



News

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Americans Are Stressed Out Over Healthcare Costs This Enrollment Season *New research delves into the healthcare issues and concerns among U.S. adults*

LOS ANGELES – Oct. 25, 2018 – Sixty-two percent of U.S. adults identify healthcare costs as a significant source of stress. One in five (17%) adults cannot afford health insurance co-pays, deductibles, and out-of-pocket expenses, including prescription drugs, according to a new study released today, *Stressed Out: Americans and Healthcare*, by nonprofit Transamerica Center for Health Studies® (TCHS). These alarming findings come to light as people across the country prepare for open enrollment, whether through employer-based health insurance, individual insurance, or health insurance Exchanges.

"Health insurance is the means to receive quality healthcare. Our survey findings underscore that the most pressing issues in healthcare today are affordability and access," said Hector De La Torre, Executive Director of TCHS.

As part of its [Sixth Annual Healthcare Survey](#), TCHS surveyed 3,604 adults ages 18-64 to understand the current state of healthcare in the United States. The survey was conducted online by the Harris Poll in August 2018. The survey findings identify ways in which the current system is out of sync with the needs of U.S. consumers. Key findings include:

- **Consumers experience rising healthcare costs but aren't preparing for additional costs.** One in three U.S. adults indicate they have seen an increase in health insurance premiums (35 percent) and out-of-pocket expenses (31 percent). Forty-eight percent of adults said they received an unexpected or surprise medical bill they thought would be covered by insurance. Amid rising costs, relatively few (31 percent) report saving for healthcare expenses.
- **Out-of-pocket costs compromise financial security.** Sixty-nine percent of US adults are paying for significant healthcare expenses through a variety of means, including savings (35 percent), credit cards (28 percent), disposable income (24 percent), loans from family (8 percent), or a 401k withdrawal (6 percent). Only 27 percent indicate they do not have significant healthcare expenses.
- **Cost leads to lack of insurance.** Over three in five (61 percent) of the uninsured say obtaining health insurance is too expensive and they cannot afford it.
- **Pre-existing conditions are a concern for many.** The most often cited "biggest fear" among U.S. adults (35 percent) regarding health policy/law is losing their healthcare insurance because of a pre-existing condition. Overall, 62 percent report having a chronic illness.
- **Consumers favor the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and specific provisions of healthcare policy.** Forty-one percent have a positive view of the ACA and 30 percent have a negative view. However, 56 percent do not believe the government should require (mandate) healthcare coverage. The top three inclusions U.S. adults would like to see in healthcare policy include pre-existing condition

coverage (45 percent), annual out-of-pocket limits (35 percent), and expansion of Medicare for seniors (34 percent). Amid reports of high prescription drug costs, 79 percent feel pharmaceutical companies are responsible.

- **There are noticeable disparities in health insurance coverage.** Latinos (69 percent) are the groups least able to afford health insurance and are by far the most uninsured (26 percent).

“By doing their homework now, Americans may avoid unexpected out-of-pocket medical costs later,” said De La Torre. “It can really pay off to take extra steps to both protect your health and fully understand your insurance coverage, which is especially important for those with pre-existing conditions.”

In addition to offering detailed survey findings for 2018, *Stressed Out: Americans and Healthcare*, offers a high level trend analysis that illustrates the changing healthcare landscape. Please visit TCHS at www.transamericacenterforhealthstudies.org for more information, resources, news and perspectives. Follow TCHS on [Facebook](#) and Twitter [@TCHS](#).

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About The Transamerica Center for Health Studies

[Transamerica Center for Health Studies](#)® (TCHS) – a division of [Transamerica Institute](#)® (TI) – is focused on empowering consumers and employers to achieve the best value and protection from their health coverage, as well as the best outcomes in their personal health and wellness. TCHS engages with the American public through national surveys, its website, research findings and consumer guidance. TCHS also collaborates with healthcare experts and organizations that are equally focused on health coverage and personal health and wellness. TI is a nonprofit, private foundation funded by contributions from Transamerica Life Insurance Company and its affiliates, as well as unaffiliated third parties. None of the contributors are major medical insurers.

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About the Sixth Annual Nationwide Consumer Healthcare Survey

The results of the study – conducted by The Harris Poll via a self-administered online survey among 3,604 US adults (ages 18-64) in August 2018 – represent the sixth annual survey from Transamerica Center for Health Studies. Figures for education, age by gender, region and household income were weighted where necessary to align them with the population of US residents ages 18 to 64, then separately by race, and combined into a total General Population sample. A separate weight was created for US residents ages 18-64 who are currently uninsured, as well as for age and ethnicity. An additional weight was created for Millennials and Generation Z to ensure representativeness. A full methodology is available in the report.