



DATA BRIEF NO. 122 | AUGUST 2022

Missouri Residents Worried about High Drug Costs; Support a Range of Government Solutions

According to a survey of more than 1,100 Missouri adults, conducted from April 1 to April 18, 2022, respondents are concerned about prescription drug costs and express a strong desire for policymakers to enact solutions.

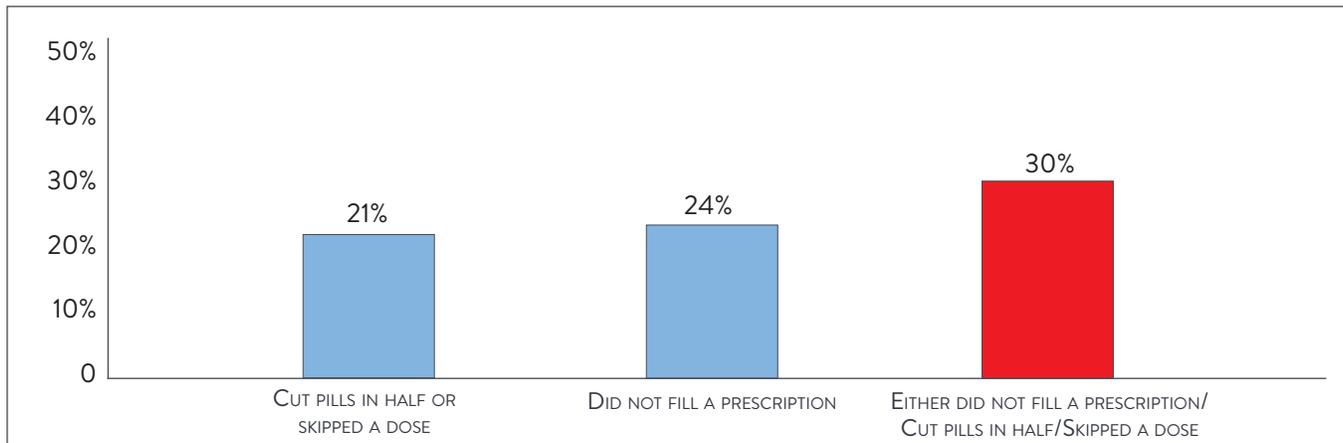
Just over half (52%) of survey respondents report being somewhat or very worried about affording the cost of prescription drugs. Worry varies substantially by income group, with respondents in households making less than \$50,000 per year¹ experiencing the most worry (see Figure 1). However, it is important to note that a large percentage of households making above \$50,000 per year also worry about affording prescription drugs. By insurance type, uninsured respondents reported the highest rate of worry about affording prescription drugs (74%), followed by respondents with Medicaid (65%). Still, 51% of respondents with insurance through an employer reported worry about affording prescription drugs, as well as 52% of those who purchased insurance on their own and 43% of respondents with Medicare.

Figure 1
Somewhat or Very Worried About Affording Prescription Drugs, by Income Group



Source: 2022 Poll of Missouri 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 Missouri respondents have experienced hardship in the prior 12 months due to the cost of prescription drugs. Indeed, nearly 1 in 3 Missouri respondents (30%) did not fill a prescription, cut pills in half or skipped a dose of medicine in the last year due to cost (see Figure 2). Overall, lack of adherence to prescribed medication, regardless of reason, is estimated to cause roughly 125,000 deaths and at least 10% of hospitalizations and costs the American healthcare system between \$100 billion and \$289 billion a year.²

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

Source: 2022 Poll of Missouri Adults, Ages 18+, Altarum Healthcare Value Hub's Consumer Healthcare Experience State Survey

These hardships disproportionately impact people in lower-income households. As Table 1 shows, respondents living in households earning less than \$50,000 per year reported higher rates of rationing their prescription medicines (by not filling a prescription, cutting pills in half or skipping a dose of medicine) than respondents living in high-income households. These hardships are alarmingly prevalent in middle-income households, as well. Uninsured respondents reported the highest rates of rationing medication by a large margin compared to other insurance types, followed by those with MO HealthNet (Medicaid). Finally, respondents living in households with a person with a disability reported notably higher rates of rationing medication due to cost in the past 12 months compared to respondents without a disabled household member.

