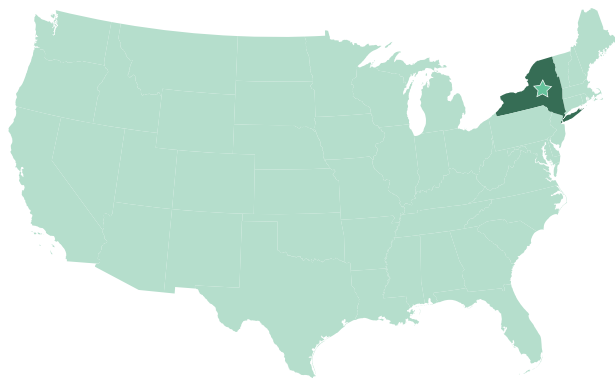


# The Patient Experience

## Perspectives on Today's Healthcare



### Background

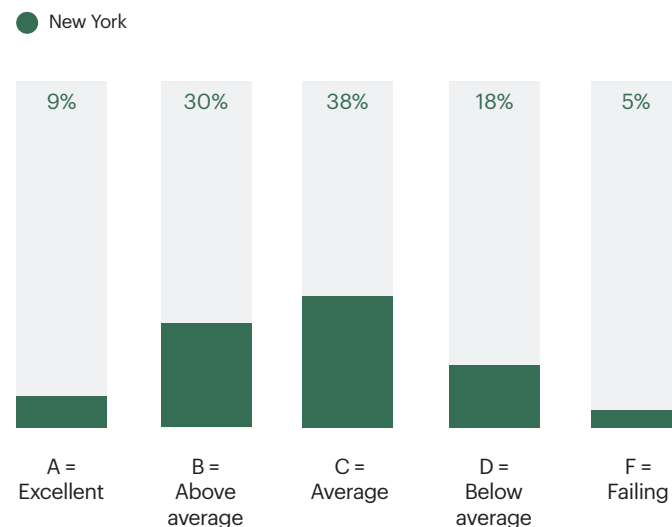
The American Academy of Physician Associates (AAPA) advocates for the physician associate/assistant (PA) profession and provides tools to improve the PA practice and patient care. Earlier this year, AAPA approached The Harris Poll to revisit work that had been conducted in 2014. Unlike the past survey, AAPA wanted to take a wider look at the state of the U.S. healthcare system and capture the issues patients are encountering within today's system. Additionally, the research seeks to understand attitudes toward PAs to reinforce the need for this group of expertly trained, high-quality, compassionate providers. This summary includes research findings from the national sample collected as well as the oversample of adults living in Kentucky.

The research revealed that the U.S. healthcare system is stretched thin – a reality that was both illuminated during and exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to healthcare provider burnout and staffing shortages, many feel that not everyone has equal access to care, and simply navigating the system can be overwhelming and time-consuming. This may contribute to the general lack of confidence that the U.S. healthcare system will be able to support the care they need in the future. Beyond the need to reduce the cost of healthcare, adults agree that having stronger relationships with providers – especially those whom they trust – has the potential to improve their health. This is where PAs, working to the full extent of their education and ability, have an opportunity to elevate healthcare within the U.S.

### Views of the System

- **One in four adults in New York give the U.S. system a failing grade, though New York residents are more positive about the system's ability to support their needs at all life stages than adults nationally.**
- **Some dissatisfaction with healthcare system:** Twenty-three percent of New Yorkers grade the healthcare system as poor (with 18% giving it a D and another 5% giving it an F). Nationally, 26% rate it the same: (D/F: 18% and 8% respectively).
- **Concerns over workforce shortages:** New Yorkers worry about healthcare workforce shortages affecting their families (63%) or themselves (69%), in line with 68% nationally fearing the same for their loved ones or themselves.
- **Relative optimism about system's support of the life cycle:** However, nearly three quarters of New Yorkers (71%) believe that the healthcare system will be able to support the care they need at all stages of their life (directionally higher than adults nationally; 67%).

