



Health Care Experience

Ipsos survey conducted on behalf of Consumers for Quality Care

Highlights

- Americans are acutely worried about paying for health care – even more than they worry about costs associated with retirement, college, housing, or child care.
- What people pay is the main pain point: Americans are more concerned about premiums, deductibles, and co-pays than they are about access to care or quality of care.
- When asked who is responsible for their out-of-pocket costs, Americans mostly blame insurance companies, pharmaceutical companies, and the federal government.
- Although the majority of Americans are able to get health care when they need it, there are troubling indicators about quality and access.
- Regardless of political persuasion, Americans share common frustrations about their health care, and have shared priorities for change.

Findings

Americans are acutely worried about paying for health care. When asked whether they are concerned about a wide range of life expenses, Americans put health care costs at the top of the list. Americans say they are most concerned about the cost of health care (85%), followed by retirement (73%) and higher education (73%). They are much less worried about the cost of housing (66%) and child care (49%).

Americans are more concerned about premiums, deductibles, and co-pays than they are about access to care or quality of care. When asked about their top concerns about health care specifically, Americans are more worried about topics revolving around cost of care than those around access to care. Americans' top concerns are about the cost of their health insurance premiums (28% - most important and 18% - 2nd most important) and their out-of-pocket costs for health care (26% - most important and 27% 2nd most important). One in four Americans list out-of-pocket health care costs, like co-pays and deductibles, as their top concern (26%), with 27% of respondents listing it as their second most important concern.

When asked who is responsible for their out-of-pocket costs, Americans mostly blame insurance companies, pharmaceutical companies, and the federal government. Most Americans believe their out-of-pocket expenses for health care have increased in the past two years (55%). When asked who is responsible for the cost of health care, Americans were more likely to say insurance and pharmaceutical companies are responsible for health care costs. About half of Americans say health insurance companies are responsible for the cost paid out-of-pocket for health care (47%) and about two in five say the pharmaceutical companies are responsible (43%). More than one-third of Americans say the Federal government is responsible for the cost paid out-of-pocket for health care.



Although the majority of Americans are able to get health care when they need it, there are troubling indicators about quality and access. While they trust their doctors, Americans are simultaneously concerned that doctors have to factor the quality of their patient's insurance coverage into the treatment options they recommend. The vast majority of Americans trust that their doctor is putting their medical needs above all other considerations (87%), but there is also substantial concern that insurance is affecting care. Specifically, two-thirds of Americans think their doctor factors in their insurance type (64%) when deciding treatments, and 59% say their doctor's treatment options are limited by what their insurance will cover.

African American and Hispanic Americans are statistically significantly more likely than white Americans to say their doctor factors in their insurance type when deciding how to treat them (72% of African American, 75% of Hispanic, and 61% of white) and that the doctor's options are limited by their insurance coverage (65% of African American, 66% of Hispanic, and 57% of white). Americans with Medicaid are most likely to feel their doctor is limited by their insurance (76%); even more than uninsured Americans (68%).

Most Americans say health coverage is not as good today as it used to be. 57% say more health care services were covered by insurance in the past, 56% say more prescription drugs were covered in the past, and 54% say more doctors accepted their insurance in the past.

Overall, Americans struggle more with understanding different aspects of their care and the cost than getting the appointments they need. Two in five Americans say it is very or somewhat difficult to understand their medical bills (38%) or get answers from their insurance company (38%), while only one in ten Americans say that it is difficult to get routine doctor's appointments (14%), get prescription medications (14%), or have access to emergency care (13%).

One in six Americans (17%) report having at least one occurrence within the last two years when they needed health care but were not able to receive it. These Americans are overwhelmingly on Medicaid or uninsured (74%).

Regardless of political affiliation, Americans share common frustrations about their health care, and have shared priorities for change. Regardless of political leaning, Americans rate the health care quality in the US similarly. Republicans (49%), Democrats (51%), and Independents (48%) are all equally likely to rate the quality of health care as 'good'. Similarly, all three groups are equally likely to rate the quality of health insurance coverage as 'good' -- Republicans (43%), Democrats (42%), and Independents (40%).

Americans who rate the quality of health care as poor or very poor also say their out-of-pocket expenses are increasing (62%).

Americans with private insurance (59%) are most likely to say that their out-of-pocket health care spending has increased, outweighing uninsured Americans (51%).



Americans are in favor of making changes to improve the health care system (72%). Two-fifths of Americans are in favor of big changes (40%) and one-third support small changes (33%). Regardless of party, Americans are more likely to vote for a candidate who supports disclosure of costs by pharmaceutical companies, hospitals, and health insurers (83%), lowering out-of-pocket expenses for health care (81%) and passing pharmaceutical discounts onto consumers (81%).

The vast majority of Americans (85%) want increased predictability when it comes to their out-of-pocket costs for health care. To that end, they want more transparency around the items that have a direct impact on their access and out-of-pocket expenses, like the medicines and doctors covered by insurance (94%), how pharmaceutical companies price prescription drugs (93%), and out-of-pocket costs for hospital visits (92%).

Partisan divisions on health care arise in the context of the Affordable Care Act (ACA). Democrats support improving and funding the ACA (77% compared to 15% of Republicans), while Republicans are more likely to support repealing the ACA (68% compared to 28% of Democrats). Independents are evenly split about the ACA (52% in favor and 48% against).

While there is a clear partisan split on the ACA, Americans are not as widely divided over a single-payer health care system. Fifty-nine percent of Democrats would vote for a candidate who supports single-payer, as would 44% of Republicans and 53% of Independents.



About the Study

These are findings from an Ipsos survey conducted March 13-25, 2018 on behalf of Consumers for Quality Care. For the survey, a sample of 1,700 adults age 18+ from the continental U.S., Alaska and Hawaii was interviewed via phone in English.

The sample for this study was developed through random digital dialing. Ipsos uses fixed sample targets, unique to each study, in drawing sample. After a sample has been obtained from the Ipsos panel, Ipsos calibrates respondent characteristics to be representative of the U.S. Population using standard procedures such as raking-ratio adjustments. The source of these population targets is U.S. Census 2013 American Community Survey data. The sample drawn for this study reflects fixed sample targets on demographics. Post-hoc weights were made to the population characteristics on gender, age, race/ethnicity, region, and education.

All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error and measurement error. Where figures do not sum to 100, this is due to the effects of rounding. The precision of Ipsos phone polls is measured using a credibility interval. In this case, the poll has a credibility interval of plus or minus 2.7 percentage points for all respondents. Ipsos calculates a design effect (DEFF) for each study based on the variation of the weights, following the formula of Kish (1965). This study had a credibility interval adjusted for design effect of the following ($n=1,700$, $DEFF=1.5$, adjusted Confidence Interval=2.7).

For more information on this news release, please contact:

Jennifer Berg
Senior Account Manager, U.S.
Ipsos Public Affairs
+1 312 526-4224
jennifer.berg@ipso.com



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