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FOCUS GROUP REPORT

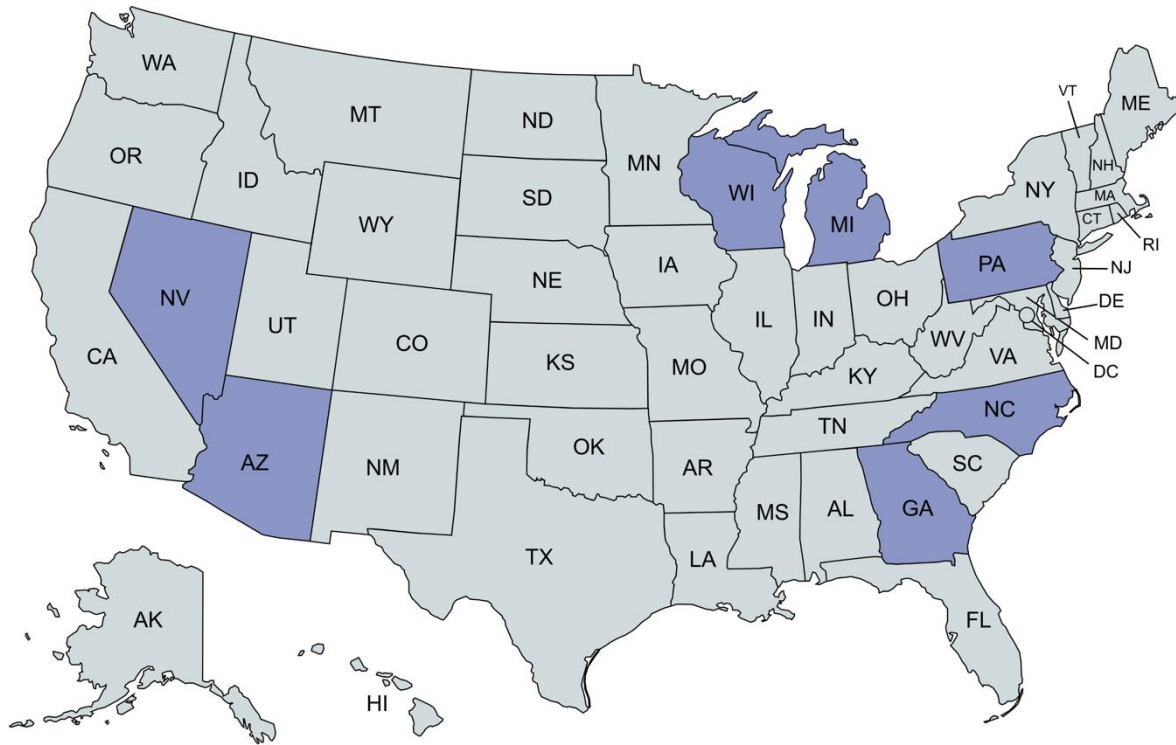
Tuesday, May 5, 2026

Healthcare Providers on the
State of Healthcare



Methodology

On April 23, 2026, GBAO conducted three online focus groups in battleground states* with voters who get health insurance through the ACA marketplace, recently uninsured voters, and patient-facing health care professionals.



- ❖ Group 1: Americans who get insurance through the ACA marketplace and have experienced rate hikes, independents/soft partisans
- ❖ Group 2: Recently uninsured Americans, independents/soft partisans
- ❖ Group 3: Patient-facing healthcare professionals, independents/soft partisans

Key Takeaways

- Healthcare providers are *strongly* united in their diagnosis of the American healthcare system, sharing horrifying stories from the frontlines and the issues faced by their patients.
- Providers have noticed significant negative impacts on their patients since the passage of the One Big Beautiful Bill Act.
- Almost all agree that a major overhaul is needed to address the issues plaguing the American healthcare system.
- Providers in particular see insurance companies and corporate greed to blame for issues impacting healthcare in America.

