



DATA BRIEF NO. 100 | OCTOBER 2021

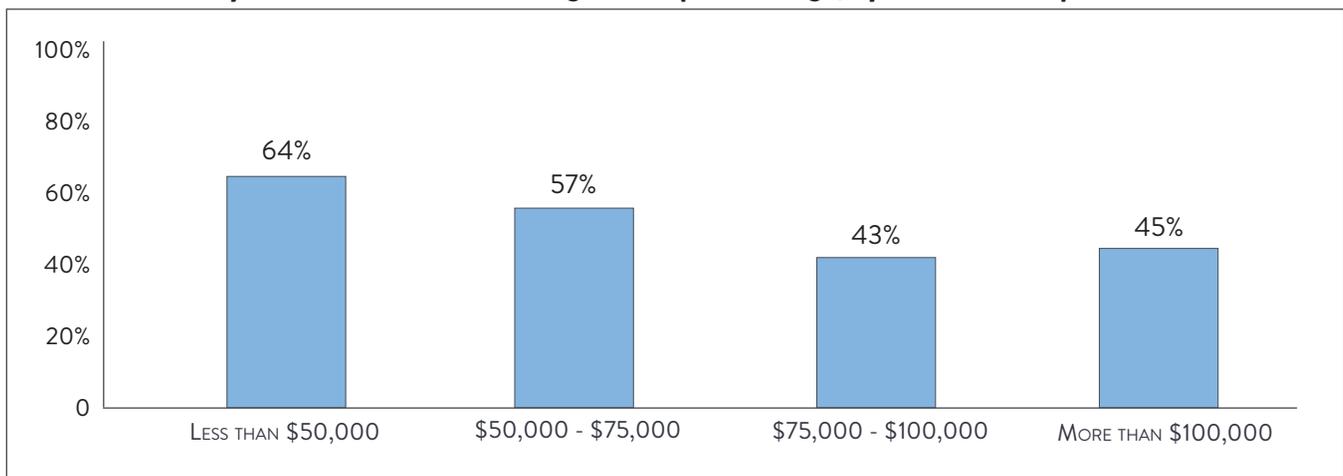
Georgia Residents Worried about High Drug Costs—Support a Range of Government Solutions

According to a survey of more than 950 Georgia adults conducted from April 12, 2021 to May 3, 2021, residents are concerned about prescription drug costs and express a strong desire to enact solutions.

Over half of all survey respondents (55%) reported being either “somewhat worried” or “very worried” about affording the cost of prescription drugs. Worry varied substantially by income group, with residents in households making less than \$50,000 per year experiencing the most worry (see Figure 1). However, it is important to note that a large percentage of households making \$75,000-\$100,000 and more than \$100,000 worried about affording prescription drugs.

Figure 1

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

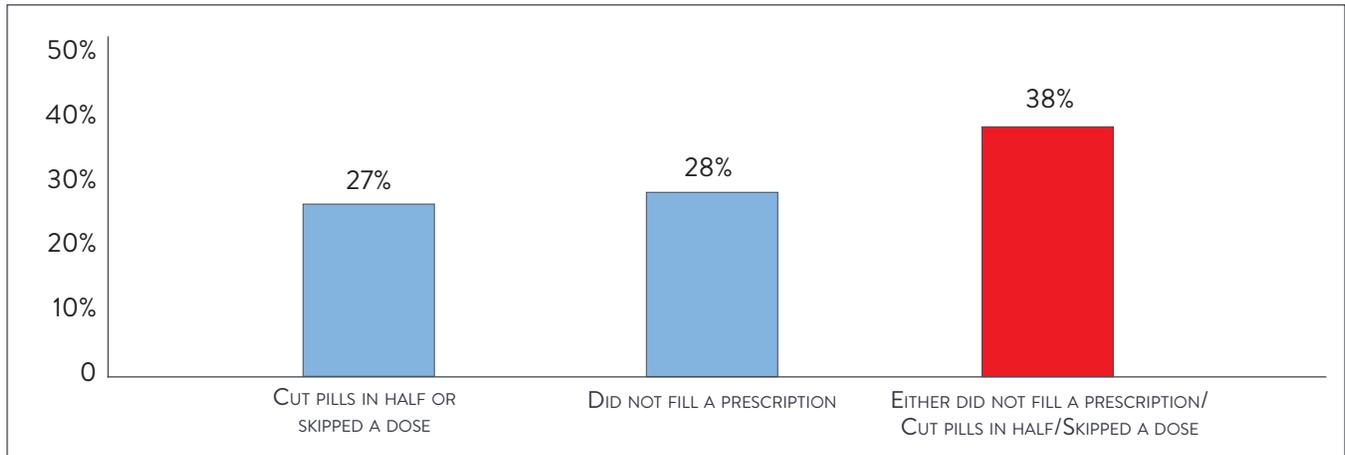


Source: 2021 Poll of Georgia Adults, Ages 18+, Altarum Healthcare Value Hub's Consumer Healthcare Experience State Survey

In addition to being worried about prescription drug affordability in the future, many Georgia residents experienced hardship in the prior 12 months due to the cost of prescription drugs. Indeed, cost concerns led over one-third (38%) of Georgia adults to not fill a prescription, cut pills in half or skip a dose of medicine (see Figure 2).

