



DATA BRIEF NO. 88 | JANUARY 2021

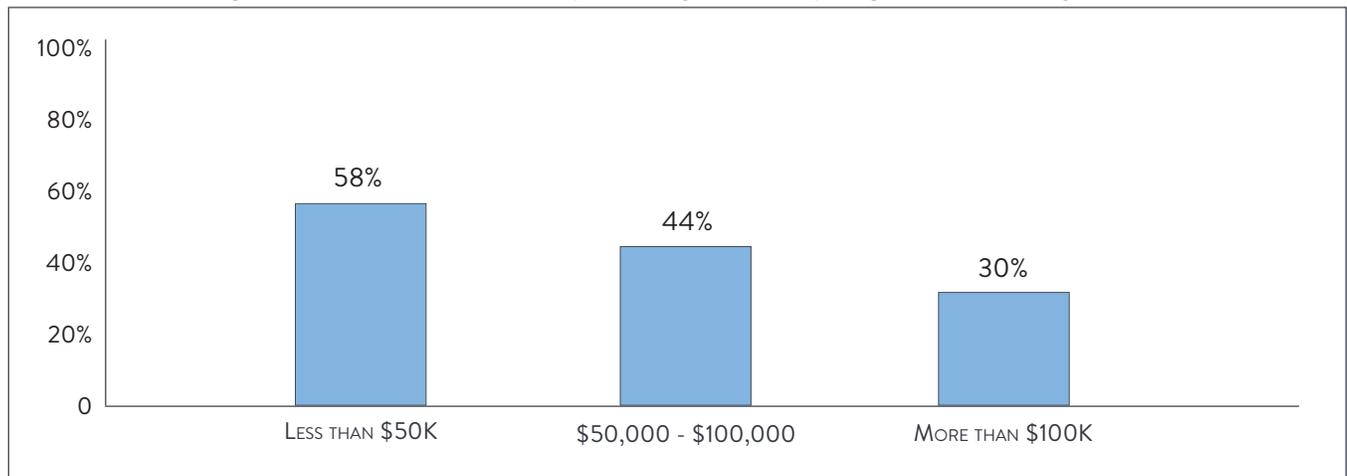
Minnesota Residents Worried about High Drug Costs—Support a Range of Government Solutions

According to a survey of 1,077 Minnesota adults, conducted from Oct. 30, 2020 to Nov. 27, 2020, residents are concerned about prescription drug costs and express a strong desire to enact solutions.

Almost half of all survey respondents (45%) reported being either “somewhat worried” or “very worried” about affording the cost of prescription drugs. Worry varied significantly by income group, with residents in households making less than \$50,000 per year being almost twice as worried as those in households making more than \$100,000 per year (see Figure 1).

Figure 1

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



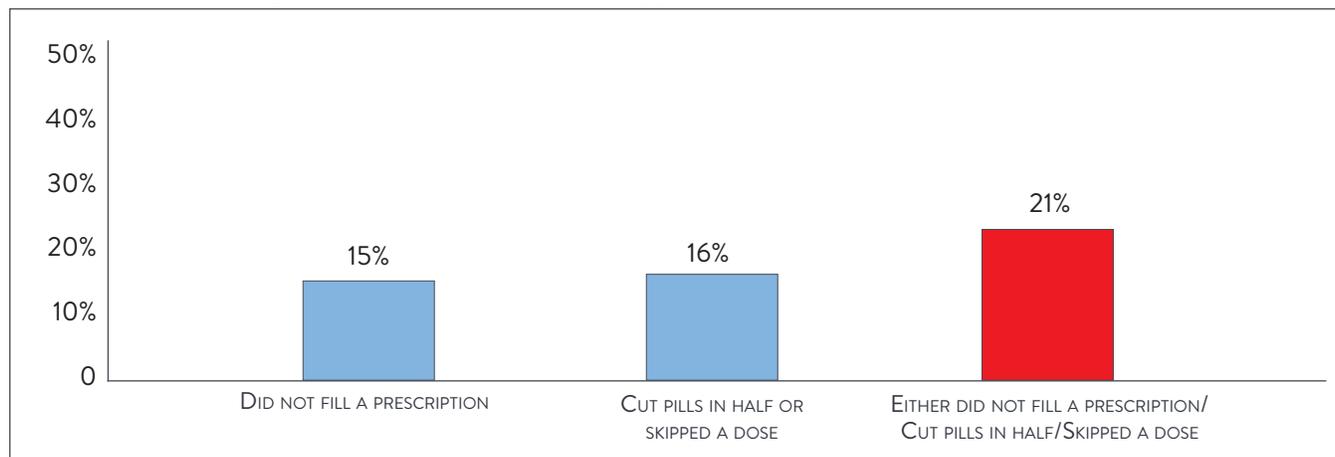
Source: 2020 Poll of Minnesota Adults, Ages 18+, Altarum Healthcare Value Hub's Consumer Healthcare Experience State Survey

