

Alternative Sites for Health Care

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Alternative sites for health care are places other than a typical health care provider’s office/clinic, community health center, or hospital emergency department where patients receive care in-person. For these questions, we are not referring to telehealth visits.

Q1. In the past two years, how many times have you gone to one of these sites for care?

	1. Never	2. Once	3. 2-3 times	4. 4 or more times
a. Retail health clinic (typically found in retail locations such as pharmacies, grocery stores, or department stores)				
b. Urgent care clinic (this does not include a hospital emergency department)				
c. Worksite clinic				
d. Mobile clinic (in a bus or van that comes to a location near you)				



Q2. How likely are you to use an alternative site for health care in the future?

1. Very likely
2. Somewhat likely
3. Not likely

If Q2 = 3

Q3. Why are you not likely to seek health care at an alternative site in the future? Select all that apply.

1. I am not familiar with them
2. I don't trust them
3. I prefer a typical health care provider's office/clinic, community health center, or hospital emergency department
4. My insurance doesn't cover it/I am worried about the cost
5. It would be hard to get to one/none close by
6. I am concerned about the privacy of my health data
7. Other reason

If Q1a–d = 2, 3, or 4

Q4. Why did you go you to an alternative site rather than a regular health care provider's office/clinic, community health center, or hospital emergency department? Select all that apply.

1. I got an appointment sooner/at a more convenient time
2. Your regular health care provider's office was closed
3. The alternative site was closer
4. My health care provider told me to go there
5. Cost
6. To receive care that is more culturally or language-appropriate for me
7. I was out of town
8. I needed a vaccine, specific test, or health exam for a job or other reason
9. I needed urgent care but did not want to go to a hospital emergency department
10. This is where I usually go for health care
11. Other reason

If Q1a–d = 2, 3, or 4

Q5. What were you seeking care or treatment for when you visited an alternative site for health care site in the past two years? Select all that apply.

1. Prescription renewal
2. COVID-19 infection/possible infection
3. Symptoms of illness (such as sore throat, fever, stomach pain, rash/itching, chest pain, dizziness, fatigue)
4. Injury (e.g., sprain, bone fracture, or cut/abrasion)
5. Vaccine (for COVID-19, flu, or other illnesses)
6. A specific screening, test, or exam (other than for COVID-19)
7. A physical for work, school or travel
8. A mental health concern
9. Something else

If Q1a–d = 2, 3, or 4

Q6. After your most recent visit to an alternative site for health care, did you go for follow-up care?

1. Yes, at the same alternative site
2. Yes, at my usual health care provider's office/clinic
3. Yes, somewhere else
4. No, I did not need follow up care
5. No, I chose not to go for follow up care

If Q6 = 1, 3, 4, or 5

Q7. Did your primary care provider (PCP) know about your most recent visit to an alternative site for health care? Select all that apply.

1. Yes, I let my PCP know
2. Yes, my records were sent to my PCP
3. No
4. Not sure



If Q1a–d = 2, 3, or 4

Q8. Overall, how does care at an alternative site for health care compare to care at your PCP’s office, in terms of:

	Alternative site is better	PCP’s office is better	Alternative site & PCP’s office are about the same
a. Ease of talking to a health care provider			
b. Feeling connected to a health care provider			
c. Amount of time spent with the health care provider			
d. Cost			
e. Overall convenience			
f. Overall quality of care			

Q9. Do you have a primary care provider (PCP)?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Unsure

Data Source and Methods

This National Poll on Healthy Aging report presents findings from a nationally representative household survey conducted exclusively by NORC at the University of Chicago for the University of Michigan’s Institute for Healthcare Policy and Innovation. National Poll on Healthy Aging surveys are conducted using NORC’s AmeriSpeak probability-based panel. This survey module was administered online and via phone from July 17th – August 7th, 2023 to a randomly selected, stratified group of U.S. adults age 50–80 (n=2,657), with an oversample of non-Hispanic Black and Hispanic populations. The sample was subsequently weighted to reflect population figures from the U.S. Census Bureau. The completion rate was 50% among panel members contacted to participate. The margin of error is ±1 to 5 percentage points for questions asked of the full sample and higher among subgroups.

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