



Affordable Care Act

HealthVoices

Healthcare Survey Results

Issue 1, 2014

Implementation of major components of The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA) has been underway for over a year. Georgia residents have begun to experience the impact of this historic federal legislation, and the state of Georgia has made key policy decisions about different components of the law. The purpose of this issue of HealthVoices is to provide a snapshot of how Georgians feel about their current healthcare, and how they view these state-level policy decisions one year following ACA implementation.

What is the experience of Georgians as they access healthcare? How do they assess the quality of their healthcare? Do they face issues around cost? How much do Georgians know about and support the ACA and healthcare reform? What changes, if any, have they experienced over the past year around access to, quality of, and cost of healthcare?

In the summer of 2014, Healthcare Georgia Foundation provided support to The Schapiro Group (TSG) to conduct a public opinion poll measuring Georgians' views on and experience with healthcare access, quality, and cost. This survey is a follow-up to similar polls conducted during the summer of 2013 (access) and the fall of 2013 (quality and cost). Click [here](#) to learn more.

Access

Over the past year, Georgians report no change in their ability to get all of the healthcare they need. Similarly, they have experienced no change in the availability of all needed healthcare providers.

However, the cost of healthcare continues to have an impact on access. The past year saw an increase in the number of Georgians who wanted to seek care for a health-related issue, but chose not to for some reason. Several reasons for that choice were

tested. (Figure 1) As was true in 2013, only one of the tested reasons played a major role in more than 20% of these residents' decision not to seek healthcare—the cost, which was cited by 68% as playing a major role.

Health Insurance

According to the poll, the percentage of Georgians who are not covered by some type of health insurance (including Medicaid and Medicare) decreased from 19% in 2013 to 14% in 2014. For those who do not have health insurance, the main reason cited for lack of coverage is, once again, the cost. Population groups least likely to have health insurance are individuals with less education, those with less household income, and unmarried Georgians.

Quality of Healthcare

Georgians' ratings of healthcare quality are virtually unchanged from 2013. On a scale of one to ten, with a value of one meaning poor and a value of ten meaning excellent, Georgians rate healthcare quality in the state a relatively modest 7.35 (7.26 in 2013). When it comes to the quality of the healthcare they personally receive, though, Georgians are more satisfied. On average, Georgians rate the quality of their personal care a 7.82 (7.85 in 2013).

Figure 1. In the past year, have you wanted to seek care for any health-related issue, but chose not to for some reason, such as the cost, the distance to a doctor's office, or the time that it would take? (% Yes)



Georgians have become more familiar with the ACA

Healthcare Survey Results

Cost of Healthcare

While the respondents' assessments of access and quality are unchanged from 2013, challenges arising from the cost of healthcare have increased over the past year. As was noted earlier, cost is a growing reason that Georgians cite for choosing not to seek healthcare when needed. Georgians are also slightly less satisfied with the amount they personally pay for healthcare overall. Though they are still satisfied, 58% report being satisfied in 2014, compared to 63% in 2013. Dissatisfaction with the amount they pay for healthcare increased from 33% in 2013 to 40% in 2014.

The Affordable Care Act

Georgians have become more familiar with the ACA, as 68% indicate they are familiar with it (52% in 2013). Their approval levels, however, have not changed much over the past year. Forty-two percent (42%) approve of the law (38% in 2013), while 46% disapprove (42% in 2013).

Despite being split on their overall support of the healthcare law, Georgians continue to be very supportive of most of the specific elements of the law. At least three-quarters of residents continue to support preventing health insurance companies from denying coverage due to pre-existing conditions, requiring health insurance companies to cover some preventive services at no cost to the patient, and lowering the amount that seniors have to pay out-of-pocket for their prescription drugs. On the other hand, half of respondents (51%) continue to *strongly* disapprove of requiring many Americans to purchase health insurance or else pay a tax penalty.

Impact of ACA

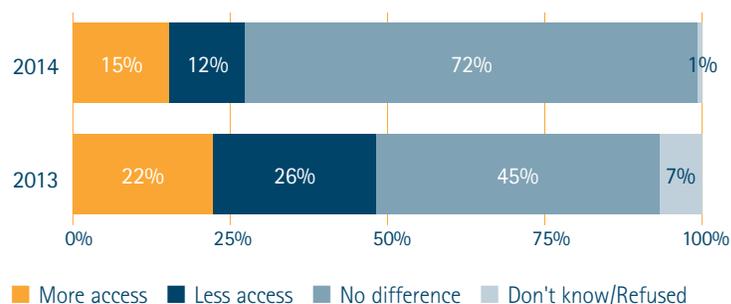
The summer 2013 survey asked residents to *predict the impact* of the healthcare law on their own healthcare access, quality, and cost. The 2014 survey asked respondents to report *what actually happened* to them and their family over the past year on each of these three healthcare dimensions. The results show that the impact of the ACA was not what was expected, particularly around access and quality.

