



DATA BRIEF NO. 26 | FEBRUARY 2019

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

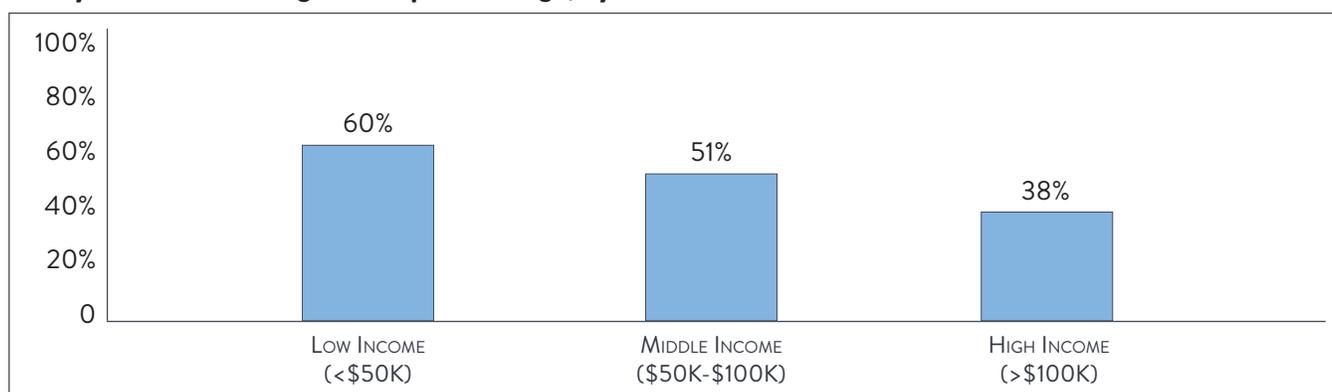
According to a survey of more than 930 Minnesota adults conducted from December 20, 2018 to January 2, 2019, there is great concern about prescription drug costs and a desire for policymakers and other stakeholders to enact solutions.

Fully half (51%) of all survey respondents reported being either “worried” or “very worried” about affording the cost of prescription drugs.

These concerns vary by household income, with lower-income respondents being the most worried (see Figure 1). Remarkably, concerns about high drug costs go far up the income ladder.

Figure 1

Worry About Affording Prescription Drugs, by Household Income

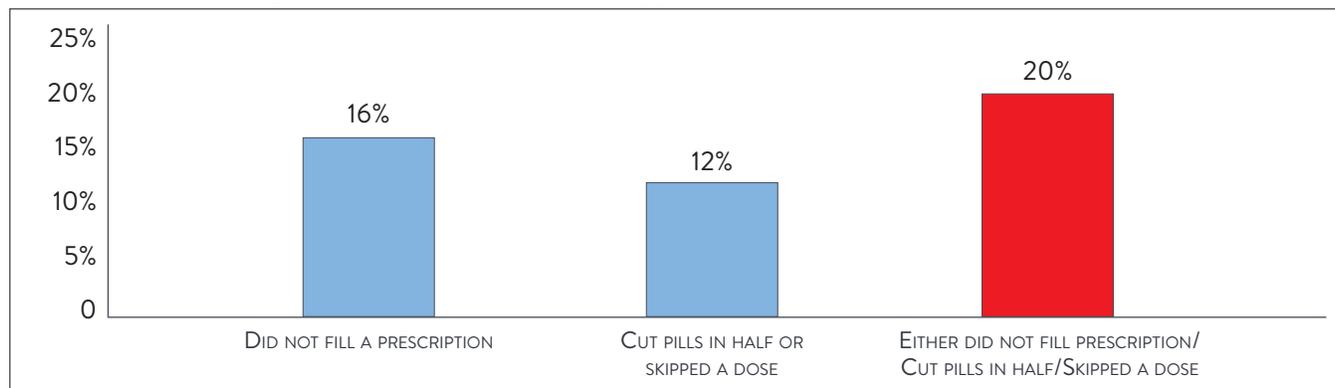


Source: 2018-2019 Poll of Minnesota Adults, Ages 18+, Altarum Healthcare Value Hub, Altarum’s Consumer Healthcare Experience State Survey

In addition to being concerned about drug affordability in the future, many Minnesota residents are currently experiencing hardship due to drug costs. Nearly one-fifth (17%) of respondents report it was “Difficult” or “Extremely Difficult” to afford their prescription drugs during the past year.

Indeed, cost concerns lead 20% of respondents (or someone in their household) to not fill a prescription or to cut pills in half (see Figure 2).

Figure 2
Did not Fill a Prescription, Cut Pills in Half or Skipped a Dose Due to Concerns About Cost



