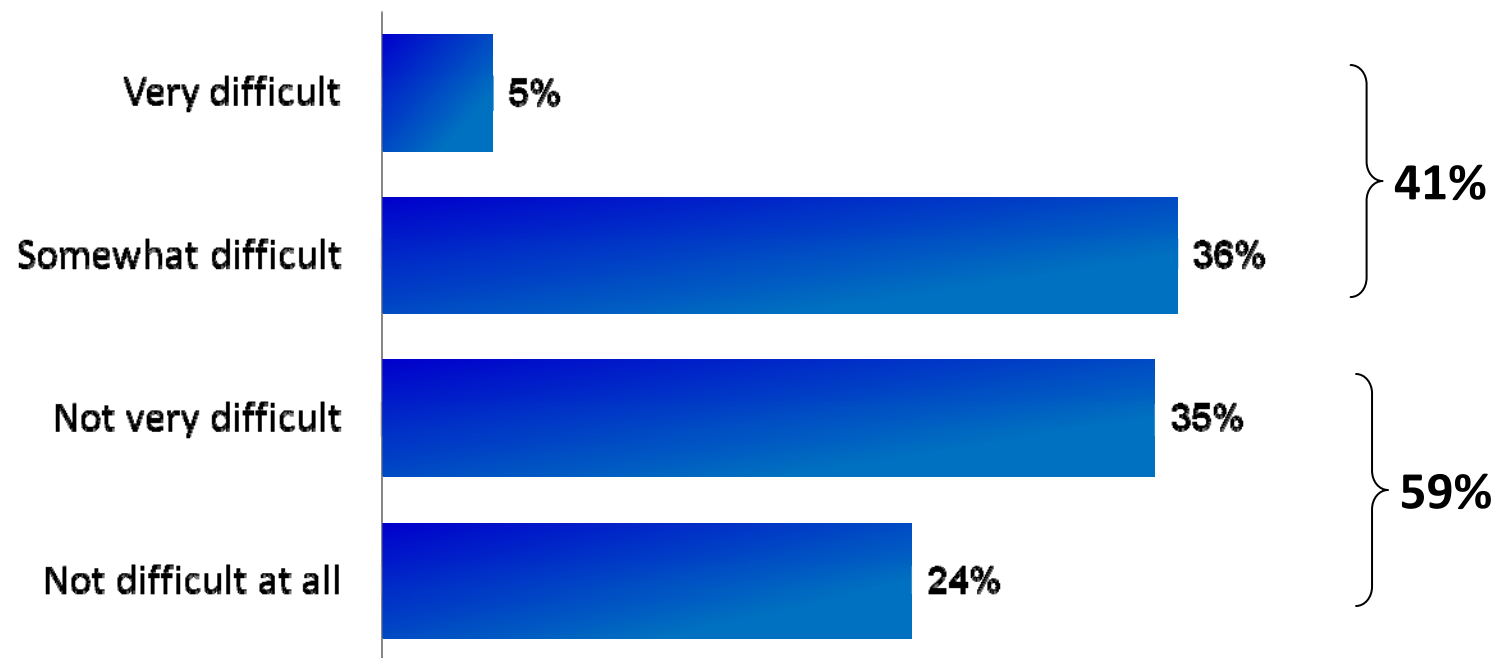
**To stay informed about medicines, physicians review and integrate information from many sources.**

- Over 4 in 10 find it at least somewhat difficult to stay informed about new medications.
- Top tier sources of information about medicines are Continuing Medical Education courses, articles in peer-reviewed medical journals, Clinical Practice Guidelines, and colleagues and peers.
- Physicians also consider information and activities from pharmaceutical and biotech research companies useful.

