

For Immediate Release
Press Release
February 26, 2026



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New survey results reveal Mainers struggle with high health care costs; identifies hospital services as leading source of medical debt

A new statewide survey shows nearly half of all Maine households, more than four in ten, have incurred medical debt in the past two years. One out of three households with such debt owe \$5,000 or more. The statewide survey, *Examining Maine Voters' Views on Health Care Affordability and Medical Debt in Maine*, conducted on behalf of Consumers for Affordable Health Care, revealed:

- Eight out of ten Mainers who carry medical debt reported a hospital-based service contributed to their debt. These Mainers pointed to necessary surgeries, medical tests and diagnostic services, and emergency treatment as primary sources of their debt.
- Two out of three Maine households reported adverse financial impacts because of medical bills, including struggling to pay for basic necessities such as food, heat, or housing, needing to take on additional debt, or having to rely upon savings.
- Two out of three Maine families have been contacted by a collection agency over a medical bill.

Mainers shared their concerns about medical costs and the wide-ranging impacts those costs have on their ability to access the care they need:

- Six out of ten who have commercial insurance said they would be more likely to receive medical services if their out-of-pocket expenses were lower.
- Another six out of ten stated a major medical event would be a financial disaster for the households.
- Four out of ten have lost sleep worrying about medical costs.

Ann Woloson, Executive Director of Consumers for Affordable Health Care, commented: “The survey data, collected from people across the state, demonstrates that Mainers can no longer be left holding the bag when it comes to health care costs. They should be able to see a doctor or receive other health care they need without risking financial ruin. Mainers need relief from these onerous costs and steps need be taken immediately to address the very real concerns and burdens Mainers carry.”

Survey results can be found [here](#).

The goals of the survey were to assess health care affordability in Maine and to measure how the cost of health care and health insurance impact their lives, finances, and access to treatment.

The survey included a total of 514 registered voters in Maine.

- Data collection occurred in January and February of 2026.
- With a total sample of 514 respondents, results presented here have a margin of sampling error of +/- 4.4 percentage points at the 95% confidence level.
- All survey respondents were registered voters who live in Maine; final data reflects the overall demographics of the state’s population.

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