



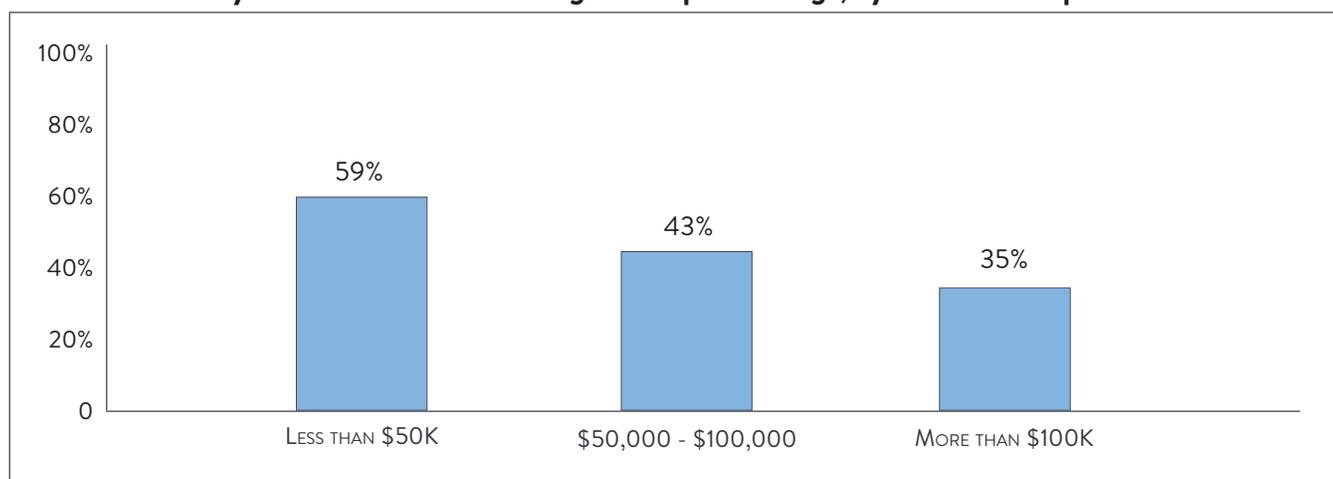
Mississippi Residents Worried about High Drug Costs—Support a Range of Government Solutions

According to a survey of 945 Mississippi adults, conducted from May 7, 2020 to June 9, 2020, residents are concerned about prescription drug costs and ready to see solutions enacted.

More than half of all survey respondents (51%) reported being either “somewhat worried” or “very worried” about affording the cost of prescription drugs. Worry varied significantly by income group, with households making less than \$50,000 per year being almost twice as worried compared to households making more than \$100,000 per year (Figure 1).

Figure 1

Somewhat or Very Worried About Affording Prescription Drugs, by Income Group



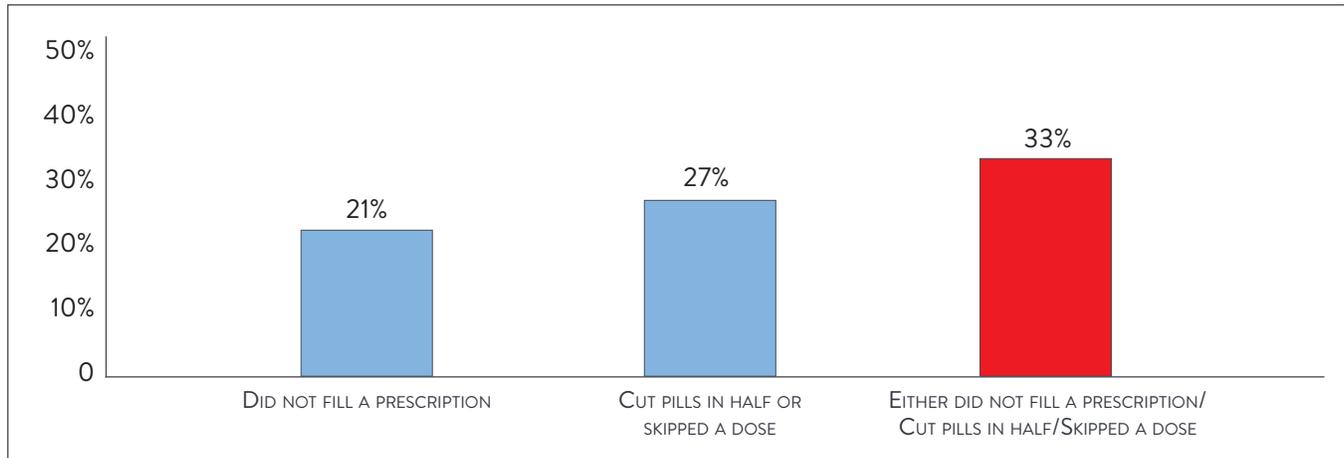
Source: 2020 Poll of Mississippi Adults, Ages 18+, Altarum Healthcare Value Hub's Consumer Healthcare Experience State Survey

In addition to being worried about prescription drug affordability in the future, many Mississippi residents experienced hardship due to the cost of prescription drugs. Indeed, cost concerns led one-third (33%) of respondents (or someone in their household) to not fill a prescription, cut pills in half or skip a dose of medicine (see Figure 2).

