



# HealthVoices

## Healthcare Cost and Quality Survey Results

Issue 4, 2013

Rollout of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA) has been bumpy, at best. If nothing else, the focus on the ACA has kept healthcare at the fore. The debate surrounding the law continues to be intense, as elected officials, providers, payers and consumers all seek to understand the implementation of this historic legislation. This issue of HealthVoices provides a snapshot of how Georgians view health reform as the new law continues to take hold.

How do Georgians assess the quality of their healthcare? Do they face issues around cost? How do they expect the law to affect the quality and cost of their own healthcare?

In the summer of 2013, Healthcare Georgia Foundation provided support to The Schapiro Group (TSG) to conduct a public opinion poll measuring Georgians' experience with and views on healthcare *access*. TSG conducted a companion survey of Georgia residents in the fall of 2013 to assess perceptions of healthcare *quality* and *cost*.

### Quality of Healthcare

We first asked respondents how they would rate the overall quality of healthcare available in Georgia. On a scale of one to ten, with a one meaning poor and a ten meaning excellent, Georgians rate healthcare in the state a relatively modest 7.26. When it comes to the quality of the healthcare that they personally receive, though, Georgians are more satisfied. On average, Georgians rate the quality of their personal care 7.85 out of ten.

Next we wanted to learn more about the quality of specific aspects of healthcare that residents have personally received.

Georgians are most pleased with the quality of their doctors and give them an average score over eight. Hospitals and community clinics both receive average scores of 7.79, and emergency rooms rate the lowest, at just 7.07.

All of these providers appear to do a good job of keeping Georgians healthy. A majority (57%) of respondents consider their personal health to be at least very good, including 23% who consider their health to be excellent. On the other hand, 14% of Georgians consider their health to be just fair or even poor. These personal health ratings are very close to those for the nation overall.

*"A majority (57%) of respondents consider their personal health to be at least very good, including 23% who consider their health to be excellent. On the other hand, 14% of Georgians consider their health to be just fair or even poor."*

Figure 1. How would you rate the quality of the following aspects of healthcare?



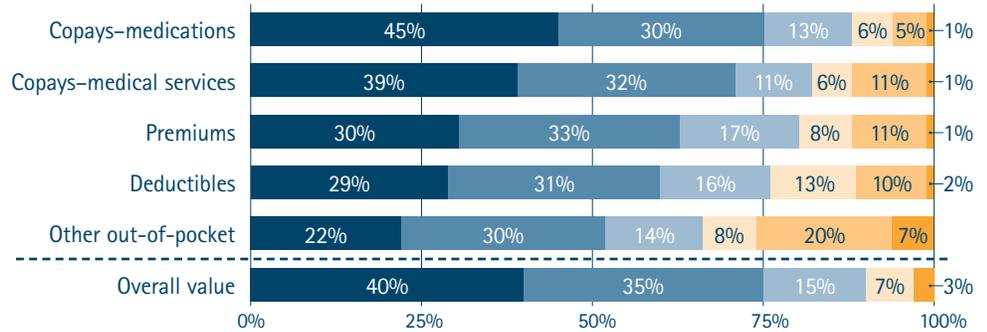


"Seventy-five percent of Georgians report being satisfied with the overall value of healthcare that they receive in relation to the amount that they pay for it, including 40% who are very satisfied."

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**Figure 2.** How satisfied are you with the cost of each of the following specific elements of your health insurance?

- Very satisfied
- Somewhat satisfied
- Somewhat dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied
- Does not pay
- Not sure



### Satisfaction with Cost

In general, Georgians are satisfied with the amount that they pay for healthcare. Just under two-thirds (63%) report being at least somewhat satisfied with what they pay, with 28% being *very* satisfied. One-third (33%) of residents are dissatisfied with what they pay, including 15% who are *very* dissatisfied.

As might be expected, people who pay less for their healthcare are more likely to be satisfied with how much they pay. In 2013, nearly one-quarter (23%) of Georgians report paying less than \$500 out of pocket for healthcare expenses. At the other end of the spectrum, another quarter (28%) has paid more than \$2,500 for the year.

Residents with healthcare coverage are also more likely to be satisfied with the amount that they pay for healthcare. Eighty percent of Georgians have health coverage through insurance, Medicare, or Medicaid, and they are generally happy with their healthcare payments. About three-quarters of residents are at least somewhat satisfied with how much they pay for copays for medical services and prescription medications. Majorities are satisfied with the amounts they pay for premiums and deductibles. Further, 75%

of Georgians report being satisfied with the overall value of healthcare that they receive in relation to the amount that they pay for it, including 40% who are *very* satisfied.