## The majority of physicians say it's not that difficult to stay informed about medications and therapies.

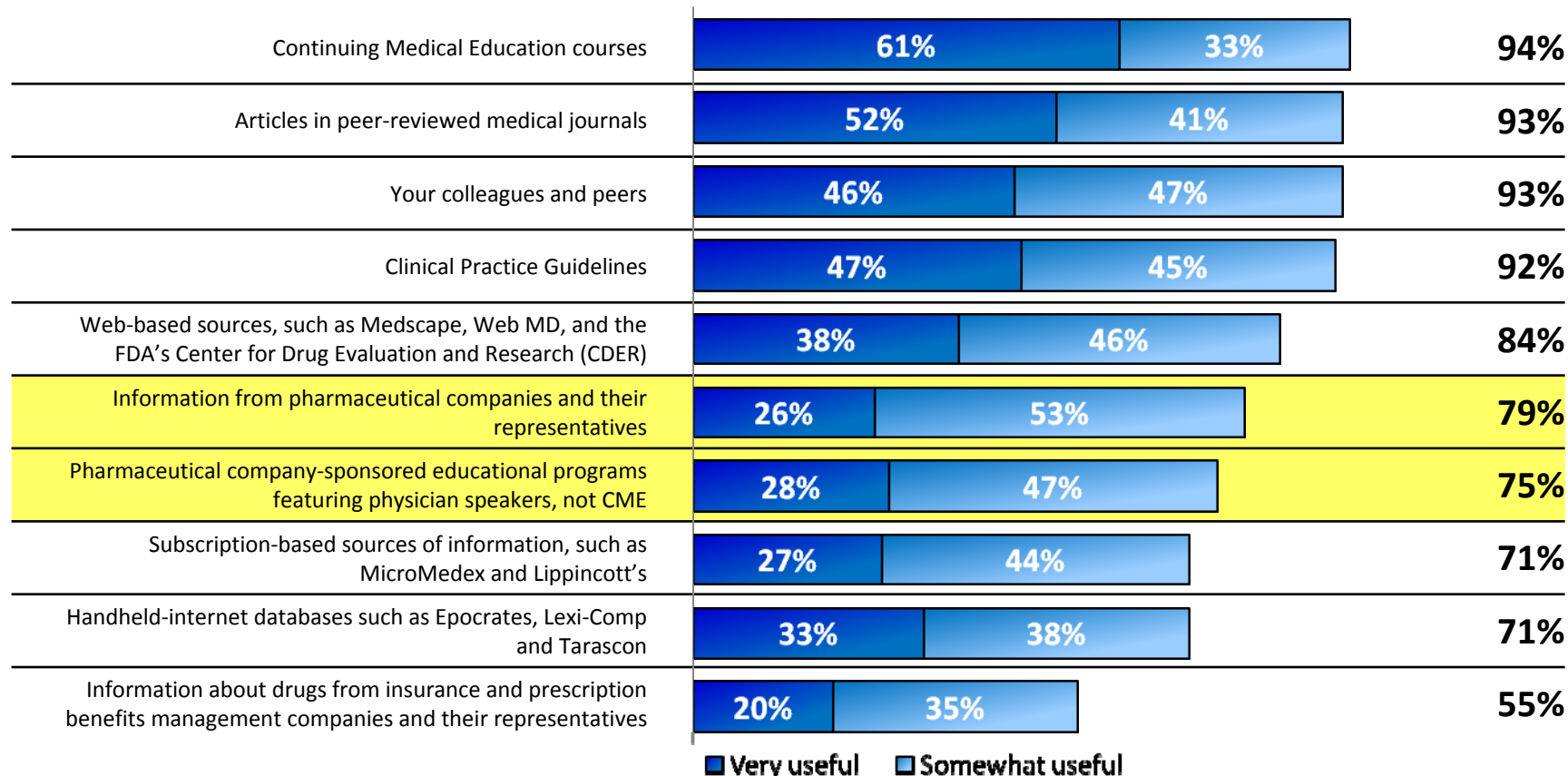
**However, 4 in 10 say it is at least somewhat difficult to stay informed.**

*How difficult is it for physicians to stay informed about medications or therapies to treat particular conditions? Is it very difficult, somewhat difficult, not very difficult, or not difficult at all?*



## Physicians find a range of sources useful for staying informed; nearly 8 in 10 say pharmaceutical companies and their reps are a useful source—over 1 in 4 say very useful.

*I'm going to read you a list of sources where you can find information to stay informed about medications to treat particular conditions. For each one, please tell me how useful that source of information is to you personally—is it very useful, somewhat useful, not too useful, or not at all useful to you personally?*





