



# LONE STAR PERSPECTIVES

THE STATE OF HEALTH CARE IN TEXAS

We surveyed Texans to get a better understanding of their perspectives on health care. Knowing what's working – and what's not – is key to driving change to elevate health care for all.



EXPRESS SCRIPTS®



## Elevating health for all

In Texas, and across our country, there is tremendous potential for progress in health care across the spectrum. As a health care partner committed to improving health for all, one of the ways we bring about change is by listening.

We recently surveyed consumers in Texas to understand their perspectives when it comes to accessing care, finding resources and prioritizing whole person health. The results revealed the challenges related to affordability and access, and highlighted the need for greater virtual care and mental health support.

These results illuminated for our teams the need to drive change for expanded capabilities beyond traditional pharmacy benefit services that work together – seamlessly – to provide better health care solutions. And that's exactly where we're going, together.

Express Scripts, now part of Evernorth<sup>SM</sup> health services, is building on a legacy – designed to redefine health care leveraging world-class capabilities across pharmacy, benefits management, care and intelligence.



**EVERNORTH**<sup>SM</sup>



Recently, we probed into the attitudes, beliefs, and actions among Texas residents to uncover their top health care concerns. Here's what we heard Texans say:



### **VIRTUAL CARE** **Bridging gaps to accessing care**

Telemedicine is one way to bridge the geographic gap to accessing care, and most Texans used some form of virtual care in the past year. Overall, they had a positive experience and most plan to use virtual care again.



### **INCREASING COSTS** **Managing impact and dollars**

Like most Americans, Texans are concerned about the costs of health care – medications, premiums, and out-of-pocket expenses. While they felt their financial health was strong, there is growing concern about the impact of rising costs on their pocketbook.



### **MENTAL HEALTH** **Acceptance doesn't equal understanding**

More people are talking about mental health than ever before, and for those in Texas, they agree they are comfortable talking to their doctor. But some aren't sure where to get care, or that it's even different from seeing a medical doctor.



### **ACCESS** **Help is out there... but where?**

Not everyone in Texas has the same access to the health care they need. Factors such as levels of education and proximity to the city center all played a role in Texans telling us help is out there but it takes time to get it.

## LONE STAR PERSPECTIVE 1:

# VIRTUAL CARE

## Bridging gaps to accessing care

Communicating via digital tools, or telemedicine, is certainly not a new practice, but its use increased significantly due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite citing challenges with access to health care, about half of Texans have used some form of virtual care in the past year, **an increase of about 114% from before 2020.**

### KEY INSIGHTS CONTRIBUTING TO TEXANS' ATTITUDES



#### Satisfaction

More than **8 out of 10** of survey respondents were slightly, somewhat, and **very satisfied with their virtual care experience.**



#### Demographics

**Latinx Texans were least likely** to use virtual care, and their **satisfaction is the lowest** among the racial groups. However, **54% say they will use some form of virtual care in the future.**



#### Future-Focused

Among those who have used virtual care, **a majority (56%) plan to continue to use** a form of virtual care in the future.



#### Location

Those in **rural areas** are most likely to plan to **continue using virtual care** in the upcoming year (61%), followed by those in urban areas (57%) and suburban areas (53%).

### GENERATIONAL INSIGHTS ON TELEMEDICINE

#### Ages 50-64 are more likely to ...

- Review test or lab results with a doctor
- Discuss additional Rx refills or continuing use of a Rx

#### Ages 30-49 and 50-64 are more likely to ...

- Follow up with a doctor about a new Rx
- Discuss a healthy lifestyle/living with a health professional





With more education and awareness of digital tools, we can bring health care professionals and information directly to patients' fingertips, especially those in younger and minority or underserved communities, which can reduce frustrations and increase better health outcomes.

**Also, a critical component to reaching minority or underserved communities virtually is having providers who look and speak like those trying to access care.**



## The Evernorth Difference

When patients have the ability to connect with health care providers where and when they want, their chances of having positive outcomes increases.

**MDLIVE** – part of Evernorth – specializes in providing 24/7, on-demand, online telehealth services for patients, hospitals, physician groups, employers and payers. For more information, visit [MDLive.com](https://MDLive.com).