In light of these prescription drug cost concerns—as well as concerns about high healthcare costs generally³—it is not surprising that Missouri respondents were generally dissatisfied with the health system:

- Just **33%** agreed or strongly agreed that “*we have a great healthcare system in the U.S.,*”
- While **71%** agreed or strongly agreed that “*the system needs to change.*”

When given more than 20 options, the options cited most frequently as being a “major reason” for high healthcare costs were:

- **75%**—Drug companies charging too much money
- **72%**—Hospitals charging too much money
- **66%**—Insurance companies charging too much money

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

- **92%**—Authorize the Attorney General to take legal action to prevent price gouging or unfair prescription drug price hikes
- **91%**—Require drug companies to provide advanced notice of price increases and information to justify those increases
- **90%**—Set standard prices for drugs to make them affordable
- **89%**—Create a Prescription Drug Affordability Board to examine the evidence and establish acceptable costs for drugs
- **88%**—Prohibit drug companies from charging more in the U.S. than abroad

Table 1**Missouri Respondents with Drug Affordability Issues, by Income Group, Insurance Type and Disability Status**

	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
INCOME			
LESS THAN \$50K	27%	31%	39%
\$50K - \$75K	16%	22%	25%
\$75K - \$100K	13%	16%	19%
MORE THAN \$100K	18%	17%	25%
INSURANCE TYPE			
HEALTH INSURANCE THROUGH MY EMPLOYER OR A FAMILY MEMBER'S EMPLOYER	22%	26%	33%
HEALTH INSURANCE I PURCHASE ON MY OWN	24%	25%	32%
MEDICARE, COVERAGE FOR SENIORS AND THOSE WITH SERIOUS DISABILITIES	13%	12%	18%
MO HEALTHNET, COVERAGE FOR LOW-INCOME PEOPLE	26%	35%	38%
UNINSURED	34%	45%	53%
DISABILITY STATUS			
HOUSEHOLD DOES NOT INCLUDE A PERSON WITH AT LEAST ONE DISABILITY	16%	19%	23%
HOUSEHOLD INCLUDES A PERSON WITH AT LEAST ONE DISABILITY	32%	35%	45%

Source: 2022 Poll of Missouri Adults, Ages 18+, Altarum Healthcare Value Hub's Consumer Healthcare Experience State Survey

Moreover, there is substantial support for government action on drug costs regardless of the respondents' political affiliation (see Table 2).

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

- 81% would switch from a brand name to an equivalent generic drug if given a chance
- 59% have tried to find out the cost of a drug beforehand

Conclusion

The high burden of healthcare and prescription drug affordability, along with high levels of support for change, suggest that elected leaders and other stakeholders need to make addressing this consumer burden a top priority. Moreover, the COVID crisis has led state residents to take a hard look at how well health and public health systems are working for them, with strong support for a wide variety of actions. Annual surveys can help assess whether or not progress is being made.

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	75%	75%	75%	73%
THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD AUTHORIZE THE ATTORNEY GENERAL TO TAKE LEGAL ACTION TO PREVENT PRICE GOUGING OR UNFAIR PRESCRIPTION DRUG PRICE HIKES	92%	93%	93%	91%
THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD REQUIRE DRUG COMPANIES TO PROVIDE ADVANCED NOTICE OF PRICE INCREASES AND INFORMATION TO JUSTIFY THOSE INCREASES	91%	90%	95%	89%
THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD SET STANDARD PRICES FOR DRUGS TO MAKE THEM AFFORDABLE	90%	90%	92%	87%
THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD CREATE A PRESCRIPTION DRUG AFFORDABILITY BOARD TO EXAMINE THE EVIDENCE AND ESTABLISH ACCEPTABLE COSTS FOR DRUGS	89%	85%	94%	87%
THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD PROHIBIT DRUG COMPANIES FROM CHARGING MORE IN U.S. THAN ABROAD	88%	88%	89%	86%

Source: 2022 Poll of Missouri Adults, Ages 18+, Altarum Healthcare Value Hub's Consumer Healthcare Experience State Survey

Methodology

For the complete methodology, please see [Missouri Residents Struggle to Afford High Healthcare Costs; Worry about Affording Healthcare in the Future; Cite Unfair Prices Charged by Powerful Industry Stakeholders; Support Government Action across Party Lines](#).

Notes

1. Median household income in Missouri was \$57,290 (2016-2020). U.S. Census, *Quick Facts*. Retrieved from: <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/MO>
2. Brody, Jane E., “[The Cost of Not Taking Your Medicine](#),” *The New York Times* (April 17, 2017).
3. For more detailed information about healthcare affordability burdens facing Missouri respondents, please see: Healthcare Value Hub, [Missouri Residents Struggle to Afford High Healthcare Costs; Worry about Affording Healthcare in the Future; Cite Unfair Prices Charged by Powerful Industry Stakeholders; Support Government Action across Party Lines](#), Data Brief No. 121 (August 2022).



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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