



Your Mental Health

**A Survey of Americans' Understanding of the
Mental Health Parity Law**

American Psychological Association

Harris Interactive

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A Survey of Americans' Understanding of the Mental Health Parity Law

An overwhelming majority of Americans remain unaware and unfamiliar with a new law providing equal coverage of mental health benefits by insurance companies according to a recent survey conducted by Harris Interactive for the American Psychological Association.

This survey was conducted online within the United States between December 14 and 27, 2010 among 2,940 adults aged 18+ who reside in the U.S.

Key findings

- Few Americans (7 percent) have heard of the term “mental health parity” and even fewer have heard of the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008. But the majority of those who have heard of the new law view it positively.
- More than half of adults report they have adequate mental health care. However, nearly one-third report they do not know if they have adequate coverage.
- Most adults surveyed have health insurance but nearly half of those with insurance are not sure if their insurance reimburses for mental health care.
- When asked to identify reasons why they or family members would potentially not seek treatment from a mental health professional not knowing if it is appropriate to seek help and lack of knowledge about how to find the right professional were two of the top most commonly cited reasons.



- One-quarter of the adults in the survey reported they have received treatment from a mental health professional. Of these, three-quarters used their insurance benefits to cover costs.
- In the cases where insurance was not used, the top reasons given were that they did not have insurance or there was little or no cost difference.
- Additionally, when asked to identify reasons why they or family members might not seek treatment, cost and coverage concerns topped the list. Few adults selected stigma as a reason for not seeking treatment.

The goal of this survey was to better understand what Americans believe regarding mental health benefits, access to mental health services, potential stigma associated with accessing mental health services and whether, and why people access their health benefits when seeking mental health services.

Methodology

This survey was conducted online within the United States by Harris Interactive on behalf of the American Psychological Association between December 14 and 27, 2010 among 2,940 adults aged 18+ who reside in the U.S.

Results were weighted as needed for age, sex, race/ethnicity, education, region and household income. Propensity score weighting was also used to adjust for respondents' propensity to be online.

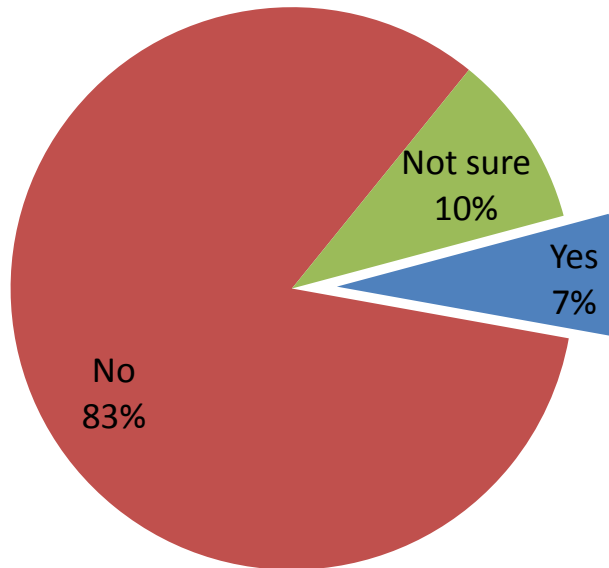
Respondents for this survey were selected from among those who have agreed to participate in Harris Interactive surveys. Because the sample is based on those who were invited to participate in the Harris Interactive online research panel, no estimates of theoretical sampling error can be calculated.



Awareness of Mental Health Parity

Few (7 percent) have heard of the term “mental health parity”. Of those who have heard of the term, 65 percent define mental health parity as “mental and physical care are equal” or “receive same coverage or benefits.”