## LONE STAR PERSPECTIVE 2: INCREASING COSTS Managing impact and dollars

The rise of health care costs continues to be a prominent issue on the national stage, and survey respondents in the state of Texas agree – costs aren't going down, and their concerns about affording their medications is going up.

Across the board, the top three issues Texans are most concerned about are:

- **Increasing insurance costs and premiums**
- **Out-of-pocket health care costs**
- **The high cost of prescription drugs**

Trust is an important factor in understanding changes in health care and what that means for the cost of care. Texans agree their physician or doctor is the best source for this information and for Black Texans in particular, there is a strong level of trust when information comes from their community and religious organizations.



49%

say insurance premiums  
are **increasing**



46%

say out-of-pocket costs for  
health care are **too high**

## SPOTLIGHT

### LOWER COSTS WHILE PROVIDING HIGH QUALITY CARE.

Plan sponsors – employers, health plans and government agencies – want to keep medications affordable and accessible for patients. Leveraging relationships with trusted advisors is key to getting patients to start, and stay on, their therapies as prescribed. Evernorth and Express Scripts' cost containment strategies can drive plan trend down while still providing patient access to the care providers they need.

## LONE STAR PERSPECTIVE 3:

# MENTAL HEALTH

## Acceptance doesn't equal understanding

Like most Americans, the challenges of the pandemic took its toll on Texans' mental health and wellness. More than one-fourth of Texas said their mental health declined in 2020. And of those who say **COVID-19 negatively impacted their mental health, less than 1 in 5 who rate their mental health as poor are seeing a mental health professional regularly.**

When it comes to characterizing mental and physical health attributes, Texans mostly don't make a distinction between the two. **The majority of Texans (74%) view mental health like any other illness** and are comfortable talking to their doctor about it. But there are some key differences among racial groups:



**Latinx Texans are less comfortable** talking to their doctor about mental health.



**Black Texans** expressed **COVID-19 is still a high concern** impacting their mental well being.

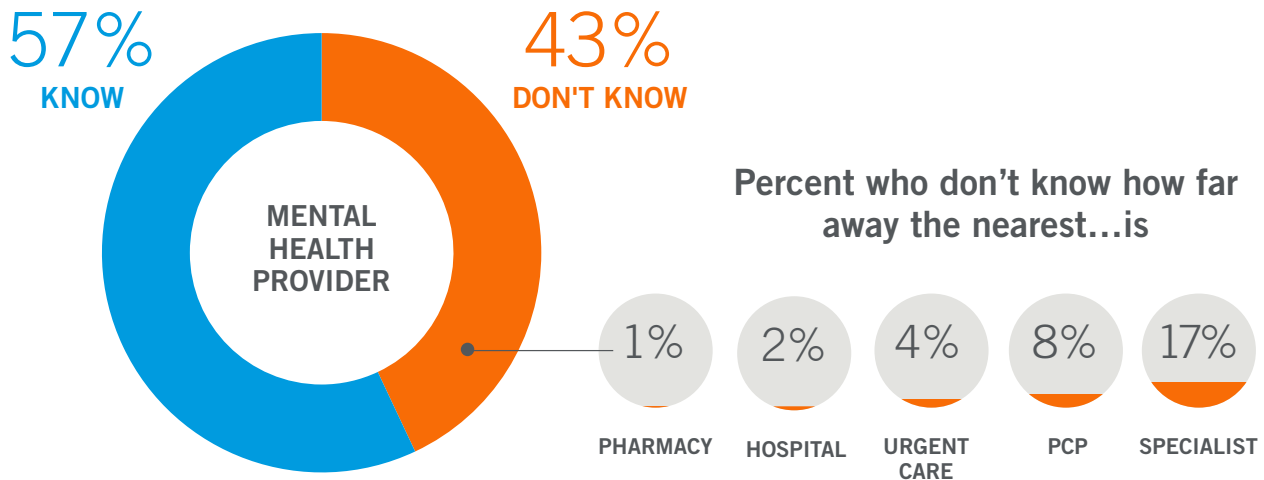


**White Texans** are most likely to say that the system treats **physical health as more important** than mental health (57%), followed by Black Texans (43%) and Latinx Texans (36%).



