

## Polls Show Americans Struggling To Pay For Health Care

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A new study reports that about one-fourth of Americans say they've struggled in the last 12 months to pay for health care, [Reuters](#) reports.

Baby boomers were the most likely to put off medical care, the study from the Center for Healthcare Improvement said. In all, "17.4 percent of households reported postponing or delaying care over the past year."

"Americans pay more per capita for health care than people in any other country, yet have high rates of infant mortality, diabetes, untreated heart disease and other conditions. Americans are often dissatisfied with their access to care. Thomson Reuters -- the parent company of Reuters news agency -- used its annual Pulse survey that queries 100,000 households to get information about health behavior."

Income was also "a big factor -- homes where people made less than \$50,000 a year were three times as likely to say they had trouble paying for medical bills as homes with combined incomes of \$100,000 or more" (Fox, 6/21).

Copayments are on the rise, [The Boston Globe](#) reports: "Not that long ago, such dilemmas were typically faced by lower-income families, often on publicly subsidized insurance. But with many consumers struggling to pay rising health care costs amid today's shrinking family budgets, these tough choices are becoming commonplace - even among families with employer-provided health insurance, consumer advocates say. 'Our medical debt resolution program is hearing repeatedly that copayments are a problem,' said Mark Rukavina, executive director of the Boston-based Access Project, a nonprofit organization that helps consumers with health care issues. 'Previously it was the uninsured,' Rukavina said. 'Now we are seeing people with insurance, but they are struggling to pay their bills'" (Lazar, 6/21).

[The New York Times](#) reports news from a NYTimes/CBS News poll regarding public support for a government-run health plan: "The poll found that most Americans would be willing to pay higher taxes so everyone could have health insurance and that they said the government could do a better job of holding down health-care costs than the private sector. Yet the survey also revealed considerable unease about the impact of heightened government involvement, on both the economy and the quality of the respondents' own medical care" (Sack and Connelly, 6/20).

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