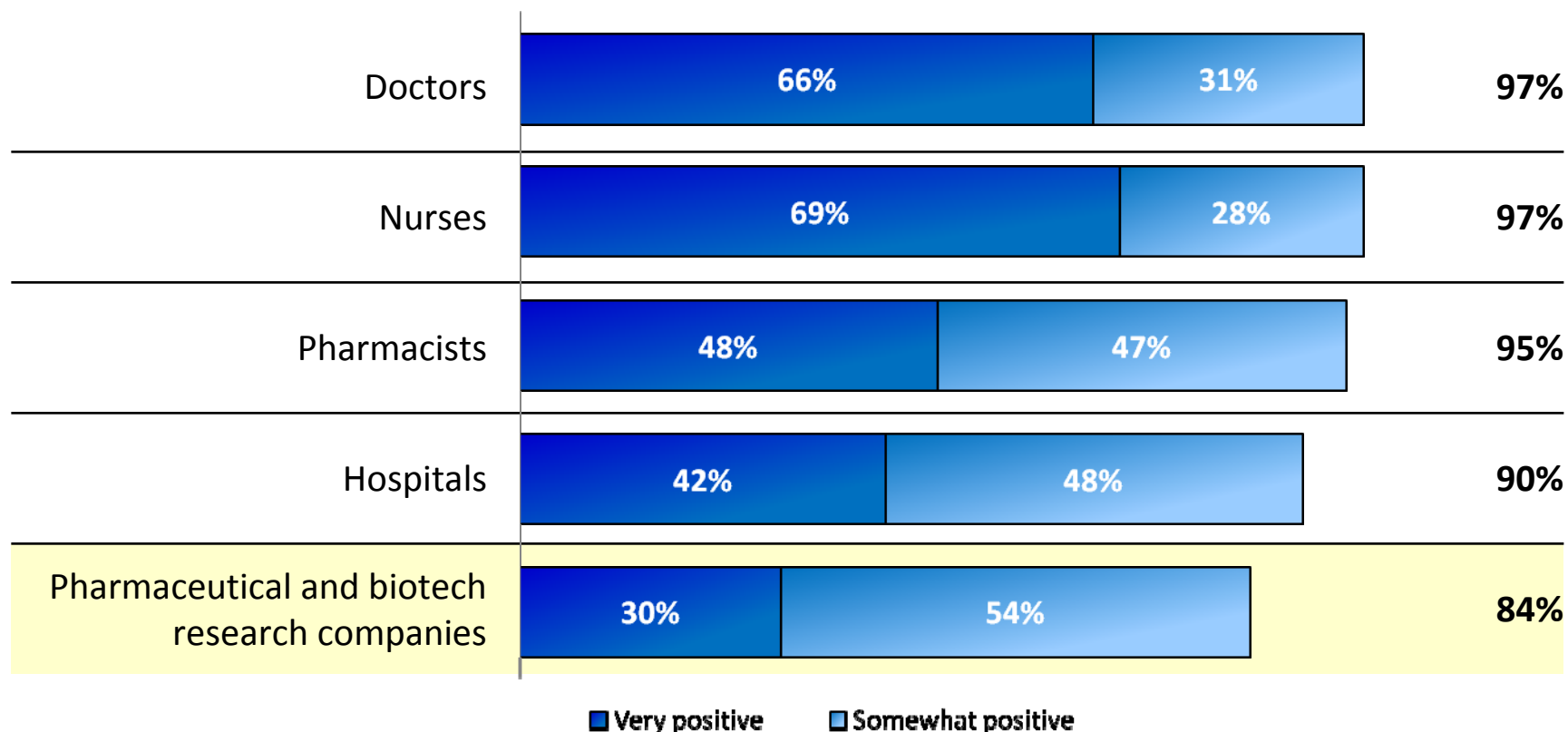
## Finding #4

### **Most physicians recognize and value contributions made by pharmaceutical and biotech companies.**

- More than 8 in 10 said they feel positive about the contribution pharmaceutical and biotech research companies make to healthcare quality—30% have a very positive feeling.
- Similarly, more than 8 in 10 value activities and information by pharmaceutical and biotech research companies. Most say information provided is timely, useful, and reliable. They and interactions offer an opportunity to learn new information and provide feedback.
- Most accept drug samples and say they serve a variety of important uses.

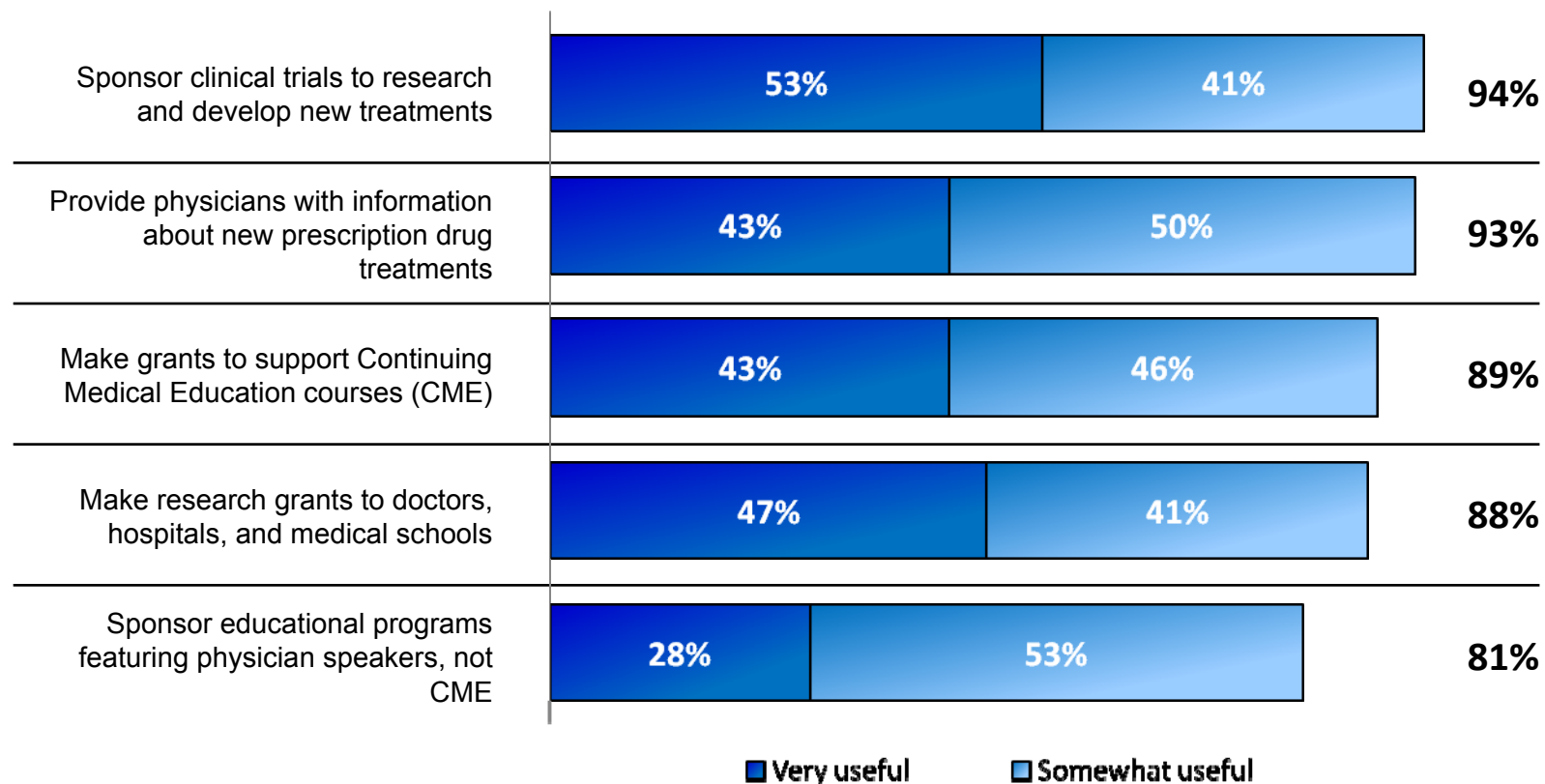
## Most say pharmaceutical and biotech companies make a positive contribution to healthcare quality.