Regions within Mississippi varied with respect to drug affordability issues (see Table 1). Thirty-one percent of adults in the Northeast region had difficulty affording prescription drugs in the prior 12 months, while adults in the Central region fared worse. Surprisingly, most of the regional variation was due to adults not filling their prescription—in contrast, similar numbers reported rationing prescription drugs, either by cutting pills in half or skipping doses, in each region.

Figure 2

Did not Fill a Prescription, Cut Pills in Half or Skipped a Dose Due to Concerns About Cost



Source: 2020 Poll of Mississippi Adults, Ages 18+, Altarum Healthcare Value Hub, Altarum’s Consumer Healthcare Experience State Survey

Table 1

Mississippi Adults with Drug Affordability Issues, By Region

Region	CUT PILLS IN HALF OR SKIPPED A DOSE	DID NOT FILL A PRESCRIPTION	EITHER DID NOT FILL A PRESCRIPTION/CUT PILLS IN HALF/OR SKIPPED A DOSE
NORTHEAST	19%	26%	31%
DELTA	21%	29%	35%
CENTRAL	23%	28%	36%
SOUTHEAST	20%	26%	33%

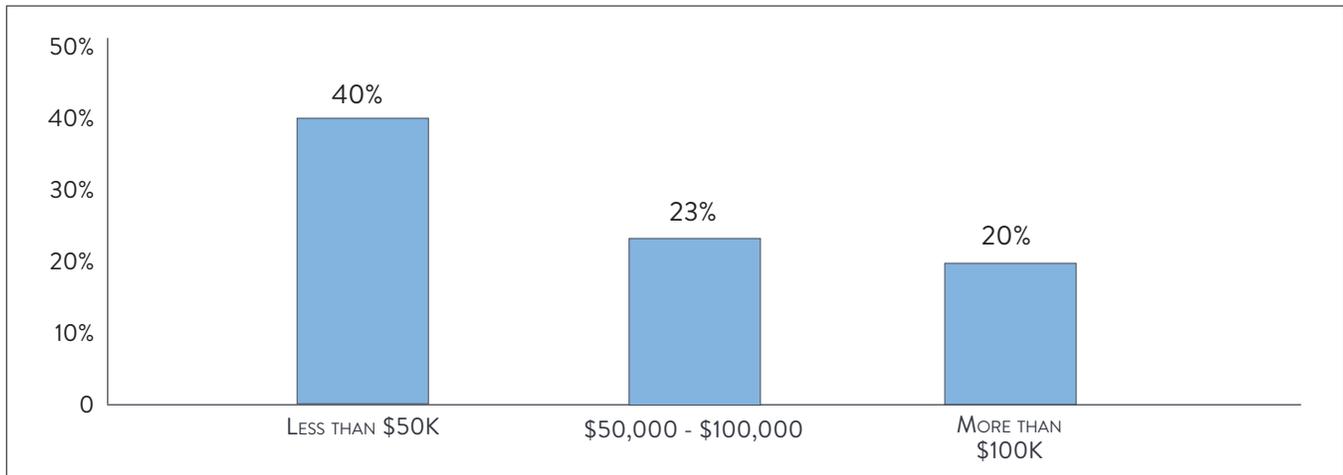
Source: 2020 Poll of Mississippi Adults, Ages 18+, Altarum Healthcare Value Hub, Altarum’s Consumer Healthcare Experience State Survey

Note: The counties comprising the above regions can be found in Data Brief No. 68, *Mississippi Residents Struggle to Afford High Healthcare Costs; COVID Fears Add to Support for a Range of Government Solutions Across Party Lines* (July 2020).

These hardships have a disproportionate impact on lower income households. As Figure 3 shows, households making less than \$50,000 per year were twice as likely to ration their prescription medicines (by not filling a prescription, cutting pills in half or skipping a dose of medicine) as households making more than \$100,000 per year. Moreover, these hardships are alarmingly prevalent in middle income households.

When given more than 20 options, the option cited most frequently as being a “major reason” for high healthcare costs was “drug companies charging too much money:”

- 68%—Drug companies charging too much money
- 61%—Hospitals charging too much money
- 59%—Insurance companies charging too much money

Figure 3**Percent Who Did Not Fill a Prescription, Cut Pills in Half or Skipped a Dose of Medicine, by Income Group**

Source: 2020 Poll of New Jersey Adults, Ages 18+, Altarum Healthcare Value Hub's Consumer Healthcare Experience State Survey

When it comes to tackling high drug costs specifically, respondents endorsed a number of strategies:

- **85%**—Ensure the cost of widely needed vaccines are affordable for all
- **82%**—Authorize the attorney general to take legal action to prevent price gouging or unfair prescription drug price hikes
- **82%**—Require drug companies to provide advanced notice of price increases and information to justify those increases
- **81%**—Prohibit drug companies from charging more in the U.S. than abroad
- **81%**—Set standard prices for drugs to make them affordable
- **78%**—Create a Prescription Drug Affordability Board to examine the evidence and establish acceptable costs for drugs

While Mississippi residents are united in calling for a role for the government in addressing high drug costs, they also see a role for themselves:

- **68%**—would switch from a brand to a less expensive generic if given the option
- **62%**—have tried to find out the cost of a drug beforehand

In light of these prescription drug cost concerns—as well as concern about high healthcare costs generally—it is not surprising that Mississippi adults are extremely dissatisfied with the health system:

- Overall, only **32%** agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “*We have a great healthcare system in the U.S.*”
- While overall **62%** agreed or strongly agreed that “*The system needs to change.*”

There is remarkably high support for government action on drug costs regardless of the respondents' political affiliation (see Table 2).

