



TOOLKIT
Utilizing and Sharing Pulse Poll Findings
Phase Two Release
Health and Well-being

THE INFORMATION IN THIS TOOLKIT IS EMBARGOED UNTIL TUESDAY, JUNE 7, 2022

About Pulse:

At The Colorado Health Foundation, we believe in the importance of listening, and that's why each year we listen to Coloradans from across the state through our annual poll. From the increasing cost of living and lack of affordable housing to health care and mental well-being, our poll takes the pulse of Coloradans on a range of important issues this year and every year – to inform policy that advances health equity.

About Our Phased Release:

This year, we're releasing the findings from Pulse, our statewide poll, in three phases, and we're providing a variety of options to engage with the data that interests you most. This phase covers results related to health and well-being, including mental health and drug and alcohol use. We previously shared results related to cost of living and housing, and later this month, we will provide a deep-dive understanding of all the challenges that impact Coloradans most and the solutions they'd like to see prioritized.

How To Utilize The Findings:

The Pulse Poll findings are provided to the public to more deeply understand Colorado's most pressing challenges, the personal impacts of those challenges and desired solutions. It is our hope that nonprofits and advocates across the state utilize the findings for their own purposes. Please share the results far and wide, and consider incorporating them into your own materials as you build the case for a better and more equitable Colorado.

This document provides information and customizable examples to easily promote the findings with your networks. We encourage you to make these suggestions your own.

You will be able to access the findings at www.COPulsePoll.org. We've also provided some of the toplines toward the end of this document.

Suggested Social Media Content

Hashtags:

@COPulsePoll, @COHealthFdn, #COHealth, #COPulsePoll, #COLeg

Suggested Posts

Facebook/LinkedIn

- People in Colorado place health and well-being as one of their biggest concerns, second to the cost of living and housing, according to our Pulse: The Colorado Health Foundation Poll 2022 findings. What else is on their minds? Find out more: COPulsePoll.org/results.
- The Colorado Health Foundation's Pulse Poll reveals that about two-thirds of Coloradans say the cost of health care is a problem – but cost isn't the only challenge facing respondents. Learn more about their other concerns by visiting COPulsePoll.org/results.
- The last year has been tough for Coloradans' health, with nearly half of all Coloradans postponed medical or dental care, and six in ten Coloradans have experienced mental health strain such as anxiety, depression, loneliness or stress. Learn more about these trends and other health challenges people are facing at COPulsePoll.org/results.
- Despite open schools and businesses, readily available vaccines and a growing economy, mental health strain is on the rise—61% of Coloradans say they have experienced anxiety, depression, loneliness or stress in the last year. Learn more at COPulsePoll.org/results.
- People in Colorado are making difficult decisions to afford their homes, including working more, skipping meals, or postponing medical and dental care – with many citing a lack of insurance coverage and financial instability as the reasons.
- Learn more about how your neighbors are handling health care and mental health issues at COPulsePoll.org/results.

Twitter

- .@COPulsePoll found that people in Colorado rank health care and mental health care as top concerns. Learn more about their worries and how they're impacting lives at COPulsePoll.org/results. #COHealth
- Two-thirds of Coloradans say the cost of health care is a problem – but cost isn't the only challenge facing people in the state. Want to learn more about how your neighbors feel about their health and well being? Check out COPulsePoll.org/results.
- Concern about alcohol and drug use is increasing: here's how many people in CO considered it a serious problem over the past three years, according to @COPulsePoll:
 - 2020: 45%
 - 2021: 50%
 - 2022: 58%Find out more from @COPulsePoll at COPulsePoll.org/results.
- People across the state who need mental health support are struggling to access – and afford it with 66% of all Coloradans ,and 77% of uninsured people, say costs for accessing care were a challenge. Learn more about the challenges people in our state face with @COPulsePoll at COPulsePoll.org/results.

Social Media Graphics

Majorities of Coloradans think the cost of health care, mental health and alcohol and drug use are extremely or very serious problems.