### Medical Home

We next asked residents about how they receive their healthcare treatment. Specifically, we were interested in who directs their care—do they rely on a single primary care doctor to treat any issues that arise, or do they see medical specialists for each type of issue? And if they are seeing multiple doctors, are they managing their care on their own, or does their primary doctor coordinate the care they receive from multiple sources?

About four out of every five Georgians (78%) has a single primary care or family healthcare professional that they tend to see for most health related issues or preventive care. Of those who have a primary care physician, 72% also use other healthcare professionals or facilities for their care, such as specialists in certain fields. Of those who both have a primary care physician and who also see other doctors, a majority (54%) have their care coordinated by that primary doctor.

### Government Programs

The final set of questions gauged respondents' feelings about what the government is doing about healthcare today; in short, most people are dissatisfied with what is happening at both the federal and state levels, but they consider at least one government program to be quite important.

Georgians do not tend to have high hopes for the ACA. Nearly half (47%) expect that the ACA will result in them paying more for their healthcare overall, and only 11% believe that they will pay less. About one-third (30%) believe that the ACA will not make a difference in the amount they pay. A majority (55%) of those who currently pay health insurance premiums believe that, under the new healthcare law, they will pay more for their premiums.

Further, they do not believe that the increased cost will be offset by a comparable increase in quality. To the contrary, nearly five times as many residents believe that the ACA will result in their family receiving *lower* quality care than those who believe it will result in higher quality. However, more than half (54%) believe that it will not affect the quality at all.



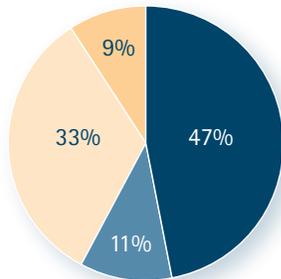
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## Key Findings

**Figure 3.** Under the healthcare reform law, do you think you and your family will...

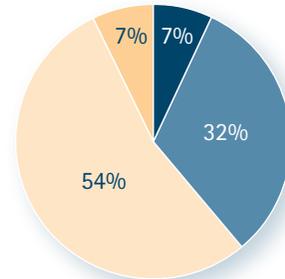
...pay more for healthcare overall, pay less, or it won't make much difference?

- Pay more
- Pay less
- No difference
- Don't know/Refused



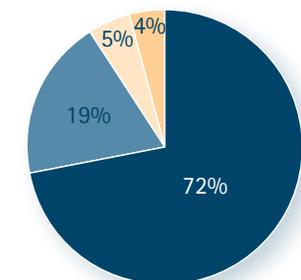
...receive higher quality healthcare, lower quality, or it won't make much difference?

- Higher quality
- Lower quality
- No difference
- Don't know/Refused



Georgians' discontent does not only extend to what is going on at the federal level. Nearly half of residents (45%) think that state officials' decisions not to offer a state marketplace for health insurance and not to expand Medicaid in the state will result in them paying more for healthcare. Another 40% believe that these decisions will not make a difference in how much they pay, and only 5% believe that they will decrease costs. Part of their reasoning could come from the importance they place on Medicaid. Nearly three-quarters (72%) of Georgia residents consider Medicaid to be a *very* important program in Georgia, with another 19% believing it is somewhat important. Just 5% do not consider it to be important at all.

**Figure 4.** In your opinion, how important is the Medicaid program for healthcare in Georgia?



- Very important
- Somewhat important
- Not important at all
- Don't know/Refused

## Subgroups

There were several differences in the way various demographic subgroups responded to the survey questions. As might be expected, individuals without health coverage, those who pay more for their healthcare, and those who have medical debt are less likely to be satisfied with how much they pay for healthcare, less likely to be satisfied with the value of their healthcare, and more likely to consider Medicaid to be very important.

## Implications

Currently, Georgians are, in general, pleased with both the quality of the healthcare they receive and the amount that they pay for it. They are less pleased, however, with what they believe the future holds for healthcare. Many believe that the recent and impending changes brought about by the government will result in healthcare that is of the same or lower quality, but more expensive. This research effort has created an important baseline to measure how Georgians' feelings might change over time, as well as whether or not their concerns about the future are warranted.

## About the Survey

The Schapiro Group conducted a scientific telephone survey of 400 Georgia adults, including 100 respondents from cell phone-only households, in October and November 2013. The margin of sampling error for the entire sample is  $\pm 4.8\%$ .



#### Recommended Citation

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Healthcare Georgia Foundation is a statewide, private independent foundation whose mission is to advance the health of all Georgians and to expand access to affordable, quality health care for underserved individuals and communities.