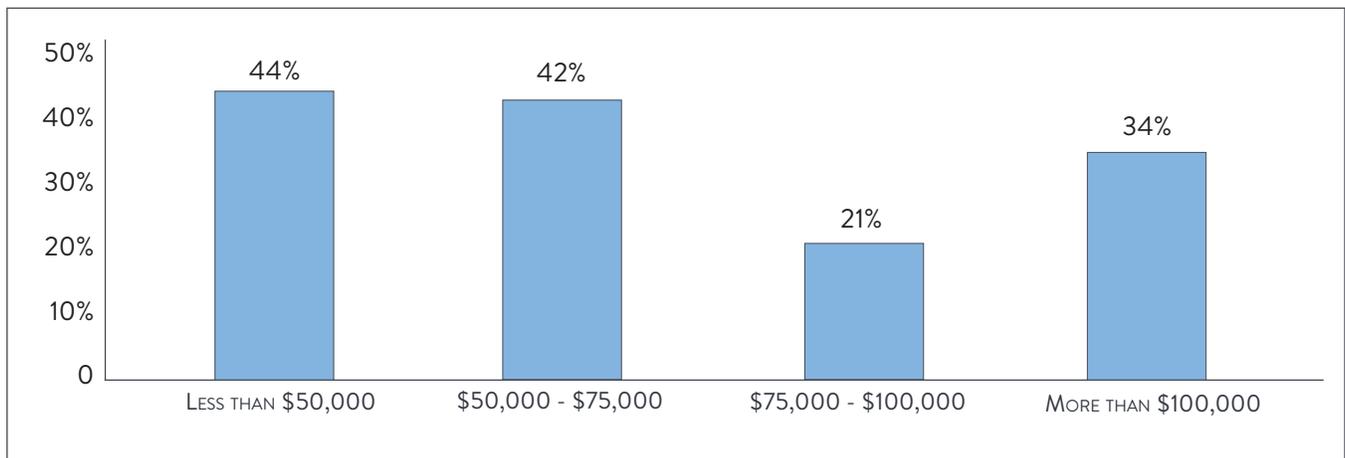
These hardships disproportionately impact people in lower income households. As Figure 3 shows, households making less than \$75,000¹ per year are more likely to have rationed their prescription medicines (by not filling a prescription, cutting pills in half or skipping a dose of medicine) than households making more than \$75,000 per year. Still, these hardships are alarmingly prevalent in high income households, with one-third of households earning more than \$100,000 per year rationing medication their doctor prescribed.

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



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

Figure 3
Did not Fill a Prescription, Cut Pills in Half or Skipped a Dose, by Income Group



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

Additionally, more than one-third of residents in every region of the state reported rationing medication due to cost (see Table 1). Thirty-three percent of adults in the Metro-Atlanta region cut pills in half, skipped a dose or did not fill a prescription in the prior 12 months, while adults in the East region fared much worse, with 44% struggling to afford prescription drugs.

Table 1
Georgia Adults with Drug Affordability Issues, by Region

REGION	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
EAST	32%	32%	44%
METRO-ATLANTA	22%	22%	33%
NORTH	30%	30%	39%
SOUTHWEST	26%	31%	37%

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

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

- 63%—Hospitals charging too much money
- 62%—Drug companies charging too much money
- 61%—Insurance companies charging too much money

In light of these prescription drug cost concerns—as well as concerns about high healthcare costs generally²—it is not surprising that Georgia adults are dissatisfied with the health system:

- Just 39% agreed or strongly agreed that “we have a great healthcare system in the U.S.”
- While 62% agreed or strongly agreed that “the system needs to change.”

When it comes to tackling high drug costs, Georgia adults endorsed a number of strategies:

- 84%—Authorize the Attorney General to take legal action to prevent price gouging or unfair prescription drug price hikes
- 84%—Ensure the cost of widely needed vaccines are affordable for all
- 84%—Require drug companies to provide advanced notice of price increases and information to justify those increases
- 83%—Set standard prices for drugs to make them affordable
- 81%—Prohibit drug companies from charging more in the U.S. than abroad
- 79%—Create a Prescription Drug Affordability Board to examine the evidence and establish acceptable costs for drugs

There is substantial support for government action on drug costs regardless of the respondents’ political affiliation (see Table 2).