Despite the majority of consumers viewing mental and physical health equally, Texans perceive that the health care system treats physical health as more important than mental health.

This perception can ultimately impact accessing care, if Texans don't know where to look for help with their mental health concerns.



**Two in five don't know how far away the nearest mental health provider is;** very few don't know how to find other types of health professionals.

**Younger Texans (18–49) collectively reported a decline in their mental health** last year and are more likely to rate their mental health as lower compared to older generations.

While this data validates progress in reducing the mental health stigma and leveling the playing field to talk to their doctors about mental health resources, there's still work to be done. If patients are connecting physical and mental health concerns together, it may be more difficult to find the right kind of help they need for their specific situation.



## The Evernorth Difference

### Behavioral Health Support

As part of Evernorth's Care+ capability, managing behavioral health has a direct impact on health care costs. People diagnosed with a behavioral health condition, such as anxiety, depression, or substance use disorder, who receive outpatient care had lower total health care costs – up to \$1,377 per person in the first year compared to those who didn't. Not only that, the savings impact was sustainable over time with a **two-year cost reduction of up to \$3,109 per person.**



## LONE STAR PERSPECTIVE 4:

# ACCESS

## Help is out there...but where?

Having access to affordable health care services positively impacts whole person health. When patients can regularly and reliably access health services, the greater the chances of preventing and treating disease and illness, which can elevate health for all. While most Texans rate their ability to get the health care they need as excellent or good, factors such as proximity to urban centers and education can impact perceptions of having quality care.



Most Texans say the nearest hospital is **20 min away**



1 in 10 Texans say they had to wait **3 weeks or more** to see a doctor



Those in **rural areas** of Texas are more likely to **travel farther and wait longer** for care

### EDUCATION AND INCOME IMPACT ACCESS TO CARE





## THE COVID-19 EFFECT ON CARE

We all know the pandemic presented challenges for everyone, but surprisingly, less than half of Texans said COVID-19 negatively impacted their care. Less than a quarter of respondents found it harder to schedule an appointment and fewer than 10% weren't able to see a preferred doctor or experienced a delay in receiving a prescription. One group, however, was significantly impacted by COVID-19: Our study found that **26% of Latinx Texans experienced longer wait times for an appointment.**

### SPOTLIGHT

At Evernorth, elevating health for all means working to help every person access the care they need. During the COVID-19 pandemic, we stood up walk-in wellness clinics to help make it easier for patients who may have had trouble getting care they need to see a doctor.

**“I’ve been homeless for a while now and sometimes I feel like I’ve been completely forgotten about. Thank you so much for welcoming me and checking my numbers.”**

- Participant from the Express Scripts/Evernorth Walk-in Wellness Event in Austin, TX

## EXPRESS SCRIPTS PERSPECTIVE: Health care needs to work harder.

Understanding Texans' insights, feelings, beliefs, attitudes and actions can put a spotlight on the areas where we can bring about the changes the health care industry needs. At Evernorth, by working together, across the health care spectrum, we can continue moving forward in ways that are strategic, innovative and connected, to drive progress onward, and upward.

**For more details on our survey and how we're driving health forward, please contact your Express Scripts representative today.**

Evernorth creates and connects premier health services offerings, including benefits management, pharmacy, care solutions, insights and intelligence. With an open approach to partnering across the health care landscape, we deliver innovative and flexible solutions for health plans, employers and government programs. Evernorth capabilities are powered by our family of companies, including Express Scripts, Accredo, eviCore and MDLIVE, along with holistic Evernorth platforms and solutions that elevate health and drive progress for people and businesses.

We conducted an online survey among a representative sample aged 18+ in Texas using the probability-based Ipsos KnowledgePanel® tool. This study was conducted in both English and Spanish from Sept. 24 – Oct. 12, 2021 and had a sample size of n=1,518 with the margin of sampling error of ± 3.4%.

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