The Rising Cost Of Healthcare Is Negatively Impacting Patients

“Since **they're not able to pay for [medication]**, they're not getting it. So they are getting admitted into the hospital. That's the only way that they can get their medications.” – GA woman, nursing assistant

“I think for many patients, I work in the hospital as well, and I work with a wide variety of folks. And I think **finances are a big burden for many people**. A lot of people have to choose between medications or food.” – PA woman, occupational therapist

“People take their medicine every other day, stagger it, maybe stretch it out. I've seen that. **I've seen just avoiding healthcare altogether**, just not making appointments, not following through, not following up.” – WI woman, nurse practitioner

“I had one patient that she was saying that her **health insurance was so high she couldn't go to the doctor**. So she started **researching stuff on her phone** to try to find out what to take. And when she did that, she ended up putting herself in the hospital.” – GA woman, nursing assistant



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Providers Have Noticed Recent Changes To Healthcare Access And Attribute These Changes To Washington



"People are coming in, their insurance is shut off, or they were getting it through a program because they might make too much for Medicaid, so they were in a tiered thing that's no longer available...A lot of these people are new in recovery and trying to do the right thing, and it's like doors are being slammed in their face." – PA woman, recovery specialist

"Since January, I work in home health, basically. I'm a paramedic and I do community paramedicine, and my job is to try to keep some of the high utilizers in the ER from bouncing back into the ER. So I try to keep them at home. And I've noticed that we've lost some of our patients out of the program...I guess they've lost funding." – PA woman, paramedic

"I have a gentleman that just lost his Medicaid and no longer has the ability to pay his caregivers. So he's going to be spending a lot more time in the hospital until they can find a solution for him." – PA woman, occupational therapist

"In Congress, the insurance was like, okay, we're going to up premiums, we're going to start cutting funding for resources and Medicaid. You started to notice that in November, December, and it really started making people realize in around January that people are getting impacted." – MI man, physician assistant

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Providers Report Difficult Working Conditions That Are Worsening

“Hospitals are managed by business people and all they see is numbers and the insurance reimbursement. And so they make the providers—I have a timeline. **There's a timer on how quickly I can see somebody, do the labs and then discharge them.** I think that that's one of the biggest problems why a lot of patients feel like they're not listening. It's because the providers are getting rushed.” – MI man, physician assistant



“I couldn't work on the floor anymore. **It's just so short-staffed** and people are admitted and on a floor, not because they need their meds or they need other help and they just get sifted through the system.” – NC woman, registered nurse

“**We go through a lot of abuse.** I've been punched before working in the hospital.” – MI woman, patient care tech

“**They've cut the housekeeping and there's blood on the floor.** I see that too. And we're getting to the point where we're not any better than any of these Third World countries....The rate of hospital acquired infections is astronomical and it's preventative.” – PA woman, paramedic

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Diagnosis Of The American Healthcare System Is Bleak

Moderator: If our health care system was a patient, and you were a doctor, what would be your diagnosis?



"[The system has] to be **amputated and cut their limbs off** to start....That's disturbing, but yeah, it needs reform. It needs total reform and we need billionaires to not be billionaires." – WI woman, nurse practitioner

"I would say **terminally ill** for sure, because it seems like for some reason, we just can't get it together. We've been going through this problem for decades now, and I guess the government just keeps butting heads on what's good for the majority of Americans in this country in terms of healthcare." – NC man, registered nurse

"**Bipolar**...We need to stop sending billions and billions of dollars to other countries to fund wars rather than supplying our citizens here in the United States with proper healthcare." – MI woman, patient care tech

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American Innovation Is Valued And Trade Offs Are Seen When Comparing To Other Countries

“There's a lot of scientific advancements in the pipeline. Yeah. COPD can be treated and eczema can be treated with the same medicine. It's pretty wild.” – WI woman, nurse practitioner

“I think there's a lot of progression. I think there's a lot of change in for the good. With what I do, **keeping patients at home** is something I never would've thought I would've been doing 10 years ago...There's only me and two other paramedics that are in the program, so **it's groundbreaking stuff.**” – PA woman, paramedic



“I have relatives that live **overseas, and you do wait two years** to have...You wait two years there. I don't want to wait two years. And they're taxed 60%...I feel like the system isn't working. I don't know what the answer is.” – NC woman, registered nurse



“We shouldn't even have to pay for healthcare. There should be just universal healthcare. Nobody should have to choose between food and medicine. That's just disturbing on so many levels. I don't know. Yeah. **Sweden, Germany, they just take care of their citizens.**” – WI woman, nurse practitioner

