

# State of Patient Access Focus Brief: LGBTQIA+ patients

## Overview

Patients in the LGBTQIA+ community have historically faced bias in their healthcare encounters and healthcare coverage. Our 2024 *State of Patient Access* survey shows that this community continues to experience discomfort with healthcare providers (HCPs), to lack trust in the healthcare system, and to rate the quality of their healthcare lower than other patients. LGBTQIA+ patients were more likely to report having been diagnosed with a mental health condition and to seek medical care specifically for their mental health. Like patients from other historically marginalized communities, LGBTQIA+ patients also face disproportionate financial burdens and anxiety regarding healthcare costs.

## 2024 State of Patient Access Scorecard


	Total		LGBTQIA+ Patients	
<b>Overall grade</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>75.8</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>65.8</b>
Overall Access to Care	C+	78.8	C-	70.7
Relationship with Healthcare Professionals	B	84.2	C	76.4
Affordability of Prescription Medications	B-	82.3	C	74.3
Access to Treatment through Healthcare Plans	D-	62.8	F	53.2
Financial Toxicity	C-	70.7	F	54.3

■ 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, while patients overall rate the state of patient access a ("C"), LGBTQIA+ patients gave it a ("D"). On every dimension, LGBTQIA+ patients rated their access and experience worse than the overall patient population. Notably, LGBTQIA+ patients gave failing grades to *Access to Treatment through Healthcare Plans* ("F") and *Financial Toxicity* ("F"), compared with ("D-") and ("C-"), respectively, from the overall patient population.



**71% of LGBTQIA+ patients said unexpected medical bills had been unaffordable in the past year.**

# Detailed findings

## Mental healthcare

- Over two-thirds (68%) of LGBTQIA+ patients surveyed have been diagnosed with a mental health condition, compared with 31% of non-LGBTQIA+ survey patients.
- Related, 43% of LGBTQIA+ patients said they had a medical appointment related to their mental health in the past 12 months compared to 19% of non-LGBTQIA+ patients. However, that still represents a substantial gap between the number of patients reporting a mental health condition and the proportion receiving medical care for that condition.
- One-third (33%) of LGBTQIA+ patients had used mental health resources in the past year, compared with 11% of non-LGBTQIA+ patients.

## Healthcare quality and HCP relationships

- Overall, LGBTQIA+ patients (31%) were more likely than non-LGBTQIA+ patients (17%) to rate the healthcare they received in the past year as poor or fair.
- LGBTQIA+ patients were more likely to report feeling that aspects of their identity had caused them to receive less than optimal care. Nearly one in five (17%) LGBTQIA+ patients said they felt their gender identity had negatively impacted their access to care as had their sexual orientation (14%), compared to just 3% and 1% of non-LGBTQIA+ patients, respectively.
- LGBTQIA+ patients were less likely to report trusting their HCP; 80% said they felt their HCP has their best interest in mind when making healthcare decisions, compared with 92% of non-LGBTQIA+ patients.
- Similarly, only 79% of LGBTQIA+ patients said they feel their HCP sees them as a partner in treatment planning, compared with 88% of non-LGBTQIA+ patients.
- LGBTQIA+ patients are more likely than non-LGBTQIA+ counterparts to feel that their HCP does not take their concerns seriously (25% vs. 11%), to feel their HCP is critical of their habits (18% vs. 7%), to feel misunderstood as an individual (16% vs. 6%), or to feel uncomfortable talking with their HCP (13% vs. 6%) or intimidated by them (9% vs. 4%).

## Financial hardship, anxiety, and toxicity

- Nearly three-quarters (71%) of LGBTQIA+ patients said unexpected medical bills had been unaffordable in the past year, compared with 50% of non-LGBTQIA+ patients. Almost as many (68%) of LGBTQIA+ patients worry about these bills in the coming year (compared to 45% of non-LGBTQIA+ patients) and 69% say they could only afford surprise bills if they were less than \$500 (compared with 48% of non-LGBTQIA+ patients).
- About one-quarter (26%) of LGBTQIA+ patients did not get a prescribed medication in the past 12 months because of high out-of-pocket costs and 65% suffered negative mental health impacts as a result.
- Nearly half (48%) of LGBTQIA+ patients said that their health insurance deductible had been unaffordable in the past year, compared with 30% of non-LGBTQIA+ patients. About as many (49%) said they worry about deductible affordability in the coming year, compared with 36% of non-LGBTQIA+ counterparts.

## Insurance barriers

- More than half (58%) of LGBTQIA+ patients on a healthcare plan report having experienced some challenge related to coverage for prescribed medications.
- About one-quarter (27%) said their health plan required them to get prior authorization, compared with 19% among non-LGBTQIA+ patients.
- One-quarter (25%) said their health plan did not cover their medication, compared with 17% of non-LGBTQIA+ patients.