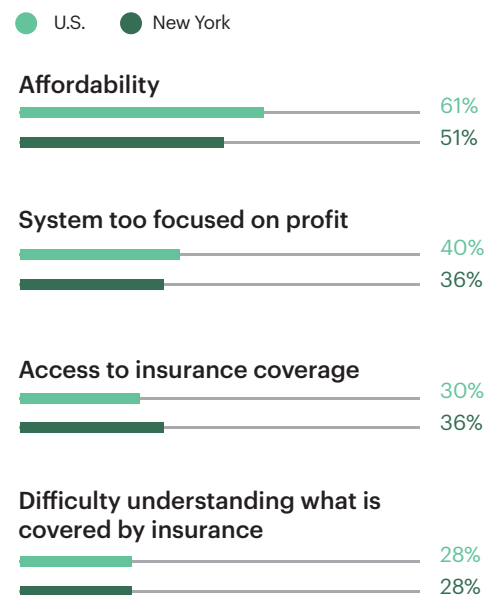
### Healthcare Grades: U.S. Healthcare System



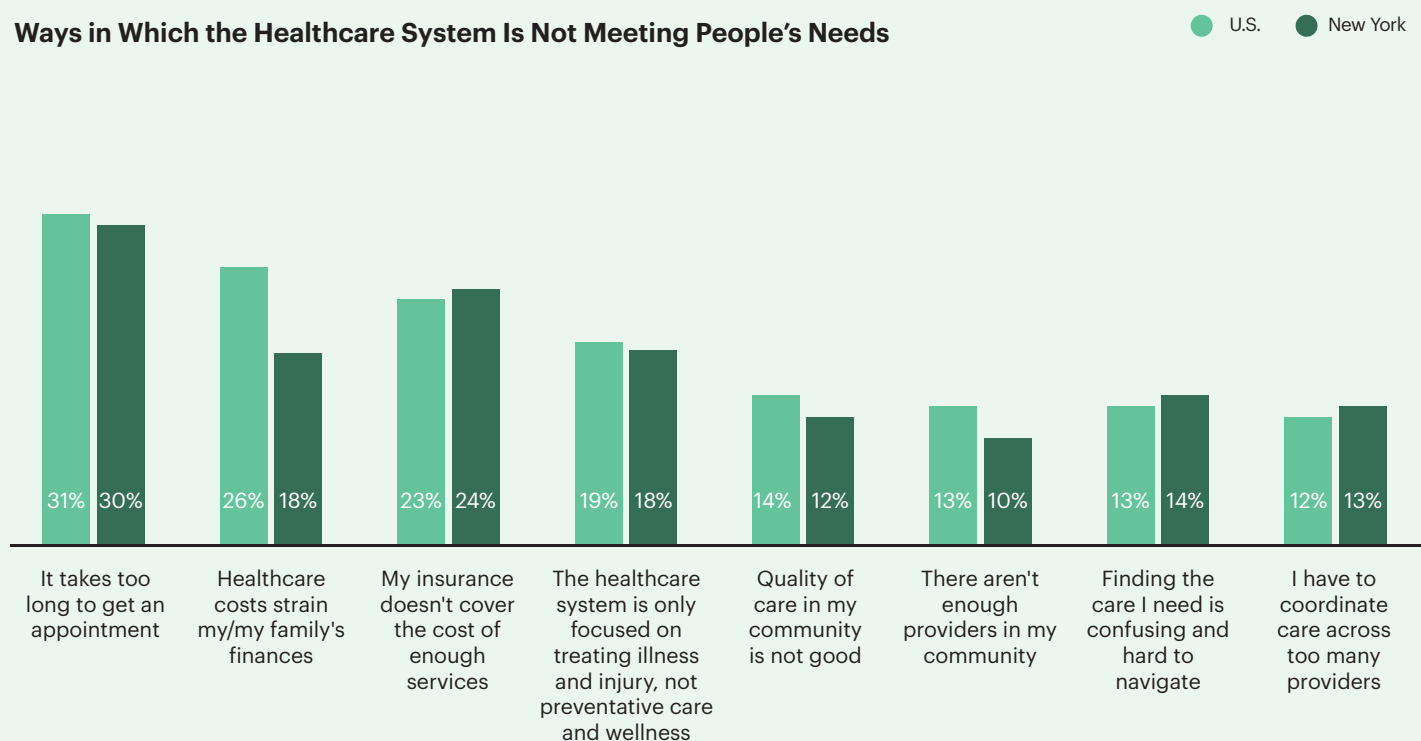
New Yorkers identify affordability as the top deterrent to healthcare access but are also particularly likely to cite the system's limited access to insurance coverage as a barrier to care access. Relative to adults nationally, though, they are more likely to see the system as meeting their needs.

