

Health and health care in Minnesota

A public opinion poll

A statewide survey was conducted by Wilder Research for the Bush Foundation as part of the Citizen Solutions project. Survey questions were developed from themes that emerged from a series of in-depth community conversations held in 2012 in which citizens shared their concerns about and ideas for improving health care in the state. The survey also asked about policy issues emerging from the bipartisan Minnesota Health Care Reform Task Force.

A representative sample of 603 Minnesotans were surveyed. This summary report describes the key findings from the survey.

Most Minnesotans want to take more responsibility for creating and managing their own health and wellness, but about one-third do not feel supported by the health care system to do so.

I want to manage my own health care



I know how to navigate the health care system to manage my own health care



I have the information that I need to make choices about health care treatment options



I feel supported by the health care system to take responsibility for my own health and health care decisions



■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree

Minnesotans want support in maintaining their health, a focus on prevention, and incentives in the health care system to encourage healthy behavior.

The vast majority of Minnesotans believe that individuals have a responsibility to practice a healthy lifestyle with diet and exercise in order to lower health care costs. In general, Minnesotans report practicing healthy behaviors. A majority say they eat healthy food (70%), get enough physical activity (65%), get routine preventative care (67%), and follow doctor’s orders (89%) “all of the time” or “most of the time.”

Minnesotans also want incentives to promote healthy behavior – 91 percent say they would like their health insurance to create incentives for healthy behavior, and 77 percent say that they should pay less for insurance if they practice healthy behaviors.

Minnesotans say they want the health care system to focus more on prevention and less on treatment of chronic conditions. They also want their health care provider to tell them about all available health care treatment options, including alternative therapies.

Individual responsibility

Individuals have a responsibility to practice a healthy lifestyle with diet and exercise to lower health care costs



Minnesotans who practice healthy behaviors such as eating well, getting plenty of exercise, and getting preventative care should pay less for their health insurance than those who do not



Health care system support

I want my health insurance to create incentives for healthy behavior



I want my health care provider to inform me about all available options for my care, including alternative therapies such as acupuncture, massage, or chiropractic care



I want the health care system to focus more on prevention and less on treatment of chronic conditions



■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree

When asked what individuals can do to improve health, respondents said:

“Healthy eating. People are eating too much. King-sized pop, and too much junk food. They should stress good eating habits.”

“Making better decisions about your life and maintaining a healthy lifestyle.”

“Take personal responsibility. Make healthy choices in terms of diet and exercise.”

When asked what the health care system can do, respondents said:

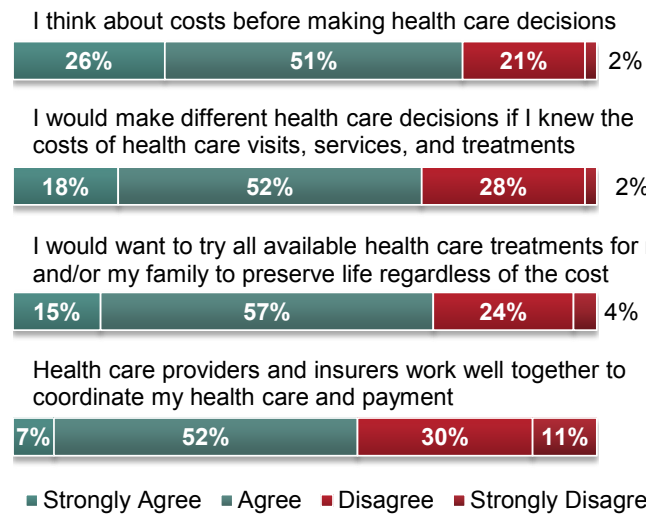
“Focus on prevention. Promote healthy living rather than fixing people when they get sick.”

“Tell people how to live healthier lives. Do more about informing people. They hand out prescriptions more than information.”

“They should make systems and policies more easily understood.”

Health care costs are a significant concern for Minnesotans, and most say they would make different health care decisions if they had more information about the costs.

Over three-quarters of Minnesotans think about costs before making treatment decisions, and 70 percent said they would make different health care decisions if they knew the cost. However, 72 percent also say they want all available treatment options regardless of cost.



When asked what they think is the biggest challenge for Minnesotans in getting needed health care, over half (53%) of Minnesotans named affordability or the cost of care. The next most frequent responses given were a lack of focus on prevention (19%) and the system is too confusing (16%).

A comment from a respondent:

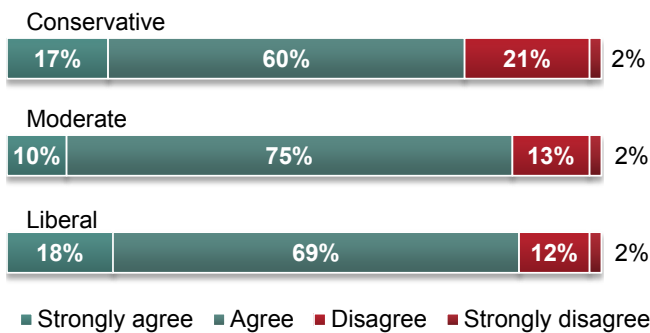
“If people could afford to go to the doctor, the treatments, and medications, I think more people would be able to get the treatment and medications they need when they get sick.”

Minnesotans are in general agreement with two emerging policy ideas.

While there are some differences by self-identified political affiliation, the majority of Minnesotans (regardless of their political perspective) support two policy considerations emerging from the bipartisan Minnesota Health Care Reform Task Force.

