Results from this survey will inform our work and help us meet our evolving goals around access to care, with an intentional focus on equity.
The Health Care Services Low-Income Coloradans Value, Know About and Use

To that end, we partnered with Langer Research Associates in 2016 to conduct this survey to understand the perceptions of low-income Coloradans about the care that is available to them. Results from this survey will be used to inform our work and help us to meet our evolving goals around access to care, with an intentional focus on equity. We are sharing these findings with you so that, together, we can make informed decisions about how to improve the health care experiences and outcomes for low-income Coloradans in communities across the state.

For the purpose of this survey, “low-income” was defined as having a household income less than 200 percent of the federal poverty level, or about $49,000 per year for a family of four. A total of 901 low-income Coloradans from across the state responded to a 20-minute phone interview, and 302 Coloradans whose income is above the 200 percent federal poverty level were interviewed for comparison.

The survey included an extensive review of the types of health care services that low-income Coloradans prioritize, are aware are available to them, and that they use. Providers who understand which health care services low-income Coloradans most want are better positioned to offer those services and communicate their availability to their patients. This survey reveals that there are significant gaps between the services providers offer and the services low-income Coloradans value and are most likely to use.
### Key Findings

| 1 | Nine out of 10 low-income Coloradans highly value preventive health care yet gaps persist in their knowledge and use of those services. |
| 2 | Patients who have positive experiences with their health care provider are most likely to know about and use the services available at their clinic. |
| 3 | There are unexplored barriers to the use of basic health care services for low-income Coloradans of color. |
| 4 | Low-income Coloradans report higher satisfaction with facilities that offer a variety of comprehensive services under one roof, and safety net clinics typically offer more comprehensive services than other facilities. |
Preventive health care stands out as the service most highly valued, widely available and in use. Though the numbers are an encouraging start, there is room for improvement. Twenty-four percent of low-income Coloradans haven’t used preventive care services and 9 percent don’t know whether they are available to them.

The differences in the perceived value and use of referrals to specialists and chronic care persist even among low-income Coloradans with chronic conditions or disabilities. For that population, the use of referrals and chronic care services increases to 82 and 59 percent, respectively.

Low-income Coloradans who rely on health care facilities other than private practice or safety net clinics, such as private urgent care clinics or hospital emergency departments are least likely to say they have access to and use preventive care, referrals to specialists and chronic care services, though the differences are not statistically significant.
Comprehensive Primary Care Services

Low-income Coloradans rate a variety of comprehensive primary care services as highly important to them.

For the purposes of the survey, whether a person is aware that a service is available to them is considered “availability.” When a person reported they were unaware that a service was available to them, they were not asked whether they used that service and there was no outside test of whether the services are available according to the facilities themselves.

Discussion Questions:

How do you decide which services to offer in your facility?

How do you assess which services have value to the patients you serve?
ASSISTANCE ENROLLING IN INSURANCE STANDS OUT AS A SERVICE THAT IS BOTH HIGHLY VALUED AND OFTEN USED WHEN IT IS AVAILABLE, SUGGESTING THAT OFFERING THIS SERVICE WITHIN HEALTH CARE FACILITIES MAY BE PARTICULARLY EFFECTIVE AT ENROLLING MORE LOW-INCOME COLORADANS INTO INSURANCE PROGRAMS.

Fewer than half of low-income Coloradans say their health care provider offers behavioral health and reproductive health services, both of which are highly valued, suggesting a need to bolster patient awareness of these services where they are available.

Three other services – dental care, screening for alcohol or drug use and referrals to social services – are highly valued but less commonly available. Of those, dental care is the most widely used. Forty-eight percent of low-income residents with dental care available to them make use of it. Fifteen percent of survey respondents were unsure whether dental care is available at their facility, suggesting that dental care uptake may increase if patients were aware it was available.
Comprehensive Primary Care Services by Facility Type

SAFETY NET CLINICS ARE COMMITTED TO PROVIDING A RANGE OF SERVICES IN-HOUSE AND ARE MORE LIKELY THAN OTHER FACILITIES TO DO SO.

% WHO HIGHLY PRIORITIZE SERVICE BY FACILITY TYPE

Patients who go to safety net clinics are more likely to prioritize all comprehensive primary care services than patients who go to other clinics.

There is a positive relationship between the availability of a service and its perceived importance. Patients who know they have a service available to them are more likely to regard that service as valuable, and the same holds true for service use: Patients who use a service are more likely to value that service than those who have it available to them but don’t use it.

Discussion Question:

What mechanisms can be created to better communicate with patients about the health care services they want and those that are already available?
Team-Based Care and Health Navigators

LOW-INCOME COLORADANS SEE TEAM-BASED CARE AND HEALTH CARE NAVIGATORS AS “HIGHLY IMPORTANT” YET FEW HAVE THEM AVAILABLE AT THEIR CARE FACILITIES, SUGGESTING AN OPPORTUNITY TO EXPAND THESE MODELS OF CARE DELIVERY.

ALTERNATIVE CARE MODELS

It is interesting to note that safety net patients are 13 percent more likely than patients at other facilities to say they value team-based care, though they are no more likely than others to have it available at their clinic.

Survey data suggests that meeting this interest in team-based care and health navigation may increase health care service use overall. Where it is available, team-based care increases patients engagement, satisfaction and use of basic care services such as preventive care. See The 4 Cs issue brief for more information.