- Affordability and insurance coverage deterring care:** Affordability stands as a primary hurdle, with half of adults in New York (51%) and 6 in 10 nationally (61%) saying that affordability in general is among the top barriers to accessing healthcare. Interestingly, residents in New York are significantly likely to say that access to insurance coverage (36% vs. 30% nationally) is a main barrier to access.
- System meeting people's needs:** Adults in New York identify long wait times / it taking too long to get an appointment as the top way that the system is not meeting their needs (30%, in line with 31% nationally). However, nearly a third of adults in New York (32%), directionally higher than adults nationally (27%), say that the healthcare system is meeting all of their needs.
- Choice in providers:** Further, New Yorkers are the most likely to say that they have choice when it comes to selecting a healthcare provider (86% vs. 80% nationally).

### Biggest Barriers to Accessing Healthcare



### Ways in Which the Healthcare System Is Not Meeting People's Needs

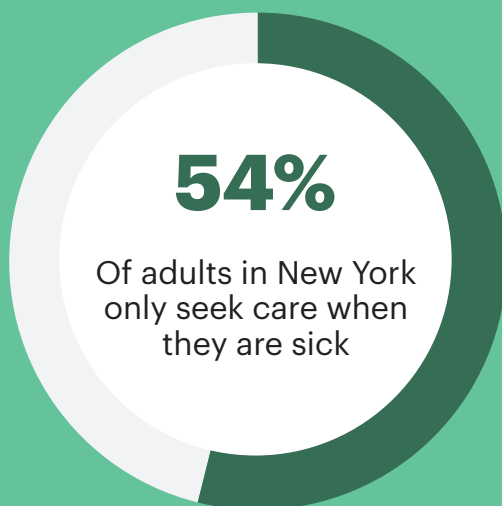


### Coordinating care burdens patients and informal caregivers assisting family and friends navigating the healthcare system.

- Coordinating care:** Nearly two-thirds of adults in New York (63%) and nationally (65%) say that coordinating and managing healthcare is overwhelming and time-consuming. Adults in New York report spending an average of 2.3 hours coordinating care for themselves or their families, and an average of 4.0 hours if they are helping someone else navigate care, which is directionally higher than the national average. Nationally, adults spend an average of 2.0 hours coordinating care for themselves or their families and an average of 3.3 hours helping someone else.
- Long wait times:** On average, whether national or in New York, it takes around a month or more to get a needed appointment with a healthcare provider. For those who do not get an appointment within a week, it takes an average of 4.5 weeks for New Yorkers and 3.9 weeks nationally.

### Compared to adults nationally, New Yorkers appear less likely to skip or delay care, and even those that have report a lesser impact of doing so in terms of personal and health outcomes.

- Less likely to skip care:** Nearly two thirds of New Yorkers (63%) say they have not delayed or skipped care, which is significantly higher than what is seen nationally (56%).
- Lesser impact of skipping care:** Moreover, nearly half of adults in New York (46%) who delayed or skipped care within the past two years said that nothing happened as a result of them skipping or delaying care, which is directionally higher than adults nationally (40%).



**37%** OF ADULTS IN NEW YORK

**Have either skipped or delayed healthcare services within the past two years**

Nearly half of New Yorkers observe that their healthcare provider(s) appear burned out or overburdened which may lead to patients feeling rushed during appointments. New Yorkers also place value on shared backgrounds and recognition of their culture and ethnicity from providers.

