

## Perspectives on Today's Healthcare: Adults Diagnosed with Cancer Summary

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 adults who have been diagnosed with cancer.

### *View of the System*

- Two-thirds of adults diagnosed with cancer (66%) say the healthcare system is not meeting all their needs. [Q125]
- More than half of adults diagnosed with cancer (57%) grade the U.S. healthcare system poorly, with 28% giving it a C, 22% giving it a D, and 7% saying it deserves an F. [Q100]
- About 7 in 10 adults diagnosed with cancer are worried that the demands on healthcare providers are too great (72%) and nearly two-thirds (63%) say providers seem more rushed than they have in the past. [Q310]

### *Barriers to Care*

- Affordability is the primary barrier to accessing healthcare in the U.S. (56%) for adults who have been diagnosed with cancer. The fact that the healthcare system is too focused on profit is cited by more than half of those diagnosed with cancer (53%) as one of the biggest barriers to access to healthcare in the U.S. [Q105]
- When asked how, if at all, the healthcare system is not meeting their needs, the most common response is that it takes too long to get an appointment (34%). More than 2 in 5 points to healthcare costs straining their/their family's finances (23%) and/or that the healthcare system being focused on treatment and not prevention (22%). [Q125]
- For those who cannot get a healthcare appointment within a week, they end up waiting about a month, on average, to see a healthcare provider (4 weeks). [Q150]

### *Impact of the System*

- About 4 in 5 adults diagnosed with cancer (79%) fear healthcare quality will suffer as care increasingly becomes focused on profit. [Q130]
- About a third of adults diagnosed with cancer say their own health would be improved if there was more focus on preventative care (34%) and if healthcare didn't cost so much (30%), while 22% believe their health would improve if it wasn't so hard to get an appointment. [Q305]
- Over the last 2 years, 2 in 5 adults with cancer (40%) have delayed or skipped needed care altogether. [Q135]

### *Views of Providers*

- Grades for the healthcare adults diagnosed with cancer received in the past 12 months are more positive than grades for the U.S. healthcare system in general (86% vs. 43% respectively for A/B). [Q115 & Q100]
- However, when asked about experiences when interacting with a healthcare provider, a quarter of adults who have been diagnosed with cancer say they felt like their provider wasn't really listening to them (25%) and that they felt rushed (24%). [Q175]
- More than half of those diagnosed with cancer (57%) wish their healthcare providers took more time to understand them. [Q180]

### *Views of PAs*

- More than 4 in 5 adults diagnosed with cancer (85%) have seen a PA. [Q500]
  - Among those who have seen one:
    - 82% rate the care they received in the past 12 months positively (excellent/good) with 50% who say the care was *excellent*. [Q532]
    - 89% say PAs are trusted healthcare providers and 88% believe they provide safe and effective healthcare. [Q550]
    - 94% say having a PA at a practice makes it easier for patients to get an appointment. [Q551]
- About half of adults diagnosed with cancer (53%) would trust a PA to be their primary healthcare provider. [Q565]
- A large majority of adults diagnosed with cancer (93%) believe PAs should be allowed to provide care to the fullest extent of their education, training, and experience. [Q605]
- And, 90% say PA practice laws should be updated to allow states and healthcare systems to fully utilize their healthcare workforce. [Q605]

## **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+ including n=168 adults who have been diagnosed with cancer. The survey was conducted from February 23 – March 9, 2023.

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.