Low-income Coloradans who have a health care navigator are 14 percentage points more likely to use preventive care services (83 percent vs. 69 percent). Those who have team-based care are 11 percentage points more likely to use preventive care services (78 percent vs. 67 percent).
Value, Access and Use of Services by Gender and Age

Within the population of low-income Coloradans, the most significant group differences in priority, knowledge and use of health care services was between women and men.

Low-income women are more likely than men to say they use the three basic health care services: preventive care, referrals to specialists and continuing care.

This finding suggests the need to identify barriers to care for low-income men and interventions that focus on encouraging low-income men to make use of these services.

Priorities, Access & Use by Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Highly Important</th>
<th>Available</th>
<th>Use (if available)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Women</td>
<td>Men</td>
<td>Difference (in percentage points)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Screening</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reproductive Health</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team-Based Care</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Care Navigator</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chronic Care</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preventive Care</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral Health</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insurance Aid</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dental Care</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Service Referrals</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialist Referrals</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Bold indicates a statistically significant difference at p < .05.
Communities of Color

Within the population of low-income Coloradans, the survey revealed no differences by race and ethnicity in the importance placed on the core health care services of preventive care, medical referrals and chronic care.

There no racial or ethnic gap for availability of preventive care, although communities of color may be less likely than whites to report their facility offers ongoing care for chronic conditions and referrals to medical specialists. And the data suggests that communities of color may be slightly less likely to use the basic services of chronic care, medical referrals and preventive care when they are available.

Other public health research illustrates that access to services is only the beginning for addressing racial health disparities. Improving the experience of patients of color within clinics through personal connections, cultural responsiveness and continuity of care is critical to increasing use of service and improving health outcomes.

Regarding comprehensive primary care services, data suggests communities of color may be more likely than white communities to value help enrolling in insurance, dental care, reproductive and behavioral health care, though with the exception of insurance help, they may be less likely than white patients to use any of those services. Read more detailed information in the Coloradans of Color issue brief.

Discussion Questions:

How is your facility working to improve the uptake of services by patients of color?
SENIORS ARE LESS LIKELY THAN YOUNGER ADULTS TO SAY THAT MOST COMPREHENSIVE PRIMARY CARE SERVICES ARE “HIGHLY IMPORTANT” AND LESS LIKELY TO KNOW WHETHER THOSE SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE AT THEIR CURRENT FACILITY. THESE FINDINGS SUGGEST IT IS IMPORTANT TO FOCUS PATIENT AWARENESS OF THESE SERVICES EFFORTS ON OLDER PATIENTS.

PRIORITIZED SERVICES BY AGE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>&lt;65</th>
<th>65+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reproductive Health</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insurance Aid</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral Health</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Care</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dental Care</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Service Referrals</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug Screening</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
AMONG ADULTS UNDER AGE 65, THERE ARE OPPORTUNITIES AS WELL:

- Adults under age 65 are more likely than seniors to value access to behavioral health services and help enrolling in insurance, but they are no more likely than seniors to report those services are available at their place of care.

- Although adults under 65 are more likely than seniors to value preventive care, they are less likely than seniors to use it when it is available.

- Twenty-three percent of low-income adults age 40-64 use health care navigators. Only 11 percent of adults under 30 use health care navigators, though they are as likely as the older adults to perceive navigators as highly important.

Other Essential Differences in Preventive Care Use

EDUCATION IS ANOTHER ELEMENT THAT IS SIGNIFICANT IN PREDICTING THE USE OF PREVENTIVE CARE SERVICES.

Just 67 percent of low-income Coloradans with a high school diploma or less education say they’ve used preventive health services, compared with 83 percent who have some college education. Patients with less formal education are also less likely to know whether referrals to specialists and ongoing chronic care are offered at their facility. Efforts to increase awareness and use of those basic care services should benefit from a focus on outreach for people with less formal education.

The survey’s overall results also reinforce the deeply intertwined relationship between patients who access preventive care services and those who report they are engaged with their care, satisfied with their quality of care, see the same provider frequently and feel they have a personal connection with someone at their care facility. In essence, more satisfied, more engaged patients also are more likely to use more health care services.
Key Takeaways

CONSIDERED AS A WHOLE, THESE RESULTS SHOW A DISCREPANCY BETWEEN THE VALUE LOW-INCOME COLORADANS PLACE ON A VARIETY OF HEALTH CARE SERVICES, THOSE THEY PERCEIVE TO BE AVAILABLE AND THOSE THEY ACTUALLY USE.

These results suggest that patients and providers would benefit from increasing the number of in-house services provided at facilities as well as better communication about those that are available, with special attention to patients from communities of color, who are over 65, and who have less formal education.

There is an opportunity to significantly increase the uptake in basic health services for communities of color through the 4 Cs of connectedness, continuity, cultural responsiveness and community ties. See the 4 Cs issue brief for more information.
Patients who have positive experiences with their health care provider are most likely to know about and use the services available at their clinic.
About the Colorado Health Foundation:

The Colorado Health Foundation is bringing health in reach for all Coloradans by engaging closely with communities across the state through investing, policy and advocacy, learning and capacity building. For more information, please visit [www.coloradohealth.org](http://www.coloradohealth.org).

The Colorado Health Foundation would like to thank Langer Research Associates for their work on this study. For more information, please visit [www.langerresearch.com](http://www.langerresearch.com).

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