



# WASHINGTON STATEWIDE POLL ON HEALTH CARE QUALITY, ACCESS AND AFFORDABILITY

*Key Findings*

AUGUST 2021

[consumers4qualitycare.org](http://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 EMC Research, conducted on behalf of Consumers for Quality Care, shows voters in Washington 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 and EMC Research's recent Washington 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 those with insurance – are struggling to afford quality care and are racking up medical debt as costs continue to climb.

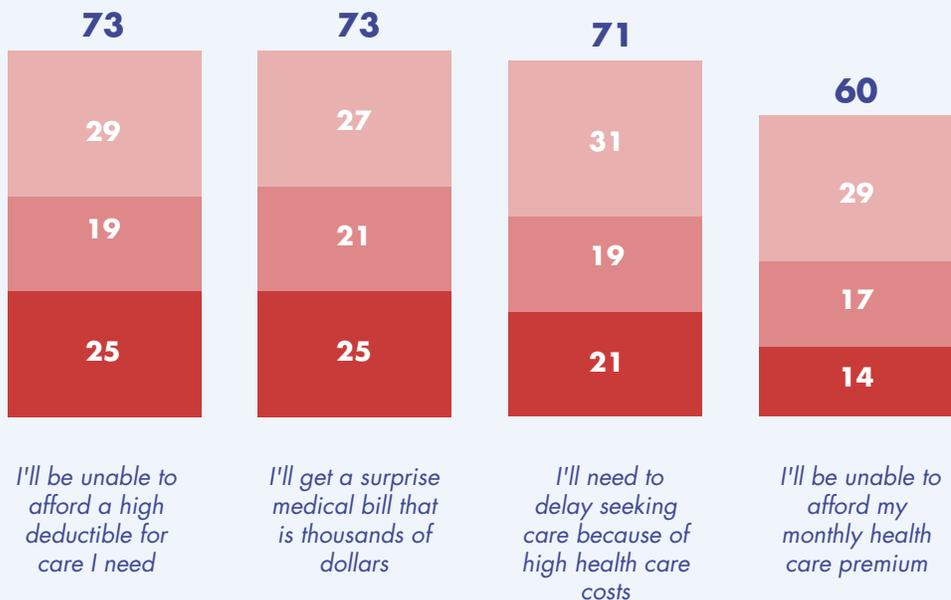


**THE OUT-OF-POCKET COSTS THAT BOTHER PEOPLE MOST: HIGH DEDUCTIBLES, SURPRISE BILLS, AND HIGH PREMIUMS.**

Majorities are concerned about being able to afford high deductibles (73% concerned), getting a surprise medical bill (73%), or being able to afford their monthly premium (60%). When it comes to reducing the specific costs of health care, Washington voters would most like to see guaranteed coverage for pre-existing conditions (21%), lower prescription medication costs (19%), and lower premiums (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 cautious making changes as we come out of the COVID-19 pandemic (71% 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 (67%) want to see at least some government involvement in providing coverage, but just 17% of voters overall, including 25% 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

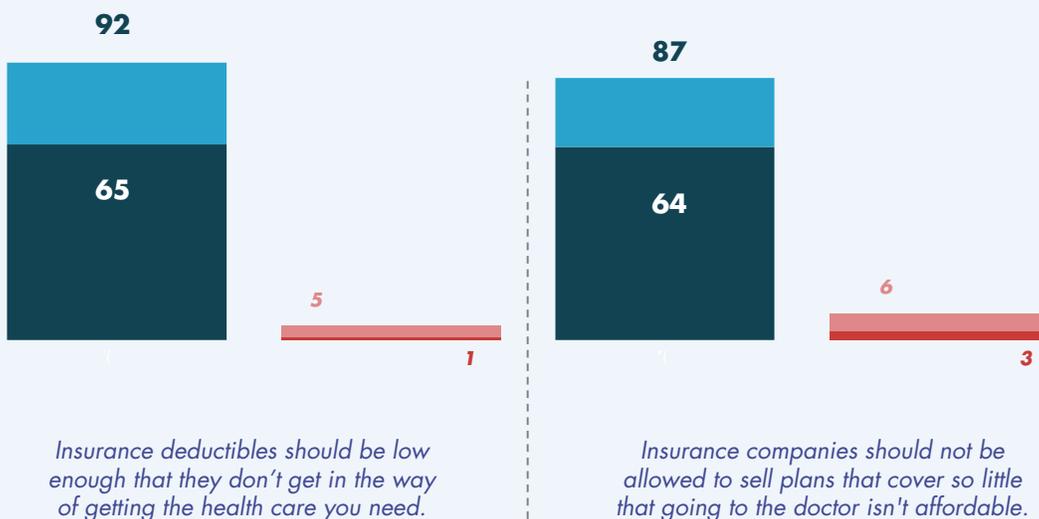


## INSTEAD, LEGISLATION THAT ALIGNS WITH THEIR PRIORITIES WOULD:

- Make sure insurance deductibles are low enough that they don't get in the way of getting quality care (92% agree with this).
- Prevent insurance companies from selling plans that cover so little that it isn't affordable to get care (87% agree with this).
- Allow some participation of private interests while limiting insurance company profits (80% believe private companies shouldn't make as much off of providing medical care as they currently do).
- Publicly finance the cost of health insurance premiums for everyone in Washington State while still allowing individuals to choose whether they want private insurance or the public option (64% support).

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

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



**ALTHOUGH THIS SURVEY WAS CONDUCTED IN THE MIDST OF A ONCE IN A LIFETIME PANDEMIC AND ECONOMIC CRISIS, VOTERS ARE SKEPTICAL OF LOWERING THE STANDARDS OF HEALTH INSURANCE PLANS.**

A plurality of Washington voters (41%) want insurance plans that don't meet Affordable Care Act standards to be banned entirely, 15% are ok with them as a short-term bridge of up to three months, and 27% believe they should be generally allowed. This is seen through a partisan lens; a majority of Democrats (56%) and a plurality of Independents (34%) want these plans banned. Among Republicans, a plurality (46%) say these plans should be allowed, but even a quarter of Republicans (23%) want to ban these plans.

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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 EMC Research and conducted by ALG Research July 19-25, 2021 among N=600 registered voters in Washington. Overall results were weighted to reflect the composition of registered voters in the state.*

Consumers for  
**Quality Care**

**ALG**research

**EMC**  
research