*Would you say your feeling about the contribution of \_\_\_\_\_ to the quality of healthcare today is very positive, somewhat positive, somewhat negative, or very negative?*



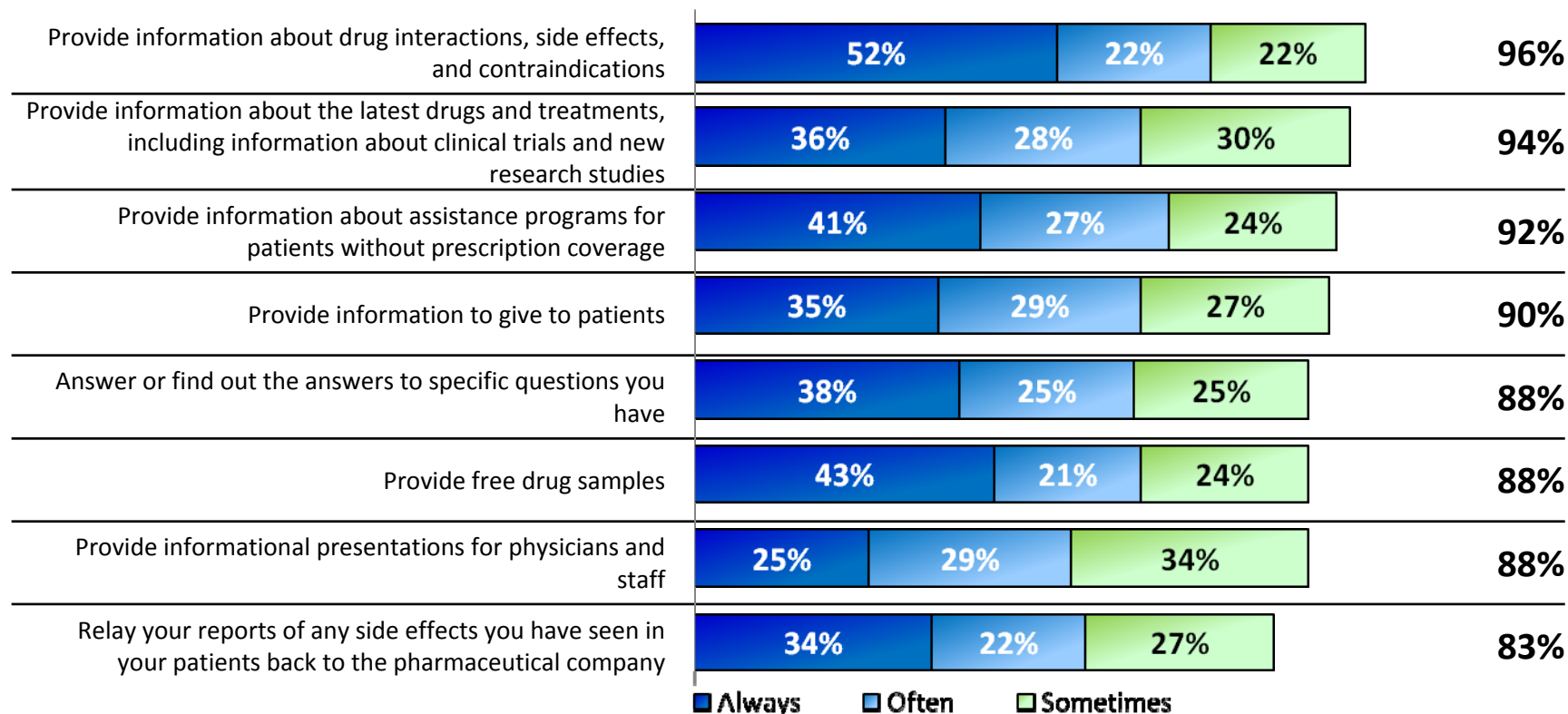
## Most doctors value pharmaceutical and biotech research company activities—particularly clinical trials.