Cost of health care



Mental health



Alcohol and drug use



Extremely Serious

Very Serious

Somewhat Serious

Not Too Serious

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DELAYING CARE 
impacts those without health insurance

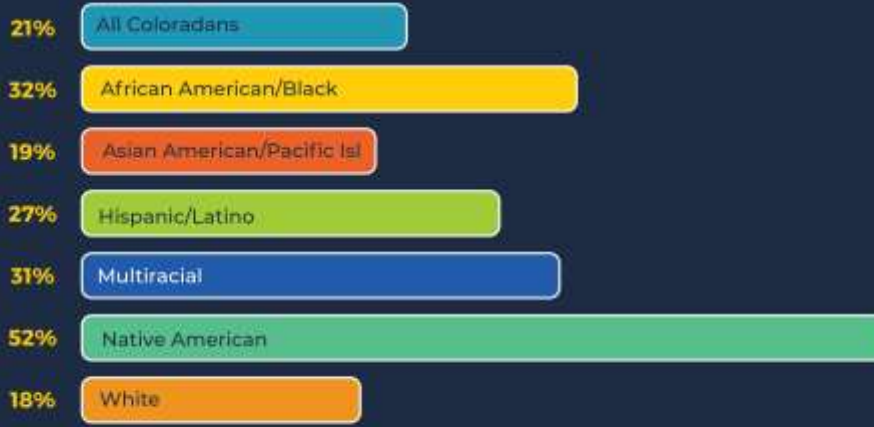


65% of uninsured Coloradans postponed medical or dental care in the last year, compared to almost half of all Coloradans (45%).



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Many Coloradans of color say they – or someone they know – have been **treated unfairly** because of race or ethnicity when seeking health care services



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Suggested Email, Blog or Newsletter Content

Subject: Survey findings show rising concerns about health and well-being

The Colorado Health Foundation recently completed their annual survey of people across the state. The Pulse Poll interviewed nearly 3,000 Coloradans to more deeply understand Colorado's most pressing challenges, the personal impacts of those challenges and desired solutions. The results continue to demonstrate the critical importance of our work.

On the heels of sharing that most Coloradans feel increasingly overwhelmed by economic pressures, a majority are also expressing increased concerns over their health and well-being. Of top concern is that over the last year, nearly half of all Coloradans have postponed medical or dental care, and six in ten Coloradans have experienced mental health strain such as anxiety, depression, loneliness or stress. In addition to expressing a need for medical care or mental health support, significant percentages of people report challenges in accessing that care, including being concerned about the cost of services, availability of appointments, and uncertainty in where to find providers. Those challenges are amplified for people of color, LGBTQ people, younger respondents, and those with disabilities.

Alcohol and drug consumption also has increased for 13% of Coloradans. That number is even higher for people aged 18 to 29 (20%), LGBT (24%), and people worried about losing their health insurance (17%).

Highlights of this year's health and well being data include:

- **The cost of health care has been a consistent concern for Coloradans with about two-thirds naming it as a problem in 2021 and 2022, but cost isn't the only challenge facing respondents.**
 - Almost four-in-10 (37%) Colorado residents are worried that they or someone in their household will be without health insurance – up from 27% in 2021.
 - Additionally, about one-in-five (21%) respondents say they – or someone they know – were treated unfairly because of race or ethnicity when seeking health care.
- **Nearly half (45%) of Coloradans say they've postponed medical or dental care in the last 12 months – an increase from 38% in 2021.**
- **Six in ten Coloradans have experienced mental health strain such as anxiety, depression, loneliness or stress - an increase from 53% in 2020.**
 - Even when Coloradans are trying to find help, there are many challenges to accessing mental health care, according to respondents who are experiencing emotional strain like anxiety and depression. The challenges include: expensive out-of-pocket costs (66%), inability to find appointments (57%), difficulty finding a mental health provider (50%), and a lack of providers who would understand their background and experience (50%), among others.
- **Concern about alcohol and drug use is also increasing; in 2020, 45% considered it a serious problem; in 2021, that number increased to 50%, and now in 2022, a majority of respondents (58%) are concerned.**

If you're interested in examining these findings on your own, visit www.COPulsePoll.org.