Access: A plurality expected *no difference*. To the extent they thought there would be an impact, slightly more expected less rather than more access. However, 72% report no difference in access, with the remainder closely divided about having more (15%) versus less (12%) access. (Figure 2)

Quality: Over half expected no difference, but over four times as many expected lower quality (32%) than higher quality (7%). In reality, 75% experienced no difference in quality. Those who saw a difference were equally split as to whether quality was higher (12%) or lower (12%). (Figure 3)

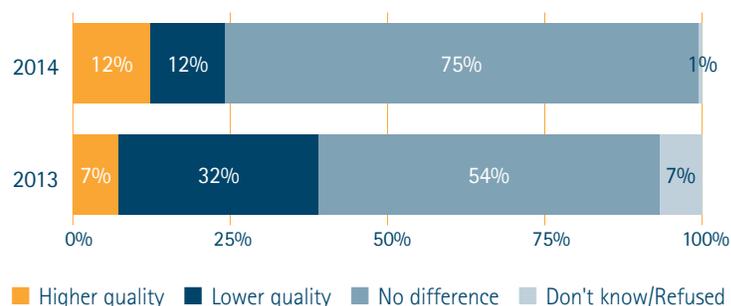
Cost: Experience around cost came closest to meeting expectations, though the impact on cost was not as strong as predicted. While close to half of the state's residents reported no change in what they paid for healthcare over the past year, 40% think they have paid more. This is slightly lower than the 47% who had expected costs to rise. (Figure 4)

Figure 2. During the past year, do you think you and your family have had more access to healthcare, less access, or there hasn't been much difference?*



*In 2013, asked as: "Under the healthcare reform law, do you think you and your family will have more access to healthcare, less access, or it won't make much difference?"

Figure 3. During the past year, do you think you and your family have received higher quality healthcare, lower quality, or there hasn't been much difference?*

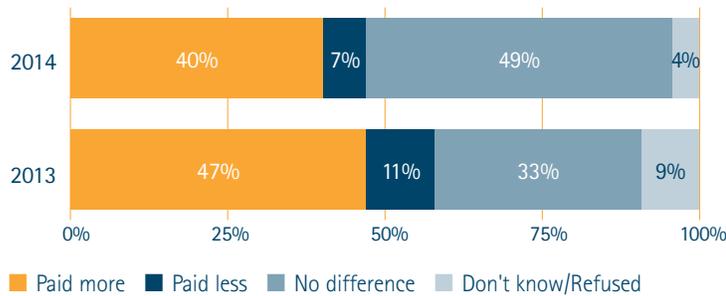


*In 2013, asked as: "Under the healthcare reform law, do you think you and your family will receive higher quality healthcare, lower quality, or it won't make much difference?"



HealthVoices

Figure 4. During the past year, do you think you and your family have paid more for healthcare overall, paid less, or there hasn't been much difference?*



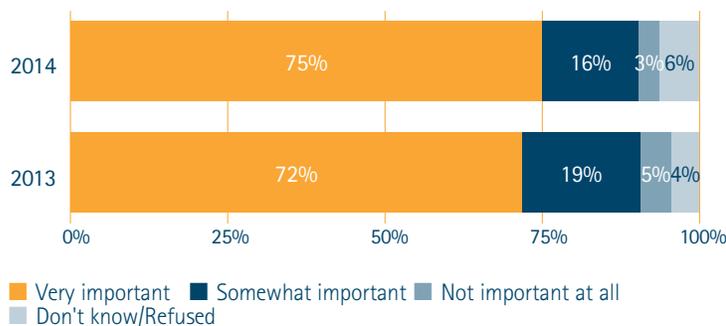
*In 2013, asked as: "Under the healthcare reform law, do you think you and your family will pay more for healthcare overall, pay less, or it won't make much difference?"

Public Policy Decisions

State officials made two key policy decisions around ACA implementation. First was the decision not to offer a state marketplace for health insurance. Georgians are split on this decision, with 44% approving and 44% expressing disapproval. They are more likely to *strongly* disapprove (27%) than to *strongly* approve (19%).

Georgia residents are less conflicted about the decision not to expand Medicaid, with only 36% approving of that choice. The 60% who disapprove includes 43% who *strongly* disapprove. These attitudes are not surprising in light of the continued importance Georgians assign to the Medicaid program. Just over nine in ten Georgians (91%) believe Medicaid is important for healthcare in Georgia, with 75% saying it is *very* important. (Figure 5)

Figure 5. In your opinion, how important is the Medicaid program for healthcare in Georgia?



Just over nine in ten Georgians (91%) believe Medicaid is important for healthcare in Georgia, with 75% saying it is very important.

Implications

The survey results bring to light several findings about what has happened in Georgia since the health insurance exchange opened in 2013. In two key areas—access to and quality of healthcare—Georgians report experiencing no differences over the past year. Cost, however, continues to be a key challenge. The cost of healthcare affects access, as those who cannot afford insurance are unable to get the healthcare they need. As Georgians grapple with cost issues, they continue to believe strongly in the Medicaid program designed to help those less fortunate.

About the Survey

TSG conducted a scientific telephone survey of 400 Georgia adults, including 100 respondents from cell phone-only households, in August 2014. The margin of sampling error for the entire sample is $\pm 4.8\%$.

On the other hand, half of respondents (51%) continue to strongly disapprove of requiring many Americans to purchase health insurance or else pay a tax penalty.



Recommended Citation

HealthVoices: Healthcare Survey Results, Beth Schapiro, PhD, President, The Schapiro Group, Healthcare Georgia Foundation, Issue 1, 2014, Publication #90, October 2014.

To view previous surveys on healthcare access, cost and quality, click [here](#).

Healthcare Georgia Foundation is a catalyst for better health and healthcare in Georgia.

Through strategic grantmaking, Healthcare Georgia Foundation supports organizations that drive positive change; promotes programs that improve health and healthcare among underserved individuals and communities; and connects people, partners and resources across Georgia.

HealthVoices is published periodically by Healthcare Georgia Foundation as an educational service to Georgians interested in health policy.

HealthVoices is available online at www.healthcaregeorgia.org. For further information, please contact Toni Almasy, Avatar Communications, 404-688-9005 or toni@getavatar.com.

Healthcare Georgia Foundation is a statewide, private independent foundation whose mission is to advance the health of all Georgians and to expand access to affordable, quality healthcare for underserved individuals and communities.