*Next, I'm going to read you a list of some pharmaceutical and biotech research company activities. For each one, tell me how useful that activity is in healthcare today—very useful, somewhat useful, not too useful, or not at all useful. First...*



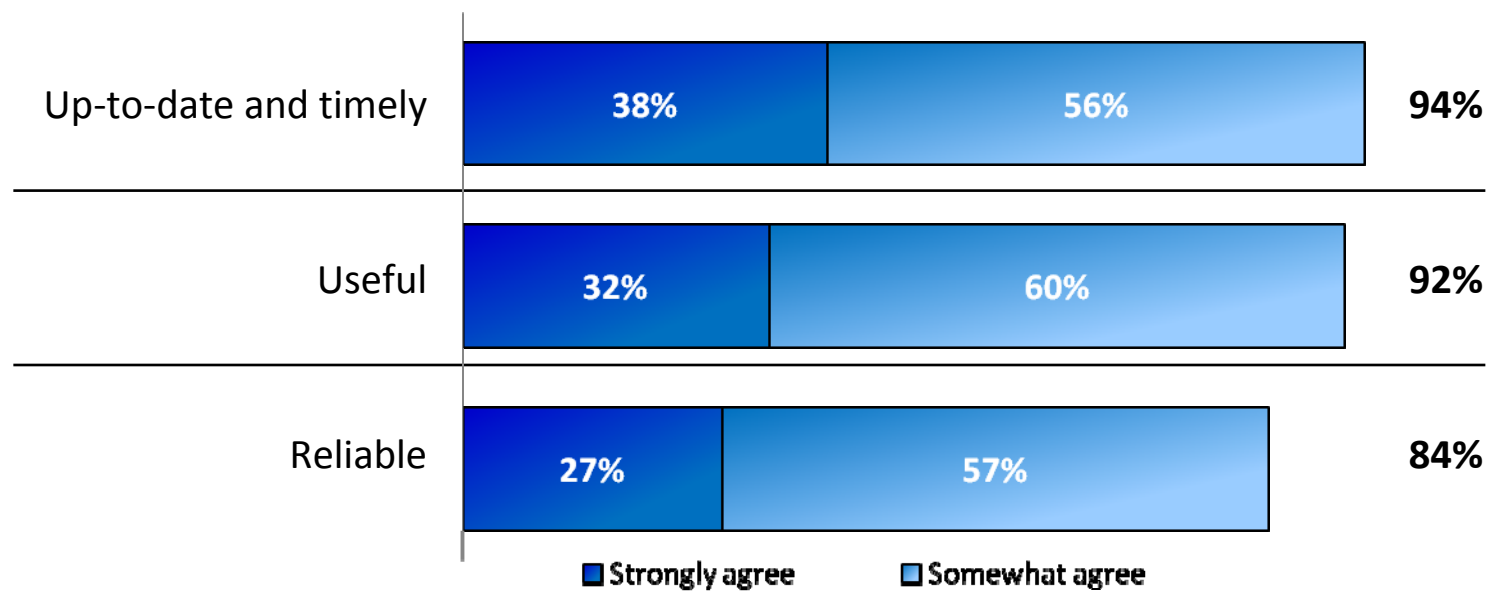
## Most useful from pharmaceutical and biotech companies: Information about drug interactions, side effects, and contraindications; the latest drugs; assistance programs and free samples.

*Now I'm going to read you a list of some things that pharmaceutical and biotech research company representatives do. For each one, tell me if that is always useful, often useful, sometimes useful, rarely useful, or never useful.*



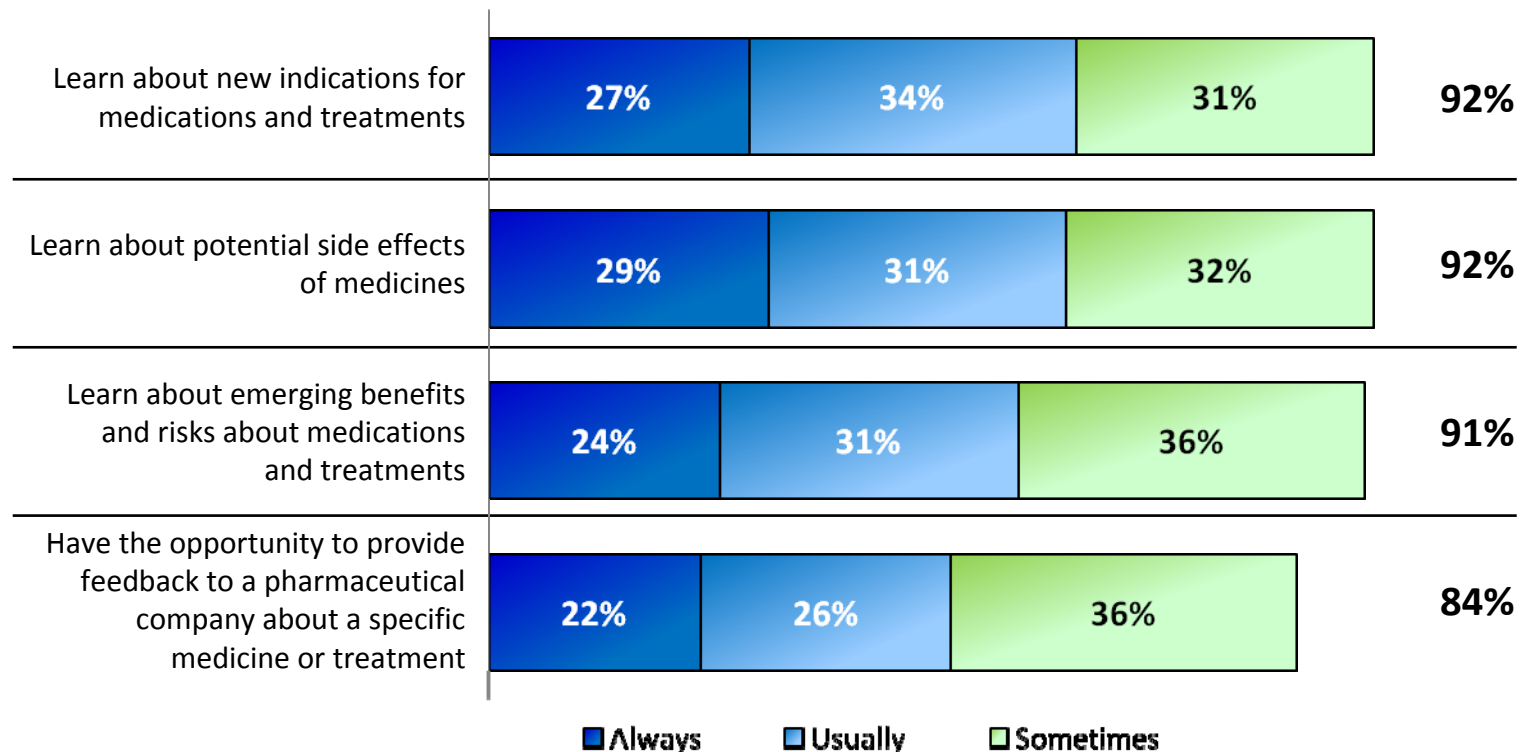
## Large majorities report that information from pharmaceutical company representatives is up-to-date, useful, and reliable.

