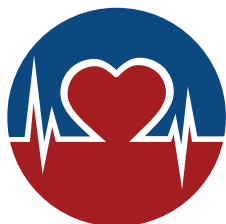


December 2021

Cardiovascular Care & Medication Access

A National Survey of Patients



PARTNERSHIP TO ADVANCE
**Cardiovascular
Health**



Introduction

More than 121 million adults in the United States live with cardiovascular disease. This includes conditions such as heart failure, coronary heart disease and high blood pressure. In fact, cardiovascular disease remains the number one killer of Americans.

Many people with cardiovascular disease rely on prescription medication to help avoid that fate. By normalizing blood pressure or lowering LDL cholesterol, patients and their health care providers can lower the risk of heart attack and stroke.

But national polling reveals that working with one's provider to identify, access and maintain treatment can be difficult.

This report highlights findings from a Partnership to Advance Cardiovascular Health poll of 350 cardiovascular patients from across the country. Responses reveal patients' attitudes about their heart medication and their expectations of how providers and health insurers should support their treatment path. Results also indicate the barriers patients face along the way — and policy measures that could encourage more patient-centered cardiovascular care.

Finding the Right Heart Medication

Starting a medication regimen is a serious decision. Patients value finding a medication that not only addresses their heart condition but also works with their lifestyle and comorbidities.

When it came to selecting a medication, therefore, a majority of patients (75%) reported they researched or talked with their doctor about the medication before they began taking it.

Patients also reported that their medication provided value on several different levels.

When asked about the importance of their heart medication, PATIENTS AGREED:



99%

It helps reduce my risk of heart attack or stroke.

87%

It gives me peace of mind.

75%

I depend on it to go about my day-to-day life.

Attitudes about Health Care Providers

Patients also reported clear opinions about how the health care system should work. They overwhelmingly saw health care providers as trusted professionals who help patients navigate treatment decisions and improve their health.

PATIENTS AGREED:

97%

Doctors and nurses help heart patients live healthier lives.

91%

Doctors can be trusted to know what is best for heart patients.



96%

Doctors and nurses work with heart patients to find the right treatment path.

99%

My doctor's role is to work side by side with me to find the right treatment path.

Attitudes About Health Insurers

Respondents agreed that, while insurance companies can help patients live healthier lives too, they should not be the ones driving treatment changes. Only 28% of patients agreed that “Health insurance companies can be trusted to know what is best for patients.”

PATIENTS AGREED:



99%

My insurance company should allow me to continue taking prescribed medications that work well for me.



96%

My insurance company should not try to influence which medications I take.



99%

Once my doctor and I select a medication, my insurance company should help me access that medication.

Obstacles & Delays

Patients don't always experience the health care system in the way they envision it, however. Responses suggested that health insurance companies, intended to facilitate patient care, can instead pose barriers.

Roughly one in every 10 patients reported that their insurance company:



Delayed access to prescribed medication



Denied coverage for prescribed medication



Covered insurer-preferred drugs rather than prescribed medication



Switched their prescribed medication for non-medical reasons

In Their Own Words

Some patients were fortunate to report few challenges in getting their prescribed medications. Others, however, reported facing non-medical switching, unmanageable out-of-pocket costs and insurance red tape.

“Insurance company periodically tries to make me switch.”

“After my open heart surgery the insurance did not want to pay for my blood thinner.”

“I always need prior authorization for my medication!!”

“I had to choose a medicine my insurance would cover versus what was right for me.”

“I take one drug the insurance company won't pay for. I pay for it myself.”

“Insurance company changed my insulin to a cheaper brand without any warning.”

“It's so hard to find a med that works great and then insurance says NO.”

“I have changed medication twice to find something the insurance would cover.”

“My insurance provider wouldn't cover the medication that was prescribed by my doctor. So I had to settle for something else.”

Finding Policy Solutions

Policy change could help bridge the gap between the health care system patients envision and the one they actually experience.

PATIENTS AGREED:



99%

Policies should allow for personalized care, not one-size-fits-all approaches, for heart patients.

95%

Doctors and nurses should have the autonomy to decide what's right for heart patients.

They also reported support for policies that would limit insurance companies' overreach. This included limits on utilization management delays and a clear appeals process for patients struggling to access their medication.