Awareness of Mental Health Parity



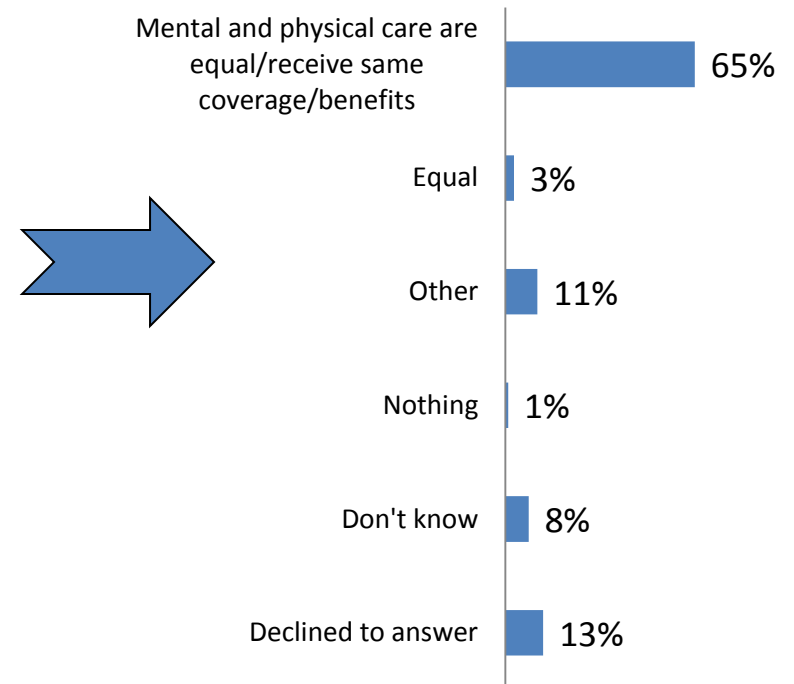
BASE: ALL RESPONDENTS (n=2940)

Q815 Have you heard of the term “mental health parity”?

BASE: QUALIFIED AND HAVE HEARD OF MENTAL HEALTH PARITY (n=176)

Q820 What does the term “mental health parity” mean, as you understand it?

Meaning of “Mental Health Parity”

