MASSACHUSETTS RESIDENTS CITE HEALTH CARE COSTS, NOT COVID, AS PRIMARY HEALTH CARE CONCERN

Only inflation and housing costs outpaced health care costs as a leading challenge

BOSTON, Sept. 8, 2022 /PRNewswire/ -- The cost of health care, not the COVID-19 pandemic, is now the top health care concern facing residents of the Commonwealth. Massachusetts residents reported that only inflation and the cost of housing were greater challenges than the cost of health care, according to a new survey commissioned by Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts ("Blue Cross"). The survey, conducted by Beacon Research, also found that the cost of care resulted in skipped or delayed health care for nearly half of Massachusetts residents.



"After two years of intense focus on COVID, cost is again the primary health care issue facing Massachusetts residents," said Chris Anderson, founder and president of Beacon Research. "Consumers strongly believe that this is an urgent issue that health plans, the government and hospitals should be working to address."

Key findings from the survey included:

- Massachusetts residents are three times more concerned about cost of care over quality, access or the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Health care costs are challenging family finances for nearly two-thirds of MA residents, trailing only the daily pressure of gasoline and food price increases.
- 80% of Massachusetts residents think it is highly/extremely important to take action on health care costs.
- When asked who they think should be doing more to control health care costs, residents cited health plans (87%), government (85%) and hospitals (81%).
- Massachusetts residents are putting off needed health care (42%) and prescriptions (26%) because of cost.
- Younger and affluent residents are the most likely to think care is unaffordable.

"As we emerge from the COVID pandemic, we conducted this poll to better understand what Massachusetts residents believe are the key priorities in health care," said Jay McQuaide, senior vice president and chief communications officer at Blue Cross. "There is a clear call to action in these survey results for those of us in health care to do more and to act with greater urgency to address the unsustainable rise in health care costs."

Blue Cross is working with others in health care to responsibly moderate the growth in health care spending. Among the steps the company is taking:

- Collaborating with physicians and hospitals to achieve contracts that reflect the community's serious concerns related to health care costs
- Advancing next-generation value-based payments
- Better supporting members managing chronic conditions
- Managing pharmacy spending – the company's most-used benefit – to ensure members are getting high quality, clinically appropriate prescription drugs

A total of 1,004 Massachusetts adults were interviewed for this survey between the dates of June 14-23, 2022. The survey was conducted using a mixed methodology approach with approximately half of the interviews conducted by live interviewer telephone calls and half online. Slight weights were used to bring the demographics of the sample in line with actual

demographics of Massachusetts.

Complete poll results can be found **here**.

About Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts
Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts (http://www.bluecrossma.org) is a community-focused, tax-paying, not-for-profit health plan headquartered in Boston. We are committed to the relentless pursuit of quality, affordable and equitable health care with an unparalleled consumer experience. Consistent with our promise to always put our members first, we are rated among the nation's best health plans for member satisfaction and quality. Connect with us on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and LinkedIn.

SOURCE Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts

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