PATIENTS AGREED:



90%

Insurance companies need fair limits on how long they can delay treatment access for patients.

98%

Patients need a straightforward appeals process for when their treatment is delayed or denied.

Finally, patients were adamant that, once they found success with a prescribed medication, they should not be subjected to non-medical switching.

PATIENTS AGREED:



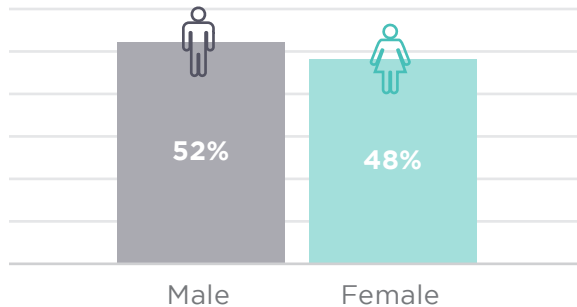
96%

Insurers should not be able to switch patients' medication for the insurance company's own financial purposes.

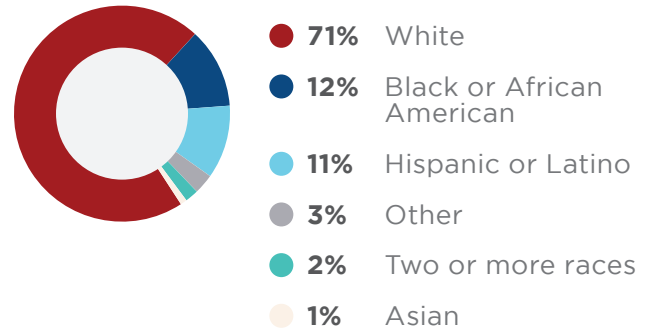
Demographics

Online polls ran November 3-8, 2021 and captured responses from 350 cardiovascular patients. Some respondents have already experienced a cardiac event. Others are living with high blood pressure, atrial fibrillation, high cholesterol, high triglycerides, obesity, diabetes, hypertension or heart failure.

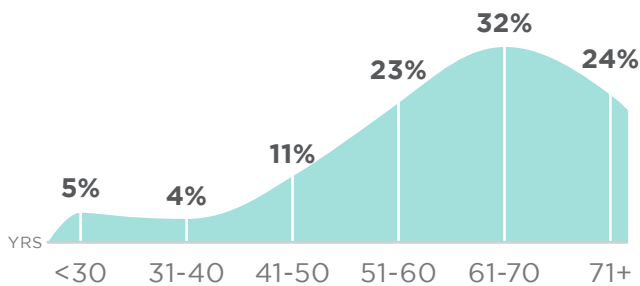
GENDER



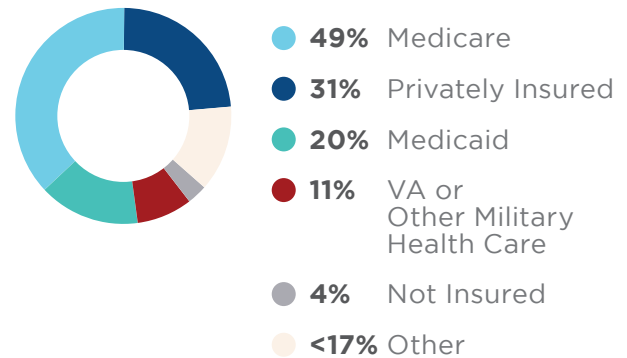
RACE



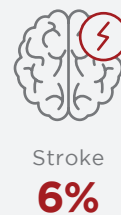
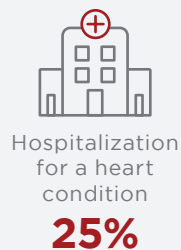
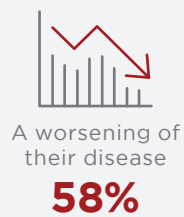
AGE



INSURANCE



PATIENTS HAVE EXPERIENCED:





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About the Partnership to Advance Cardiovascular Health

The Partnership to Advance Cardiovascular Health works to advance public policies and practices that result in more treatment options and improved cardiovascular health for heart patients around the world.



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