



# **COLORADO STATEWIDE POLL** ON HEALTH CARE QUALITY, ACCESS AND AFFORDABILITY

## *Key Findings*

**AUGUST 2021**

[consumers4qualitycare.org](https://consumers4qualitycare.org)

# INTRODUCTION

Before the pandemic, Consumers for Quality Care (CQC) research showed that Americans were more concerned with health care costs than costs related to retirement, housing, childcare and higher education. The pandemic put even more stress on our nation's health care infrastructure and exposed serious flaws in the system for patients; at the center of the issue is how much Americans are paying for care.

Recent research conducted by ALG Research and Keating Research, conducted on behalf of Consumers for Quality Care, shows voters in Colorado and across the U.S. want elected officials to get those costs down, so that they can feel confident that they have access to the quality health care they want, when they need it.



## SURVEY RESULTS

Voters in ALG Research's recent Colorado poll see affordability as a major issue in the state's health care system. While voters generally believe the health care system is meeting their needs and are wary of making fundamental changes to it, especially as we continue to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, it's clear out-of-pocket costs are having a serious impact. As a result, voters – even some with insurance – are struggling to afford quality care and are racking up medical debt as costs continue to climb.

## COLORADANS' BIGGEST PROBLEM WITH HEALTH CARE: IT'S TOO EXPENSIVE.

In an open-ended question about what word most describes health care in Colorado, the quality of the system is evident as the word “good” is the second-most mentioned. However, “expensive” is the word that dominates their associations with the current health care system.



## MULTIPLE NUMBERS THROUGHOUT THIS DATA POINT TO WHY COST HAS BECOME SUCH AN ISSUE FOR VOTERS:

- Nearly three-quarters of Coloradan voters (73%) agree that the amount they pay for health care seems to be going up every year.
- Nearly 2-in-3 voters (61%) agree that at some point they have struggled to pay a medical bill even while they had health insurance.
- One-quarter (25%) actively have unpaid or overdue medical bills that they are having difficulty paying off. Among both Hispanics and voters who are already struggling financially, this number climbs to 47%.

## VOTERS WANT ELECTED OFFICIALS TO GET THOSE COSTS DOWN, BUT NOT AT THE EXPENSE OF ACCESS TO QUALITY CARE.

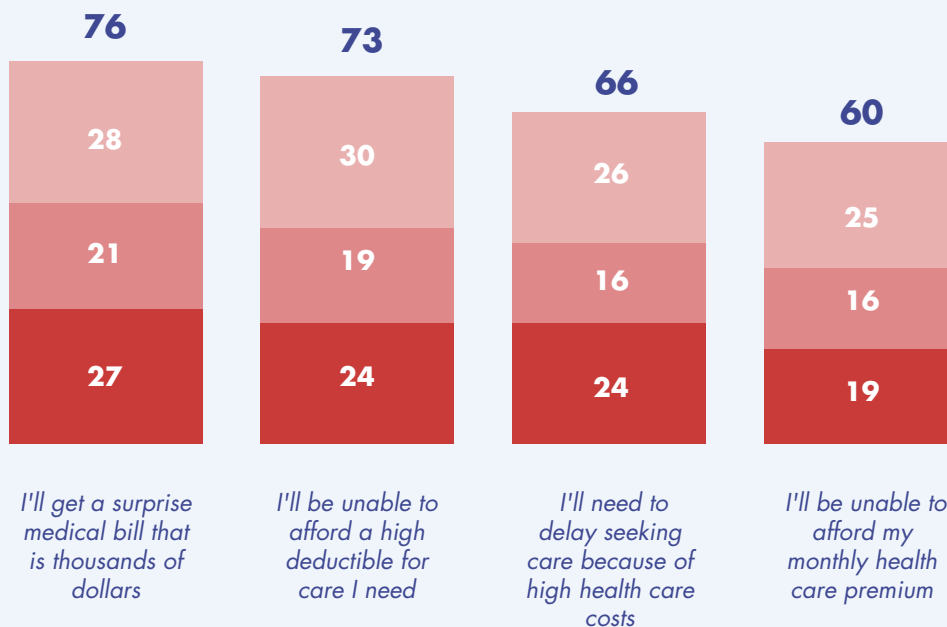
Voters cite cost (54%) as the thing they want their leaders to work on most—more than three times as many choose cost compared to those who choose improving access (15%), or ease-of-navigation (15%), or quality (14%). However, in an open-ended question, roughly the same amount of respondents said “good health care” would mean access to good health care providers (47%) as said it would mean more affordable care (44%).

