



# ANNUAL REPORT OF FINDINGS FROM DEEP LISTENING AND NATIONAL PUBLIC OPINION RESEARCH

## Background and Core Recommendations

Over the past year and a half, United States of Care has undertaken a variety of research efforts to better understand the shared and different needs and experiences of people when it comes to health care in the United States.

This fall, we commissioned QualBoards and a national survey of 1,000 registered voters to learn more about Americans' needs and wants in the health care system. We have found that **many Americans have shared needs and believe that the system is in need of improvement**, especially in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic—but that most people don't want drastic changes to the system. Instead, voters believe the system generally works, but that costs are too high.

### United States of Care recommends that policymakers:

- Act quickly.** Now is the time to **improve our health care system**: Americans widely support improvements coming out of the pandemic.
- Focus on solutions that bring down costs** in all aspects of the health care system, while preserving quality and dependability.
- Recognize that there is an acute sense of urgency to making improvements**, especially related to bringing down cost and making coverage more dependable following months of the pandemic and related economic impacts.
- Recognize that most voters are satisfied with their existing care**, and focus on areas to improve the system, rather than dismantling or radically changing it.

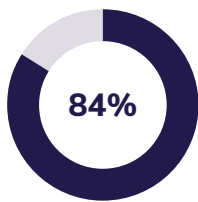


# Key Findings

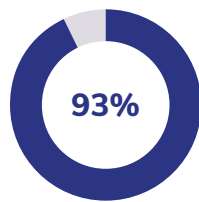


## Now is the Time! Americans Widely Support Post-Pandemic Improvements to our Health Care System

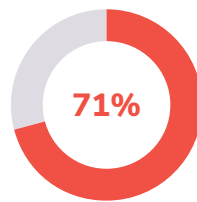
The data from our national survey was clear; nearly all Americans (84%, 54% strongly) agree that we **must build a better, more equitable health care system in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic**. This sentiment is shared by Republicans (71% agree) and Democrats (93% agree), and felt especially strongly among Black voters (94% agree).



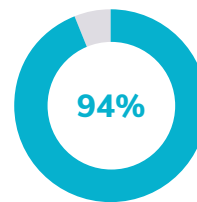
84% of **American** voters agree



93% of **Democrat** voters agree



71% of **Republican** voters agree



94% of **Black** voters agree

## There is Intense Agreement (83%) with a Shared Vision for the Future of Health Care

“A system in which all people can access high-quality health care in a way that meets their unique needs at a price they can afford. In this improved, easy-to-navigate system, people will have the security of knowing they can depend on their health care coverage throughout life’s changes, and get the care they need, when and how they need it.”

When looking closely at this vision, there are **FOUR CLEAR GOALS** for improvement that are supported by the public. A majority of voters say each of the following describe their own goals and needs for health care:

### → 1. “People have certainty that they can afford their health care.” (57%)

Cost is the main source of anxiety when it comes to health care and is at the top of the list for fixes. People want to know that they can afford the care they receive and that they won’t have to choose between their health and potential bankruptcy.

- Cost is the overwhelming reason that **42% of voters have foregone health insurance in the past** and that 41% of those under 30 have opted not to seek medical treatment in the last year.
- When forced to choose which aspect of the U.S. health care system most needs improvement, affordability was chosen by a majority of voters (51%) and more than twice as much as the next closest option.
- Cost concerns stem from a range of sources. Voters do not identify one single driver of cost problems in health care. Instead, voters across demographics identify a **spectrum of costs (premiums, deductibles, surprise bills, prescription prices, etc.) as major sources of concern**.

→ **2. “People have the security and freedom that dependable health care coverage provides as life changes.” (63%)**

Regardless of life’s changes—whether people are diagnosed with a major illness, lose their job, grow older, or have unexpected expenses—people want to know that they will have dependable, accessible health care coverage.

One example of a policy solution in this area is a **public health insurance option**, which is a health insurance program set up by either the state or federal government that people can choose as an alternative to a traditional plan through an employer or individual market, at a lower cost. More than 2-in-3 respondents said that they support a public option (32% strongly) including over half of Republican voters (54%) and the vast majority of Democrats (80%).

Respondents express a notable level anxiety related to their health care coverage:



**68% expressed a concern** about people close to them losing insurance because of a loss of a job.



**22% were concerned** about losing their own coverage due to a job change or (19%) due to changes in their health status.

→ **3. “People can get the personalized care they need, when and how they need it.” (64%)**

People want to be able to access care when they need it, and have their care personalized to their needs.

Examples of solutions in this area might include telehealth, convenience care, or simply having a health care provider nearby. It also includes addressing the deep inequities that have long made it hard for some to get care they need, including holistic care and mental health. **A few policies stand out from our research:**

- Support for a variety of improvements related to **mental health** remained steady between 83% and 86%, including making mental health resources more available, funding mental health research, and raising awareness of the warning signs of mental health problems.
- There is wide support for the convenience of **virtual care**, especially during the pandemic. 87% had something positive to say about their virtual care experience, and 72% appreciated the convenience of not having to leave their place of residence to receive care and the ease of scheduling. However, many have questions about the accuracy of care and concerns about the use of technology, which need to be considered as virtual care policies are formalized. Additionally, of the 53% who haven’t utilized virtual care, 16% haven’t done so because they feel it won’t be personalized or meet their specific care needs.

→ **4. “People experience a health care system that’s understandable and easy to navigate.” (60%)**

Complexity is overwhelming, and people want to be able to understand and navigate the system.

Our recent qualitative research demonstrated that **people put an immense amount of time into figuring out their own care**—from understanding their coverage, to selecting the right provider, to attempting to get ahead of costs and upcoming bills.



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## While Recognizing Problems and Areas for Improvement, People are Generally Satisfied with the Care They Receive and the Coverage They Have

Despite concerns above, **93% of respondents who have health insurance were satisfied.**

A majority (54%) support improving the system through incremental changes, prioritizing the biggest problems first. About a quarter (24%) wanted to transform our health care system through large-scale changes, and few (13%) wanted to keep the health care system as it currently is.



**54% support improving the system through incremental changes**



**24% want to transform our health care system through large-scale changes**



**13% want to keep the health care system as it currently is.**

Confirming a major finding from our previous qualitative research, most Americans (62%) believe the care they receive is, on average, better than most, while 17% believe it worse than average.

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## There Is Widespread Understanding That Some People Face Inequities When Seeking Health Care (68%)

Our country is at a pivotal moment. The COVID-19 pandemic has shone a light on longstanding inequities and flaws in our health care system, and has renewed a national awakening about equity.

There is widespread understanding that some people—especially those who are uninsured (57%), low income (48%), people with mental illness (46%), and undocumented people (46%)—face inequities in our health care system.

When compared to voters overall, Black and Hispanic voters are also significantly more likely to believe their own demographic groups face major inequities in health care.

- **Black voters are 30-points more likely** than voters overall to believe that other Black people face major inequities in health care.
- **Hispanic voters are 22-points more likely** than voters overall to believe that other Hispanic people face major inequities in health care.

The survey also found that nearly a quarter (23%) reported personally facing discrimination when seeking health care.

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United States of Care is committed to working closely with our cross-sector partners and policymakers to improve the health care system by paving a path to durable, people-centered policies.

Learn more at [USOFCARE.ORG](https://USOFCARE.ORG)