*I'm going to read you some statements about the information provided by pharmaceutical company representatives.  
For each statement, tell me if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree*



## Most physicians say interactions with pharmaceutical company reps provide an opportunity to learn new information and provide feedback.

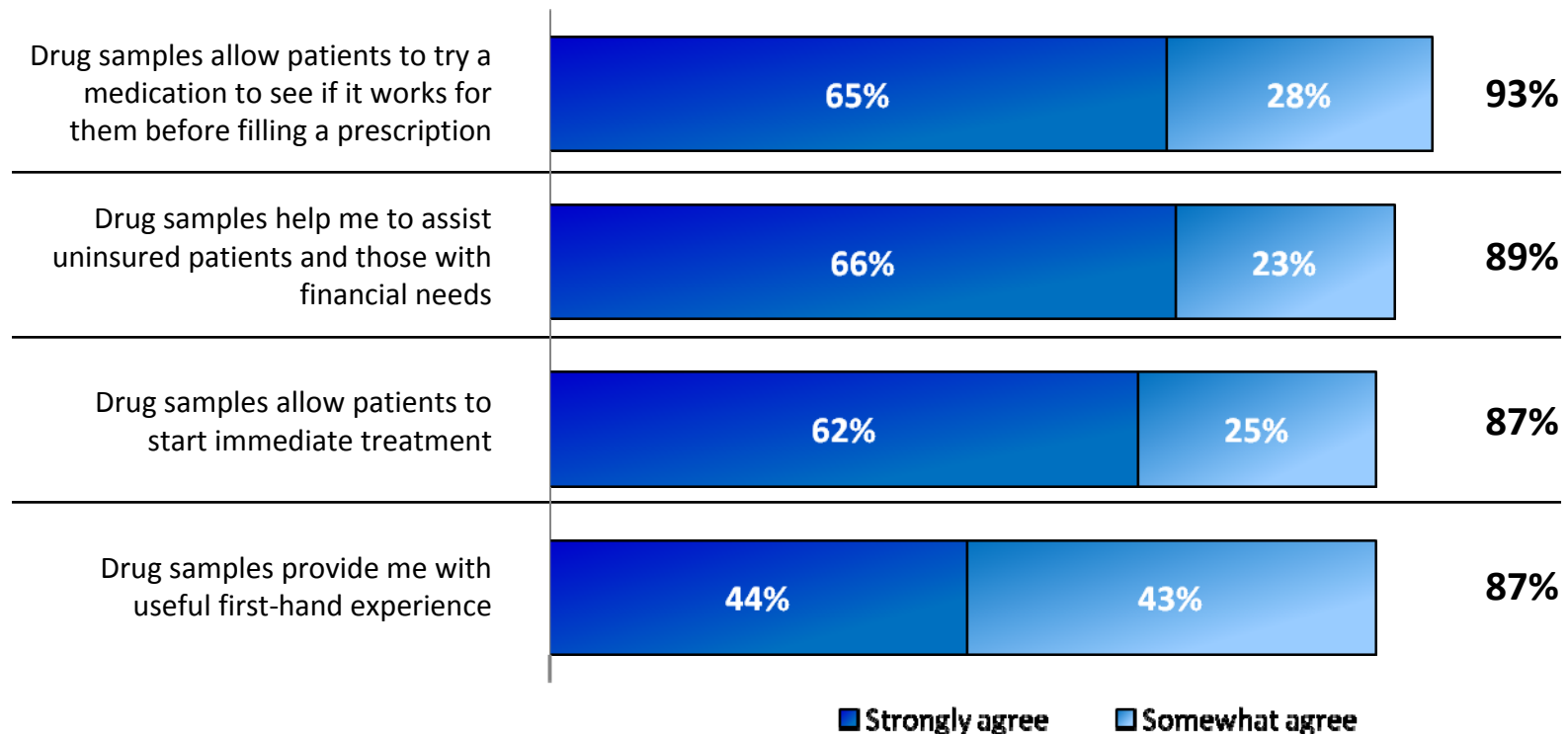
*Now I'm going to read you some outcomes related to direct interactions between physicians and pharmaceutical company representatives. For each one, tell me if that is an outcome you experience always, usually, sometimes, or never. If you've never interacted with a pharmaceutical company representative, just say so. First...*