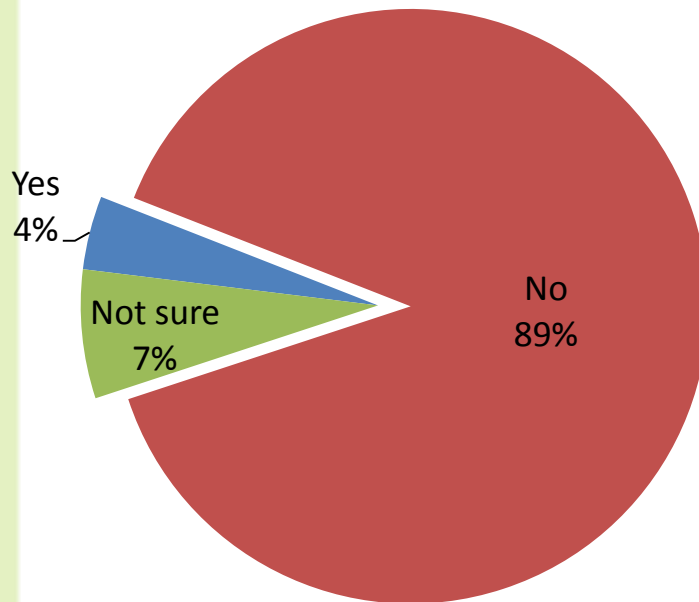




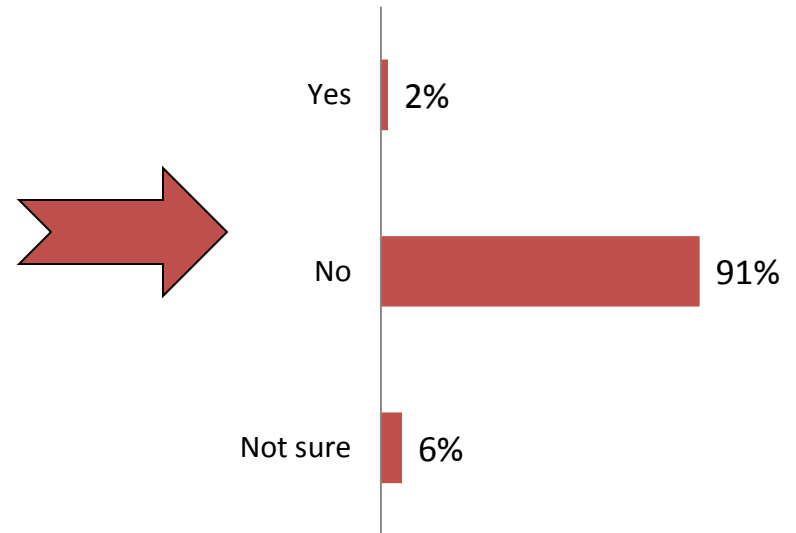
Mental Health Parity Act of 2008

Few adults (4 percent) have heard of the Mental Health Parity Act of 2008. Even after given a description, few (2 percent) adults said they are aware of the law.

Awareness of Mental Health Parity Act of 2008



The Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008 (MHPAEA) is a law that will make sure mental and physical health coverage/benefits are equal. Have you heard of this law?



BASE: ALL RESPONDENTS (n=2940)

Q825 Have you heard about the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008 (MHPAEA)?

BASE: QUALIFIED AND HAVE NOT HEARD OF MENTAL HEALTH PARITY AND ADDICTION EQUITY ACT (n=2845)

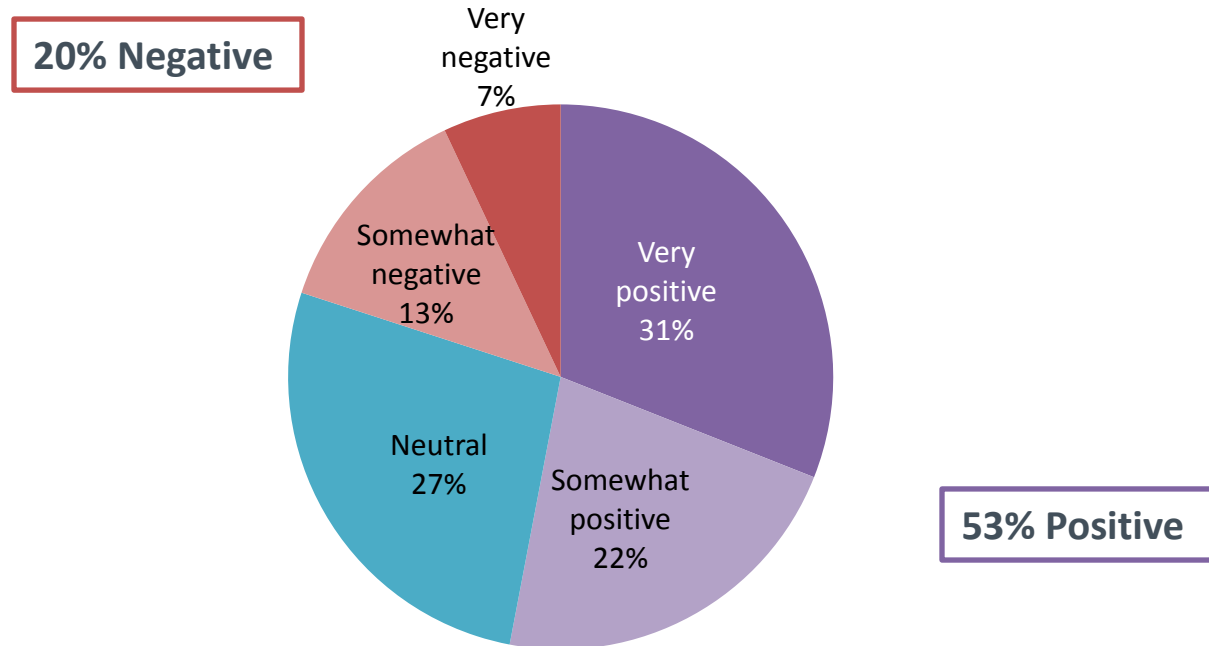
Q830 The Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008 (MHPAEA) is a law that will make sure mental and physical health coverage/benefits are equal. Have you heard of this law?



