



DATA BRIEF NO. 95 | JULY 2021

Tennessee Residents Rank Healthcare Affordability as a Top Concern for Policymakers; Strong Support for Government Action Across Party Lines

In a period of great political divisiveness, Tennessee adults are fairly united around one topic—the need for government action to address healthcare issues, especially healthcare affordability.

A survey of more than 900 Tennessee adults, conducted from March 26, 2021, to April 9, 2021, revealed that Tennessee residents see the government as the key stakeholder that needs to act to address health system problems. Moreover, addressing healthcare problems is just as important as the economy/joblessness in terms of issues that Tennessee residents want elected officials to work on.

Survey respondents were asked to rank the **top three issues** the government should address in the upcoming year. Healthcare and the economy/joblessness were the most frequently cited issues, with 56% of respondents selecting it as a top three issue (see Table 1), exceeding seven other options.

Table 1
Top Issues for Government to Work On

ISSUES GOVERNMENT SHOULD ADDRESS	PERCENT OF RESPONDENTS WHO SELECTED ISSUE AS ONE OF THE "TOP 3" ISSUES GOVERNMENT SHOULD ADDRESS IN THE COMING YEAR
HEALTHCARE	56%
ECONOMY/JOBLESSNESS	56%
TAXES	39%
IMMIGRATION	37%
ENVIRONMENT/ENERGY	26%
AFFORDABLE HOUSING	26%
COST OF HIGHER EDUCATION/STUDENT LOAN DEBT	15%
FOREIGN POLICY	15%
WOMEN'S ISSUES	12%

Source: 2021 Poll of Tennessee Adults, Ages 18+, Altarum Healthcare Value Hub's Consumer Healthcare Experience State Survey

When asked specifically about their healthcare priorities, almost half (49%) of respondents selected addressing high healthcare costs, including prescription drug costs, as one of their top 3 issues. The next most frequently selected issue (preserving consumer protections) was selected by 34% of respondents (see Table 2).

Moreover, support for government action was high, regardless of respondents' political affiliation (see Table 3), and spanned a broad range of solutions.

Table 2
Top Healthcare Priorities for Government

HEALTHCARE ISSUES GOVERNMENT SHOULD ADDRESS	PERCENT OF RESPONDENTS WHO SELECTED ISSUE AS ONE OF THE "TOP 3" ISSUES GOVERNMENT SHOULD ADDRESS
ADDRESS HIGH HEALTHCARE COSTS, INCLUDING PRESCRIPTION DRUG COSTS	49%
PRESERVE CONSUMER PROTECTIONS PREVENTING PEOPLE FROM BEING DENIED COVERAGE OR CHARGED MORE FOR HAVING A PRE-EXISTING MEDICAL CONDITION	34%
GET HEALTH INSURANCE TO THOSE WHO CANNOT AFFORD COVERAGE	31%
IMPROVE MEDICARE (COVERAGE FOR SENIORS) AND THOSE WITH SERIOUS DISABILITIES	31%
IMPROVE MEDICAID (COVERAGE FOR LOW-INCOME EARNERS)	25%
REPEAL THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT/OBAMACARE	22%
REFINE OR MODIFY THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT/OBAMACARE	17%
IMPLEMENT MEDICARE FOR ALL/SINGLE-PAYER HEALTH COVERAGE	16%
MAKE THE QUALITY OF DOCTORS MORE TRANSPARENT	15%
MAKE THE QUALITY OF HOSPITALS MORE TRANSPARENT	15%
SECURE FUNDING FOR RESEARCH INTO CAUSES OF AND CURES FOR SPECIFIC DISEASES	15%
ADDRESS WOMEN'S HEALTH	9%

Source: 2021 Poll of Tennessee Adults, Ages 18+, Altarum Healthcare Value Hub's Consumer Healthcare Experience State Survey

Table 3
Percent Who Agreed/Strongly Agreed, by Political Affiliation

SELECTED SURVEY QUESTIONS/STATEMENTS	TOTAL	GENERALLY SPEAKING, DO YOU THINK OF YOURSELF AS...		
		REPUBLICAN	DEMOCRAT	NEITHER
THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD MAKE IT EASY TO SWITCH INSURERS IF A HEALTH PLAN DROPS YOUR DOCTOR	91%	90%	91%	92%
THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD ENSURE THE COST OF WIDELY NEEDED VACCINES ARE AFFORDABLE FOR ALL	89%	87%	89%	91%
THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD SHOW WHAT A FAIR PRICE WOULD BE FOR SPECIFIC PROCEDURES	89%	87%	90%	92%
THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD AUTHORIZE THE ATTORNEY GENERAL TO TAKE LEGAL ACTION TO PREVENT PRICE GOUGING OR UNFAIR PRESCRIPTION DRUG PRICE HIKES	89%	88%	89%	90%
THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD REQUIRE INSURERS TO PROVIDE UP-FRONT COST ESTIMATES TO CONSUMERS	89%	90%	89%	90%
THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD REQUIRE HOSPITALS AND DOCTORS TO PROVIDE UP-FRONT PATIENT COST ESTIMATES	89%	90%	89%	89%
THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD ENSURE PATIENTS CAN'T BE CHARGED OUT-OF-NETWORK PRICES IF THEY ENCOUNTER AN OUT-OF-NETWORK PROVIDER THROUGH NO FAULT OF THEIR OWN	87%	87%	88%	87%
THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD EXPAND HEALTH INSURANCE OPTIONS SO THAT EVERYONE CAN AFFORD QUALITY COVERAGE	87%	83%	92%	89%

Source: 2021 Poll of Tennessee Adults, Ages 18+, Altarum Healthcare Value Hub's Consumer Healthcare Experience State Survey

Tennessee policymakers should not ignore this clear call for action by state residents. The high burden of healthcare affordability and high levels of support for change suggest that elected leaders and other stakeholders need to make addressing healthcare affordability a top priority.

For survey methodology and full report, please see *Tennessee Residents Struggle to Afford High Healthcare Costs; COVID Fears Add to Support for a Range of Government Solutions Across Party Lines*, Healthcare Value Hub, Data Brief No. 94 (June 2021). HealthcareValueHub.org/tennessee-state-survey



ABOUT ALTARUM'S HEALTHCARE VALUE HUB

With support from Arnold Ventures, 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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