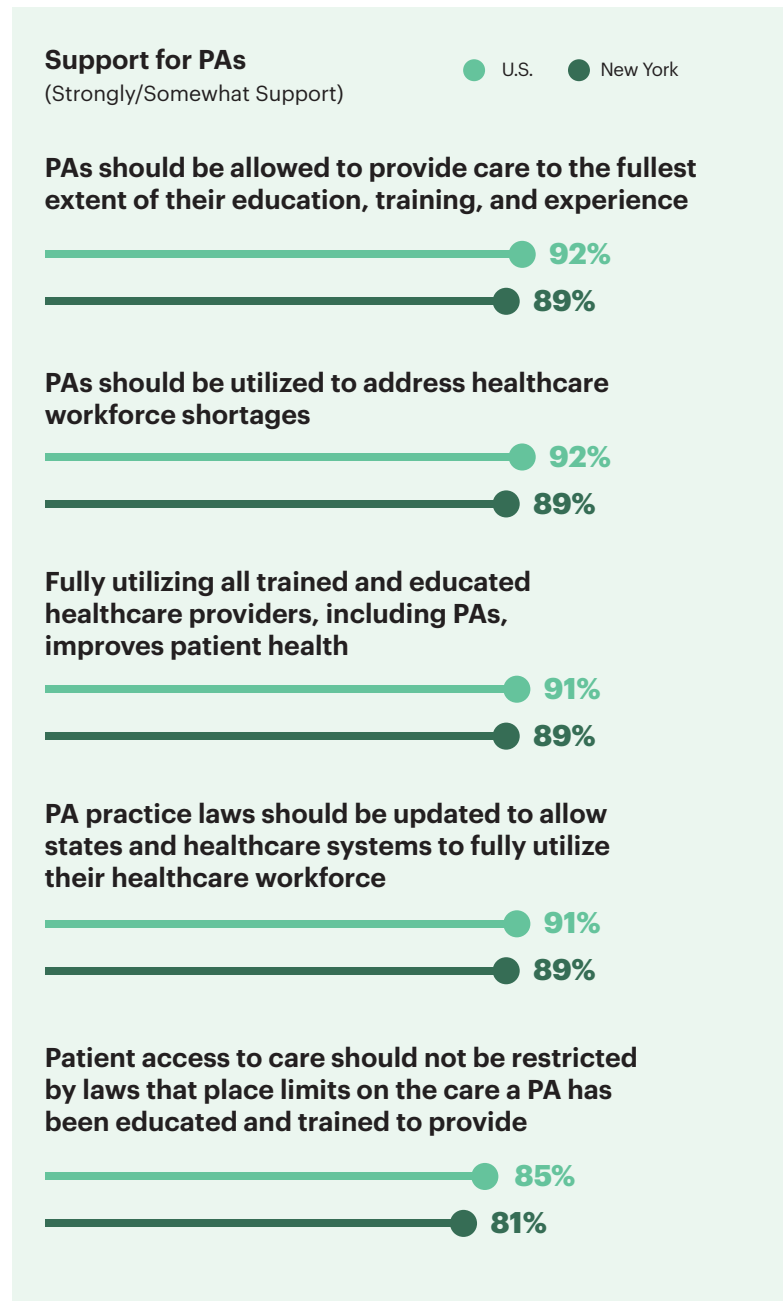
- Rushed care due to demands of healthcare providers:** Nearly seven in 10 adults in New York (69%), directionally higher than what we see nationally (66%), agree that healthcare providers seem more rushed than they have been in the past.
- Provider burnout:** Around half of adults in New York (49%) and nationally (47%) worry their healthcare providers appear to be burned out/overburdened and 7 in 10 (70%) in New York and nationally (71%) worry that the demands on providers are too great.
- Patient and provider background matters:** Over half of New Yorkers (53%) admit that they wish that their provider recognized and valued their culture and ethnicity (compared to 46% nationally). Further, New York adults feel more comfortable with providers who share their background (56% vs. 54% nationally).

### The Value of Physician Associates/Assistants

Positive patient-provider relationships are crucial to keeping people active within the healthcare system, bolstering faith in the system, and improving health outcomes overall.

- Primary care:** At a national level, more than four-fifths of adults (86%) have a primary care provider, while 14% do not. New York adults are similarly likely to have a primary care provider (87%). Those who have a primary care provider are two times more likely than those who do not to give healthcare they received in the past 12 months an A or B grade.