Key Messages Related to the Findings - EMBARGOED UNTIL JUNE 7

The full set of results from this phase of the poll will be published on June 7 at www.COPulsePoll.org. After that date, we recommend pulling more detailed findings from the website. Results from Phase One of the poll related to cost of living and housing can also be found at www.COPulsePoll.org.

As the economic pressures on Coloradans have grown, concerns about COVID-19 have moved to the background. But despite entering a new phase of the pandemic, challenges to the health and well-being of Coloradans haven't disappeared.

On the heels of sharing that most Coloradans feel increasingly overwhelmed by economic pressures, a majority are also expressing increased concerns over their health and well-being, according to The Colorado Health Foundation's Pulse Poll of nearly 3,000 Coloradans. Of top concern is that over the last year, nearly half of all Coloradans have postponed medical or dental care, and six in ten Coloradans have experienced mental health strain such as anxiety, depression, loneliness or stress. In addition to expressing a need for medical care or mental health support, significant percentages of people report challenges in accessing that care, including being concerned about the cost of services, availability of appointments, and uncertainty in where to find providers. Those challenges are amplified for people of color, LGBTQ people, younger respondents, and those with disabilities.

Alcohol and drug consumption also has increased for 13% of Coloradans. That number is even higher for people aged 18 to 29 (20%), LGBTQ (24%), and people worried about losing their health insurance (17%).

The Depth of the Problem

When asked to rank a series of problems facing Colorado, respondents place concerns related to health and well-being second to increasing cost of living and housing. Cost of health care, mental health and drug and alcohol use are all seen as extremely or very serious problems by 67%, 63%, and 58% of respondents respectively.

- The cost of health care and mental health have been consistent concerns for Coloradans with about two-thirds naming it as a problem in 2021 and 2022.
- Concern about alcohol and drug use is increasing; in 2020, 45% of Coloradans considered it a serious problem; in 2021, it was 50%, and in 2022, a majority of respondents (58%) say it's a problem.

Health Care: Who Is Impacted Most

About two-thirds of Coloradans say the cost of health care is a problem, but cost isn't the only challenge—almost four-in-10 (37%) Colorado residents are worried that they or someone in their household will be without health insurance – up from 27% in 2021.

- A majority (56%) of people with Medicaid are worried about losing their insurance, and more than three-in-four (76%) uninsured Coloradans are worried they'll remain without it.
- About half of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) Coloradans (49%) and people with disabilities (45%) are worried they'll be without health insurance in the next year.
- Immigrants and those who speak a language other than English at home are more likely to be worried about losing health insurance at 49% and 45% respectively.

Almost half (48%) of people of color are worried about not having insurance, but that's not the only worry they're carrying. Many Coloradans of color say they – or someone they know – have been treated unfairly because of their race or ethnicity when seeking health care services: 52% of Native Americans, 32% of African American respondents, 31% of multiracial Coloradans, 27% of Latinos and 19% of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (compared to 18% of White people). About one-in-five (21%) of all respondents say they – or someone they know – were treated unfairly because of race or ethnicity when seeking health care.

In 2022, 45% of Coloradans say they postponed medical or dental care in the last 12 months – an increase from 38% in 2021. There are many reasons why someone might postpone care:

- Lack of insurance: 65% of uninsured Coloradans and 64% of those who are worried about not having insurance postponed care.
- Fear of racial bias: 65% of those who experienced or know someone who has experienced unfair treatment when seeking health care postponed medical or dental care.
- Financial instability: 78% of people who skipped meals because they couldn't afford food also postponed medical or dental care.