Information about Mental Health Parity Act

Of those who have heard about the mental health parity act, 53 percent report what they heard was positive and 20 percent report it was negative.

Was what you heard about MHPAEA...



BASE: HEARD OF MHPAEA (n=156)

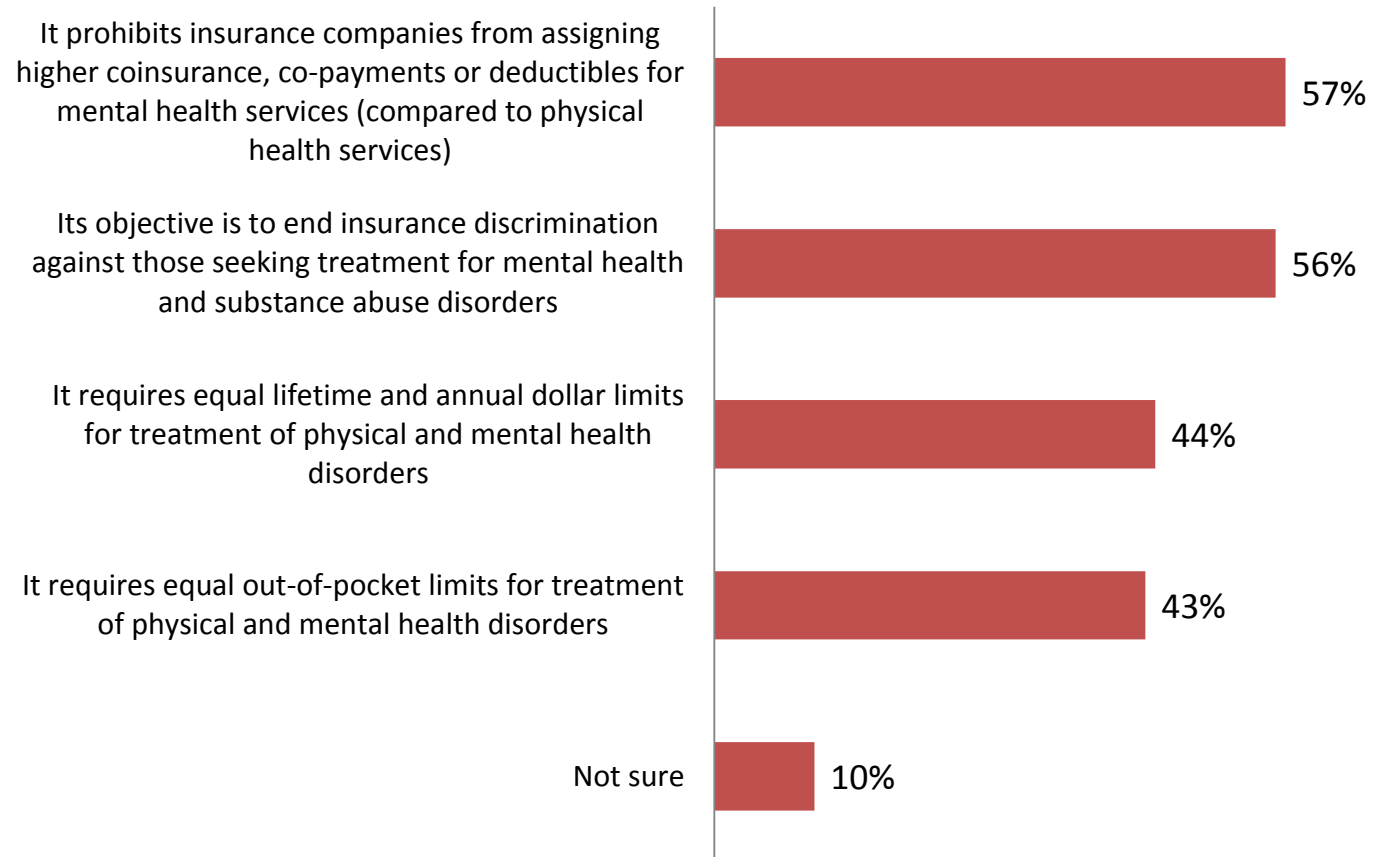
Q835 Was what you heard about the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008 (MHPAEA) positive, negative or neutral?