In addition to being worried about prescription drug affordability in the future, many Minnesota residents experienced hardship in the prior 12 months due to the cost of prescription drugs. Indeed, cost concerns led 1 in 5 Minnesota adults (21%) to not fill a prescription, cut pills in half or skip a dose of medicine (see Figure 2).

Regions within Minnesota show significant variation with respect to drug affordability issues (see Table 1). Twenty percent of adults in the Twin Cities Metro area had difficulty affording prescription drugs in the prior 12 months, while adults in Southern Minnesota fared worse, at 25%.

These hardships have a disproportionate impact on lower income households. As Figure 3 shows, households making less than \$50,000 per year are three times as likely to have rationed their prescription medicines (by not filling a prescription, cutting pills in half or skipping a dose of

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



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

Table 1
Minnesota 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
TWIN CITIES METRO	15%	14%	20%
SOUTHERN	19%	17%	25%
NORTHERN & WESTERN	16%	15%	21%

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

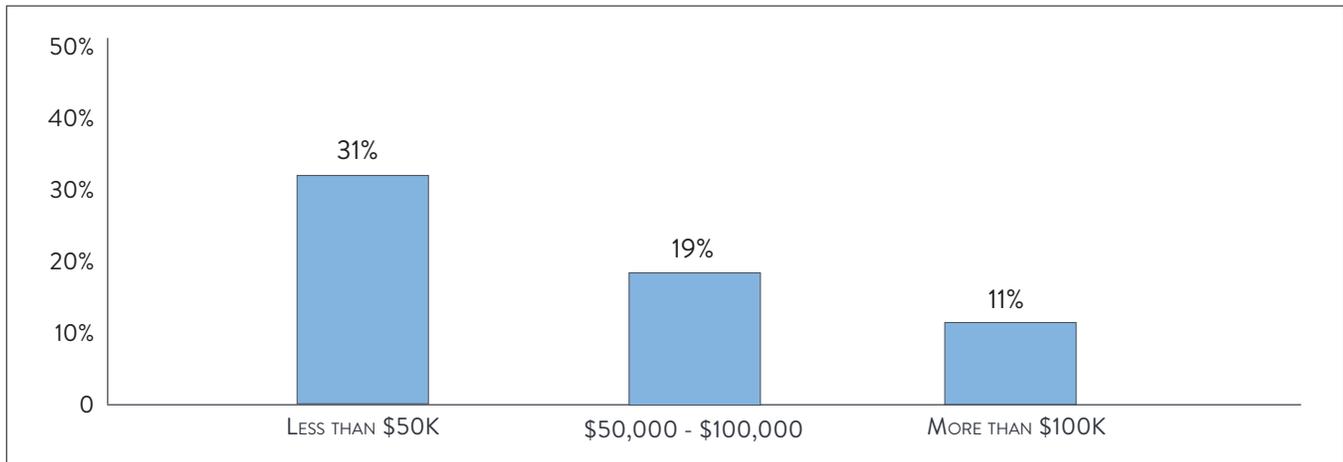
medicine) as households making more than \$100,000 per year. Moreover, these hardships are alarmingly prevalent in middle income households.

