

Texas Medical Center-Nielsen Survey Reveals Texan's Attitudes Towards Healthcare

World's largest medical center aims to advance healthcare delivery by learning attitudes towards health insurance, physicians and medical care



HOUSTON, April 28, 2015 /PRNewswire/ -- The Texas Medical Center (TMC) released findings from a healthcare survey of Texans called "TMC 2015 Texas Consumer Health Report: A Texas Medical Center-Nielsen Poll", a survey funded by TMC and initiated by the Health Policy Institute. Dr. Tim Garson, Director of the Texas Medical Center Health Policy Institute, revealed the survey results during his keynote address at the Medical World Americas conference in Houston.

"As healthcare becomes more consumer-directed, providers are working to better understand what the public wants. We want to know what consumers think about their health insurance, both personally and for the country, and how they want their healthcare delivered," said Dr. Tim Garson. "Of course this is fascinating data for Texas. However, Houston is the fourth largest city in the country and has a diverse population, therefore the findings are likely applicable far beyond the state."

The statewide survey involved 1,000 respondents, ages 18 and older, to assess their attitudes and behaviors towards health insurance. The Nielsen survey was conducted online through Harris Poll between January 27 and March 3, 2015 and data was weighted by sex, race, ethnicity, income and education.

"The Texas Medical Center is comprised of 56 member institutions, many of which serve patients. As the world's largest medical center, it is imperative that TMC provides this type of information to our members so we, as a whole, continue to be the leader in world-renowned patient care, research and education," said Dr. Robert Robbins, President & CEO, Texas Medical Center.

Key survey findings include:

How important is having health insurance to you and your family?

Respondents value having health insurance. 83% say having health insurance is absolutely essential or very important.

What is most important: having health insurance, the total cost of health care I have to pay, ability to see a physician or nurse when needed, or quality of health care received?

Just having healthcare trumps cost and quality. 46% feel having health insurance is most important; 27% say the total cost of healthcare is most important; 27% feel the ability to see a physician or nurse when needed is important; quality of healthcare received is dead last in importance with 0%.

In order for you/your family to have health insurance, what would you be willing to give up? (e.g. eating fast food, cable TV, cell phone...)

Respondents will give up some "extras" for insurance. But, most would rather hold on to internet and cell phones. Insured respondents appear more likely to keep their coverage, while uninsured are less likely to sacrifice.

How important is it to you that all US citizens have health insurance?

Respondents value universal health insurance. 55% of respondents say it is very or extremely important to all US citizens to have health insurance. Only 13% say it is not at all important.

How much would you be willing to pay, per month, if it meant that all US citizens would have health insurance?

Respondents will pay to guarantee coverage for all. More lower-income respondents are willing to pay, but they can afford significantly less, versus respondents with the highest income.

Which one of the following most closely describes how you believe health insurance should be provided: through one's employer (shared costs), an employee receives money from employer to buy plan on open marketplace, citizens who pay taxes get health insurance (like Medicare or Medicaid), other or not sure?

Some support for single payer concept in Texas. 42% think citizens who pay taxes should get insurance (i.e., single payer), 27% defer to employers (either insurance or a defined contribution), 12% believe the employee should receive money from their employer to buy a plan on the marketplace.

Which of the following is most important to you when choosing a primary care physician? Reading ratings on the internet/online, recommendation from another doctor, recommendation from family/friends, low cost, other, not sure.

Word of mouth is key for choosing physicians. 31% say they would choose a physician by asking a friend/family member. 18% would choose from ratings on the internet. 16% would choose based on a recommendation from another doctor.

There are many ways you can get information about your current health. Indicated how important each of the following is as a source of information: doctor or online/internet.

Doctors are the top health information source. Respondents defer to doctors for information; even in the internet age, only one in four say internet sources are absolutely essential/very important.

Choose: A. I want my physician to make my medical decisions with minimal involvement from me; B. I want to make my own medical decisions with minimal involvement of my physician; C. Not sure.

43% want to make their own medical decisions with minimal physician involvement; 40% want their physician to make medical decisions with minimal involvement from me; 17% are unsure. Males are more likely to defer to a physician, while females want to make their own decisions with minimal physician involvement.

Agree or disagree: for myself or a relative, I would want everything possible done at the end of life, to prolong life.

63% agree; 37% disagree. 2 in 3 want everything done at the end of life.

Agree or disagree: People with poor health habits (e.g. smoking, lack of exercise) should have to pay more for health insurance.

59% agree that people with poor health habits should have to pay more for health insurance. 41% disagree.

Agree or disagree: Foods that lead to obesity (e.g. sugary drinks) should be more expensive.

52% agree that foods that lead to obesity should be more expensive. 48% disagree. Nearly 3 in 4 young adults (18-34) support a "fat tax".

About the TMC Health Policy Institute

The TMC Health Policy Institute was established to inform, define and lead health policy, ultimately developing the most effective solutions to improve the health of diverse populations around the globe. Utilizing expertise across the Texas Medical Center's member institutions, the TMC Health Policy Institute addresses fundamental health policy issues important to Houston, the state and the nation including public health advocacy, health care delivery models, health care funding, patient quality outcomes, patient safety and health ethics.

About Texas Medical Center

The largest medical complex in the world, the Texas Medical Center is internationally recognized and home to many of the nation's best hospitals, physicians, educational institutions, researchers, and the largest concentration of life-sciences experts. For the first time in its history, the Texas Medical Center has aligned the multi-institutional expertise to formulate five institutions dedicated to: Health Policy, Clinical Trials, Regenerative Medicine, Genomics and Innovation. Together, these institutions will advance the Texas Medical Center as the global leader in human health and life sciences. The Innovation Institute accelerator program, TMCx, launched in March 2015 and the Health Policy Institute executive team and advisory committee first convened in January 2015.

SOURCE Texas Medical Center