Mental Health: Who Is Impacted Most

In 2022, 61% of Coloradans say they have experienced mental health strain such as anxiety, depression, loneliness or stress in the last year.

Mental health strain is not impacting all Colorado residents equally:

- Financial insecurity often exists alongside mental health strain: 72% of those living on low income are experiencing it.

- Unfair treatment because of race and ethnicity has lasting impacts: 74% of those who were treated unfairly in health care settings say they're experiencing mental health strain.
- Working and taking care of kids can be stressful: 66% of people who are employed full time and 65% of parents are experiencing mental health strain.

Even when Coloradans are trying to find help, there are many challenges to accessing mental health care, according to respondents who are experiencing emotional strain like anxiety and depression.

The challenges include:

- Expensive, out-of-pocket costs: 66% of all Coloradans and 77% of uninsured people say costs were a challenge.
- Inability to find appointments: 57% of all Coloradans and 66% of young people aged 18-29 say there were no available appointments or the wait was too long.
- Difficulty finding a mental health provider: 50% of all Coloradans and 68% of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders say they were unsure how to find a provider.
- Lack of providers with the right experience: 50% of all Coloradans, 59% of people with disabilities, and 62% of LGBTQ people say it was a challenge to find a mental health provider who would be understanding of their background or experiences.
- Concerns about privacy: 42% of all Coloradans, 51% of people who speak a language other than English at home and 63% of Eastern Plains residents say it was a challenge having to disclose personal information.
- Fear of judgment: 38% of all Coloradans, 52% of Asian Americans, 50% of Black respondents, 50% of multiracial people and 49% of Latinos say they had concerns about being judged by family members, friends or coworkers.

The most likely Coloradans to experience mental health strain and to report facing challenges accessing mental health care include LGBTQ Coloradans and young people (ages 18-29).

Alcohol and Drug Use: Who Is Impacted Most

Coloradans are more and more concerned about alcohol and drug use in the state; since 2020, there's been a 13% increase in the number of people saying it's an extremely or very serious problem. More than one-in-ten (13%) say that the amount of alcohol or drugs they consume has increased in the past year, and 13% also say they've felt worried about the amount of alcohol or drugs they consume. Among those who have increased their use, 44% feel worried about it.

- About one-quarter of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) Coloradans have increased their consumption (24%) and are worried about how much they use (25%).
- One-in-five young people (20%) have increased the amount of alcohol and drugs they consume and are worried about how much.
- Mental health strain can co-exist with alcohol and drug use: 17% of those with mental health strain say they've increased how much alcohol or drugs they consume.

Solutions That Start to Address the Problem

Almost all Coloradans agree that costs and accessibility of health care and mental health support are among the most pressing issues facing the state. And an increasing number also agree that drug and alcohol use is a rising concern. A majority of Democrat, Independent, and Republican respondents believe the following actions would offer effective solutions for improving mental health in Colorado:

- Creating more options for people to access mental health care where they live (85%).

- Democrat 92%, Independent 87%, Republican 79% effective
- Requiring health insurance companies to cover more mental health services without requiring copays (80%).
 - Democrat 92%, Independent 81%, Republican 73% effective
- Pairing mental health professionals with law enforcement to respond to mental health emergency calls (77%).
 - Democrat 92%, Independent 79%, Republican 62% effective

When it comes to the most effective actions that could address increasing rates of alcohol and drug use, Coloradans demonstrate enthusiasm for:

- Making treatment for addiction more affordable and more easily available (81%)
 - Democrat 89%, Independent 84%, Republican 75% effective
- Connecting people trying to recover from addiction with support from other people like them (81%).
 - Democrat 86%, Independent 82%, Republican 77% effective
- Investing in programs to prevent people from abusing alcohol and drugs (68%).
 - Democrat 74%, Independent 71%, Republican 59% effective
- Sending people to treatment, not to jails or prisons, if they've committed a crime related to alcohol or drug use (67%).
 - Democrat 85%, Independent 70%, Republican 46% effective