

ISSUE BRIEF

Perspectives on Health and the Health Care System: Views of Likely Voters in Georgia



Georgia's midterm elections this November will shape health policy in our state for years to come. That's why Georgia Health Initiative® (the Initiative) commissioned statewide polling in June 2026 to hear from Georgia voters on how they are experiencing health care in our state and what changes they would like to see made.

The Initiative partnered with the Survey Research Center at the University of Georgia School of Public and International Affairs, who administered the poll among likely voters in Georgia.* Poll questions were shaped by focus groups held with voters across the state, asking about their experiences accessing care and navigating the system.

This Issue Brief highlights **KEY FINDINGS** and insights that emerged from the statewide poll, along with select quotes from focus group participants. Overall, the research found that Georgia voters across party lines, income levels, ages, and geographic areas agree that:

- Health care costs too much and does not prioritize patients' needs
- Georgia's health care system is complicated and falls short in coverage, access, and quality of care.

* The full report, entitled Georgia Voters' Perceptions and Priorities on Health Care: 2026 Polling Results, and an overview of the methodology can be found at <https://georgiahealthinitiative.org/our-work/publications-and-releases>.

Suggested citation: Georgia Health Initiative. Issue Brief: Perspectives on Health and the Health Care System: Views of Likely Voters in Georgia. Available at <https://georgiahealthinitiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/08/Issue-Brief-Perspectives-2026.pdf>

KEY FINDING

Health care in Georgia costs too much and is an ongoing source of financial worry—even for those with insurance.

More than **3 in 5** voters (62%) say that health care is not affordable.

The cost of care is a strong factor in how Georgia voters experience the health care system. Over a third of Georgia voters (36%) reported skipping or delaying care in the past year due to cost.

Also, when asked about health-related causes of financial concern in the next 12 months, roughly half of Georgia voters indicated they are worried about **unexpected medical bills, copays/deductibles, monthly premiums, and the cost of prescription drugs.**

Across Georgia voters, 84% agree that “the health care system is more about money than people” — a view shared by a majority of Republicans, Independents, and Democrats alike.

“[A big unexpected medical bill] would break me.”

— Voter from Warner Robins

“I make decent money, but it seems like the goalpost keeps getting moved.”

— Voter from Kingsland

“I was supposed to get a mammogram. And it was going to be a few thousand dollars, and [so] I didn’t get it...So by the time I got it, it was a year after. And it’s like, oh, you have a tumor... I feel if I got [the mammogram] when they [first] told me to, maybe my outcome would have been different.”

— Voter from Atlanta

KEY FINDING

Cost and provider shortages can make it harder for some to get care, especially in rural Georgia.

22% of voters said they found it difficult to access needed care within the past year.

Georgia voters are split on how they view the overall functioning of the health care system, with roughly half rating it as excellent/good, and the other half as fair/poor. But they are united in recognizing that disparities exist, as 84% agree that the quality of care received depends on the type of insurance you have, and 79% agree that the quality of care depends on where you live.

Challenges in accessing care included: **high costs, lack of specialty and behavioral health providers, and gaps in service provision in rural areas of the state.**

“It seems like rural doctors have gone away.”

— Voter from Pine Mountain

“The system that’s broken in the state of Georgia is the mental health system...if you do find anybody that you can afford, they’re not taking new patients, they’re maxed out...your family member doesn’t get the kind of care that they need.”

— Voter from Warner Robins



KEY FINDING

The next governor should prioritize health care.

Georgia voters across the political spectrum agree that the next governor should prioritize the health care issues listed below. Support crosses party lines, with strong majorities of Democrats, Independents, and Republicans alike naming each one an important issue.

Percent of Voters Who Indicate a Given Issue is Very Important or Important

Health Care Issues	All	By Party Affiliation		
		Dem.	Ind.	Rep.
Increasing access to behavioral health services (mental health counseling and addiction treatment)	86%	96%	88%	76%
Making information about the price of health care more available to patients	85%	90%	88%	80%
Making health care more affordable	85%	95%	86%	75%
Making sure everyone has access to health insurance coverage	81%	98%	82%	65%
Increasing access to maternal health services	81%	95%	85%	69%
Increasing the number of health care providers across Georgia	71%	80%	63%	63%

KEY FINDING

Leaders should listen to constituent concerns and take action.

77% of voters say a gubernatorial candidate's views on health care is an important factor they will take into consideration when marking their ballot.

Only **40%** of voters feel that elected officials listen to what their constituents have to say in addressing health care policy.



Across party lines, Georgia voters are sharing the challenges they face when they or their loved ones access the health care system. They want change and are looking to state leaders to make health care more affordable, accessible, and for the system to work better for Georgians.

“I would like to see a lot more bipartisanship when it comes to things such as health care, rather than ‘this side is for it and this side isn’t’... It’s a lot of conflict for some people where I think there should be more teamwork when it comes to politics for something as serious as health care.”

— Voter from Atlanta

“I would like to hear the next candidate for governor say that [they] will be running for the people of Georgia and not the Democrat or Republican Party.”

— Voter from Dacula

By listening and acting on what people are saying, Georgia leaders can reimagine our health care system and begin to restore trust among the people it serves.