- Navigating the system:** More than six in 10 adults nationally who have a primary care provider (63%) say that healthcare providers help them navigate the healthcare system – compared with less than half of those who do not have a primary care provider (48%).
- Preventing health conditions:** Nationally, more than two-fifths of care coordinators (45%) agree that better primary or preventative healthcare could have prevented the health condition, injury, or major illness for the patient.



Physician associates/assistants are well-positioned to be part of the solution to the healthcare crisis in the U.S. Having an ongoing relationship with a PA further establishes and enhances these positive feelings, and New Yorkers who have seen a PA recognize that PAs improve health outcomes for patients and have positively impacted their health.

- Trust in PAs as health advocates:** Most New Yorkers (74%) don't have a preference for the type of healthcare provider that they see – it is more about the quality of care than the title. The majority of New Yorkers and adults nationally agree that PAs are trusted partners and advocates for their health (89% in New York and nationally, respectively).
- Positive marks for PA care:** Around eight in 10 adults (79% nationally and 76% in New York) who have seen a PA rate the medical care they received from a PA in the past 12 months as either good or excellent. The majority agree that PAs improve health outcomes for patients (89% nationally; 90% in New York) and have positively impacted their health (87% nationally, 86% in New York). Nationally, those who consider themselves as having an ongoing relationship with a PA are more likely to grade their recent healthcare as an A or B (89% compared with 76% who have seen a PA but do not have an ongoing relationship).

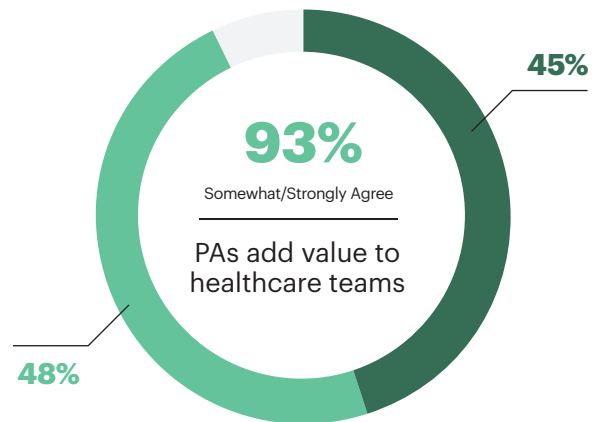
The public supports better utilizing PAs to improve the healthcare system and better address an aging population, the rise in chronic disease, and a significant healthcare workforce shortage.

- Maximizing PA care:** Large majorities agree that PAs should be allowed to provide care to the fullest extent of their education, training, and experience (92% nationally and 89% in New York, are in support).
- Updating PA practice laws:** Majorities also support PA practice laws being updated to allow states and healthcare systems to fully utilize their healthcare workforce (91% nationally; 89% in New York).

### Agreement with Statements about PAs

(Among U.S. Adults)

● Somewhat Support ● Strongly Support



**Unlocking the potential of all trained healthcare providers, including PAs, holds the key to enhancing patient well-being. However, maximizing this approach mandates updating PA practice laws, enabling states and healthcare systems to fully harness their workforce.**

# Research Method

The research was conducted online in the U.S. by The Harris Poll on behalf of The American Academy of Physician Associates among n=2,519 adults age 18+. In addition to the national sample, oversamples were collected in eighteen states including New York (n=501). The survey was conducted from November 28 – December 26, 2023. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish.

Data from the national sample was weighted by race where necessary and by gender, region, education, marital status, household size, employment, household income, language proficiency (for Hispanic respondents only), and propensity to be online to bring respondents in line with their actual proportions in the population, and then combined using a post-weight.

All sample surveys and polls, whether or not they use probability sampling, as subject to other multiple sources of error which are most often not possible to quantify or estimate, including but not limited to coverage error, error associated with nonresponse, error associated with question wording and response options, and post-survey weighting and adjustments.

Respondents for this survey were selected from among those who have agreed to participate in our surveys. The sampling precision of Harris online polls is measured by using a Bayesian credible interval. For this study, the national sample data is accurate to within +2.8 percentage points using a 95% confidence level. This credible interval will be wider among subsets of the surveyed population of interest.