## THE OUT-OF-POCKET COSTS THAT BOTHER PEOPLE MOST: SURPRISE BILLS, HIGH DEDUCTIBLES, AND MONTHLY PREMIUMS.

Majorities are concerned about getting a surprise bill (76% concerned), being unable to afford a high deductible (73%), and being unable to afford the monthly premium (60%). When it comes to reducing the costs of health care, Colorado voters would most like to see ensuring pre-existing conditions are covered (20%), lower premiums (17%), and lower deductibles (17%).

### HOW CONCERNED ARE YOU WITH EACH OF THE FOLLOWING?

■ *Extremely concerned*   ■ *Very concerned*   ■ *Somewhat concerned*

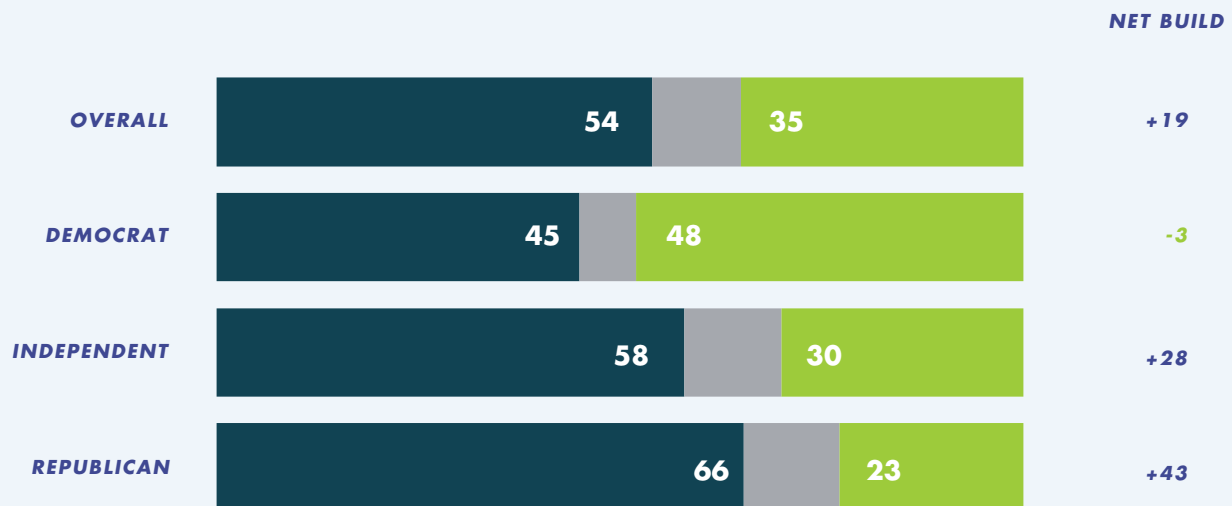


## VOTERS WANT TARGETED, CAREFUL FIXES – ESPECIALLY COMING OUT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC – NOT A GOVERNMENT-RUN SYSTEM.

Most agree we should be thoughtful and cautious making changes as we come out of the COVID-19 pandemic (65% agree), and they are looking to Congress for targeted fixes that build on the current system (54%) rather than fundamentally transforming it (35%). A majority of voters (57%) want to see at least some government involvement in providing coverage, but just 15% overall, including 24% of Democrats, want a fully government-run system.