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Providers Want A More Affordable Healthcare System But Even They Had Trouble Identifying The Terminology



"I feel like **healthcare should be made affordable** for people regardless of their income...The government should offer more subsidies for prescription medications, because I've heard people say that insulin, which is crucial for diabetics, it can cost \$800 a month." – NC man, registered nurse

"I'm paying almost close to \$300 or \$400 for insurance right now...I would love to be able to pay...either [for it] to be free or pay \$20, and still be able to get the benefits that I'm paying." – GA woman, nursing assistant

"I'm not too sure. **Single payer**. I don't really know what that means, to be honest." – PA woman, recovery specialist

"[Those terms are] just **terminology**." – PA woman, paramedic

"Medicare for all, it would be, I guess, for really anybody who doesn't meet the requirements to afford healthcare...**Medicare is there to cover whatever expenses they can't cover themselves**." – NC man, registered nurse



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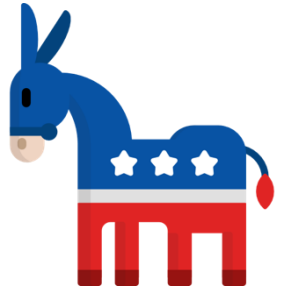
Democrats More Likely To Be Seen As Fighting For Affordable Healthcare And Providers Are Upset At Trump's Recent Comments Calling Medicare And Medicaid "Scams"

"Democrats are more toward everybody gets healthcare, and I think this whole...when we had all these immigrants come in and everyone gets free, and then there's just people from America that can't even see somebody. So, it's a touchy thing." – NC woman, registered nurse

"I feel like with Democrats since they're, I guess, more towards socialism, they want universal healthcare. They want good healthcare outcomes for everybody." – NC man, registered nurse

"I feel like there's more people benefiting from Medicare than there [are] people that are scamming the system. So, I feel like we shouldn't just throw the whole thing away just because you may see 20% scams, because that 80% that's benefiting from it, they really need it. So, I think it's really nonsensical to throw the whole thing away." – NC man, registered nurse

"For somebody who's never ever had to worry about money at all probably his whole life, healthcare could seem little to him. But to somebody who's reliant on their insurance to pick up the medication, I can assure you it's not little or scammy to them." – PA woman, recovery specialist



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Providers See Insurance Companies As A Clear Villain And Want To See Something Done About It In Washington



"I think if you listen to the politics of any politician, you will never hear anybody talk about regulating the insurance companies. You will never hear that." – MI man, physician assistant

"There's just a bunch of greed and corruption that's tied up in these companies, and these companies are only worried about making record-breaking profits. And so, they don't care what happens to their customers, because people have to have health insurance." –NC man, registered nurse

"They're still insurance companies and they're still big and powerful. And until you do something to tell them to get under control, you can't even get to [better care]....I mean, nobody's talking about getting these insurance companies to do something." – MI man, physician assistant

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Providers In Particular Are Watching The Pitt – And Say It Gets A Lot Right

Moderator: How well do you think the Pitt captures our health care system?

“I think [the Pitt] shows the real world of what healthcare workers really go through....Discrimination that patients may experience in the emergency department, the lack of timely care. I would say providers overlooking certain symptoms or misdiagnosing patients. There's really a plethora of things that people experience in the emergency department that can be very unsettling.” – NC man, registered nurse

“[The Pitt is right about the] **stress**. Not with just patients, but employees.” – MI woman, patient care tech

“[It gets that] there's a lot of love. There's a lot of family. **There's a lot of just looking out for your colleagues**. It's a rush. Some people really love that. It can be in cities, like gunshot trauma and the trauma hospitals are intense. And then they joke about [the] Pitt. ‘It's the Pitts.’” – WI woman, nurse practitioner



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About Navigator

In a world where the news cycle is the length of a tweet, our leaders often lack the real-time public-sentiment analysis to shape the best approaches to talking about the issues that matter the most. Navigator is designed to act as a consistent, flexible, responsive tool to inform policy debates by conducting research and reliable guidance to inform allies, elected leaders, and the press. Navigator is a project led by pollsters from Global Strategy Group and GBAO.

About the Study

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To learn more about Navigator:

<http://navigatorresearch.org>

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