Information about Mental Health Parity Act

The most commonly known information about the mental health parity act is that it creates equality for mental health services compared to physical health services and its objective is to end discrimination against those seeking treatment for mental health and substance abuse disorders.

What have you heard about MHPAEA?



BASE: HEARD OF MHPAEA (n=156)

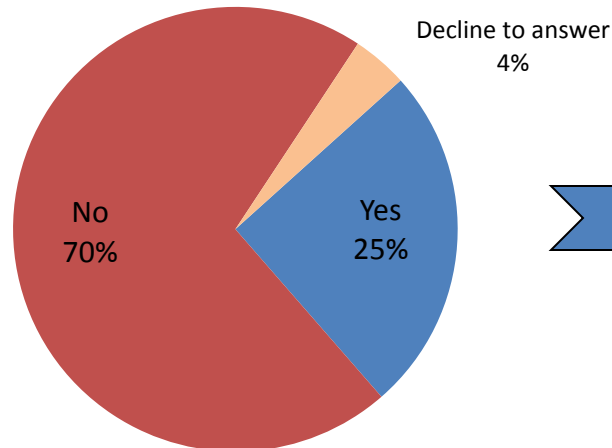
Q840 Specifically, what have you heard about Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008 (MHPAEA)? Please select all that apply.



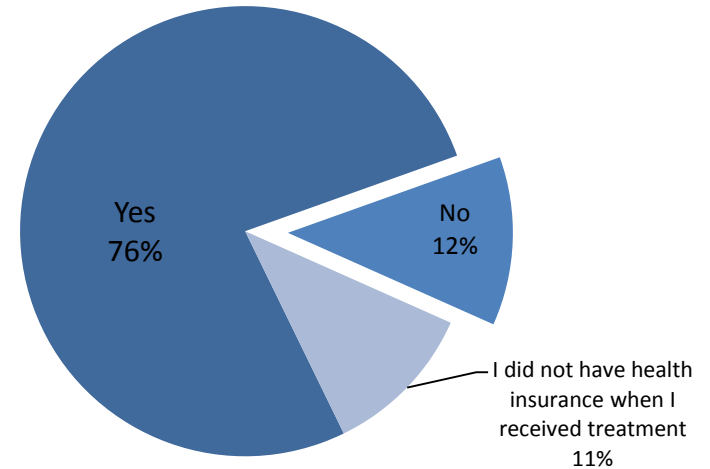
Experience with Treatment from a Mental Health Professional

One-quarter (25 percent) of adults report they have received treatment. Of those, three-quarters (76 percent) used insurance to help pay for the cost of treatment.

Received Treatment from Mental Health Professional



Used Insurance Benefits to Cover Costs



BASE: ALL QUALIFIED PATIENTS (n=2940)

Q750 Have you ever received treatment or therapy from a psychologist or other mental health professional?

BASE: RECEIVED TREATMENT FROM MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL (n=801)