### THINKING ABOUT CHANGES CONGRESS COULD MAKE TO THE HEALTH CARE SYSTEM, WHICH IS CLOSER TO YOUR VIEW?

Congress should focus more on building upon the current system by making specific fixes, such as reducing out-of-pocket costs
  Don't know
  Congress should focus more on fundamentally transforming the health care system

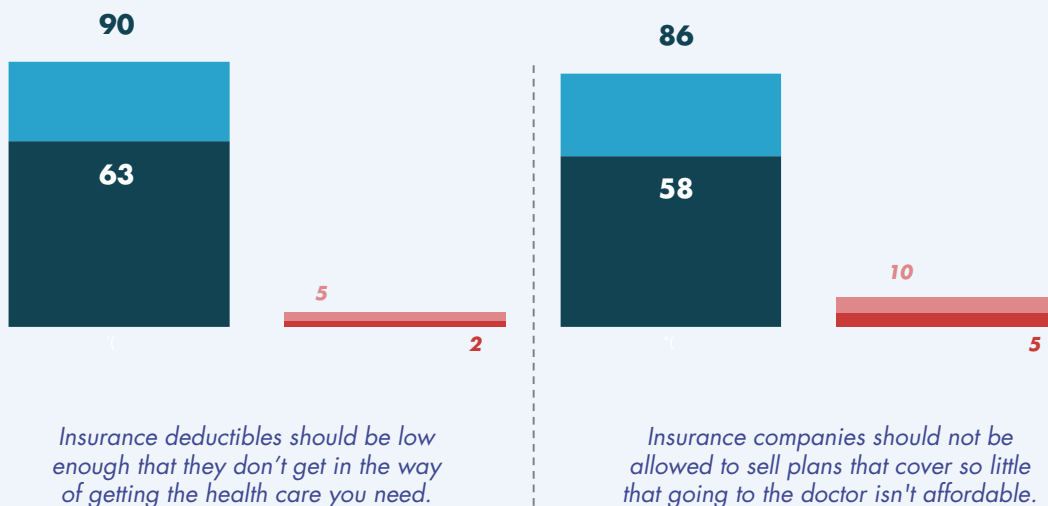


## INSTEAD, LEGISLATION THAT ALIGNS WITH THEIR PRIORITIES WOULD:

- Make sure insurance deductibles are low enough that they don't get in the way of getting quality care (90% agree with this).
- Prevent insurance companies from selling plans that cover so little that it isn't affordable to get care (86% agree with this).

## DO YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS?

■ Strongly agree   ■ Somewhat agree   ■ Strongly disagree   ■ Somewhat disagree



## **A MAJORITY, 6-OF-10 VOTERS SUPPORT THE COLORADO STANDARD HEALTH BENEFIT PLAN ACT**

that was recently passed by the state legislature (62% support / 16% oppose). Democrats overwhelmingly support the plan (80% support / 9% oppose) and it's noteworthy that Republicans are also supportive by a strong 32-point margin (55% support / 23% oppose).

## **BY MORE THAN A 5-TO-1 MARGIN, SENATOR MICHAEL BENNET'S LEGISLATION THAT ALLOWS THE FDA TO ACCELERATE APPROVAL OF BREAKTHROUGH THERAPIES MAKES VOTERS MORE LIKELY TO VOTE FOR HIM**

(42% more likely / 8% less likely / 39% no difference). Among Independents, 34% say the law he passed would make them more likely to vote for him, 48% say it wouldn't make a difference, and just 5% say it would make them less likely.

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### **ABOUT CONSUMERS FOR QUALITY CARE (CQC)**

*Consumers for Quality Care (CQC) is a coalition of advocates and former policymakers working to provide a voice for patients in the health care debate as they demand better care. CQC is led by a board of directors that includes the Honorable Donna Christensen, physician and former Member of Congress; Jim Manley, former senior advisor to Senators Edward Kennedy and Harry Reid; and Jason Resendez, community advocate, and health care strategist.*

**TO LEARN MORE ABOUT CONSUMERS FOR QUALITY CARE  
AND THE ISSUES CONSUMERS ARE EXPERIENCING, VISIT**

**CONSUMERS4QUALITYCARE.ORG**

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### *Key Findings*

*These findings are from an online survey, designed by ALG Research and Keating Research and conducted by ALG Research July 16-21, 2021 among N=603 registered voters in Colorado. Overall results were weighted to reflect the composition of registered voters in the state.*

Consumers for  
**Quality Care**

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