

NEWS BRIEF

Report: Health Care Costs and Access Are Top Concerns for Americans

A recent Gallup report revealed that health care has once again risen to the top of Americans' concerns, outpacing inflation, the economy and other domestic issues, according to new national polling. After several years in which rising prices dominated public anxiety, access to and affordability of health care are now the issues people say they worry about most.

A [March 2026 Gallup poll](#) found that 61% of U.S. adults say they worry "a great deal" about health care, more than for any other domestic issue Gallup tracks, including inflation and the overall economy. Nearly everyone surveyed (94%) said they were at least somewhat worried about health care availability or costs.

Health care last held this poll position consistently from 2015 through 2020; however, economic pressures such as inflation had overtaken it in the past several years. That shift is now reversing, with health care concerns leading by a clear margin. Medical costs are standing out more sharply in household budgets since health care inflation has continued while broader inflation has begun to ease.

"Health care has reclaimed its position as Americans' foremost domestic concern, returning to the top tier after several years when economic matters commanded more attention. While the percentage [of those who are] highly worried about the availability and affordability of health care hasn't increased over the past year, ongoing public concerns about health care costs, including personal challenges in affording care, make this a perennial concern."

- Gallup reporting

Why Inflation Hits Health Care Harder

Health care costs continue to outpace general inflation, and they are both ongoing and unpredictable. For many employees, expenses don't appear just once; they show up every month through premiums and unexpectedly through copays, deductibles and prescription costs. Even with employer sponsored coverage, a sudden medical need can create financial strain. Gallup research consistently shows that cost is the primary driver of dissatisfaction with the U.S. health care system, compounded by access issues, billing complexity and concerns about provider networks. When broader inflation eases, these persistent health care costs stand out even more.

What This Means

Health care's return to the top of Americans' concerns signals not just rising costs, but also the importance of access to quality health coverage. Employers play a central role in helping employees mitigate the impact of rising costs and navigate an increasingly complex system.

Rising health care costs are likely to continue to disrupt employer-sponsored health insurance. Well-informed employers are better positioned to navigate changing trends. Contact us for more resources.

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