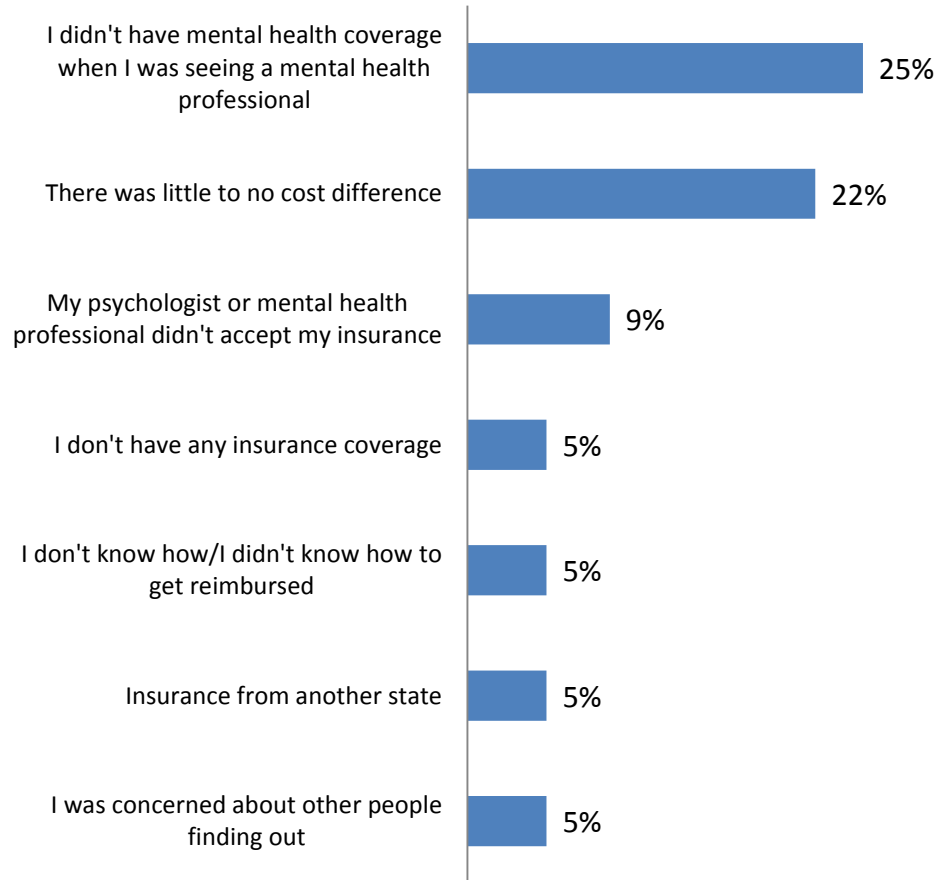
Q755 When you received treatment or therapy from a psychologist or other mental health professional did you use your insurance benefits (coverage) to help pay for the cost of treatment?



Experience with Treatment from a Mental Health Professional

Lack of mental health coverage was the most cited reason why insurance was not used.

Reason Insurance Was Not Used



BASE: QUALIFIED AND DID NOT USE HEALTH INSURANCE (n=103)

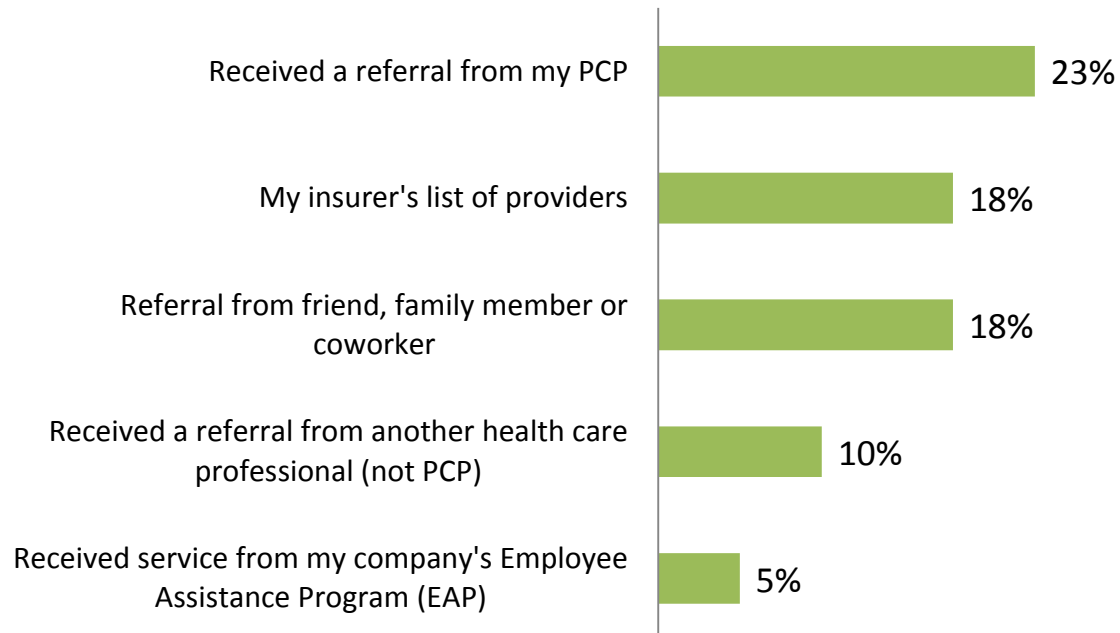
Q775 Which of the following best describes why you chose not to use your health insurance for treatment from a psychologist or other mental health professional?



