

State of Patient Access Focus Brief: Patients of different generations

Overview

Patients of different ages tend to have different healthcare needs, but can also have different expectations, and experiences. Our 2024 *State of Patient Access* survey showed distinct health needs and priorities depending on the segment, and significant differences in the nature of the access challenges patients in different age groups face. Specifically, older patients were least likely to experience financial hardships and toxicity, while Gen Z respondents were typically the most likely of any generation to experience financial challenges due to healthcare costs.

Age		54 Mean
7%	Gen Z (18-26)	
21%	Millennials (27-42)	
28%	Gen X (43-58)	
44%	Boomers/Silent (59+)	

Breakdown of survey patients by generation

2024 State of Patient Access Scorecard



91% of Gen Z participants said they want help navigating healthcare

	Total		Gen Z Patients		Millennial Patients	
	Grade	Score	Grade	Score	Grade	Score
Overall grade	C	75.8	D+	67.4	D+	69
Overall Access to Care	C+	78.8	C-	71.1	C	73.5
Relationship with Healthcare Providers	B	84.2	C+	76.9	C+	78.9
Affordability of Prescription Medications	B-	82.3	C	75.7	C	76
Access to Treatment through Healthcare Plans	D-	62.8	F	52.9	F	57.5
Financial Toxicity	C-	70.7	D-	60.2	F	59.1

- B= 80-89
- C= 70-79
- D= 60-69
- F= 50-59

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, younger patients in Gen Z and Millennial generations gave much worse grades to the overall state of patient access than patients did in aggregate. Specifically, Gen Z and Millennials' overall grade was a ("D+") and they gave a failing grade to *Access to Treatment through Healthcare Plans*. Even the measures that patients gave relatively higher marks on—such as *Relationship with Healthcare Providers* ("B") and *Affordability of Prescription Medications* ("B-")—only got ("Cs") from Gen Z and Millennial patients.

Detailed findings

Generational differences in health needs

- Younger patients were more likely to have a mental health diagnosis (59% of Gen Z, 52% of Millennials, 34% of Gen X, and 18% of Boomers/Silent Generation).
- Younger generations were also more likely to have had a mental health visit in the past year, compared with older generations (49% of Gen Z, 30% of Millennials, 21% of Gen X, and 7% of Boomers or older). Similar percentages had had an appointment specifically to address their mental health.

Financial hardship, anxiety, and toxicity

- Older patients were least likely to report high levels of financial toxicity (34% among Gen Z, 37% of Millennials, 28% of Gen X, and 13% of Boomers/Silent Generation).
- Boomers and older patients were least likely to have medical bills they did not know how to pay (13%, compared to 34% of Gen Z, 34% of Millennials, and 25% of Gen X).
- More than one-third (36%) of Gen Z patients and 28% of Millennials said it was very or somewhat difficult to pay for prescriptions in the past 12 months, compared to 23% of Gen X and 16% of Boomers/Silent Generation.
- Similar proportions said that their prescription medication costs have not been affordable over the past year (36% of Gen Z, 31% of Millennials, 24% of Gen X, and 14% of Boomers/Silent Generation).
- More than half (61%) of Gen Z participants took some financial actions to pay for medications, compared with 49% of Millennials, 35% of Gen X, and 26% of Boomers/Silent Generation.

Logistical challenges

- Younger patients were more likely to face logistical challenges in accessing needed healthcare (70% of Gen Z and 70% of Millennials vs. 49% of Gen X and 34% Boomers and older).
- Almost all (91%) of Gen Z said they want help navigating healthcare, compared with 71% of Millennials, 49% of Gen X, and 29% of Boomers/Silent Generation.

Healthcare quality and HCP relationships

- Gen Z patients were three times more likely to say the quality of care they received in the past year was poor or fair, compared to Boomers/Silent Generation (30% vs. 10%). Millennials (26%) and Gen X (19%) patients fell in between.
- Nearly three-quarters (72%) of Gen Z patients experienced an interaction-related challenge with their HCP, compared with their older counterparts (45% of Millennials, 26% of Gen X, and 14% of Boomer/Silent Generation).
- Younger patients felt that some aspect of their identity got in the way of access to the best possible healthcare; 34% of Gen Z felt this way, most commonly related to their income level rather than age that negatively impacted them getting the best possible care. Among Millennials, Gen X, and Boomer/Silent Generation patients, these figures were 28%, 16%, and 8%, respectively.

Insurance barriers

- Health plan deductibles were not at all or not very affordable for 51% of Gen Z patients, compared with 37% of both Millennials and Gen X, and 21% of Boomers/Silent Generation.
- Nearly three-quarters (71%) of Gen Z and 63% of Millennials had challenges with their health plans in getting their prescribed medications, compared with 50% of Gen X and 39% of Boomers/Silent Generation.

