

Patient Experience Survey: Barriers to Health Care Access in the Patient Experience

Key Findings

The health care system isn't working for everyone - especially those that are sick and vulnerable. The systemic issues go beyond the uninsured.

- Three in ten Americans who have insurance **still face a financial barrier** to care, like trouble paying medical bills or out-of-pocket costs that are more than they can afford.
- Insecurity in health care access **disproportionately affects those reporting the poorest health, the disabled and patients suffering from the most serious health conditions.**

Health plan use of tools like prior authorization or failing first on other therapies can create significant barriers - especially for the sick and communities of color.

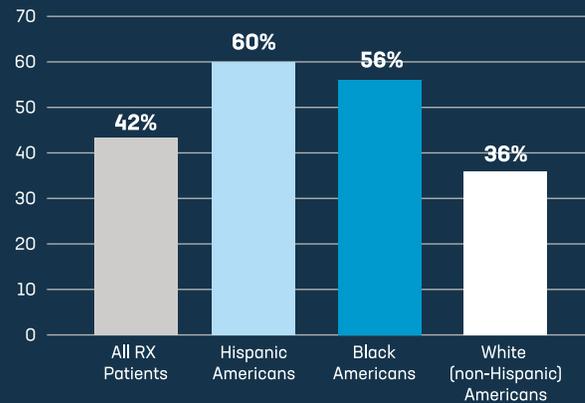
- Patients with some of the **most serious chronic diseases** – autoimmune diseases (62%), allergies (52%) and diabetes (52%) – are more likely to report experiences with health plan barriers like utilization management, including prior authorization and step therapy, than other Americans who take prescription medicines.
- **Disparities also exist** - while 56% of Black Americans and 60% of Hispanic Americans report being subject to health plans' tools practices, only 36% of white (non-Hispanic) Americans report experiencing the same.



3 in 10

Americans who have insurance still face a financial barrier to care

Insurer Tools Like Prior Authorization or Failing First Disproportionately Impact Communities of Color



Q: Have any of the following happened to you or your family over the past three months? Please answer regarding any kind of prescription medicine for any condition or illness.

*Base: 3,612 patients who take prescription medicines
Source: Patient Experience Survey, June 25 - July 9, 2021*

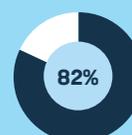
Health insurance benefit design and out-of-pocket costs are barriers to care that can lead to nonadherence.



31% of Americans say their health care out-of-pocket costs are unworkable for their budget.

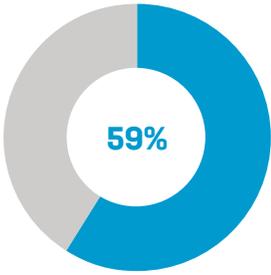


87% of Americans with medical debt experienced adherence issues in the past year.

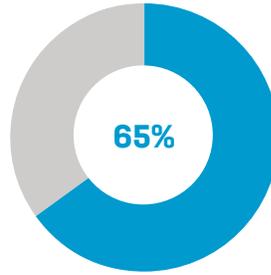


82% of patients with adherence challenges report they were subject to utilization management.

Patients prioritize lowering their out-of-pocket costs, not their premiums.



59% of adults with insurance coverage prefer paying lower out-of-pocket costs compared with paying lower premiums each month.



65% of those experiencing the greatest anxiety about and most problems affording care, prioritize lowering out-of-pocket costs to reduce barriers to their health care access over lowering premiums.

PhRMA's Patient Experience Survey (PES) is a new research initiative designed to explore the barriers patients face in accessing health care and prescription medicines. Launched in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic, which exposed many of the vulnerabilities of our health care system, the findings are a result of the lived experiences of 4,765 Americans, including 3,612 who rely on prescription medicines. The research aims to understand how patients engage with the health care system, uncover the real, practical challenges Americans face around access and affordability and identify solutions that would make a meaningful difference.

The inaugural PES was conducted online June 25 - July 9, 2021. The full methodology can be found in the **report**.

For more detailed findings, please visit [phrma.org](https://www.phrma.org)