Method of Finding Mental Health Professional

Receiving a referral from a primary care physician (PCP), an insurer's list of providers, and a referral from a friend, family member, or coworker were the top three most common methods used to find a mental health professional.

Method of Finding Mental Health Professional



Note: Only responses >5% are shown.

BASE: RECEIVED TREATMENT FROM MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL (n=801)

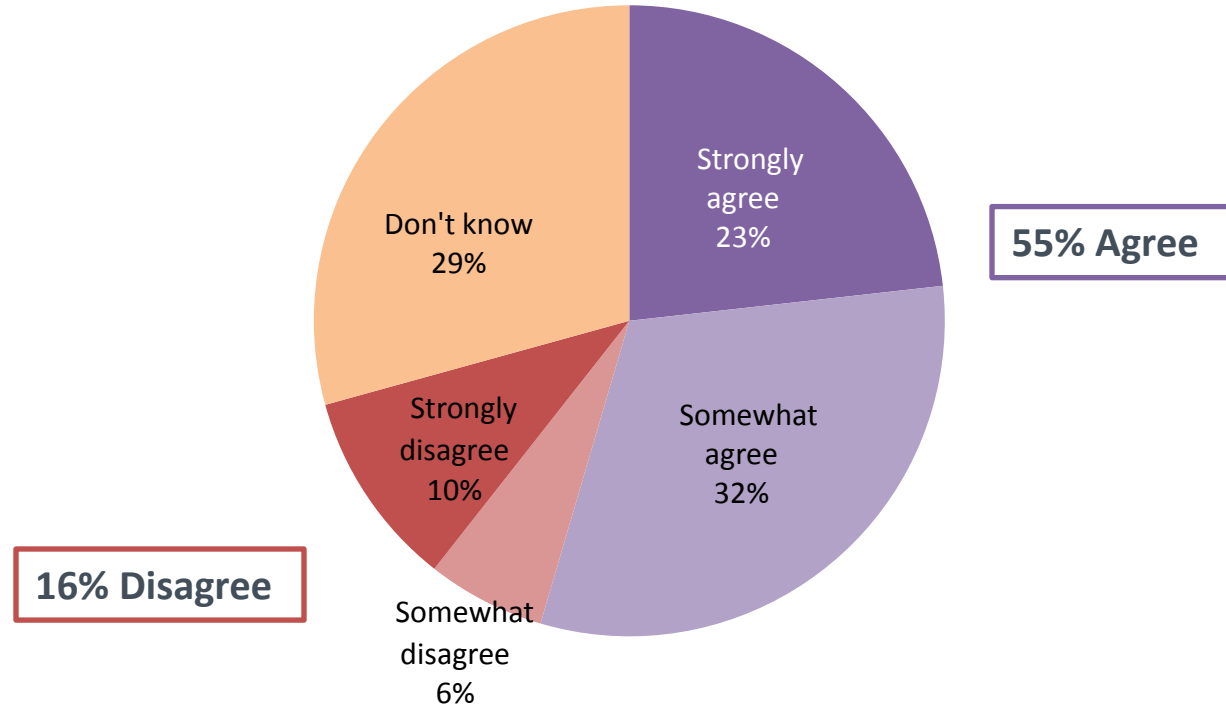
Q760 How did you find the mental health professional you saw?



