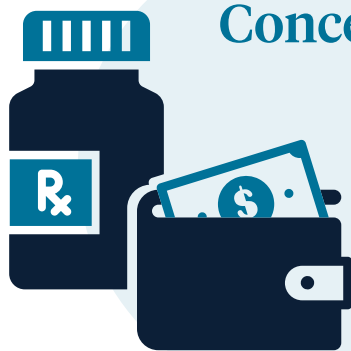


Prescription Drug Affordability in America: A Growing Crisis

Millions are forced to skip medications, ration doses, and delay care—while support for government action reaches overwhelming levels.



Concern about prescription drug costs is rising

Increasing drug prices are leaving millions worried they won't afford essential prescriptions in the year ahead.

In 2025, **more than 1 in 3 (37%)** adults said they were concerned or extremely concerned that their household would not be able to afford needed prescriptions in the next year—a sharp increase from **30%** in 2021.

Financial strain is already affecting access. **20%** of adults also said that in the past three months alone, they or someone in their household were unable to pay for prescribed medication due to cost.

“As a senior, I was told I needed Eliquis because I had blood clots in my lungs. They wanted \$500.00 a month and then \$250.00 a month there after. I had to stop taking it because it was too expensive. I could die from the blood clots in my lungs without it.”

— LUCILLE T., WHITE PLAINS, NY

The burden falls heaviest on low-income and medically complex patients

The affordability crisis affects Americans across income levels but hits some groups far harder than others.

In 2025, **56%** of adults in households making less than \$24,000 per year reported being concerned or extremely concerned about affording needed prescriptions in the next year, compared to **37%** of adults overall. Among those in households earning \$24,000–\$48,000 per year concern remains similarly high at **54%**.

Patients with greater health needs are also disproportionately affected.

Nearly half (46%) of adults with three or more chronic conditions reported concern about their ability to pay for prescriptions in the next year.





Patients are skipping and rationing medications to save money

When patients cannot afford their prescriptions, many are forced to make dangerous trade-offs.

Nearly one in four (23%) adults in 2025 said they or a family member skipped a prescribed pill, dose, or other type of medication in the past year to save money. Among households earning under \$24,000 per year, that figure rises to 37%.

Others stretch medications to make them last longer. In 2025, 15% of adults reported prolonging a current prescription, such as by cutting pills—rising to 21% among the lowest-income households, those making less than \$24,000 per year.

“I currently cannot afford any of the medications that are prescribed to me. Prices continue to rise, our Medicare continues to reduce coverage, and sadly it comes down to paying bills, eating, or having heart medication.” — KD M., SWANSBORO, NC

Affordability concerns cut across political, age, and geographic lines

Prescription drug affordability is not a partisan issue.

Cost-related medication skipping is seen across political parties, with Democrats (22%), Republicans (19%), and Independents (24%) reporting rates in a close range.

Concern about affordability is also consistent across age groups and regions. In 2025, roughly one-third of adults in every age bracket and region reported concern or extreme concern about their ability to afford needed prescriptions.



“I’m 77 and can’t retire due to high prescription drug prices.” — SHARON W., SPARKS, NV

There’s overwhelming support for government action

Broad concern about affordability is driving strong public support for policy solutions.

In 2026, 72% of adults said that there is not as much government regulation as there should be to limit the price of prescription drugs.¹ Support for specific reforms is even higher. In 2024, 85% of adults said they support allowing the federal government to negotiate the price of some prescription drugs for people with Medicare—including strong majorities of Republicans (77%), Independents (89%), and Democrats (92%).²

Note: Findings are based on West Health–Gallup Center on Healthcare surveys. To learn more, visit: westhealth.gallup.com. Patient quotes were provided by Patients For Affordable Drugs.

1. <https://www.kff.org/public-opinion/public-views-on-prescription-drug-costs-regulation-affordability-and-trump/>

2. <https://www.kff.org/medicare/kff-health-tracking-poll-september-2024-support-for-reducing-prescription-drug-prices-remains-high/#4b71b1b2-15db-4529-a09f-1e734f1eb6ef>