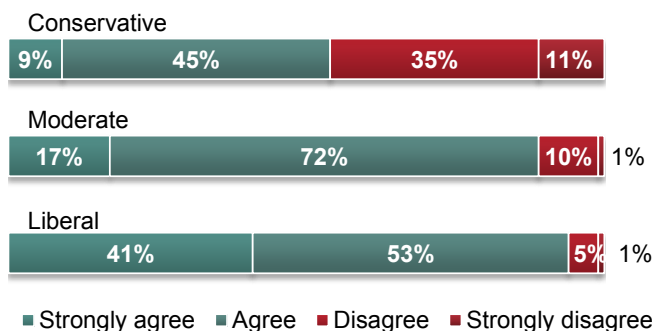
Overall, 8 out of 10 Minnesotans (81%) are comfortable with providers and insurers sharing health and clinical data for the purposes of better care coordination.

I am comfortable with providers and insurance companies sharing my health and clinical data for the purpose of better care coordination.



Overall, more than three-quarters of Minnesotans (76%) think that, if available, the State of Minnesota should accept new federal dollars to provide health care coverage for low-income Minnesotans.

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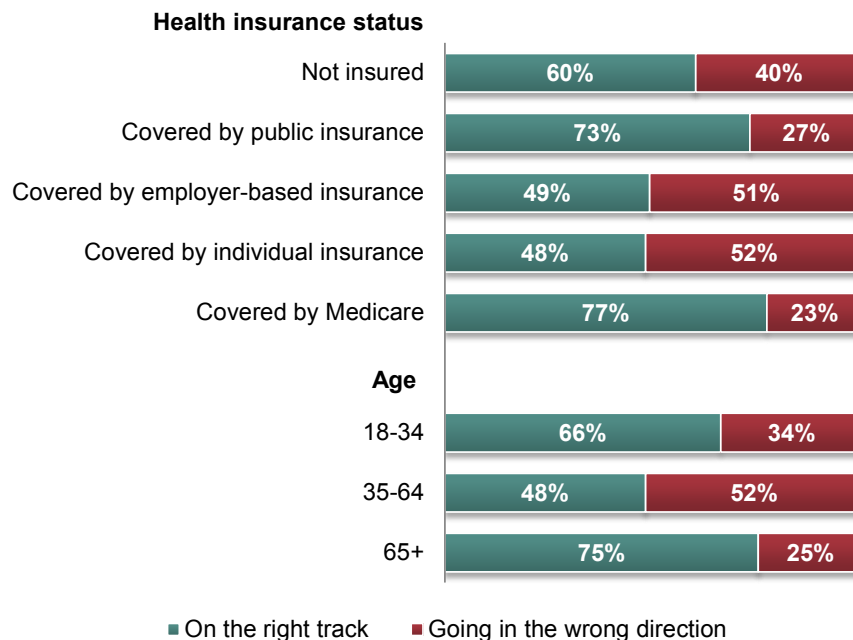


Satisfaction with the health care system varies among Minnesotans by age and type of insurance.

Overall, 59 percent of Minnesotans are satisfied with the health care system, but satisfaction varies by age group — just 53 percent of respondents age 18-34 report they are satisfied compared with 81 percent of those age 65 and older. Nearly 8 out of 10 Minnesotans on Medicare (79%) and those who are covered by public insurance programs (77%) are satisfied with the health care system compared with just over half of Minnesotans with employer-based insurance (55%).

Similarly, 58 percent of Minnesotans say health care is on the right track. Younger and older adults and those on Medicare and public insurance are even more likely to feel health care in Minnesota is on the right track.

Based on what you know or have heard about health care in Minnesota, do you think things are on the right track or going in the wrong direction?



Further, 8 out of 10 Minnesotans covered by a public insurance program (80%) and Minnesotans who are on Medicare (81%) believe health care providers and insurers work well together to coordinate health care, compared with half of those who are insured through an employer or group benefit (50%).

Public health insurance participants and Medicare enrollees are also more likely than Minnesotans covered by employer-based insurance to say they practice healthy lifestyles.

Study methods and respondent characteristics

Between December 6, 2012, and January 13, 2013, telephone surveys were completed with 603 adult Minnesotans, including 401 landline surveys and 202 cell phone surveys. This results in a +/- 5.8 percent margin of error when generalizing to the population of Minnesota. See the Methodology Report for more information.

Respondents represent all ages, household types, education levels, and political ideologies. They also represent the Twin Cities metro area and Greater Minnesota and residents with all levels of self-reported health, health care usage, professional experience in the health care system, and insurance coverage. After weighting, the demographic characteristics of poll respondents closely match the demographic characteristics of the adult population of Minnesota.

	Poll Respondents	Minnesota*
Gender		
Male	49%	50%
Female	51%	50%
Age		
18-34	30%	30%
35-64	52%	53%
65 or older	18%	17%
Education		
High school diploma or less	35%	36%
Some college	33%	32%
Bachelor's degree or more	32%	32%
Location		
Metro (7-county area)	54%	54%
Greater Minnesota	46%	46%

Self-reported...	Poll Respondents
Political affiliation	
Conservative/Very conservative	43%
Moderate	35%
Liberal/Very liberal	22%
Health care professional	
Yes	26%
No	74%
Health care user	
Low end	47%
Moderate	13%
High end	40%

* Source: American Community Survey 2007-2011 5 year estimates, U.S. Census Bureau.

For more information

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