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## **Consumers for Quality Care Releases New Research Showing Concern Among New Jerseyans Over Rising Health Care Costs**

*ALG Research and Bully Pulpit Interactive poll results show strong concerns of health care costs outpacing income*

**NEW JERSEY** — [Consumers for Quality Care](#), a coalition of advocates and former policymakers working to provide a voice for patients in the health care debate as they demand better care, today released key findings from a recent survey of New Jersey voters conducted by [ALG Research](#) and [Bully Pulpit Interactive](#). The poll shows that New Jersey residents remain concerned about the skyrocketing cost of health care, especially in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“The rising cost of health care is a major concern for three-quarters of New Jersey voters,” said **Danny Franklin, Partner, Bully Pulpit Interactive**. “The poll shows that 71 percent of respondents say that their health care costs are rising faster than income levels. That number jumps to 80 percent among those who are struggling financially. As New Jersey families rebuild and recover from the COVID-19 crisis, they are looking for solutions that lower the cost of care. Voters want to see their elected officials prioritize lowering health care costs.”

Nearly a quarter of all respondents currently have unpaid or overdue medical bills. The disparity increases among both voters of color and those struggling financially. Among respondents of color, 35 percent say they currently have unpaid or overdue medical bills, while 43 percent of those struggling financially stated the same.

Addressing the issue of health care affordability remained a priority to respondents. Voters are looking to Congress for a more targeted approach to fixing the current system, rather than completely transforming it. Overall, 61 percent of respondents believe Congress should focus more on building upon the current system by making specific fixes, such as reducing out-of-pocket costs, compared to 26 percent who say Congress should fundamentally transform the health care system and 13 percent who are unsure. However, most also agree that lawmakers should be cautious to make changes coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic, with 71 percent agreeing with this approach.

As for specific solutions, 73 percent of respondents support permitting non-physician health care practitioners to provide services currently administered by physicians. In addition, 58 percent support preventing insurance companies from limiting coverage or increasing premiums or copays for COVID-19 survivors.

“This research confirms what many New Jerseyans have been feeling: the out-of-pocket costs for quality health care are too high,” said the **Hon. Donna Christensen, a founding board member of CQC and the first female physician elected to Congress**. “With about 18% of Americans with medical debt in collections, it is no wonder why consumers are stressed about the cost of going to the hospital or seeing a doctor. Out-of-pocket costs shouldn’t be so high and unpredictable that they discourage people from seeking care, and insurance should act like insurance and be there for patients when they need it.”

In addition to health care cost concerns, the poll revealed that issues such as out-of-pocket costs including surprise bills, high deductibles, and delaying care due to rising health care costs are top of mind with voters. The results show that voters want their elected officials to focus on driving these costs down, with respondents overwhelmingly stating they would like their leaders to work on driving down costs (54 percent) over improvement to quality (15 percent) and access (13 percent).

Other key findings from the poll include:

- **71 percent** of respondents say the cost of health care is rising faster than their income. Among respondents who struggle financially, this number rises to **80 percent**
- **78 percent** of respondents agree the amount they pay for health care seems to be going up every year
- **52 percent** of respondents agree that at some point in their life, they have struggled to pay a medical bill, even while having health insurance
- **72 percent** of respondents are concerned they will receive a surprise medical bill that is thousands of dollars, while **71 percent** are concerned they will be unable to afford a high deductible for the care they need
- **66 percent** of respondents are concerned they will need to delay seeking care due to high health care costs, with **60 percent** noting concerns they will be unable to afford their monthly health care premiums

*The Consumers for Quality Care poll was conducted via an online survey from July 19 to 25, 2021 with 601 total respondents of registered voters across New Jersey. The poll was conducted by ALG Research and Bully Pulpit Interactive. For more information on poll results, visit: [consumers4qualitycare.org/newjersey](https://consumers4qualitycare.org/newjersey).*

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### **About Consumers for Quality Care**

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 <http://www.consumers4qualitycare.org/>.