



The Associated Press-NORC
Center for Public Affairs Research

National Survey Examines Perceptions of Health Care Provider Quality

Chicago, July 20, 2014—The [Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research](#) has released the results of a major survey examining the public’s opinions about what it means to be a quality health care provider in the United States. The survey, funded by the [Robert Wood Johnson Foundation](#), sheds new light on how American adults perceive the quality of their health care and doctors, as well as the information they use and trust when making health care decisions. The survey produces new and actionable data during a crucial period of Affordable Care Act (ACA) implementation. Interviews were conducted with 1,002 adults age 18 and over.

“This survey is designed to provide meaningful data on how consumers understand, trust, and use the health care information available to them,” said Trevor Tompson, vice president for public affairs research for [NORC at the University of Chicago](#) and director of the AP-NORC Center. “This survey provides answers to key questions around Americans’ perceptions of health care quality, such as: What are the main factors people consider when choosing a doctor? How do Americans evaluate the available information on their providers? What is more important when choosing a doctor: cost or quality? The survey also explored whether people think public reporting requirements would improve health care in the U.S.”

Key findings from the study include:

- When it comes to defining provider quality, most Americans tend to focus on certain aspects of quality relating to doctor-patient interactions and doctors’ personality traits, rather than the effectiveness of the care provided or the patient’s own health outcomes.
- Consumers agree with health policy experts in principle that public reporting requirements for doctors would improve health care quality. Overwhelming majorities say requiring doctors to report the effectiveness of their treatments and patient satisfaction with care would improve the quality of care provided in the United States.
- Yet, this survey shows that less than a quarter of consumers are receiving provider quality information. Most people are not very confident they could find provider quality information they can trust on their own, including direct comparisons of physicians.
- Americans report that they would trust word-of-mouth and personal recommendations from doctors far more than provider quality data coming from the government or third parties.
- Getting information on the cost of provider care is even more challenging for Americans than finding information about provider quality. A third of Americans say it is easy to find information

they trust related to the costs of provider care. Fewer say it's easy to find data that compares a provider's costs and quality.

- About half of Americans believe that higher quality health care generally comes at a higher cost, while 37 percent say there is no real relationship between quality and cost.
- Despite the fact that more Americans are now insured as a result of the ACA, those without insurance face more challenges in finding information about provider quality and cost; at the same time, they are more likely than the insured to think public reporting of such information would improve the overall quality of care doctors provide.

Additional information, including the survey's complete topline findings, can be found on the AP-NORC Center's website at www.apnorc.org.

About the Survey

The survey was conducted by the Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research between May 27 and June 18, 2014. It was funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. This random-digit-dial (RDD) survey of the 50 states and the District of Columbia was conducted via telephone with 1,002 adults age 18 and older. The sample included 595 respondents on landlines and 407 respondents on cell phones. Interviews were conducted in both English and Spanish, depending on respondent preference. All interviews were completed by professional interviewers who were carefully trained on the specific survey for this study. The overall margin of error was +/- 4.0 percentage points, including the design effect resulting from the complex sample design.

NORC at the University of Chicago

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