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: <i>DRUG COMPANIES CHARGING TOO MUCH MONEY</i>	62%	58%	62%	65%
THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD AUTHORIZE THE ATTORNEY GENERAL TO TAKE LEGAL ACTION TO PREVENT PRICE GOUGING OR UNFAIR PRESCRIPTION DRUG PRICE HIKES	84%	81%	85%	85%
THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD ENSURE THE COST OF WIDELY NEEDED VACCINES ARE AFFORDABLE FOR ALL	84%	85%	84%	83%
THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD PROHIBIT DRUG COMPANIES FROM CHARGING MORE IN THE U.S. THAN ABROAD	81%	79%	81%	82%
THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD REQUIRE DRUG COMPANIES TO PROVIDE ADVANCED NOTICE OF PRICE INCREASES AND INFORMATION TO JUSTIFY THOSE INCREASES	84%	83%	84%	85%
THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD CREATE A PRESCRIPTION DRUG AFFORDABILITY BOARD TO EXAMINE THE EVIDENCE AND ESTABLISH ACCEPTABLE COSTS FOR DRUGS	79%	74%	84%	79%
THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD SET STANDARD PRICES FOR DRUGS TO MAKE THEM AFFORDABLE	83%	83%	84%	82%

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

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

- 69% would switch from a brand name to an equivalent generic drug if given the option
- 67% have tried to find out the cost of a drug beforehand

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 current COVID crisis is leading 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.

Notes

1. Median household income in Georgia was \$58,700 (2015-2019). U.S. Census, *Quick Facts*. Retrieved from: [U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: Georgia](https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/georgia)
2. For more detailed information about healthcare affordability burdens facing Georgia residents, see: Healthcare Value Hub, *Georgia Residents Struggle to Afford High Healthcare Costs; COVID Fears Add to Support for a Range of Government Solutions Across Party Lines*, Data Brief No. 97

Methodology

Altarum’s Consumer Healthcare Experience State Survey (CHES) is designed to elicit respondents’ unbiased views on a wide range of health system issues, including confidence using the health system, financial burden and views on fixes that might be needed.

The survey used a web panel from Dynata with a demographically balanced sample of approximately 1,000 respondents who live in Georgia. The survey was conducted in English and Spanish and was restricted to adults ages 18 and older. Respondents who finished the survey in less than half the median time were excluded from the final sample, leaving 981 cases for analysis. After those exclusions, the demographic composition of respondents was as follows, although not all demographic information has complete response rates:

Demographic Composition of Survey Respondents

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTIC	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE	DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTIC	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
HOUSEHOLD INCOME			GENDER		
Under \$20K	143	15%	MALE	441	45%
\$20K - \$30K	98	10%	FEMALE	540	55%
\$30K - \$40K	92	9%	INSURANCE STATUS		
\$40K - \$50K	91	9%	HEALTH INSURANCE THROUGH EMPLOYER OR FAMILY MEMBER’S EMPLOYER	306	31%
\$50K - \$60K	107	11%	HEALTH INSURANCE I BUY ON MY OWN	134	14%
\$60K - \$75K	90	9%	MEDICARE, COVERAGE FOR SENIORS AND THOSE WITH SERIOUS DISABILITIES	306	31%
\$75K - \$100K	123	13%	GEORGIA MEDICAID, COVERAGE FOR LOW-INCOME PEOPLE	85	9%
\$100K - \$150K	134	14%	TRICARE/MILITARY HEALTH SYSTEM	37	4%
\$150K+	103	10%	DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS (VA) HEALTH CARE	14	1%
PARTY AFFILIATION			NO COVERAGE OF ANY TYPE	65	7%
REPUBLICAN	340	35%	I DON’T KNOW	34	3%
DEMOCRAT	387	39%	HEALTH STATUS		
NEITHER	254	26%	EXCELLENT	188	19%
AGE			VERY GOOD	331	34%
18-24	293	30%	GOOD	305	31%
25-34	157	16%	FAIR	121	12%
35-44	102	11%	POOR	36	4%
45-54	80	8%			
55-64	144	15%			
65+	186	19%			

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

Note: Percentages in the body of the brief are based on weighted values, while the data presented in the demographic table is unweighted.



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.

Contact the Hub: 2000 M Street, NW, Suite 400, Washington, DC 20036
 (202) 828-5100 | www.HealthcareValueHub.org | @HealthValueHub