**Most (74%) say they accept drug samples from representatives.  
Large majorities who accept samples use them to help patients.**

***Drug samples allow patients to try a medication to see if it works and help uninsured patients and those with financial needs.***

*Asked of those who accept drug samples: Now I'm going to read you some statements about drug samples. For each one, tell me if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree. First...*



## Finding #5

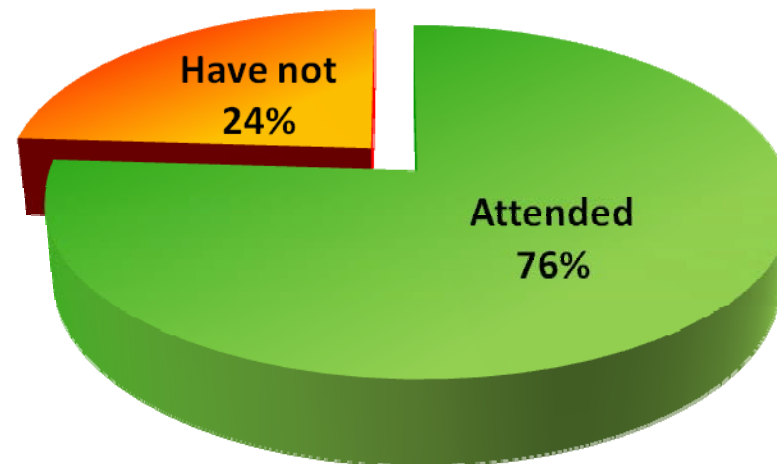
**Pharmaceutical company-sponsored educational programs are well attended. Most say the information provided is up-to-date, useful, and reliable.**

- About 9 in 10 attendees say information provided at educational programs is up-to-date, useful, and reliable.
- More than half of attendees say they often gain knowledge or skills helpful in their practice.
- Those who practice in rural areas (86%) are especially likely to attend.



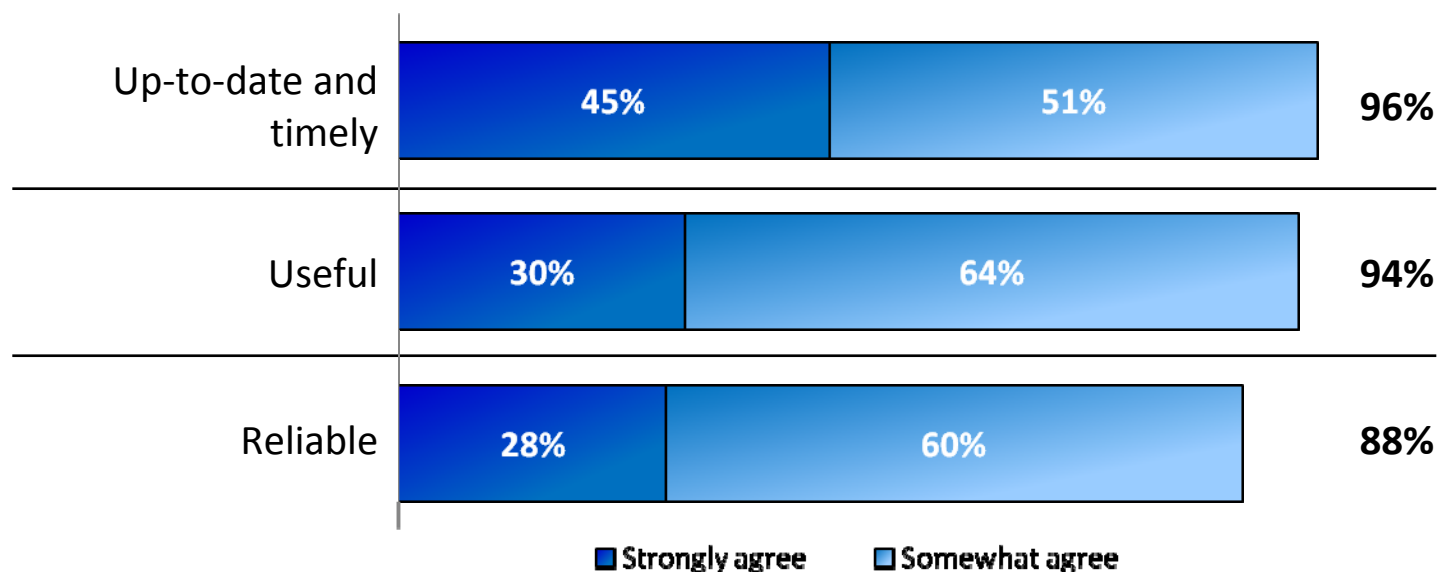
## Three-quarters of physicians report having attended pharmaceutical company-sponsored education programs.

