

State of Patient Access Focus Brief: Female patients

Overview

Increasing attention to women's health has resulted from increased scrutiny of gender equity in healthcare and scientific research. Our 2024 *State of Patient Access* survey showed that women face more difficulties getting accurate diagnoses and rate the quality of their healthcare lower than men. Women also face greater financial burdens and worries regarding their health costs than men.

2024 State of Patient Access Scorecard

	Total		Female Patients	
Overall grade	C	75.8	C	74.5
Overall Access to Care	C+	78.8	C+	78.2
Relationship with Healthcare Professionals	B	84.2	B	83.9
Affordability of Prescription Medications	B-	82.3	B-	82
Access to Treatment through Healthcare Plans	D-	62.8	D-	60.8
Financial Toxicity	C-	70.7	D+	68

■ B= 80-89 ■ C= 70-79 ■ D= 60-69



48% of women surveyed worry about the affordability of unexpected medical bills in the coming year.

The PAN Foundation's *State of Patient Access* initiative aims to further explore healthcare access challenges and their impact on different communities. To crystallize the key findings from the patient survey and synthesize the state of patient access in the United States, we created a scorecard with five dimensions:

1. Overall Access to Care
2. Relationship with Healthcare Professionals
3. Affordability of Prescription Medications
4. Access to Treatments through Healthcare Plans
5. Financial Toxicity

When looking at the five dimensions included in the 2024 *State of Patient Access* Scorecard, the grades women gave to various measures of patient access were highly consistent with the overall sample. This consistency makes sense since the sample skewed slightly female. Still, women graded *Financial Toxicity* as a ("D+") compared to the ("C-") patients overall gave it.

Detailed findings

Health status and quality of care

- On average, it takes longer for women to get accurate diagnoses for their chronic condition(s) compared with men. The average gap between first experiencing symptoms and getting diagnosed is 3.9 years for women and 2.4 years for men, on average.
- Not surprisingly, women (37%) are also more likely than men (28%) to say it was difficult for them to get an accurate diagnosis.
- Overall, one in five (19%) women describe the quality of care they received in the past year as poor or fair, compared with 14% of men.

Financial hardship, anxiety, and toxicity

- Women (26%) are more likely than men (20%) to experience a great deal or a lot of financial toxicity due to their chronic condition(s).
- More than half (56%) of women reported that unexpected medical bills were not at all or not very affordable in the past year, including 28% who said unexpected medical bills were completely unaffordable. In comparison, 45% of men said their unexpected medical bills were not at all or not very affordable.
- Nearly half (48%) of women surveyed said they worry about the affordability of unexpected medical bills in the coming year, compared with 42% of men.
- Women may have less financial resilience than men, with 56% saying they could only pay an unexpected medical bill if it was less than \$500. That equivalent figure for men was 39%.