Table 2
Percent Who Agree/Strongly Agree, by Political Affiliation

SELECTED SURVEY QUESTIONS/STATEMENTS	TOTAL	GENERALLY SPEAKING, DO YOU THINK OF YOURSELF AS...		
		REPUBLICAN	DEMOCRAT	NEITHER
MAJOR REASON FOR RISING HEALTHCARE COSTS: <i>DRUG COMPANIES CHARGING TOO MUCH MONEY</i>	68%	71%	66%	67%
THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD ENSURE THE COST OF WIDELY NEEDED VACCINES ARE AFFORDABLE FOR ALL	85%	86%	84%	85%
THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD AUTHORIZE THE ATTORNEY GENERAL TO TAKE LEGAL ACTION TO PREVENT PRICE GOUGING OR UNFAIR PRESCRIPTION DRUG PRICE HIKES	82%	85%	78%	82%
THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD REQUIRE DRUG COMPANIES TO PROVIDE ADVANCED NOTICE OF PRICE INCREASES AND INFORMATION TO JUSTIFY THOSE INCREASES	82%	83%	81%	81%
THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD PROHIBIT DRUG COMPANIES FROM CHARGING MORE IN THE U.S. THAN ABROAD	81%	83%	77%	82%
THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD SET STANDARD PRICES FOR DRUGS TO MAKE THEM AFFORDABLE	81%	82%	82%	80%
THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD CREATE A PRESCRIPTION DRUG AFFORDABILITY BOARD TO EXAMINE THE EVIDENCE AND ESTABLISH ACCEPTABLE COSTS FOR DRUGS	78%	77%	80%	76%

Source: 2020 Poll of Mississippi Adults, Ages 18+, Altarum Healthcare Value Hub, Altarum's Consumer Healthcare Experience State Survey

Methodology

Altarum’s Consumer Healthcare Experience State Survey (CHESS) is designed to elicit respondents’ unbiased views on a wide range of health system issues, including confidence using the health system, financial burden and views on fixes that might be needed.

The survey used a web panel from Dynata with a demographically balanced sample of approximately 1,000 respondents who live in Mississippi. The survey was conducted only in English and restricted to adults ages 18 and older. Respondents who finished the survey in less than half the median time were excluded from the final sample, leaving 945 cases for analysis. After the exclusions, the demographic composition of respondents was as follows.

Demographic Composition of Survey Respondents

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTIC	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
HOUSEHOLD INCOME		
Under \$20K	230	24%
\$20K - \$30K	125	13%
\$30K - \$40K	93	10%
\$40K - \$50K	83	9%
\$50K - \$60K	103	11%
\$60K - \$75K	79	8%
\$75K - \$100K	100	11%
\$100K - \$150K	88	9%
\$150K+	45	5%
PARTY AFFILIATION		
REPUBLICAN	380	40%
DEMOCRAT	271	29%
NEITHER	295	31%
AGE		
18-24	233	26%
25-34	141	16%
35-44	114	13%
45-54	125	14%
55-64	130	14%
65+	164	18%

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTIC	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
GENDER		
MALE	361	38%
FEMALE	585	61%
INSURANCE STATUS		
HEALTH INSURANCE THROUGH EMPLOYER OR FAMILY MEMBER’S EMPLOYER	298	32%
HEALTH INSURANCE I BUY ON MY OWN	88	9%
MEDICARE	224	24%
MEDICAID	107	11%
TRICARE/MILITARY HEALTH SYSTEM	33	3%
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS (VA) HEALTH CARE	23	2%
NO COVERAGE OF ANY TYPE	100	11%
I DON’T KNOW	73	8%
HEALTH STATUS		
EXCELLENT	152	16%
VERY GOOD	282	30%
GOOD	311	33%
FAIR	153	16%
POOR	48	5%

Source: 2020 Poll of Mississippi Adults, Ages 18+, Altarum Healthcare Value Hub’s Consumer Healthcare Experience State Survey

Note: Percentages in the body of the brief are based on weighted values, while the data presented in the demographic table is unweighted.



ABOUT ALTARUM’S HEALTHCARE VALUE HUB

With support from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the Healthcare Value Hub provides free, timely information about the policies and practices that address high healthcare costs and poor quality, bringing better value to consumers. The Hub is part of Altarum, a nonprofit organization with the mission of creating a better, more sustainable future for all Americans by applying research-based and field-tested solutions that transform our systems of health and healthcare.

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