



## Trust in Healthcare Declines Amongst US Doctors, Patients During Pandemic



Physicians and patients report a loss of trust in the U.S. healthcare system since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, and doctors' trust in healthcare organisation leadership also lowered according to a recent survey.

However, health consumers' trust in doctors themselves has generally held steady during the pandemic, and physician respondents said their trust in nurses or fellow physicians had increased over the course of the past year. [The poll](#) was conducted in late 2020 and early 2021 by NORC at the University of Chicago on behalf of the American Board of Internal Medicine Foundation. The public survey sampled more than 2,000 adults and 600 clinicians participated in the physician survey.

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The pandemic also had a net negative impact on physicians' trust in health insurance companies and government health agencies, while the the publics' trust in hospitals and pharmaceutical companies slightly increased.

When queried, about a third of physicians said they did not trust their own organisation's leadership, even outside of the context of COVID-19. Home health care providers and skilled nursing facilities/long-term care did not fare much better in the survey, with about one-third and half of the respondents respectively, signalling that these care workers and institutions did not warrant their trust. Among the general public, trust in clinical staff and hospitals was substantially higher compared to healthcare organisations with less direct patient interaction, such as insurers or pharmaceutical companies.

Respondents who reported that they didn't trust their doctor most often said that their practitioner

hadn't spent enough time with them, did not know them or don't listen to them. Disparities in primary physician trust also existed amongst different demographics, with younger, poorer, Black and Hispanic respondents reporting lower levels of trust overall.

One positive result of the survey was with regards to vaccinations, with nearly two-thirds of consumers saying they would somewhat or completely trust their physician to distribute a COVID-19 vaccine. Positive responses were highest among patients who were Asian or white as well as those who identified as Democrats.

Findings from this survey and related editorials also highlighted the impact that misinformation, political interference, racial disparities and a novel virus have taken on trust across healthcare and offered potential strategies for healthcare leaders to rebuild relationships and trust.

Source: [NORC at the University of Chicago](#)

Photo: iStock

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