

DRAFT: For Immediate Release

August 23, 2021

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2021 Consumers for Quality Care Polling: Pennsylvanians Expectations Around Health Care Cost and Quality Coming Out of COVID Pandemic

PENNSYLVANIA – A new survey from ALG Research and Hart Research on behalf of Consumers for Quality Care (CQC) reveals that voters see affordability as a major issue in the state’s health care system and are seeking relief from rising out-of-pocket costs. Read more about the survey [here](#).

“This research confirms what many Pennsylvanians 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.”

The primary issue that Pennsylvanians have with their health care is that it’s too expensive – majorities are concerned about being able to afford high deductibles (74% concerned) or being able to afford their monthly premium (59% concerned). Across the board, cost has become a top-of-mind issue for Pennsylvania voters:

- Three-in-four voters (75%) agree that the amount they pay for health care seems to be going up every year.
- A majority (58%) agree that at some point they have struggled to pay a medical bill even while they had health insurance.
- Nearly a quarter (23%) actively have unpaid or overdue medical bills that they are having difficulty paying off. Among voters who are already struggling financially, this number climbs to 44%.

“This poll confirms Pennsylvanians have major concerns about rising health care costs,” said Fred Yang of Hart Research, “outweighing concerns about costs related to retirement, housing, childcare and college. While a vast majority express concerns about rising costs, they want reforms within the current health care system, which the vast majority are satisfied with. Thus, 63% of voters are looking for targeted fixes rather than sweeping changes.”

Though cost continues to be a priority that Pennsylvanians want elected officials to address (50% cite cost as the thing they want their leaders to work on most), coming out of the pandemic, voters are seeking targeted, careful fixes to the health care system. Most agree we

should be cautious making changes as we come out of the COVID-19 pandemic (72% agree), and they are looking to Congress for targeted fixes that build on the current system (63%) rather than fundamentally transforming it (27%):

- Nearly all (93%) of Pennsylvanians want policy changes to ensure that insurance deductibles are low enough that they don't get in the way of getting quality care.
- Separately, 87% agree that there need to be changes made to prevent insurance companies from selling plans that cover so little that it isn't affordable to get care.

Coming out of the pandemic, a majority of Pennsylvanians (65%) are concerned that COVID-19 survivors who develop serious health problems may have to pay a greater share of their health care costs or may not be covered at all because they contracted COVID. That number jumps to 77% in the nearly 1-in-6 Pennsylvania households where someone contracted COVID-19.

This new ALG/Hart Research poll was conducted from July 15-July 19, 2021. The online survey sampled 600 registered voters in Pennsylvania. Overall results were weighted to reflect the composition of registered voters in the state.

More information can be found at consumers4qualitycare.org/Pennsylvania.

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