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:”

- 70%—Drug companies charging too much money
- 61%—Insurance companies charging too much money
- 56%—Hospitals charging too much money

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

- 89%—Set standard prices for drugs to make them affordable
- 88%—Authorize the Attorney General to take legal action to prevent price gouging or unfair prescription drug price hikes
- 88%—Ensure the cost of widely needed vaccines are affordable for all

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 Minnesota Adults, Ages 18+, Altarum Healthcare Value Hub's Consumer Healthcare Experience State Survey

- **87%**—Require drug companies to provide advanced notice of price increases and information to justify those increases
- **87%**—Create a Prescription Drug Affordability Board to examine the evidence and establish acceptable costs for drugs
- **87%**—Prohibit drug companies from charging more in the U.S. than abroad

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

- **78%** would switch from a brand name to a less expensive generic if given the option
- **49%** have tried to find out the cost of a drug beforehand

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

- Just **34%** agreed or strongly agreed that “*we have a great healthcare system in the U.S.,*”
- While **65%** 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: DRUG COMPANIES CHARGING TOO MUCH MONEY	70%	61%	73%	76%
THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD SET STANDARD PRICES FOR DRUGS TO MAKE THEM AFFORDABLE	89%	87%	92%	89%
THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD AUTHORIZE THE ATTORNEY GENERAL TO TAKE LEGAL ACTION TO PREVENT PRICE GOUGING OR UNFAIR PRESCRIPTION DRUG PRICE HIKES	88%	87%	90%	87%
THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD ENSURE THE COST OF WIDELY NEEDED VACCINES ARE AFFORDABLE FOR ALL	88%	85%	90%	89%
THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD REQUIRE DRUG COMPANIES TO PROVIDE ADVANCED NOTICE OF PRICE INCREASES AND INFORMATION TO JUSTIFY THOSE INCREASES	87%	85%	89%	87%
THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD PROHIBIT DRUG COMPANIES FROM CHARGING MORE IN THE U.S. THAN ABROAD	87%	86%	87%	89%
THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD CREATE A PRESCRIPTION DRUG AFFORDABILITY BOARD TO EXAMINE THE EVIDENCE AND ESTABLISH ACCEPTABLE COSTS FOR DRUGS	87%	81%	91%	89%

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

Comparing 2020 Results to the 2019 CHES Survey

We caution readers against drawing strong conclusions about changes observed between the 2019 and 2020 CHES Surveys. While the findings from the two surveys are remarkably consistent, small differences in the weighting approach and in the instrument itself indicate that direct comparisons should not be made. For more information on the Minnesota state surveys, go to www.healthcarevaluehub.org/minnesota-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 Minnesota. The survey was conducted only in English and Spanish and was 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 1,077 cases for analysis. After those exclusions, the demographic composition of respondents was as follows, although not all demographic information has complete response rates:

Demographic Composition of Survey Respondents

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTIC	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
HOUSEHOLD INCOME		
Under \$20K	154	14%
\$20K - \$30K	97	9%
\$30K - \$40K	89	8%
\$40K - \$50K	105	10%
\$50K - \$60K	94	9%
\$60K - \$75K	129	12%
\$75K - \$100K	183	17%
\$100K - \$150K	149	14%
\$150K+	77	7%
PARTY AFFILIATION		
REPUBLICAN	324	30%
DEMOCRAT	405	38%
NEITHER	348	32%
AGE		
18-24	114	11%
25-34	113	11%
35-44	85	8%
45-54	140	13%
55-64	348	33%
65+	266	25%

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTIC	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
GENDER		
MALE	414	38%
FEMALE	663	62%
INSURANCE STATUS		
HEALTH INSURANCE THROUGH EMPLOYER OR FAMILY MEMBER’S EMPLOYER	349	32%
HEALTH INSURANCE I BUY ON MY OWN	86	8%
MEDICARE	417	39%
MEDICAID	146	14%
TRICARE/MILITARY HEALTH SYSTEM	12	1%
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS (VA) HEALTH CARE	10	1%
NO COVERAGE OF ANY TYPE	36	3%
I DON’T KNOW	21	2%
HEALTH STATUS		
EXCELLENT	124	12%
VERY GOOD	395	37%
GOOD	375	35%
FAIR	154	14%
POOR	29	3%

Source: 2020 Poll of Minnesota 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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