



PUBLIC OPINION RESEARCH

People Agree that Health Care is Too Expensive & Demand Lawmakers Take Action to Lower Costs, Limit Fees, and Increase Hospital Billing Transparency

[United States of Care](#) (USofCare), a nonpartisan nonprofit, centers its advocacy on the needs of everyday people through [deep listening work and public opinion research](#). Our research shows that health care is too expensive, and people across every demographic consistently rank affordability as people's [top concern](#) with the health care system. People want lawmakers to enact common sense, targeted [solutions](#) that will ensure their health care is affordable, accessible, dependable, and easy to understand.

The greatest share in overall health care spending is attributable to the hospital sector, which constituted [31% of all U.S. health care spending](#) in 2021. With this in mind, USofCare undertook public opinion research to understand people's attitudes and perceptions regarding prices and billing practices within the sector. Additionally, USofCare's research examined meaningful, straightforward solutions that lawmakers can enact today to address people's desires to maintain high-quality care while not having to worry about the high cost of medical bills.

Founded on the principle of paying for care on a service-by-service basis (also known as "fee-for-service"), the US health system rewards quantity over quality, misaligning incentives at a macro-level that inflates costs for people, taxpayers, employers and other payers with no meaningful improvement in health outcomes in return. At the ground level, patients encounter inflated costs as they are increasingly forced to pay unexpected "[facility fee](#)" charges when receiving care from hospital- and health system-affiliated providers, even in instances when they received routine outpatient and non-hospital-level care.

As more physician practices are acquired by larger health and hospital systems that charge facility fees as a part of their business model, patients see an astounding [14% average price increase](#) for their health care. **The system is broken; USofCare's new research reveals unwavering public support for clear, targeted, and impactful solutions for lawmakers to advance now while paving the way for a system that centers patients and rewards quality of care over quantity of services.**

Results from USofCare's public opinion research is clear. Voters across demographics — regardless of geography, income level, race and ethnicity, party affiliation, and source of coverage — overwhelmingly demand that lawmakers:

- ★ Address the health care affordability concerns of everyday people,
- ★ Shield people from unexpected and unfair facility fees, and
- ★ Demystify hospital billing through greater transparency and patient notification requirements.

¹ "Facility fees" are defined as expenses charged to patients by hospitals and health systems in addition to the cost of services and the professional fees paid to providers for routine or outpatient care delivered at an off-campus facility.

By enacting these solutions, lawmakers will deliver on what voters need in order to access and receive care for themselves and their loved ones while also giving people financial peace of mind. Such solutions will open the door to broader reforms that move our overall health care system to one that prioritizes high quality, [patient-first care](#).

METHODOLOGY

In November 2023, USofCare commissioned public opinion research conducted through focus groups facilitated by [NORC at the University of Chicago](#), and a national survey representative of American voters by [Morning Consult](#) with a sample size n = 2,206 and a margin of error +/- 2%.

RESULTS

Lawmakers Have a Clear Mandate from Voters to Enact Targeted Policy Solutions to Reign in Hospital Prices, Promote Billing Transparency, and Shield People from Unfair Facility Fees

“ *Americans are constantly living in debt over hospital bills just to stay healthy.* **”**
- Focus Group Participant



Voters are concerned about the high cost of health care.

- ★ 84% of voters think that health care is a high priority issue for Congress to address this year. 45% of people believe it is a top priority.

“ *I don't know how the... government lets these things happen and doesn't stop them happening by law. What's the good of something like this other than giving people such high medical costs, and there are so many people out there that don't have insurance at all.”* **”**
- Focus Group Participant

- ★ 75% of voters rate the cost of healthcare as only fair or poor, which is consistent across party affiliation.
 - 69% of Democrats rated the cost of care as only fair or poor.
 - 75% of Republicans rated the cost of care as only fair or poor.
 - 77% of Independents rated the cost of care as only fair or poor.



Voters experience facility fees as unfair, often hidden, charges that add financial stress to people who already feel the pinch of the rising cost of health care.

- ★ **70% of voters believe that having patients pay facility fees is unfair, with 47% deeming facility fees as “very unfair.”**
- ★ This near-universal belief is held amongst all demographics:
 - 62% of Black voters.

- 68% of disabled voters.
- 69% of Asian voters.
- 70% of white voters.
- 72% of rural voters.
- 79% of voters for whom English is a second language.
- 74% of voters aged 45-64.
- 75% of voters aged 65+.
- 77% of Latino voters.
- 85% of Indigenous voters.



Voters overwhelmingly support policy solutions that limit facility fees.

★ **Nearly 3 in 4 voters (74%) want policymakers to ban facility fees everywhere for outpatient, same-day services, regardless of the service or where care is being provided. 47% of voters *strongly* support this. This policy is supported across demographics, insurance status, and party affiliation.**

- 77% of voters support bans of facility fees for services performed at off-campus clinics and doctor's offices.
- Notable support for this policy solution is shared by:
 - 73% of Republican voters.
 - 78% of Democratic voters.
 - 79% of Independent voters.
 - 79% of voters ages 45-64.
 - 84% of voters aged 65+.
- 77% of voters support bans on facility fees for specific visits with primary health care providers or for preventive care services.
- Notable support for this policy solution is shared by:
 - 75% of Republican voters.
 - 78% of Democratic voters.
 - 80% of Independent voters.
 - 86% of voters aged 65+.
- 74% of voters support banning facility fees everywhere for outpatient, same-day services, regardless of the service or where it is being performed.
 - 79% of voters aged 65+ support such a policy ban.
 - Notably, 81% of Latino voters are supportive of this policy solution.

“I don't think that you should be having facility fees at all, but if you are going to, you should at least tell them and then based on the urgency, you could say, yes, I will pay that, or I'm going to look somewhere else.”

- Focus Group Participant

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There is overwhelming support for policies that require more transparency and give people more information about when facility fees are charged.

- 81% of voters support lawmakers requiring medical providers to disclose their facility fees upfront to patients before they are seen.

- This is supported across demographics.
 - Party affiliation, yielding support from 75% of Republicans, 83% of Democrats, and 84% of Independents.
 - Racial background, including support from Black voters (71%), Latino voters (80%), white voters (82%), Asian voters (83%), and Indigenous voters (90%).
 - Disability, with 80% of disabled voters strongly supporting this transparency solution.
 - Age, with 81% support amongst 45-64 year olds and 92% support from voters aged 65+.

“It would be nice to see how much of that is going to staff and how much is going to overhead. If I'm seeing that 80% of all the fees are going to overhead, then I'm going to have a problem with that, and I want to be able to have a competitive market to choose otherwise. And unfortunately, there's not that visibility to make the decisions.”

- Focus Group Participant

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- 81% of voters support lawmakers requiring big corporate hospitals to report data on facility fees, including how much revenue they are collecting from facility fees.
 - This is supported by 77% of Republicans, 80% of Democrats, and 88% of Independents.
 - There is also significant support amongst racial backgrounds for this policy, including 72% of Black voters, 77% of Latino voters, 83% of Asian voters, 83% of white voters, and 91% of Indigenous voters.

ABOUT UNITED STATES OF CARE

[United States of Care](#) (USofCare) is a nonpartisan nonprofit working to ensure that everyone has access to quality, affordable health care regardless of health status, social need or income, informed by listening to people's needs, partnering with a variety of stakeholders, and developing policy solutions.