

MORE U.S. ADULTS 50+ FEEL THEIR HEALTH CARE PREFERENCES ARE BEING CONSIDERED, BUT STARK INEQUITIES PERSIST

Nearly three-fourths of U.S. adults aged 50 and older (72.6%) feel their care preferences were always or usually considered by health care providers in 2020, a 9.5% increase over 2014 figures, but stark racial, economic, and geographic inequities remain, a new analysis shows.

Hispanic (51.8%) and Black adults (61.8%) were less likely than white adults (83.0%) to report having their care preferences always or usually considered by clinicians. The data review, funded by The SCAN Foundation and conducted by the LeadingAge LTSS Center @UMass Boston and Community Catalyst, is the first comprehensive look at care preferences since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Care preferences include things like what medications and treatments a person prefers, the care facility where they receive care, or trust in their clinicians' experience or care demeanor.

“Ensuring personalized care as individuals age is vital for attaining quality outcomes and ensuring the utmost patient satisfaction,” said Sarita A. Mohanty, MD, MPH, MBA, president and CEO of The SCAN Foundation. “Racial and ethnic disparities in how individuals perceive their care preferences being considered is deeply alarming and unacceptable. When preferences are not asked and respected, suboptimal care results.”

Other findings show:

- **Income matters.** Adults 50+ with household incomes less than \$30,000 were less likely to say their care preferences were always or usually considered (66.1%) compared to those with incomes greater than \$75,000 (85.1%).
- **Geography matters.** Adults 50+ in the South were less likely to report care preferences were always or usually considered (71.9%) compared to those in the Northeast (76.4%), West (76.5%) and Midwest (80.2%).
- **Relationships matter.** Adults 50+ with a usual source of care (e.g., a primary care doctor) reported an increase in their care preferences being usually or always considered (77.1% in 2020 vs. 69.9% in 2014).

“Numerous studies have shown that care that aligns with patient preferences is more effective,” said Marc Cohen, PhD, co-director of the LeadingAge LTSS Center @UMass Boston and Research Director at Community Catalyst. “The health care system has a lot of work to do to address deep-seated inequities in how it listens and responds to patients of color.”

This is the first in a series of data analyses exploring the early effects of the pandemic on older adults' care. [Download the chart pack](#) for further analyses.

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About The SCAN Foundation

The SCAN Foundation is an independent public charity dedicated to creating a society where older adults can access health and supportive services of their choosing to meet their needs. Our mission is to advance a coordinated and easily navigated system of high-quality services for older adults that preserve dignity and independence. Learn more at <https://www.thescanfoundation.org/>.

About the LeadingAge LTSS Center @UMass Boston

The LeadingAge LTSS Center @UMass Boston conducts research to help our nation address the challenges and seize the opportunities associated with a growing older population. Established in 2017, the Center is the first organization of its kind to combine the resources of a major research university with the expertise and experience of applied researchers working with providers of long-term services and supports (LTSS). Learn more at www.ltsscenter.org.