*Have you personally ever attended a pharmaceutical company-sponsored education program featuring a physician speaker (not CME)?*



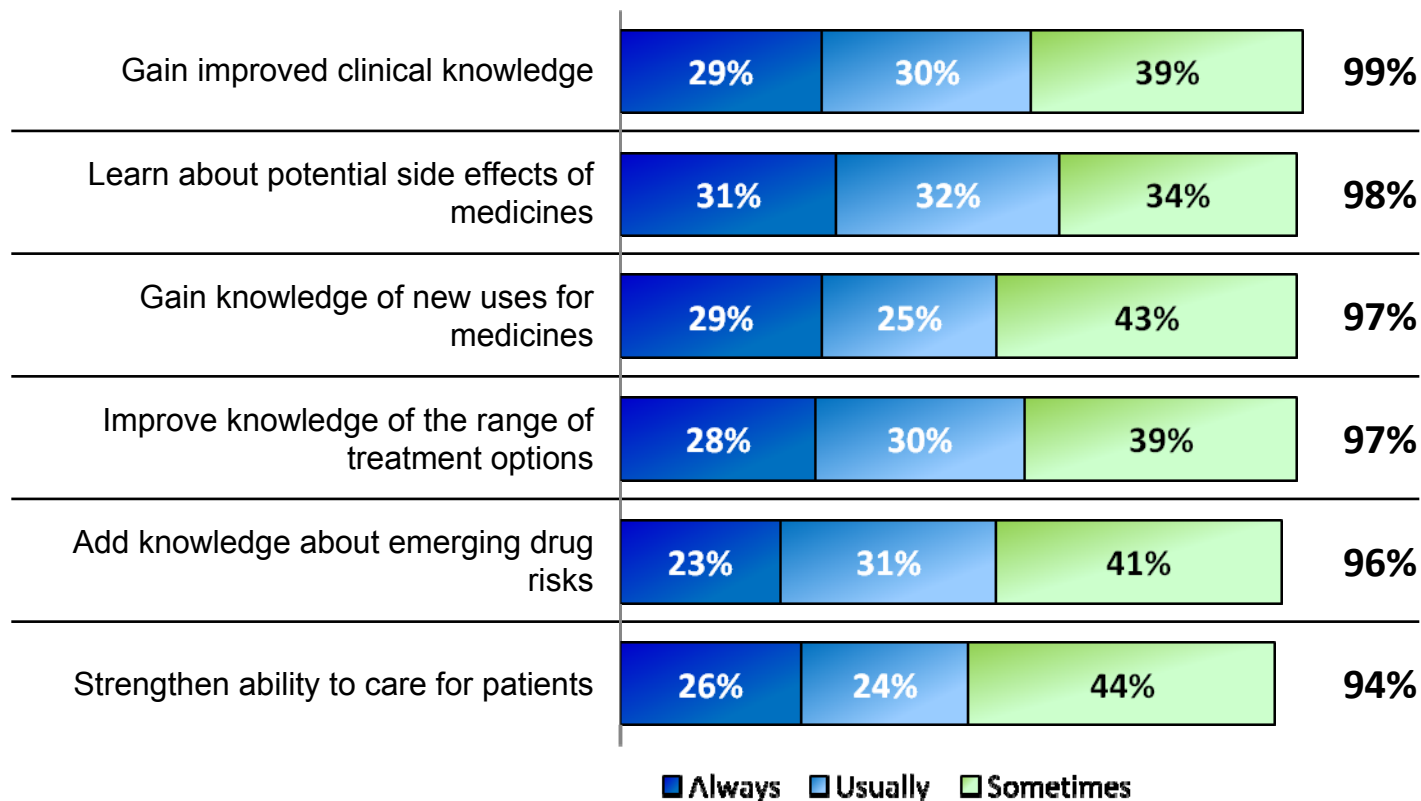
## About 9 in 10 attendees say information provided at educational events is up-to-date, useful, and reliable.

*If attended pharmaceutical company-sponsored educational programs: Now I'm going to read some statements about the information provided by pharmaceutical company-sponsored educational programs featuring physician speakers, not CME. For each one, tell me if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree. First...*



## More than half of educational program attendees say they often gain knowledge or skills helpful in their practice.

*If attended pharmaceutical company-sponsored educational programs: Now I'm going to read you some outcomes related to attending pharmaceutical-company sponsored educational programs featuring physician speakers, not CME. For each one, tell me if that is an outcome you always, usually, sometimes, or never experience. First...*



## Conclusions

1. Physicians consider advances in treatments and cures among what is best in healthcare today.
2. A significant number of physicians find it challenging to stay informed about medicines and treatments. To stay informed they review, compare, and integrate information from many sources.
3. Most physicians find information and activities from pharmaceutical and biotech research companies useful. They value both in-person interactions with company representatives and opportunities to enhance knowledge in sponsored educational programs.
4. Although most physicians appreciate this information, they do not use it in isolation. They prescribe for each of their patients based on their professional judgment and each patient's unique situation.

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