Mental Health Coverage

Most adults surveyed (55 percent) think they have adequate mental health coverage. However, nearly one-third (29 percent) do not know if they have adequate mental health coverage.

Adequate Mental Health Coverage



BASE: ALL QUALIFIED PATIENTS (n=2940)

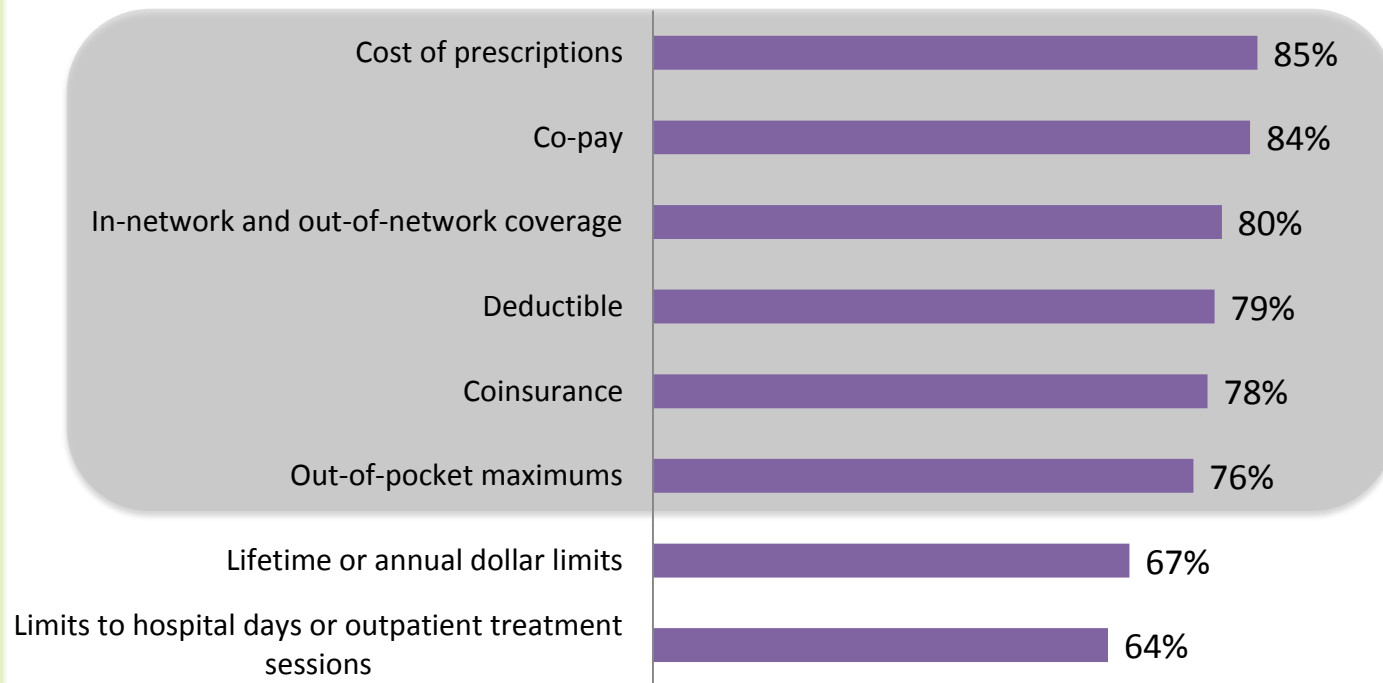
Q715 Do you feel you have adequate mental health coverage?



Mental Health Equality

The majority of respondents report that they believe that mental health coverage on health plans should be equal to physical health coverage. This is especially true when it comes to cost of prescriptions and co-pay amounts.

Mental Health Coverage on Health Plan Should Be Equal to Physical Health Coverage For...



BASE: ALL QUALIFIED RESPONDENTS (n=2940)

Q810 Do you think that mental health coverage on a health plan should be equal to physical coverage for any of the following?