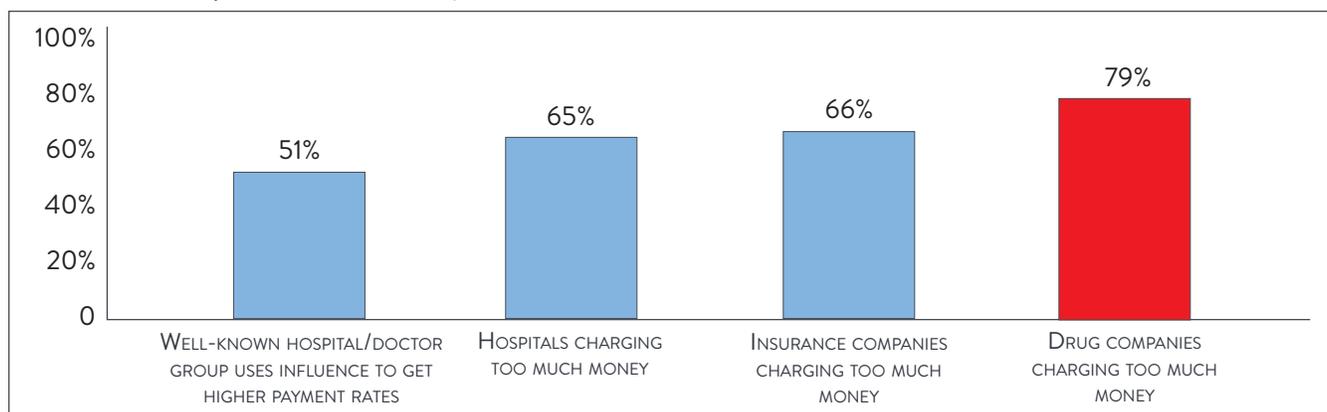
Source: 2018-2019 Poll of Minnesota Adults, Ages 18+, Altarum Healthcare Value Hub, Altarum’s Consumer Healthcare Experience State Survey

In light of these prescription drug cost concerns—as well as concern about high healthcare costs generally¹—it is not surprising that Minnesota residents are extremely dissatisfied with the health system:

- Only 27% agree or strongly agree with the statement “We have a great health care system in the U.S.”
- While 80% agree or strongly agree “the system needs to change.”

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 (see Figure 3).

Figure 3
Most Cited “Major Reason” for High Healthcare Costs



Source: 2018-2019 Poll of Minnesota Adults, Ages 18+, Altarum Healthcare Value Hub, Altarum’s Consumer Healthcare Experience State Survey

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

- 93%—Authorize the Attorney General to take legal action to prevent price gouging or unfair prescription drug price hikes

- 92%—Require drug companies to provide advanced notice of price increases and information to justify those increases
- 89%—Set standard prices for drugs to make them affordable

What is remarkable about the findings is high support for change regardless of the respondent’s political affiliation (Table 1).

Table 1
Percent Who Agree/Strongly Agree, by Political Affiliation

SELECTED SURVEY QUESTIONS	TOTAL	GENERALLY SPEAKING, DO YOU THINK OF YOURSELF AS...		
		REPUBLICAN	DEMOCRAT	NEITHER
MAJOR REASON FOR RISING HEALTHCARE COSTS: DRUG COMPANIES CHARGING TOO MUCH MONEY	79%	71%	85%	80%
THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD AUTHORIZE THE ATTORNEY GENERAL TO TAKE LEGAL ACTION TO PREVENT PRICE GOUGING OR UNFAIR PRESCRIPTION DRUG PRICE HIKES	93%	90%	96%	92%
THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD REQUIRE DRUG COMPANIES TO PROVIDE ADVANCED NOTICE OF PRICE INCREASES AND INFORMATION TO JUSTIFY THOSE INCREASES	92%	90%	95%	89%
THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD SET STANDARD PRICES FOR DRUGS TO MAKE THEM AFFORDABLE	89%	83%	93%	90%

Source: 2018-2019 Poll of Minnesota Adults, Ages 18+, Altarum Healthcare Value Hub, Altarum’s Consumer Healthcare Experience State Survey

While government action was strongly viewed as more effective to address high drug costs, respondents also saw a role for themselves in solving problems. They reported actions they have already taken, like researching the cost of drug beforehand (38%), as well as future actions—84% believe that switching to a generic if given the option is one of the top things they can do personally to address affordability.

NOTE

1. See: Healthcare Value Hub, *Minnesota Residents Struggle to Afford High Healthcare Costs; Express Support for a Range of Government Solutions Across Party Lines*, Data Brief No. 25 (February 2019). <http://www.healthcarevaluehub.org/Minnesota-2019-healthcare-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 SSI Research Now containing a demographically balanced sample of approximately 1,000 respondents who live in Minnesota. 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 934 cases for analysis with sample balancing occurring in age, gender and income to be demographically representative of Minnesota. After those exclusions, the demographic composition of respondents is as follows.

Demographic Composition of Survey Respondents

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTIC	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
HOUSEHOLD INCOME		
Under \$30K	185	20%
\$30K - \$40K	69	7%
\$40K - \$50K	97	10%
\$50K - \$60K	82	9%
\$60K - \$75K	121	13%
\$75K - \$100K	122	13%
\$100K - \$150K	161	17%
\$150K+	97	10%
PARTY AFFILIATION		
REPUBLICAN	272	29%
DEMOCRAT	365	39%
NEITHER	297	32%
AGE		
18-24	39	5%
25-34	156	17%
35-44	180	20%
45-54	131	14%
55-64	189	21%
65+	225	24%

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTIC	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
GENDER		
MALE	439	47%
FEMALE	495	53%
INSURANCE STATUS		
HEALTH INSURANCE THROUGH EMPLOYER OR FAMILY MEMBER’S EMPLOYER	443	47%
HEALTH INSURANCE I BUY ON MY OWN	73	8%
MEDICARE	227	24%
MEDICAID	137	15%
TRICARE/MILITARY HEALTH SYSTEM	9	1%
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS (VA) HEALTH CARE	8	1%
NO COVERAGE OF ANY TYPE	27	3%
I DON’T KNOW	10	1%
HEALTH STATUS		
EXCELLENT	123	13%
VERY GOOD	351	38%
GOOD	311	33%
FAIR	126	13%
POOR	23	2%

Source: 2018-2019 Poll of Minnesota Adults, Ages 18+, Altarum Healthcare Value Hub, Altarum’s Consumer Healthcare Experience State Survey



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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